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EFCA raises particular Irish concern with DG DEVCO

The inability to provide advance payment bonds for EU external aid contracts is putting Irish engineering consultancy firms at a great competitive disadvantage to their European counterparts.

At a meeting with the Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), Kevin Rudden (EFCA Board member) explained the financial impact of the Irish Banks and Surety providers' requirement to have guarantees fully cash backed.

DG DEVCO stated that 'on demand' guarantees are needed as a security to recover taxpayers' money in cases of bankruptcy or disputes.

However, DG DEVCO is willing to consider a reduction of the 6-month payment interval to more manageable stages.

Also, it will communicate details on the frequency of invoked guarantees because of contract failures.

Such information would permit the Association of Consulting Engineers of Ireland (ACEI) to evaluate to what extent the current guarantee system is contributing to the intended objective of protecting the EC's financial interests.

EFCA is promoting the principles of market openness, transparency as well as competitiveness at all levels of government across the EU

Public-public (including 'in-house') exemptions and cross-subsidisation impact negatively on competition and put at risk the private sector's competitiveness.



Following increasing concerns about the widespread use of in-house services in various EU member states, the EFCA Board agreed to a [statement](#) that depicts the structural risk of unfair competition between private and public operators and reiterates the industry's position.

EFCA continues to advocate that the expertise and innovation of private sector firms ensure the delivery of quality, on-time services to public clients.

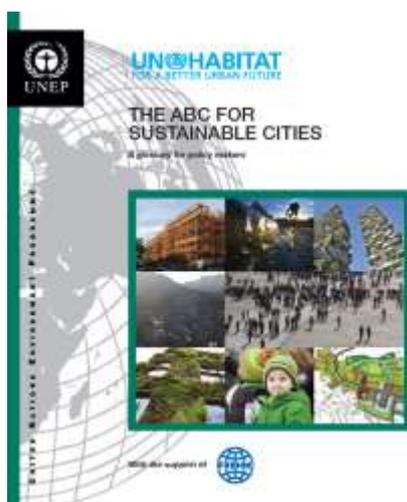
Also EFCA recalls that the implementation and use of public-public (including in-house) exemptions in the EU public procurement Directives are optional and not obligatory.

The ABC for Sustainable Cities: new glossary for policy makers

The "ABC for Sustainable Cities" is published by UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) and UN-Habitat (United Nations Human Settlements Programme).

It is drawn up with the support of FIDIC in cooperation with EFCA.

The "ABC for Sustainable Cities" aims to bring clarity about the concepts related to urban sustainability by collecting definitions from internationally recognised sources, and to support dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders, by providing a reference tool easily accessible by a technical and non-technical audience.



The publication does not provide globally agreed definitions, but compiles the existing ones, which may continue to evolve over time and with the input of relevant stakeholders.

The City We Need 2.0: groundbreaking consensus document defining a joint vision for a better urban future

135 World Urban Campaign partners, including FIDIC, adopted a global Manifesto towards the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III).

Stellan Fryxell, François Baillon, Anders Persson, Idriss Kathrada and Jean Félix represented FIDIC at the World Urban Campaign Steering Committee meeting in Prague on 16 March 2016.



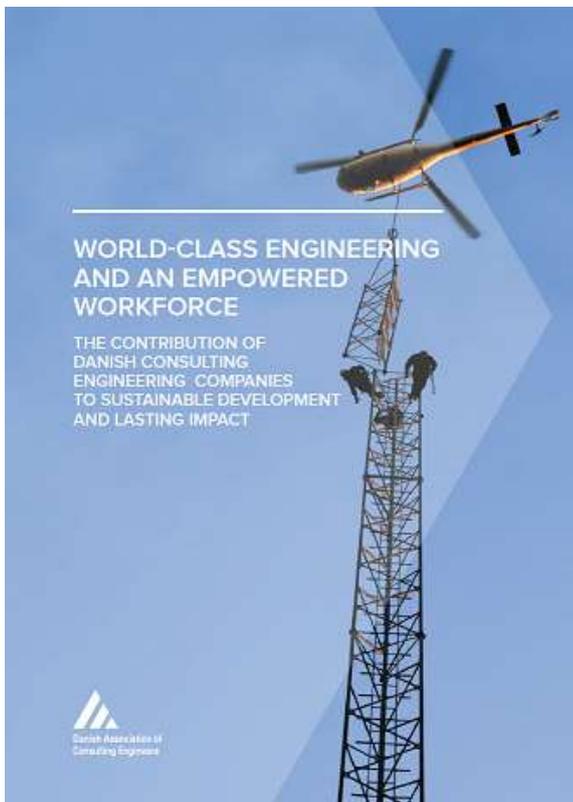
Arcadis, WUC top sponsor and WUC partner, is actively contributing to the civil society's dialogue and debate with the inter-governmental Habitat III conference in Quito in October 2016.

