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Public procurement at the forefront of the agenda

The European Public Market Committee outlines the industry's recommendations for the reform of procurement for engineering consultancy services.

The Commission embarked on a comprehensive evaluation of EU procurement legislation and policies. This evaluation, to be completed in spring 2011, examines the effectiveness of EU rules in promoting open and sound procurement against new demands resulting from the changing policy and market environment.

In order to help the Commission to design better policies and laws, the European Public Market Committee analysed the objectives of European public procurement legislation, consequences of EU law and policies for our industry, and the contributions of our industry to EU strategies for the promotion of sustainable economic growth.



President Panos Panagopoulos invited further contributions from the membership to ensure that further insights and challenges are identified before defining the industry's main considerations and establishing its key recommendations for the European decision-makers.

Consultation on revised Code of Conduct

EFCA started a 6-month consultation process with the national associations on the revised Code of Conduct for the European consulting engineering industry.



The European Public Market Committee developed the revised text of the Code of Conduct in accordance with the provisions of the Services Directive 2006/123.

Specifically, this Directive considers self-regulation through codes of conduct as tools for non-regulated professions to ensure an appropriate quality level of their services and to contribute to the better functioning of the internal market for services.

The final text will be submitted for approval to the 26 May 2011 General Assembly meeting in Berlin.

Thereafter, it will be presented to the European Commission to be recorded in the database, set up under the 'Better lawmaking' initiative, to heighten awareness of our industry's services and increasing clients' confidence.

Need for both better buildings and better used buildings, says EFCA together with other construction actors

The European construction sector issued a paper that shows the necessity of setting ambitious, realistic targets for the energy renovation of buildings.

The paper authoritatively points out that without paying immediate attention to buildings, it will be impossible to achieve the ambitions of the EU to reduce CO₂ emissions by 80-95% by 2050 as compared to 1990 levels.

It carries proposals to the European decision makers to trigger a true market for energy efficient buildings, in particular with regard to the existing building stock.

<http://www.efcanet.org/pages/news.aspx?item=13836>

Recast of the Directive on energy performance of buildings: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:153:SO:EN:HTML>

Sustainable Development Task Force makes a flying start

The 2010-2011 action plan will cover five major areas and aim at supporting firms to better understand the issues in these areas that impact on the business.

The task force's programme incorporates the following:

- Sustainable building certification systems: to identify the industry's interests and critical issues and steer EFCA responses to these issues;
- International initiatives: to explore strengths and weaknesses, and possible EFCA contributions;
- EU law and policies: to examine the impact on the industry, identify business opportunities and promote the industry's commitment to sustainable development;
- Research and development: to improve the industry's access to EU research funding and to stimulate innovation and growth in the industry;
- Life Cycle Costing: to exchange information about standards and methodologies.

The task force elaborated a draft overview of relevant EU policies and law to analyse potential effects on national markets and sectors, and the European engineering consultancy industry's competitiveness.

A second draft paper describes EU financing programmes, contracts and support, as well as public sector and industry-led initiatives that are relevant to the engineering consultancy sector. This paper on business opportunities also carries useful information on budget, eligibility rules and contact points. The final version of the briefing note will be made available to the membership shortly.

26-28 May 2011: the annual gathering of the European engineering consultancy industry

In the light of an overall and effective branding campaign, EFCA and VBI (the German EFCA member) are engaged in the organisation of the high profile 2011 Berlin conference.

The conference programme is being set up to position the federation and the industry itself from a leadership and public image perspective and to attract young professionals.

The conference committee comprises Jan Bosschem (President-Elect), Paul Oortwijn (Board member) and Karine Leverger (SYNTEC-Ingénierie). Ulla Sassarsson (Board member and moving force of the dynamic and inspirational Danish YPs) is taking responsibility for the coordination and set up of the young professional part of the programme.

European and national communications efforts will be expanded to have a greater appeal to the entire European engineering consultancy industry, clients and decision makers.

The whole effort to organise the annual European industry event will require extensive collaboration with the membership to make it a flagship event.

