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Review public procurement Directive: EFCA President reports on partial successes

EFCA remains committed to making the voice of the industry heard in the informal dialogue negotiations between European Parliament, Council (Presidency) and Commission.

Following the adoption in December 2012 of the Rapporteur's (Marc Tarabella) report by the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee (IMCO) in the European Parliament, Jan Bosschem reported on the current stage of the EU public procurement law revision process and EFCA's partial and interim successes.

The member associations actively contributed to these positive outcomes through their active national lobby.

EFCA's Internal Market Committee examined in detail the proposed amendments.

The IMCO report reflects the position that EFCA submitted to, and discussed with the Rapporteur and Shadow Rapporteurs in a number of areas.

At the end of March, EFCA presented some further suggestions to the Rapporteur. The key issue is to provide for EU rules that ensure an appropriate approach to knowledge-based or intellectual services.

EFCA in EC High Level Tripartite Strategic Forum on construction

The Commission invited 20 construction industry representatives, including EFCA, to discuss the implementation of the action plan to ensure the sustainability of the sector.

EFCA's involvement in both the forum and the thematic groups is an indication of the importance the EC attaches to the engineering consultancy industry.



The first meeting of the high level tripartite strategic forum, grouping the European Commission, Member States and European construction stakeholders, looked at the priorities for the five thematic groups.

These groups will address key areas to ensure the industry's sustainable competitiveness and address societal challenges (the so-called 'Construction 2020 Strategy'):

- Stimulating investment in renovation and innovation
- Skills and qualifications
- Sustainable use of resources
- Internal market for both products and services
- International competitiveness.

EFCA was invited to nominate a representative to each thematic group, and therefore will have the possibility to contribute recommendations for the implementation of the Strategy.

Additionally, at the end of January, the European Construction Forum, which is representing key construction related federations, launched its manifesto for action 'Building prosperity for the future of Europe'.

www.ecf.be

Contacts to contracts: EBRD - EFCA seminar 'Opportunities for Consultants'

The 22 March 2013 workshop, focussing on EBRD consulting opportunities, brought insider advice to permit firms to know how the Bank works, and their offers to be noticed and successful.

Around 65 participants from 18 countries attended the workshop in Brussels to increase their knowledge to find opportunities and understand the Bank's selection and contracting procedures.

Many firms also participated in the one-to-one meetings with the EBRD speakers to discuss specific issues of doing business in the EBRD's countries and sectors of operation.

The seminar proved a very good opportunity for the firms to understand how the EBRD engages consultants, to learn from success stories (and, even from failures), to share knowledge and experiences and – last but not least – to network with other consultancy firms.



From left to right: Ines Ferguson, Jan Bosschem, Dilek Macit (EBRD), Martin Ehrenberg (EBRD), Jan Van der Putten, Nichola di Pietro (EBRD)

EFCA participates in the European standard-setting process

In order to ensure that standards take into account economic competitiveness and are workable for engineering consultants, EFCA has taken part in a series of standardisation activities.

A major outcome of EFCA's commitment in this area is the publication of the European standards EN 16310 and EN 16311. These two standards are not-prescriptive reference documents, i.e. a glossary of key words concerning engineering services.

These standards, published on 13 February 2013, are the first formal recognition of our sector at European level.



EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR STANDARDIZATION
COMITÉ EUROPÉEN DE NORMALISATION
EUROPÄISCHES KOMITEE FÜR NORMUNG

Latest publications – February 2013

'Latest publications' lists the European Standards (EN), CEN Workshop Agreements (CWA), CEN Technical Specifications (CEN/TS) and CEN Technical Reports (CEN/TR) that were published in February 2013. They will be available within the next six months from the CEN National Members.

EN 16310:2013	Engineering services - Terminology to describe engineering services for buildings, infrastructure and industrial facilities
EN 16311:2013	Engineering services - Terminology to describe engineering services for industrial products

In cooperation with its member associations, EFCA is also monitoring the national implementation of Eurocodes.

Other EFCA efforts that are directed towards the development of a 'common language' and consistent methods for measuring and reporting relate to:

- the follow-up of the development and use of European approaches to life-cycle costing;
- the liaison with CEN/TC350 (standards for the assessment of the sustainability of construction products and works);
- the follow-up of Commission discussions on a revision of standards for adaptation to climate change, and standardisation for smart grids in line with the development of smart cities.

EFCA guidance to negotiate contract matters with private and industrial clients

Based on a broad examination of existing documentation, EFCA's Industrial & Private Market task force determined elements for a general framework that will assist firms and clients in different industrial services contract negotiations.

