

20 July 2018

## Brexit and standards update

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.

While BSI greatly values the UK government's position on standards, BSI stresses that continued membership of CEN and CENELEC post-Brexit is not determined by any specific

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relationship between the UK and the EU post-Brexit. CEN and CENELEC develop European standards, not 'EU standards': they include national members from countries outside the EU, including Switzerland and Norway, and are not agencies of the European Union but private associations owned by their members including BSI.

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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