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EuropeAid invites further EFCA contributions to improved external aid procedures

At the January 2010 meeting of the European External Aid Committee, Agneta Lindqvist (EuropeAid) listened and responded to the industry's concerns.

Over the past years, EFCA and EuropeAid (AIDCO) have been working in partnership

to strengthen the 'management of aid for results' through workable selection and award procedures.

Recent positive outcomes of the EFCA-AIDCO dialogue relate to the EC's consent to include junior experts in the team of non-key staff, improvements with regard to guarantee requirements (volume and time period) in the Practical Guide to procedures for programme estimates financed by the European Development Fund (EDF) and the General Budget of the European Communities (BUDGET) and the noticeable progress in payments (including automatic payment of interest).

The January 2010 meeting also touched on the lack of transparency and accessibility of procurement notices of projects that are EU co-financed but managed by international / national agencies and the excessive request for three CVs for the replacement of experts.

The European External Aid Committee will submit concrete examples, illustrating these two issues, to AIDCO.

New Head of Unit in EuropeAid welcomes dialogue with EFCA

EFCA President Panos Panagopoulos, European External Aid Committee Chair Martin Guldner and Jan Van der Putten met with Christos Komninos, Agneta Lindqvist and Javier Raya Aguado at EuropeAid.

Christos Komninos is the new Head of Unit Financial and contractual matters, and legal affairs at EuropeAid.

The meeting aimed at introducing EFCA to the new Head of Unit with a view to continue the constructive dialogue on EU development aid.

Mr Komninos pointed to two major events for 2010: the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, which not only changes the 148 EC Delegations into 148 EU Delegations but also their status, and the current revision of the Financial Regulation which will impact on the revision of the EC Practical Guide (PRAG) for external aid (expected in June 2011).

Under the Lisbon Treaty, the EU financial instruments are no longer only subject to the approval of the Council (member states) but also of the European Parliament (EP). Lobbying MEPs (members of EP) therefore becomes much more significant.

In response to EFCA's comment on differing interpretation of the PRAG rules by the EU Delegations, Mr Komninos stated that the PRAG is there to create a transparent level playing field and that the Commission makes efforts to ensure a coherent interpretation of the rules.

The meeting also touched on 'delegated cooperation'. Under such arrangement, the European Commission authorises a national development agency to manage a project/programme on its behalf and to function as a fund managing donor (e.g. launching call for tenders/proposals and concluding contracts with third parties).

Since information about proposed projects and calls for proposals are published by the fund managing donor and because the fund managing donor can use its own rules and procedures for implementing the project / programme or EC rules, EFCA voiced concerns about negative impacts on transparency and fair competition.

The Commission understands the industry's concerns but underlined that this is a political decision beyond its remit.

Finally, AIDCO informed that a dedicated working group will look into problems with regard to indirect taxes, in particular VAT.

EFCA joins BUILD UP initiative

As an official BUILD UP partner, EFCA and all member associations will contribute to sharing expertise in energy-efficient and high quality buildings.



The key aim of this European initiative is to reduce the energy consumption of buildings across Europe by transferring best practices to the market and fostering their uptake.

The BUILD UP interactive web portal provides a database of useful resources and tools and allows the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

BUILD UP provides a promotional platform for the European engineering consultancy industry as it will show its critical contribution to the effective implementation of energy-saving measures in buildings.

<http://www.buildup.eu/home>

Improving the European public procurement framework

In line with the European Commission's broad evaluation of EU public procurement policy that is to be completed by 2011, EFCA develops an assessment of, and proposals for effective public procurement in the EU.

The 2004 public procurement Directives are an important instrument to ensure fair, transparent and efficient public purchasing in the EU member states.

In the former review of the EU public procurement legislation, which started in 1997, EFCA has achieved changes to the proposed texts, particularly the inclusion that electronic auctions cannot be used for the procurement of intellectual professional services.

Following the adoption of the current EU legislation, EFCA has published transposition guidance to national legislators, which sets recommendations on the economically most appropriate procedures to optimise contracting authorities' project planning. EFCA also provided contributions to the EC Interpretative Communication on Institutionalised Public-Private Partnerships (i.e. mixed public-private companies which fulfil public tasks) and Community law on public contracts and concessions.

The European Public Market Committee has now set up a sub-group to reflect on potential further improvements of the EU public procurement rules. This think tank will formulate alternative approaches to procurement routes and the feasibility of pursuing quality-based award of engineering consultancy services.

EFCA will ensure that the industry's views are taken into account in any forthcoming EC public procurement initiative in order to achieve greater efficiencies and an extended use of quality based procurement procedures.

Safeguarding sound application of EU public procurement law

EFCA published guidance for contracting authorities with clarifications and recommendations on the application of appropriate procurement processes for engineering consultancy services.