The EFCA guidance will provide a general checklist of critical issues in order to facilitate balanced contractual negotiations between parties with regard to:

- appropriate scope definition and contract object;
- terms and conditions of invoicing and payment;
- liability for defects/damage;
- risk management and division of responsibilities;
- intellectual property/copyrights/user and commercial rights.

The EFCA task force is working together with the FIDIC Task Group that is currently reviewing the White Book. The working groups mutually exchange information and outcomes.

Who will be the Young Professional of 2013?

It is going to be a challenge yet again for the jury to select the winner in this year's EFCA YP competition.

At stake is a place at the FIDIC Centenary conference and the YP Forum in Barcelona this September.

28 entries have been received from 9 countries. Evaluation has now begun.

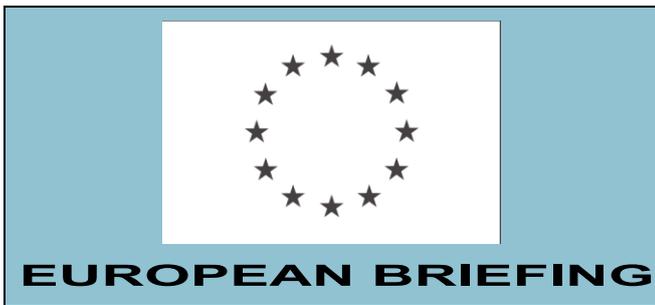
The results will be announced to the member associations during the EFCA General Assembly meeting on 31 May, and will be published thereafter.

The Early Bird rate for attending the Barcelona conference has been extended to 15 May.

Full programme information and online registration are available at <http://www.fidic2013.org/>

E F C A A G E N D A

Board of Directors meeting	Sofia	12.04.2013
European External Aid Committee	Brussels	18.04.2013 (11:00-15:00)
Barometer Task Group	Brussels	14.05.2013
Board of Directors meeting	Brussels	30.05.2013
General Assembly Meeting	Brussels	31.05.2013
D&S Meeting	Brussels	31.05.2013
FIDIC-EFCA Sustainable Development Committee	Brussels	10.06.2013
Board of Directors meeting	Barcelona	18.09.2013
Internal Market Committee	Brussels	03.10.2013



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INTERNAL MARKET

Late payments: a thing of the past



Since 16th March 2013, member states need to have integrated the revised Late Payments Directive into their national law.

The Directive obliges public authorities to pay for goods and services within 30 calendar days or, in very exceptional circumstances, within 60 days.

Businesses should pay their invoices within 60 calendar days, unless they expressly agree otherwise and if it is not grossly unfair to the creditor.

<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/single-market-goods/fighting-late-payments/late-payment-campaign/>

<http://www.30max.eu/>

Burdensome EU laws: Commission will address concerns

A consultation revealed that European small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) see the biggest difficulties and costs as a consequence of the rules regarding the REACH chemical legislation, value added tax, product safety, recognition of professional qualifications, data protection, waste legislation, labour market related legislation, recording equipment for road transport, public procurement and the modernised customs code.

SMEs appreciate reduced payment deadlines under the Late Payments Directive as one of the most successful legal improvements, together with allowing more SMEs to benefit from simplified accounting/auditing regimes.

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/public-consultation-new/index_en.htm

Commission proposes rules to cut broadband installation costs

The objectives of the proposed Regulation are to reduce the cost and enhance the efficiency of deploying high-speed electronic communications infrastructure.

High-speed broadband is the backbone of the telecoms and wider Digital Single Market.

Its rollout is currently slowed down by a patchwork of rules and administrative practices at national and sub-national levels.

<http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/proposal-regulation-european-parliament-and-council-measures-reduce-cost-deploying-high-speed>

Increasing demand for more skilled professionals

Despite record unemployment in Europe, 1.85 million vacancies are unfilled throughout the EU.

The Commission published two reports to analyse the skills needs in Europe: the European Vacancy Monitor and the European Job Mobility Bulletin.

Growth was measured in hiring in administration, teaching, business and health care, as well as engineering technicians and professionals.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=737&angId=en&pubId=7435&type=1&furtherPubs=yess>

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=737&angId=en&pubId=7434>

EU FUNDS & PROGRAMMES

€66.7 million for Marco Polo 2013

The Commission published its call for proposals 2013 for the co-funding of projects promoting intermodal freight transport under the Marco Polo programme.

Transport companies have until 23 August to submit projects.

Special environmentally-friendly maritime projects, inland waterway projects and rail projects with single-wagon loads are priorities in 2013.

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/marcopolo/getting-funds/call-for-proposals/2013/index_en.htm

EU funding for neighbourhood countries

Energy and transport sectors in the countries of the Eastern and Southern neighbourhood will be a key focus of new EU funding.

The Commission decided to allocate €200 million to the Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF) with the objective of leveraging investments from EU development banks.