Note the dates in your diary and stay informed about the programme through the EFCA Bulletin and website!



Austrian civil engineers look at glorious past and future perspectives

The 150th anniversary celebration of Austrian civil engineering looked back on a century-and-a-half of progress of the profession and changes to the civil engineers' roles.

Speakers reviewed the growth of the profession and the changes in the practice of civil engineering. It was chosen not just to celebrate the past, but also to examine the present and look forward to the future.

ACA (Austrian Consultants Association) President Josef Robl, EFCA President Panos Panagopoulos and FIDIC President Gregs Thomopoulos addressed the value of civil engineering professionals to society and critical engineering roles in the first half of the twenty-first century.



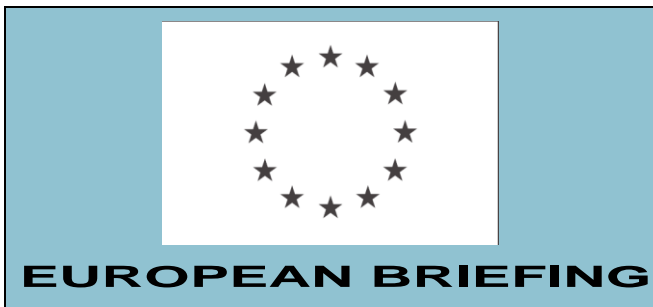
EFCA assistance to effective reform of Romanian public procurement law

In order to improve public procurement practice in Romania, in particular in the implementation of EU funds, EFCA discussed particular shortcomings in proposed amendments to the existing law with the European Commission.

EFCA explained a series of concerns about newly proposed contract forms and their weaknesses to the European Commission. The Commission will continue to follow up this matter with the Romanian authorities.

E F C A A G E N D A

European Consulting Future Committee	Brussels	01.09.2010
European External Aid Committee	Brussels	07.09.2010
Board of Directors meeting	The Hague	09-10.09.2010
European Public Market Committee	Brussels	04.10.2010
Task Force on Sustainable Development	Stockholm	08.10.2010 (09:00-16:00)
D&S meeting	Brussels	12.11.2010
Board of Directors meeting	Brussels	25.11.2010
Task Force on Sustainable Development	Brussels	10.12.2010
Board of Directors meeting	Innsbruck	28.01.2011
2011 GAM & Conference	Berlin	26-28.05.2011



On 20 July, the Commission published calls for proposals worth almost €6.4 billion under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7).



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The Commission expects some 16,000 participants from research organisations, universities and industry as well as 3,000 Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to receive funding.

SMEs will receive close to €800 million and for the first time, there will be ring-fenced budgets in several areas (e.g. health, knowledge-based bio-economy, environment and nanotechnologies).

The Commission foresees a total of €210 million for energy research, with most going on renewable energy (€137 million), smart electricity grids (€50 million) and carbon capture and storage (€36 million). Research on energy efficiency, however, only gets €15 million. The environment theme has a budget of €240 million. Research into adaptation to climate change and mitigation gets €70 million. The same amount is foreseen for eco-friendly production methods. Efficient management of natural resources is allocated some €100 million.

Around €600 million of ICT funding is earmarked for next generation network and service infrastructures, robotic systems, electronic and photonic components, and digital content technologies. More than €400 million will support research into how ICTs can address challenges such as a lower-carbon economy, an ageing society, and adaptable and sustainable factories. €90 million is also earmarked in 2011 for the Future Internet Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) to make key European infrastructures 'smart'.

EU FUNDS & PROGRAMMES

Europe's largest ever call for research proposals to back up the Innovation Union flagship initiative

The calls for proposals will feed in to Europe's Innovation Union Flagship, which Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn will launch in autumn 2010. This initiative is central to the Europe 2020 Strategy, and aims to boost the whole innovation chain "from research to retail", by marrying world-class science with an innovation economy or 'i-conomy'.

Call page:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/index_en.cfm

The Commission's website on Research:

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm>

The Commission's 'Innovation Union'

Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/innovation.union>

€35 million call for project proposals under eco-innovation scheme

This year's call concerns market replication projects, and is addressed mainly to small and medium-sized enterprises that have developed an environmental product, service, management practice or process which has a proven track record, yet is not fully marketed due to residual risks.

