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Public procurement vote good for cities

Today members of the European Parliament's internal market committee voted in favour of three directives that will help Europe's cities make better procurement choices. The votes covered two public procurement proposals: the general and utilities directives, and the concessions directive.

EUROCITIES secretary general, Paul Bevan, said of the two procurement directives:

"The new rules on procurement will give local authorities the freedom to make more strategic choices when procuring works, goods or services".

Cities will no longer have to choose the cheapest offer when they award contracts. They will now be able to select bids based on environmental and social merits, overall quality and innovativeness, or the experience of the staff who will carry out the work. The quality of after-sales service and technical assistance can also be considered when choosing a contractor.

Public authorities spend the equivalent of almost one fifth of the EU's GDP each year procuring works, products and services. A large proportion of these funds is spent by local authorities who are directly accountable to citizens and who need to provide good value for tax payers' money.

The new bidding procedure proposed in the directives will also encourage more SMEs to participate. This was a key point requested by EUROCITIES. One of the major obstacles smaller companies currently face when bidding for public contracts is the amount and complexity of paperwork involved. The new directives address these points by introducing a standard, simplified 'European Single Procurement Document' form.

On the new concessions directive, Paul Bevan said:

"The EP and the Council listened to the voice of local authorities and citizens when they decided to exclude the water sector from the scope of this directive. Their decision shows respect for the way water is managed differently in member states according to the local situation."

The concessions directive confirms the autonomy of contracting authorities who will be able to decide on the best way to provide public services. Local government is best placed to evaluate the needs of citizens and ensure quality, continuity, accessibility, availability and comprehensiveness of services.

Through procurement, cities can contribute substantially to smart, inclusive and sustainable growth. Our cities are the drivers of Europe's economic development; the new directives will help empower our cities to deliver on the Europe 2020 objectives.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- EUROCITIES position on public procurement: <http://bit.ly/JtmxsZ>
- EUROCITIES position on concessions: <http://bit.ly/L3VLgV>
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EUROCITIES is the political platform for major European cities towards the European institutions. We network the local governments of over 130 of Europe's largest cities and 40 partner cities that between them govern some 130 million citizens across 35 countries.