

Assessment of the European Commission's proposal for the revision of Public Procurement Directives

Network for sustainable development in public procurement (NSPP): Assessment of the European Commission's proposal for the revision of Public Procurement Directives, 27 February 2012

Introduction

1. The Network for sustainable development in public procurement (NSPP) is a group of social, environmental NGOs and trade union organisations united by their joint aim to achieve progress in sustainable development, including through EU public procurement legislation and policies. The Network has recently contributed to the European Commission's (EC) evaluation of the public procurement Directives, put forward key proposals to strengthen the current EU legal framework, and developed other educational materials. The Network's aims are consistent with provisions in the EU Treaties (see Annex).

2. At present sustainable development is too often forgotten about completely, or it is tagged on as an after thought in order to mitigate the worst effects of unsustainable and unethical economic policies. The Network sees the revision of the public procurement Directives as an opportunity for the EC, the European Parliament and the Council to clearly indicate the (sustainable) way forward for Europe and to ensure that sustainability considerations are mainstreamed throughout the provisions. Sustainability objectives are not a distraction from the main (economic) aim of public procurement and they do not complicate the process, on the contrary, they provide for better outcomes. Short-term thinking is not acceptable – upfront costs on their own are seldom a sound basis for a procurement award. Further, taking a long-term perspective highlights that unsustainable practices, such as air pollution, precarious work, damaging extraction and/or inefficient use of natural resources have real costs for us as well as people in other parts of the world. The Network underlines that such horizontal' objectives are

of equal value to the functional objectives of what is being purchased.

3. So, to what extent do the EC proposals for a new Directive on public procurement improve or weaken the sustainability dimension of the EU rules? Below is a first assessment of key points (...). For the full text (EN / FR / DE):

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