

**2 August 2018**

## **Brexit and standards update for EURIS**

The UK government released its White Paper on [‘the future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union’](#) on July 12. This sets out the government’s vision for the future relationship between the UK and the EU, based on an economic partnership and a set of governance mechanisms to oversee it.

BSI has engaged UK government since the referendum, educating, informing and advocating support for our position on Brexit and standards. This position sees BSI continuing to provide, post-Brexit, the standards-developing framework that our stakeholders need to trade nationally, in Europe and internationally. To deliver this position BSI will continue as a member of ISO, IEC, CEN and CENELEC, playing a full part in the development of international and European standards, as today. We have also advocated government commitment to the role of voluntary standards in the economy, including a minority of standards that enable compliance with regulation, and to the single national standard model that ensures a coherent catalogue of British Standards.

The White Paper has a specific section on standards, where it says, *“the British Standards Institution (BSI) would retain its ability to apply the ‘single standard model’ – so that where a voluntary European standard is used to support EU rules, the BSI could not put forward any competing national standards”*.

This clearly endorses the BSI position on standards and Brexit, supporting BSI’s continued role in CEN and CENELEC, and follows on from a letter received by BSI last month from Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Industrial Strategy Greg Clark MP, in which he confirmed that the government would not change its established approach to the use of voluntary standards to support trade. In the letter he also encouraged BSI to fulfil its mandate as the UK’s National Standards Body and maintain UK influence in the European Standards Organizations.

As with the government’s 2017 paper, BSI is the only private sector organization mentioned in this White Paper. Both this and the clear support for BSI’s position reflect the success of BSI’s engagement effort over the past two years.

This success also comes from the high level of stakeholder commitment to BSI’s position, through key representative organizations like EEF, the CBI and British Chambers of Commerce, as well as through professional institutions, consumer organizations and standards users.

Standards are business tools that promote simplification and reduce unnecessary duplication, thus driving down costs and reducing technical barriers to trade worldwide.

While they can be used to demonstrate compliance with legal requirements, they are not regulations, and compliance with standards is voluntary. References to 'regulatory standards' in government publications, as well as references to 'maintaining high standards', are not to business standards developed through national standards bodies but to regulations.

Stakeholder experts come together to develop standards through processes run by their national standards bodies, such as BSI. The national bodies then adopt a set of standards, whose individual origins will have been at national, regional (for the UK, European) or international level but which together constitute an internally consistent and non-conflicting whole. In Europe, this international system has been developed further: recognizing the shared economic interest across the continent, we have evolved the system into one where we have an identical national standard in each member country for any given aspect of a product, service or process. The European Standards Organizations CEN and CENELEC have a far broader membership than the EU, with 34 member countries. These bodies are also private associations, not agencies of the EU. It is therefore important to recognize that they develop 'European standards' and not 'EU standards'.

BSI is continuing to work with European partners to make whatever changes are required to the statutes of CEN and CENELEC in order to reflect the UK's status outside the EU.

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