The planned investments will target energy and transport projects establishing infrastructure interconnections between the EU and neighbouring countries and among neighbouring countries themselves, as well as projects addressing common climate change challenges and promoting growth and small businesses.

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/regional-cooperation/irc/investment_en.htm

New regulation on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure

The regulation gives priority to 12 strategic trans-European energy corridors, which need to be developed urgently.

Based on these corridors, 'projects of common interest' will be selected by member states and the Commission. They will receive special regulatory treatment, in particular an accelerated permit-granting procedure, which generally will not exceed 3 years and 6 months.

All selected projects will have to be found necessary for, at least, a corridor or a priority field mentioned under the regulation. They will have to fulfil criteria of market integration, sustainability and provision security.

EU funding for this regulation is to be negotiated in the context of the Connecting Europe Facility financing instrument relating to the next multiannual financial framework (2014 - 2020).

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/infrastructure/strategy/2020_en.htm

€10 million to boost access to sustainable energy in the Pacific Islands

The support adds up to a previous commitment from the Investment Facility for the Pacific (IFP), which aims at closing funding gaps for projects by blending grants with funds from financial institutions and the private sector.

The initial allocation from the IFP is €10 million. The IFP will help to leverage crucial additional funding, focusing on investments in different infrastructure areas such as energy, climate change and water.

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm

'A decent Life for All: Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future'

The Commission's new communication calls for a common approach to the fight against poverty and an inclusive green economy.

The communication outlines the proposed negotiating positions on the successor to the UN millennium development goals (MDGs) and says that reducing poverty will not happen unless action is taken to address climate change and the depletion of natural resources.

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/2013-02-22_communication_a_decent_life_for_all_post_2015_en.pdf

MISCELLANEOUS

Commission helps SMEs to enter South East Asian market

The Commission's sponsored facility makes sure that SMEs 'know before they go' – that they invest and trade safely, and that they know their IPR rights and risks.

The ASEAN IPR SME Helpdesk will provide EU Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) with free information and tailored

services in the form of advice on intellectual property and related issues, plus training, materials and online resources.

<http://www.asean-iprhelpdesk.eu/>

Are you ready for China?

The EU SME Centre has published a series of diagnostic business tools as a step-by-step introduction to the Chinese business environment.

The EU SME Centre is a support service provider for European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) facilitating market access in China.

<http://www.eusmecentre.org.cn/content/diagnostic-kit>



Innovation performance: gap widens between Northern and Southern states

The overall ranking within the EU remains relatively stable, with Sweden at the top, followed by Germany, Denmark and Finland. Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia are the countries that have most improved since last year.

A comparison with other European countries confirms Switzerland's position as the overall innovation leader that continually outperforms all EU countries. This year's results also again show that South Korea, the US, and Japan have a performance lead over the EU.

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/facts-figures-analysis/innovation-scoreboard/index_en.htm

Civil engineering decreased by 8.9% in the euro area and by 10.6% in the EU27 (January 2013 compared to January 2012)

In terms of sectors, building construction output declined 9.3% in the Eurozone and 9.1% in the EU27 in January this year compared to January 2012.

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/4-19032013-AP/EN/4-19032013-AP-EN.PDF

Energy performance of buildings: online portals

A broad series of online portals offers free access to a wide range of information on policy options and legislation, best practices, technologies for energy reduction and building energy codes.

<http://www.buildup.eu/taxonomy/term/15263>

The Business Case for Green Building

The World Green Building Council's report outlines the compelling global business case for green buildings.

The report concludes that by greening our built environment at the neighbourhood and city scales, the green building industry can deliver on large-scale economic priorities such as climate change mitigation, energy security, resource conservation and job creation, long-term resilience and quality of life.

<http://www.worldgbc.org/activities/business-case/>

CONSULTATIONS

2015 International Climate Change Agreement: Shaping international climate policy beyond 2020

The Consultative Communication invites the views of stakeholders on the 2015 agreement, which will lay down the international regime for fighting climate change post 2020.

Deadline: 26 June 2013

http://ec.europa.eu/clima/consultations/0020/index_en.htm

Green Paper on a 2030 framework for climate and energy policies

A policy framework for 2030 must be sufficiently ambitious to ensure that the EU is on track to meet longer term climate objectives, and guarantee both energy security of supply, and the competitiveness of the energy market.

Deadline: 2 July 2013

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/consultations/20130702_green_paper_2030_en.htm

Long-term financing of the European economy

Europe's economy is facing massive challenges, including large scale long-term investment needs. These are essential as a basis for innovation and competitiveness, supporting a return to sustainable growth and jobs in Europe. These needs require long-term financing.

Deadline: 25 June 2013

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2013/long-term-financing/index_en.htm

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