Although the EU member states have transposed the 2004 public procurement Directives, problems nonetheless persist in procurement practices.

In order to assist the national associations in their efforts to convince public decision-makers and staff to move away from a lowest-price based to a best value focussed approach, EFCA published a systematic guidance on the interpretation of Directive 2004/18/EC. The document sets out

recommendations for national regulations within the framework of the Directive.

At the same time, EFCA is making legal experts available to Member Associations at costs for seminars on public procurement for engineering consultancy firms, national legislators and clients.

<http://www.efca.be/downloads/archive/69b588d0-08ec-43c0-b1ff-1b482fb75b8d.pdf>



EFCA - Uzbek Association of Consulting Engineers (UZACE) Agreement

Through their cooperation agreement, EFCA and UZACE will provide a platform for the exchange of market and sector information to the Uzbek and European industry and their professional representations.

In the wake of the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, the EU has come closer to Central Asia, geographically, politically and economically. Central Asian countries expressed interest in deepening bilateral relations with the EU.

The region plays an important role in ensuring the EU's energy supplies. Uzbekistan receives 32,8 million euro EU assistance for the 2007 – 2010 period.

At the end of 2009, UZACE expressed interest in establishing a professional relationship with EFCA.



The EFCA – UZACE cooperation agreement will facilitate the exchange of information on the EU and Uzbek, regulatory business

and market conditions and practices. UZACE will send its magazine 'Consulting Engineers of Uzbekistan' and its annexes (in English whenever possible) to the EFCA member associations.

EFCA will inform UZACE about any EFCA event which may prove a valuable way of establishing and building relationships between Uzbek and EU firms.

EFCA will also invite the UZACE Director as an observer to the bi-annual D&S meetings.

The formal signing of the EFCA-UZACE Cooperation Agreement by the respective Presidents will take place at the annual EFCA General Assembly meeting and Conference in Rome on 27-29 May 2010.

Association of Consulting Engineers of Serbia (ACES) applies for EFCA observer membership

ACES became FIDIC member in September 2009 and submitted its application for EFCA observer membership in November 2009.

Serbia is a potential candidate country for EU accession. The country receives pre-accession financial assistance from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). IPA assistance (the allocation for 2010 totals 198,7 million euro) is implemented by the Delegation in Belgrade.

It is noteworthy that according to the 2009 EC progress report, 'Serbia is moderately advanced towards establishing an effective and fully independent public procurement system with streamlined award procedures, Additional efforts remain necessary ...'.



The Board of Directors will deliver its positive opinion on ACES' application to the 2010 General Assembly meeting.

A stronger voice for the design community on health & safety

EFCA and ACE (Architects' Council of Europe) agreed to continue their cooperation on health & safety issues.

Through speaking with one voice on behalf of the design community, both federations have made their joint voice heard effectively on the European Commission's non-binding guidance for the member states on the implementation of the Temporary and Mobile Sites Directive (92/57/EEC).

Mid January 2010, EFCA and ACE agreed to continue their cooperation on a major outstanding concern, namely the fictitious basis of the Directive.

Misleading statistics and analyses of causal factors in construction accidents as well as repeated erroneous statements still continue to leave the impression that designers are primarily responsible.

EFCA and ACE agreed to call for sound scientific evidence in order to develop effective H&S approaches and risk prevention instruments. They will seek support from the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work for such independent research proposal.

Submit your entry to the European Young Professionals competition

To help the industry to increase the pool of available talent and to promote the national organisations, EFCA organises the first European YP engineering excellence award.

EFCA calls on its national associations to approach the firms and to invite them to showcase young and high-profile talents.

Up to maximum 5 candidates from each country will compete in the Europe-wide Young Professionals contest.

The judging panel will evaluate the professional leadership potential of the candidates and their best performance expertise.

Entries must be submitted by **12 April 2010**.



Conference venue: Palazzo Corsini

The winner will be awarded with participation in the EFCA Conference & GAM in Rome on 27-28 May 2010 (including travel & accommodation expenses); a prize ceremony will take place during the GAM. Two other entries will be awarded with a support of 500 euro, to be used for participation in the event.

For further details see:

<http://www.efcanet.org/pages/news.aspx?item=12764>

Understanding Life Cycle Costing (LCC) within construction

A valuable asset to our industry would be the promotion of the use of LCC and the EU LCC methodology. This would provide scope for moving away from the lowest price award towards economically most advantageous solutions.

The European Commission has developed an EU-wide Life Cycle Costing (LCC) methodological framework. A study now presents practical applications of the EU LLC methodology.

The study starts with an overview of cost breakdown and reporting structures (CBS) across European countries. Some European countries use a standardised form of analysis for costing construction work whilst a few have extended this to include LCC and/or Facilities Management.

