

European Commission publishes new public procurement package - but not much new on the social!

(10 October 2017) On 3 October the EC published a new procurement package(*). This contains a number of different elements, including a Communication, a targeted consultation on the woolly concept of 'innovative' procurement and initiatives to improve the professionalization of public buyers.

Unfortunately there seems relatively little in the Communication on the social aspects of procurement. While jobs are mentioned, there are no references to 'quality jobs', 'workers', or to 'good employment conditions.' Worryingly too, the concept of 'sustainability' that is used seems to be narrow and to exclude social aspects. The 2014 revision of the existing EU legal framework clarified and strengthened the social dimension of public procurement framework, putting it on an equal footing with 'green' procurement. EPSU expects the European Commission to build on this advancement and come forward with proactive measures to support Member States and public authorities increase their use of social criteria in public contracts. In the follow-up to the EC package, EPSU will focus on improving the inclusion of social aspects, including in the capacity-building and professionalization initiatives.

EPSU is working on public procurement in its local and regional government sector - where over half of all procurement takes place - and in the broader network for Sustainable Development in Public Procurement (NSDPP).

(*) For the Commission package see http://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/increasing-impact-public-investment-through-efficient-and-professional-procurement-0_en

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