The EU's Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) provides support for eco-innovation. The CIP's eco-innovation initiative runs from 2008 to 2013, with a total budget of about €200 million.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eco-innovation/application_en.htm

Iceland to receive pre-accession funding

Iceland, which submitted its application for EU membership on 16 July 2009, is now eligible for funds under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

IPA will mostly target Icelandic legislation but will also be used to prepare Iceland to use Structural Funds to help inform their population about the EU once the country accedes.

The funds do not cover technical assistance, which will be offered through the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) instrument for enlargement.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/iceland/index_en.htm

Key investment projects in the European Neighbourhood get a €85 million boost

The contribution will create leverage for neighbouring partner countries to obtain higher amounts to fund vital investment projects in areas such as energy, transport, environment as well as in the social sector. It will also foster the development of the private sector by paying greater attention to SMEs.



The Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF) was launched in May 2008 in order to strengthen overall EU grant support for lending operations carried out by European multilateral and bilateral development finance institutions in ENP partner countries.

The EuropeAid Co-operation office implements NIF. Operations focus on Eastern and Southern neighbouring countries which have already signed an ENP (European Neighbourhood Policy) action plan with the EU.

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

http://www.enpi-info.eu/index.php?lang_id=450

Financial transparency: who benefited from EU grants and contracts?

The European Commission has disclosed who in 2009 received EU funds in policy areas like research, education and culture, energy and transport or external aid.

The online database, now containing more than 114,000 entries going back to 2007, has been upgraded to allow more search options.

http://ec.europa.eu/beneficiaries/fts/index_en.htm



External aid recipients are listed separately:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/funding/beneficiaries_en.htm

New measures to simplify management of regional funds

The measures help to facilitate access to the funds and accelerate flows of investment at a time when public budgets are under pressure.

Through the three cohesion policy's funds - the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund – the 455 cohesion policy programmes are investing a total of € 347 billion between 2007 and 2013 in all EU regions.

One major impact of the crisis is that Member States and regions are finding it difficult to provide the additional funding required 'to match' European investments. In response, the modifications which entered into force on 25 June 2010 are intended to accelerate implementation of the programmes and simplify day-to-day management.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:158:0001:0006:EN:PDF>

EU reconfirms position as the foremost provider of development aid in 2009

The annual report on the European Union's development and external assistance policies and their implementation in 2009 provides an overview of the six major implementation instruments as well as the three main delivery modes (project approach, sector approach and budget support).

In 2009, the Commission committed €2.4 billion of EU aid funds for external cooperation as budget support, a mechanism under which EU funds are made available to governments of beneficiary countries and their national budgets, provided agreed conditions for payment are met.

The Commission continued to improve the effectiveness of its aid by focusing on demonstrating concrete and measurable results in the three priority areas of: increased use of country systems as first option to channel bilateral assistance, implementation of division of labour among donors to reduce aid fragmentation and better quality technical cooperation.

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/annual-reports/2010_en.htm

SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENT

Give your views on the environmental impact assessment Directive

The Commission launched a public consultation on the review of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) legislation.

The consultation covers issues such as the screening of projects for EIA, the quality of the EIA process, the harmonisation of assessment requirements among member states, cross-border difficulties when projects affect more than one member state, the role of the environmental authorities,

and development of synergies with other EU policies, such as climate change and biodiversity.

The findings of the consultation will feed into a Commission review next year.

Firms involved in environmental assessments are invited to respond to the consultation by 24 September next. The questionnaire is available in all 23 Community languages.

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/eia.htm>

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/home.htm>

Stricter rules on industrial emissions

The European Parliament endorsed a new directive strengthening pollution limits that industrial installations will have to comply with.

The Industrial Emissions Directive aims to improve health and environment protection, and updates and merges seven pieces of existing legislation, including directives on large combustion plants and Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC), the latter covering around 52,000 industrial and agricultural installations.