Findings about the availability and reliability of cost and performance information, including maintenance and operational costs in the 'in-use' phase show that only limited details are available publicly. Finally, case studies (15 projects in 11 countries) illustrate the key steps of the EU methodology.

The 28 May 2010 EFCA Conference programme includes a session on LCC.

The full Conference programme and registration form will be available shortly.

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/construction/competitiveness/life-cycle-costing/index_en.htm

EFCA set to increase awareness of its role and to promote the industry

The EFCA Board of Directors mapped out the federation's 2010 communications plan.

The 2010 plan focuses on EFCA external communications to reinforce the federation's strength, raise its profile towards decision-makers and increase the visibility of the firms.

The Board of Directors initiated discussions on a series of proposed actions to leverage EFCA's position as the European business federation.

A first activity relates to the perception of the importance of our industry.

The promotion of EFCA's role as the voice of the European engineering consultancy industry is linked to the identification and recognition of the industry's achievements, measured as economic, environmental and social indicators. However, no Europe-wide inventory of statistical data on employment and recruitment, qualifications of staff, turnover etc. is currently available.

Based on OECD statistics and national sector data, the Board of Directors will embark on a programme to start the collection and analysis of quantitative evidence of our industry's significant contribution to policy goals such as economic growth, job creation, sustainable development, and environmental protection. Such information will not only provide tactical information to EFCA but also help firms in understanding the business environment and setting their business strategies.

Secondly, a meeting of CEOs of major engineering consultancies is planned in the second half of 2010. The event will provide a platform to identify major challenges faced by the European industry, and to develop strategies to address these.

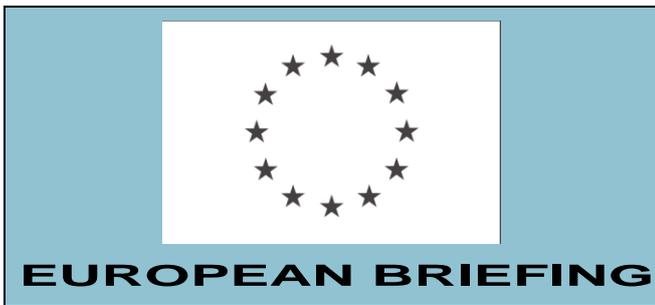
Thirdly, EFCA will broaden its coverage in the European business press. EFCA will publish 2 articles per year in the magazine Construction Europe and set up interviews between the President, Panos Panagopoulos and national press on the occasion of meetings with national associations.

These contributions will highlight EU issues seen from an engineering consultancy standpoint.

All these initiatives require backing from EFCA's stakeholders, the European Consulting Future Committee and the communications advisory group. They will be further discussed at the 11 and 12 March 2010 meetings in Amsterdam.

E F C A A G E N D A

European Consulting Future Committee	Amsterdam	11.03.2010
D&S meeting	Amsterdam	12.03.2010
Board of Directors meeting	Brussels	25.03.2010
Task Force on Sustainable Development	Brussels	02.04.2010
European Public Market Committee	Vienna	15.04.2010
European External Aid Committee	Brussels	28.04.2010
EFCA GAM & Conference	Rome	27-29.05.2010
Board of Directors meeting	Rome	27.05.2010
European External Aid Committee	Brussels	08.09.2010
Board of Directors meeting	The Hague	09-10.09.2010



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ENERGY

Wind beats any other electricity-generating technology

Renewables, led by wind, recorded greater installation of new capacity than fossil fuels and nuclear together.



39% of all new capacity installed in 2009 was wind power, followed by gas (26%) and solar photovoltaics (16%).

Total wind power in the EU is now at 74,767 MW. This is up from 64,719 MW at the end of 2008.

Wind power's share of total installed power (electricity) capacity in the EU has increased from 2.2% in 2000 to 9.1% in 2009.

Germany remains the EU country with the largest installed capacity. It is followed by Spain, Italy, France and the UK.

http://www.ewea.org/fileadmin/ewea_documents/documents/statistics/general_stats_2009.pdf

Greece, Italy, Malta and UK miss renewables deadline

The Renewable Energy Directive sets a binding overall target of 20% of renewables by 2020. The overall 20% target is broken down into different legally binding national targets, ranging from 10% for Malta or 11% for Luxembourg to 49% for Sweden and 42% for Latvia.

According to the member states' forecast documents, most countries intend to meet their national renewable energy target essentially through domestic production. A few countries, such as Luxembourg and Belgium, will need to have some form of statistical transfer of renewables from other countries or to engage in joint projects.

