

CEN-CENELEC PRESS RELEASE
14 November 2014

European Conference succeeds in building bridges between standardization, business, research and innovation communities

More than 370 delegates, including representatives of research and innovation projects, business and industry, national and European standardization organizations and the European Commission, participated in the European Conference 'Standards: Your Innovation Bridge', which was held in Brussels on October 30 2014. This event was organized by the European Standardization Organizations CEN and CENELEC, in partnership with the European Commission and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

The Conference was organized in the framework of the BRIDGIT project, supported by the European Commission and EFTA, which aims to "Bridge the Gap between Research and Standardization". The main goal of the event was to bring together representatives of all the relevant stakeholders to explore the relationship between research/innovation and standardization activities – especially at European level.

Standardization is an effective and powerful instrument for sharing knowledge and transferring new technologies, ideas and innovations to the market. This has been demonstrated by successful experiences across a range of different sectors including advanced manufacturing, energy, information technology, recycling, transport and security. However, in many cases the results of research and innovation activities are not fully exploited – either because researchers and innovators do not fully understand the potential benefits of linking-up with standardization, or because they are not aware of how they can identify and contribute to relevant standardization activities.

The European Conference 'Standards: Your Innovation Bridge' was opened by Scott Steedman, CEN Vice-President Policy, who said that "standards accelerate innovation" and "increase probability of success". He underlined that "standards have become the knowledge fuel for business and industry" and they are driving the growth of new and emerging fields – such as electric vehicles, micro-biology, etc.

The keynote speech was delivered by Christian Reinaudo, CEO of Agfa-Gevaert, who used the example of standards for x-ray images & scans in the field of healthcare to explain the benefits of standardization in terms of sharing knowledge, supporting the introduction of new technologies, and opening-up markets. He said that standardization, innovation and intellectual property are three sides of the same triangle, in which "standards represent the common infrastructure, which provides a basis for innovation".

Leading experts from the worlds of business, academia/research, and standardization took part in a panel discussion which looked at the role of standards throughout the innovation lifecycle. The members of the panel agreed that standards play an important role in facilitating the acceptance of new products in the market.

The European Commission was represented by Clara de la Torre, Director 'Key Enabling Technologies' in the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. She said that the Horizon

2020 programme, launched at the start of 2014, was more focused than previous EU programmes on bringing the results of research and innovation to the market. Mrs de la Torre emphasized that "standardization can facilitate the dissemination of innovation into new products", and underlined the need for standardization to be considered at an early stage during the conception and development of research/innovation projects.

The Conference programme included a choice of six breakout sessions, which addressed specific issues including: the relationship between standards and patents, how standards facilitate market access, the strategic importance of standardization, how standards enable knowledge transfer, and how to integrate standardization in research projects.

Alongside the Conference, there was an exhibition area where 27 projects were presented. These projects had been selected as examples of good practice regarding how to make the connection between research/innovation and standardization activities.

The main conclusions of the Conference were summed-up in the final plenary session by the Director General of CEN and CENELEC, Elena Santiago Cid. She told the delegates: "We are convinced that standards can bridge the gap" between innovation and the market, "and we really have the inspiration and the ambition to become your innovation bridge".

The full version of this press release can be found on the CEN-CENELEC website:

http://www.cencenelec.eu/news/press_releases/Pages/PR-2014-08.aspx