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EFCA recommendation for extending reference period successful

Under the PRAG 2016 (Practical Guide on the contracting procedures applying to all EU external actions financed from the EU general budget and the European Development Fund), evidence can be requested of projects carried out over the past five years instead of only 3 years.

Since many years, EFCA argued that engineering consultancy competences are the sum of methodology, skills and resources that are not necessarily reflected and demonstrated in the past three years in a particular field. This is all the more significant for consulting contracts, because these can be specialised and not often tendered, such as a dam.

The Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) agreed to the EFCA views, and supported the required revision of the Financial Regulation and its rules of application.

Eventually, the PRAG 2016 is incorporating the provision that the Contracting Authority can foresee a longer reference period.

EFCA Board meets with the Association of Consulting Engineers of Ireland (ACEI)

ACEI firms request EFCA's support to change the 'on demand' nature of the wording of the Pre-Financing Guarantee Form (PRAG).

At the EFCA / ACEI meeting, President Flemming Pedersen encouraged all to engage in the conversation in order to strengthen the federation's understanding of the industry's current needs and future challenges, and to foster the recognition and influence of consulting engineers.

The ACEI representatives discussed with EFCA the link between quality design commitment and quality output obligation as well as best value procurement and its focus on minimisation of risk and related impact on results, along with the importance of past performance indicators.

It was concluded that the introduction of a quality concept in the legislative procurement framework together with lessons learned and best practices will help in educating clients and well as providing an opportunity to change the procurement paradigm.

Other discussion topics included: rapid developments in the organisation of the engineering consultancy business; the continuous consolidation trend in the sector; and the multidisciplinary nature of the services provided.



The final section of the meeting included a presentation from ACEI, requesting EFCA to support the removal of the current restrictive bank guarantee system that places excessive financial burden on Irish firms exporting their services.

2009 EFCA call for more transparent public procurement considered in the long run

The TED (Tenders Electronic Daily) portal, the single official source of public contracts in Europe, is making an online machine translation service available, free of charge.

In 2009, EFCA expressed concerns about the adequacy of the information contained in contract notices published via TED, as well as the quality of the summary translations of invitations to tender. At that time, EFCA urged the European Commission to step up efforts to ensure adequate English language versions of tender information.

The new machine translation option will ensure fairness and accessibility for all potential bidders within the Internal Market. In particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) will face one language barrier less when participating in cross-border bidding.

Is the 2014 public procurement Directive realizing its full potential?

The Internal Market Committee continues looking at the ongoing national transposition and start of the application of the EU public procurement rules that enter into force on 18 April 2016.

All Committee members report regularly on the challenges and potential pitfalls in the transposition as well as the development of national guidance in order to contribute to a correct and consistent application of the EU law.

The Committee Chair, Jaap de Koning, will make a presentation on the 'translation' of the 2014 Directives in the national legislation of each member state at the [European Regional Infrastructure Conference](#) in Krakow on 7-8 March 2016.

The Committee is also looking at the European Single Procurement Document (ESPD), a standard form to enable companies to self-declare that they qualify to bid for public contracts, and the first experiences with the new 'innovation partnership' procedure.

BIM Task Force to identify impact on the business and the industry's role in projects

The EFCA Task Force is to ensure that our industry's concerns and issues are taken into account during the drafting and development process of European BIM standards.

The scope of CEN/TC442 the (European Committee for Standardization - Technical Committee - Building Information Modelling) covers 'standardization in the field of structured semantic life-cycle information for the built environment.

CEN/TC442 will develop a structured set of standards, specifications and reports which specify methodologies to define, describe, exchange, monitor, record and securely handle asset data, semantics and

processes with links to geospatial and other external data.

After a presentation on the ongoing work in ISO/TC59/SC13 and the CEN/TC 442 structure, the EFCA Task Force identified 16 topics to be addressed.

These topics will be clarified and prioritized, in order to convey effectively our industry's perspective and safeguard its interests.

Improved EFCA Barometer report for better oversight of European market trends

As from the spring 2016 issue, the EFCA Barometer report will present some more detailed and useful comparative and statistical information on country trends and expected business activity.

Following the launch of the [autumn 2015 EFCA Barometer report](#), the task group revised the current report format against the firms' and national associations' needs as well as challenges in gathering sufficiently accurate and regular data.

