Press release | 19.11.2013

Public procurement and global rules

MEPs give go-ahead to backdoor dismantling of EU standards

The European Parliament today gave its consent to the revised Government Procurement Agreement, which sets out rules on how public procurement is regulated at international level (1). The Greens voted against the agreement and expressed concern about its implications for EU standards on public procurement and the wider social and economic impact. Reacting to the vote, Green MEP **Yannick Jadot** said:

"The bigger political groups have all turned a blind eye to the major flaws with this agreement and its potentially deleterious impact on public procurement in Europe. The GPA will oblige the liberalisation of public procurement markets in Europe and could mean higher EU standards on public procurement are circumvented. Recently improved EU rules on public procurement, which aim to ensure key factors like ethical labour conditions, sustainability and environment protection, are central to awarding public tenders, could be overturned by the backdoor.

"Public procurement accounts for nearly 20% of the European economy. While the investment capacity of governments has been constrained, public procurement remains an essential tool for redirecting our economy towards a more sustainable path. Liberalising public procurement processes and circumventing EU standards will benefit big corporations but undermine the essential role public procurement plays in directing policy and shaping our societies.

"The EU should instead be trying to promote and strengthen its own standards, which aim to ensure public procurement processes also take account of social, ethical and environmental impacts in the tendering process. There is also a need to recognise the important role of local providers in local tendering processes. The agreement adopted today is a step backwards to this end. "

(1) The Government Procurement Agreement, which was concluded under the WTO framework, applies to Armenia, Aruba Canada, the EU, Hong Kong, Iceland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan and the US. It aims to liberalise public procurement markets in those countries.

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Responsible MEPs



Yannick Jadot

Member

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