The legislative procedure will conclude with a vote in the Council and the entry into force of the Directive by the end of 2010.

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/pollutants/stationary/ippc/proposal.htm>

Commission launches International Reference Life Cycle Data System (ILCD) handbook

The ILCD handbook is a series of technical documents that provide detailed guidance on all the steps that are required to conduct a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA).



The handbook's main goal is to ensure quality and consistency of life cycle data, methods and assessments.

Its main target audience is LCA practitioners, data providers and experts dealing with environmental decision support related to products, resources and waste management.

http://ict.jrc.ec.europa.eu/index_jrc

INTERNAL MARKET

The challenge of implementing the Services Directive

The Directive commits Member States to carry out an ambitious reform programme, combining the lifting of unjustified regulatory barriers and administrative simplification.

Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Luxemburg, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and the United Kingdom have not yet notified the adoption of all required regulatory changes to the Commission.

The Directive also required member states to set up 'Points of Single Contact' for businesses. These can be accessed at: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/eu-go/index_en.htm

Quick answers to legal questions

The EU launched the European E-justice portal - a one-stop on-line shop that enables access to legal matters in the Union.

With over 12,000 content pages the first version of the portal provides information and links on laws and practices in force in all Member States.

The Commission, which manages the site, will continue to work closely with member states to progressively enrich its content and develop new functionalities.



Visit the e-Justice Portal at: <https://e-justice.europa.eu/home.do>

MISCELLANEOUS

Business looks at European strengths to identify priorities and actions

The report 'Putting Europe Back on Track', based on a survey of more than 250 European CEOs, indicates that innovation, talent and skills development are keys to continued economic recovery.

The study was carried out within the framework of the European Business Summit 2010.

Eco-innovation, digital developments and new skills are the drivers for future growth in Europe; they are also the focus of the Europe 2020 Strategy (http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm) that was launched by the Council on 17 June 2010.

<http://www.feb.be/index.html?page=67>

Structure and developments of European SMEs

The Commission issued an integrated analysis of the situation of SMEs (small and medium-sized businesses) in the European Union as well as a comprehensive overview of the level of internationalisation of European SMEs.

According to the annual SME report preliminary estimations point at a stagnating development of the SME sector (number, jobs and production). Moreover, the forecasts are not reassuring for a sector that represents the economic backbone of the EU because SMEs are strongly focused towards the internal market and will be faced with increasingly weakening market demand.

Access to financing is another major problem faced by SMEs, in particular microenterprises.

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/performance-review/index_en.htm

The most relevant finding of a study on internationalisation of European SMEs is that a considerable number of European SMEs are engaged in international activities yet only a small percentage is involved in internationalisation beyond the Internal Market.

Also internationally active SMEs report increasing turnover and higher employment growth than SMEs without international activities. There is also a strong relationship between internationalisation and innovation.

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/mark-et-access/internationalisation/index_en.htm

A comparative report on the exporting activities of SMEs in the United States with those of SMEs in the European Union (EU), issued by the U.S. International Trade Commission is available at: <http://www.usitc.gov/publications/332/pub4169.pdf>.

Proposal for a new fast-track entry procedure for specialised staff from non-EU countries

The Commission proposed a new directive with the aim of facilitating for multinational companies to temporarily transfer third-country national skilled workers from a company located outside the EU to branches or subsidiaries in EU Member States.

The transfer of these qualified employees to the EU has the potential to increase investment flows, strengthen management effectiveness, expand EU exports, and enhance the competitiveness of EU entities in overseas markets as well as the competitiveness of the Union as a whole, which could help to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/malmstrom/archive/proposal_directive_intra_corporate_transferees.pdf

June 2010 construction output

In the construction sector, seasonally adjusted production rose by 2.7% in the euro area (EA16) and by 3.5% in the EU27 in June 2010, compared with the previous month.

In May, production fell by 0.7% and 0.1% respectively.

Compared with June 2009, output in June 2010 increased by 3.1% in the euro area and by 5.4% in the EU27.

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/4-18082010-AP/EN/4-18082010-AP-EN.PDF

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