Spain does not envisage using the transfer mechanisms. The government's initial estimate of trends in renewable energies up to 2020 is that renewables will rise from 10.5% in 2008 to 22.7% of Spain's gross final consumption of energy in 2020. Spain noted that fully exploiting the excess RES (renewable energy sources) production will require further development of Spain's electricity interconnections with the European (French) electricity system. Sweden also foresees an 'excess' of renewables in 2020.

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/transparency_platform/forecast_documents_en.htm

New Directorates-General: Energy and Climate Action

Two new Directorates-General have been created: DG Energy (ENER) and DG Climate Action (CLIM).

The Energy DG consists of the departments in the former Transport and Energy DG dealing with energy issues and of the Task Force Energy which will be transferred from the External Relations DG.

The departments responsible for transport policy will remain in the renamed Mobility and Transport DG (MOVE).

The Climate Action DG will be created from the relevant activities in DG Environment, the activities in the External Relations DG related to international negotiations on climate change and the activities in the Enterprise and Industry DG related to climate change.

INTERNAL MARKET

Services Directive: 18 member states fail on implementation

Only one third of the 27 Member States are said to have fully set in place measures included in the 'Services' directive, which dates back to 12 December 2006 and entered into force on 28 December 2009.

The Eurochambres survey points to shortcomings concerning both legislative screening (do existing national regulations constitute barriers?) and slow establishment of key points of single contact to facilitate entry of non-national companies on home markets.

The European Commission will play a key role in ensuring transposition and enforcement. Equally important is to inform and raise awareness among citizens and particularly SMEs about those expected benefits.

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/docs/services-dir/studies/eurochambres-report_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/services-dir/documents_en.htm

EU FUNDS & PROGRAMMES

Funding for 'motorways of the sea'

The 'motorways of the sea' initiative is a Trans-European Network for Transport (TEN-T) priority project that aims to promote green, viable, attractive and efficient sea-based transport links integrated through the entire transport chain.

'Motorways of the sea' is supported by the TEN-T and Marco Polo programmes. It also benefits from other resources, such as the European Investment Bank, Structural Funds, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance as well as national funding.

A one-stop helpdesk on funding possibilities is available at: [http://www.mos-helpdesk.eu/](http://www.mos-helpdesk.eu)
http://ec.europa.eu/transport/marcopolo/home/home_en.htm

MISCELLANEOUS

The EU-27 construction sector: from boom to gloom

Eurostat publication 'Statistics in focus' (7/2010) provides details on the implications of the recent credit crisis and economic downturn for the EU-27 construction sector in terms of employment, turnover, labour productivity and gross operating rate.

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OF_F PUB/KS-SF-10-007/EN/KS-SF-10-007-EN.PDF

December 2009 statistics are available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/10/24&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Easy access to information on standards in China

An upgraded Standardisation Information Platform Small provides information on standards in China.

The new web-based portal provides valuable information regarding relevant regulatory regime, standards and standardization systems in Europe and China.

Businesses will have free access to this search engine to find the standard references needed for their products, using searches either in English or Chinese.

The platform provides information on four areas/sectors: environmental protection, electrical equipment, machinery and medical devices. However, these can be extended if necessary.

<http://eu-china-standards.eu/Index.aspx>

From Lisbon Strategy to EU 2020

Commission President Barroso sets out his vision for where the European Union should be in 2020.

The new strategy should enable the EU to make a full recovery from the crisis, while speeding up the move towards a smart and green economy.

On 11 February 2010, Heads of State and government discussed the orientations for the new strategy at an informal European Council meeting.

Following this meeting the European Commission will present its full proposals for the new strategy ahead of the Spring European Council meeting scheduled for the end of March.

http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm

Vision for 2020: more and better skills

Future prosperity depends on broadening skills and raising skill levels, is the

conclusion of the report 'New Skills for New Jobs: Act Now'.

The report, prepared by a group of independent experts, provides concrete recommendations on how to solve Europe's skills deficiencies.

It sets four targets: encourage employers and citizens to raise new competence; open up on education and training; put forward a better range of competence that are better adapted to the needs of the labour market; improve anticipation of future needs in terms of competence. These four priorities are detailed in 34 specific recommendations.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/focus/focus2043_en.htm

Biodiversity: debate on post 2010 EU vision and targets

Back in 2001, the EU committed to halt biodiversity loss by 2010. This objective has yet to be achieved.

The European Commission marked the opening of the International Year of Biodiversity with a paper setting out future options for biodiversity policy in the EU and four possible mid-term targets.

In line with the EU's ambitious emission reduction targets, the Commission wishes to re-assert its position on the world scene. The loss of biodiversity affects the eco-systems' processes, which also regulate climate.

Actions for strengthening Europe's resilience to climate change therefore are to take into account the value of biodiversity and eco-systems.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/policy/index_en.htm

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