The task group sees scope for enhancing the quality of information without making the survey process more complex or burdensome.

In turn, they hope that as a result, associations will continue improving the accuracy and consistency of country data and lead to wider interest in the Barometer report among the firms.

Maximising the potential benefits of European strategic investments

Emerging business opportunities in Bulgaria and the Balkan region

The 2016 EFCA Conference will bring together the business leaders from across Europe in Sofia.

If you are interested in teaming up with Bulgarian consulting firms, finding out more about EU investments in infrastructure in the region, best practices in public procurement of EU-funded projects, growth-generating sectors for the industry and joining sparkling discussions on the effective implementation of investment programmes, join us in Sofia on 2-4 June 2016.

Mark the date in your calendar!

June 2016

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		



D&S meeting	Brussels	31.03.2016
Board of Directors meeting	Helsinki	22.04.2016
Barometer Task Group	Brussels	29.04.2016
Task Force on BIM	Brussels	18.05.2016
EFCA Conference	Sofia	02-04.06.2016



EFCA CONFERENCE 2016

*Maximising the potential benefit of European strategic investments
Emerging business opportunities in Bulgaria and the Balkan region
Sofia, Thu 2/06/2016 to Sat 4/06/2016*



Internal Market Committee	Brussels	08.09.2016
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Board of Directors meeting	tbc	tbc
Board of Directors meeting	Brussels	25.11.2016



**The deadline date – 31 March –
for the applications to this year's
YP competition is nearing!**



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INVESTMENT PLAN FOR EUROPE

European Investment Project Portal (EIPP) is now open

The EIPP is in its pre-launch phase.



The EIPP is a web portal enabling EU based project promoters to reach potential investors worldwide. The portal is set-up and managed by the European Commission as part of the Investment Plan for Europe.

[Project forms](#) can be submitted as from now.

Questions must be addressed to the EIPP Helpdesk at eipp-project@ec.europa.eu.

http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/publications/eipp-project-application-form_en

New guidelines on combining European Structural and Investment Funds with the EFSI

The EC-EIB [guidelines](#) provide an overview to local authorities and project promoters of the possible combinations of EFSI (European Fund for Strategic Investments) and ESI Funds (European Structural and Investment Funds), either at project level or through a financial instrument such as an investment platform.

European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI): SME financing agreements across Europe



The European Investment Bank (EIB) agreed a €100 million loan facility with [Qredits](#) (The Netherlands), while the European Investment Fund (EIF) also signed an agreement with Qredits to cover part of the credit risk of new loans worth €25 million for microbusinesses and SMEs. Both operations are backed by the guarantee of the European Fund for Strategic Investments ([EFSI](#)).

The European Investment Fund (EIF) agreement allows [KfW](#) via on-lending banks to provide innovative companies in [Germany](#) with access to a total of €500m of financing over the next 2 years. This InnovFin SME guarantee agreement enables KfW to offer innovative companies additional financing at favourable conditions, with the support of a guarantee provided by the EIF and backed under Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

EIF and Komerčni banka signed a [COSME](#) agreement in the [Czech Republic](#). This, together with an [EaSI](#) (Programme for Employment and Social Innovation) agreement, will allow Komerčni banka to support over €50 million of loans to more than 2,300 SMEs and microbusinesses in the Czech Republic over the next three years.

EIF and UniCredit Leasing SIA (UCL) signed the first loan agreement, worth €18 million, in the Baltics under [Progress Microfinance](#) with funding from the European Union. The loan agreement will allow UCL to provide enhanced access to finance to over 1,000 micro-entrepreneurs, in [Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania](#). Microfinance is funded by the European Commission and managed by the European Investment Fund.

EIF and Inveready Venture Finance signed a guarantee agreement, benefiting from the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). The agreement will allow Inveready to provide €6.6 million of loans to early stage, small, innovative companies in [Spain](#) over the next 2 years, with more expected in the coming months. The loan comes under the Horizon 2020 programme's [InnovFin](#) initiative.

EIF and Compañía Española de Reafianzamiento (CERSA) – part of the Spanish Ministry of Industry - signed the first InnovFin and COSME counter-guarantee agreements.

