

CEMR Employers' Platform and EPSU welcome EU tool for application of social criteria to public procurement

(6 July 2011) The Council of European Municipalities and Regions' Employers' Platform (CEMR-EP) and the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) welcome the European Commission Guide on socially responsible public procurement (SRPP)

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&langId=en&newsId=978&furtherNews=yes>

as a tool to better explain how social criteria could be applied to public procurement and to help socially responsible purchasing.

However, in the context of the current revision of public procurement rules, the CEMR-EP and EPSU recall that benefits such as employment opportunities, collective agreements, universal access to services and fair trade will be felt throughout the procurement contract's lifespan if a more socially responsible procurement policy and the guide's good practices are adopted.

Moreover, EPSU and the CEMR-EP emphasise that the delivery of quality and sustainable services to citizens is the primary objective of public procurement and that local authorities must be able to determine how best to deliver services within their capacity.

Against the background of the on-going economic crisis and austerity measures, local and regional authorities may be pressured to go for lower prices yet this may compromise the quality and sustainability of services and goods and put pressure on wages, working conditions and collective agreements. Thus, public authorities and trade unions will have to ensure that quality public services are high on the agenda so that citizens are not the first affected by the economic crisis.

"It is therefore all the more important that EPSU and CEMR-EP play a leading role in recalling the benefits that arise when contracting authorities use SRPP as a lever to promote social concerns such as employment, skills training, equality and social inclusion – influencing the market in a positive direction," underlines Steve Comer,

chair of the CEMR Employers' Platform and Eastville city councillor (Bristol City Council).

In that respect, socially responsible public procurement should enhance the development of higher standards for social public policy objectives in Europe. It should also help contribute to a fair social market economy and raise awareness on the possibilities of driving social standards upwards, all of which are necessary when considering the social and economic crisis Europe is currently undergoing.

Anders Hammerbäck, President of EPSU Local and Regional Government Standing Committee and Senior Advisor at the Swedish Union of Local Government Officers (SKTF) said "There is no doubt that we will make sure that SRPP will push for the promotion of employment opportunities (for youth, the long-term unemployed, migrants, people with disabilities), of decent work, of the respect of collective agreements, of the universal access of services and of fair trade. Without these aforementioned elements, our European social model will be meaningless.

See CEMR-EP and EPSU Joint Statement on the EC Guide on socially responsible public procurement (SRPP) – June 2011.

<http://www.epsu.org/a/7769>

EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 275 trade unions; EPSU organises workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local and national administration, in all European countries including in the EU's Eastern Neighborhood. EPSU is the recognized regional organization of Public Services International (PSI). For more information on EPSU and our work please go to: <http://www.epsu.org>

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the broadest organisation of municipalities and regions in Europe, as it represents over 100 000 local and regional authorities. Its members are 53 national associations of local and regional government from 39 European countries. CEMR notably promotes local democracy, encourages the setting-up of town twinning partnerships (www.twinning.org) and the exchange of experiences, and influences European legislation which has a significant impact on municipalities, cities and regions.

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