



# WHY COMMON STANDARDS MATTER

As an affiliate member of BSI, the TRA supports the BSI's position for the UK to continue having common standards with CEN (European standards body) and ISO (international standards body) instead of reinstating old and withdrawn British standards applying only to the UK market.

The 8 main reasons below outline why we believe maintaining strong trade relationships with both European and other global economies is important for the timber industry. A coherent catalogue of standards improves business competitiveness, avoids further complexities and maximises business opportunities within the industry.



## PASSPORT TO TRADE

One standard should avoid any conflicting national standards and will also *minimise barriers to trade*.

The single standard model would improve business competitiveness and reduce costs. Departing from the model will result in potential duplicate work as well as increasing complexity and costs.



## MARKET SIMPLIFICATION

The single standard model has enabled reciprocal market access throughout all of Europe.

This has resulted in a *fall in the number of national standards within Europe from 160,000 in 1980 to 20,000 today*. This market simplification has positive impacts on both business and customers.



## AUTONOMY FROM EU

*75% of current European standards are not linked to any European public policy or regulation.*

The formal requests from the European Commission enables standards and legal text to be developed, rather than it simply being voluntary. This results in consistency of the use of standards both within Europe and globally.



## INFLUENCE ON STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

The UK is one of the leading countries in the development of national standards.

European standards are not owned by the European Union so it is important to *maintain a UK voice* throughout the process. UK experts supported and lead a lot of the standards for structural Eurocodes for construction.



## PRESERVING UK COMPETITIVENESS

If the UK industry could no longer *exert influence* within the European standardisation system, innovation, for example, would be jeopardised.

Therefore, it is essential that the UK has a strong involvement in the revision of existing European standards and drafting of future ones.



## BENEFITS FOR CONSUMERS

Standards are often looked at as a *customer protection tool*. They are essential for the building of customer trust, with more choice of safer and high-quality products.

The standards will also ensure that the products are sustainable and secure, a key principle for the entire timber supply chain.



## AVOIDING PROLIFERATION OF STANDARDS

An alternative is to change the basis of the existing market structure in the UK to recognise multiple standards.

However, this will mean abandoning the internationally-used single national standard and there is fear that *introducing a new system may lead to further confusion for customers as well as complexity for businesses*.



## IMPACT ON FUTURE TRADE AGREEMENTS

There's a large overlap between European and international standards. For example, 80% of the European standards in the electrotechnical industry being identical to the international standards.

*Up-to-date standards are a key element for future free trade agreements between the UK and non-EU countries.*