EIF and [Raiffeisenbank \(Bulgaria\) EAD](#) signed a guarantee agreement to increase lending to innovative small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and small mid-caps in [Bulgaria](#). The agreement will allow Raiffeisenbank to provide €35 million of loans to innovative SMEs over the next 2 years.

EIF and [K&H Bank](#) signed the first [COSME](#) agreement in [Hungary](#) to provide HUF 30 billion (around €97 million) to over 1500 small businesses.

EIF and [Norrlandsfonden](#) signed a guarantee agreement to increase lending to innovative small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and small mid-caps in [Sweden](#). The agreement will allow Norrlandsfonden to provide SEK 180 million (around €19 million) of new loans to innovative companies over the next 2 years.

INTERNAL MARKET

New European Single Procurement Document (ESPD)

The [ESPD](#) will allow all businesses to electronically self-declare that they meet the necessary regulatory criteria or commercial capability requirements. Only the winning company will need to submit all the documentation proving that it qualifies for the contract.

Until 18 October 2018, the ESPD may be printed, filled in manually, scanned and sent electronically. A free, web-based system is being developed for member states and businesses.

European Professional Card (EPC) makes it easier for 5 professions to work in other EU countries

With the [EPC](#), general care nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists, real estate agents and mountain guides can get their

qualification recognised in another EU country more efficiently.

When a profession is regulated in the EU country of destination, professionals with equivalent qualifications from another EU country may need to get those qualifications recognised before they can start working there.

The EPC does not replace the ‘traditional’ recognition procedures foreseen by the [Professional Qualifications Directive](#).

Professionals can start their application online with their home authority (the country where they are established or where they obtained their qualifications). The application can be submitted in any EU language thanks to the structured multilingual questions and translation facilities offered by the IMI ([Internal Market Information System](#)).

Commission action to open up international procurement markets

The new instrument, when adopted by the Council, allows the Commission to initiate public investigations in cases of alleged discrimination of EU companies in procurement markets.

The [proposal](#) would allow the EU to take proportionate and targeted action – providing leverage in negotiations on international public procurement market openings, without closing EU markets or adding any unreasonable burden for contracting authorities.

EU FUNDS & PROGRAMMES

EC public procurement guidance available in all languages

The document is addressed to public officials, involved in the management of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).

The guidance aims to help them to identify and avoid areas of potential risk of errors and adopt best practices.

Although the [guide](#) does not provide legal interpretation of the EU directives it is a tool for improving the efficiency and the effectiveness of public procurement with potential gains in terms of fair competition and quality of investments.

Fully operational Commission investment plan for the transport sector



The [Innovation and Networks Executive Agency \(INEA\)](#) finalised the signature of all grant agreements for projects selected under the 2014 Connecting Europe Facility ([CEF](#)).

A total of €12.7 billion of EU investment will support 263 transport projects contributing to faster, safer and greener mobility in the EU.

EU invests €217 million in energy infrastructure



15 projects, selected under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), will help secure supplies and fully integrate Europe's energy market by connecting networks across Europe.

They will also contribute to the completion of a European energy market and the integration of renewables into the electricity grid.

€ 1 billion investment in regions along the EU's external borders

The new package will finance projects in 30 countries: Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine and Russia in the east; Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia; EU member states (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Hungary, Slovakia) as well as Norway and Turkey.

The funding comes under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI).

Financing agreements will be finalised between the partner countries and the EU by the end of 2016.

Grants will be awarded through calls for proposals, expected to be launched in the course of 2016 or early 2017.

MISCELLANEOUS

Commission presents energy security package

The [package](#) sets out a wide range of measures to strengthen the EU's resilience to gas supply disruptions.

Further, the proposals bring more transparency to the European energy market and create more coordination and support between the member states.

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The package is also presenting the way forward to move towards a smart, efficient and sustainable heating and cooling system.

Circular economy in Europe – Developing the knowledge base

The EEA (European Environment Agency) report [Circular economy in Europe - Developing the knowledge base](#) describes the concept of the circular economy and outlines its key characteristics.

The report draws attention to both the benefits and challenges of adopting a circular economy in Europe.

CVM Reports on Bulgaria and Romania

The Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) [Reports](#) set out progress and further steps to be taken in judicial reform and the fight against corruption in Bulgaria and Romania, and the fight against organised crime (Bulgaria).