Press release | 15.01.2014

Public procurement

New rules a gain for local authorities and small enterprises

The European Parliament today adopted a series of legislative proposals setting out EU rules on public procurement. The Greens gave a general welcome to the outcome, with internal market spokesperson **Heide Ruehle** stating:

"While this legislation could have gone further in strengthening the hand of local authorities as regards public procurement, it is nonetheless a step forward. It will provide greater legal certainty and, at the same time, give greater playing room for local authorities as regards their public procurement choices.

"The purchase of goods and services by public authorities amounts to almost 20% of GDP and, as such, can be used as a crucial measure for stimulating innovative sectors. To this end, we welcome the provisions in the new legislation, which will ensure public procurement can be more effectively used to promote more sustainable and ethical sectors.

"Up-front price will not be the sole factor to be considered in tendering processes, with life-cycle costs also to be taken into account. Quality and ethical brands like Fair Trade will be promoted, with authorities able to insist providers comply with such labels. Procurement processes will also be used to ensure the better integration of disabled and disadvantaged groups, including unemployed youth, with provisions to ensure tenders can be reserved for social enterprises. It will also be easier for small and medium sized enterprises to take part in public tenders, with less bureaucratic procedures.

"We now expect member states to quickly implement these proposals, notably as regards electronic procurement. We also insist that the European Commission respects the terms of this legislation in its international negotiations, notably its negotiations with the US on a free trade agreement (TTIP). Water services must remain outside the scope of public procurement rules, the same is true for rescue services. Failure to do so by the Commission would call its democratic legitimacy into question."

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