[The City We Need 2.0](#) will be translated into all 6 United Nations languages, to be disseminated widely and to be used as a reference document for all stakeholders and governments dealing with housing and sustainable urban development.

Consulting engineering companies make lasting impact in development assistance

The FRI report 'World-Class Engineering and an Empowered Workforce' demonstrates that the Danish engineering consultancy firms are essential for the achievement of the UN sustainable development goals.

The firms do not only deliver technical solutions for water and wastewater, energy, roads, ports and railways challenges in Africa and Asia; they tailor expert and intelligent solutions to the local geographical, economic and employment context.



The report shows that capacity building and on-site training leads to the creation of real jobs and new local companies in the aftermath of the projects.

Join us in Sofia

Some countries are missing out on EU investment finance for infrastructure because of a limited capacity to access structural funds. Cross-border partnerships can fix that.

In 2014, the EU promised mobilisation of €315 billion strategic investments to bring investment back to sustainable pre-crisis levels, to support higher risk and higher return projects that would struggle to find financing otherwise and to improve financing conditions for the real economy.

By March 2016, the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) triggered around €76 billion of investment in Europe.

Whether you are a local company or one which can cross borders and forge partnerships, if you are **open to new opportunities in Bulgaria and the Balkans** we invite you to a stimulating three days of exploration and networking in Sofia on 2-4 June 2016.

With support from the **vice-president of the European Commission**, joining us by live video link, we anticipate a stimulating and dynamic conference and ultimately the creation of new partnerships for the engineering sectors.

Register today by clicking the button below and we very much look forward to meeting you in June.

EFCA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

E F C A A G E N D A

Board of Directors meeting	Helsinki	22.04.2016
Barometer Task Group	tbc	tbc
D&S meeting	Amsterdam	12.05.2016
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*



European External Aid Committee	Brussels	28.06.2016
Internal Market Committee	Brussels	08.09.2016



Board of Directors meeting	tbc	...09.2016 (tbc)
Board of Directors meeting	Budapest	24-25.11.2016



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Revamped EURES network

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€3.3 billion transport infrastructure investment in Poland

€200 million CEF energy call for proposals

€131 million programme to modernise public administrations

€38 million for new development programmes in Sri Lanka

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Next steps for Europe after the Paris agreement

BUILD UP: new website launched

INVESTMENT PLAN FOR EUROPE

Support for SMEs, made possible by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)

The European Investment Fund (EIF), KredEx, and the Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications (MoE) launched EstFund, a €60 million risk capital fund-of-funds investing in several risk capital funds, which will then invest in Estonian SMEs.

EstFund will target smaller and earlier stage investments, operating in a complementary

way to the [Baltic Innovation Fund](#) initiative that targets larger and later stage deals. It is the first time that European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds and the EFSI are combined.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) and the [Bulgarian](#) government signed a funding agreement to implement the [SME Initiative in Bulgaria](#). This innovative instrument will unlock between 400 and 600 million euro of lending for Bulgarian small businesses.

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and [Fondo di Garanzia per le PMI](#) signed a [COSME](#) counter-guarantee agreement to provide €1 billion of financing to 20,000 SMEs in [Italy](#).

EIF and Credito Valtellinese s.c. (CREVAL) have signed an InnovFin agreement in Italy to provide €150 million in loans to innovative small and medium sized businesses in Italy. EIF and Banca [Cassa di Risparmio di Savigliano S.p.A.](#) signed an [InnovFin](#) agreement in Italy to provide €30 million in loans to innovative small and medium sized businesses in Italy.

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and the Danish Growth Fund ([Vækstfonden](#)) signed a [COSME](#) guarantee agreement to support DKK 360 million (€48 million) of loans to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in [Denmark](#) over the next two years.

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and [Banque Populaire](#) signed an InnovFin deal in Paris to provide €300 million of loans to innovative companies in [France](#) over the next 2 years via its regional network of Banques Populaires.

The [SME Initiative](#) programme for [Romania](#) will implement the scheme with the involvement of the EIB group and funds from Horizon 2020. €100 million provided by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the form of guarantees is expected to quadruple to €400 million.

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and Pohjola Bank (as part of the OP Financial Group), have signed a guarantee agreement. The agreement will allow OP Financial Group to provide €150m of loans to innovative companies in Finland and the Baltic states over the next 2 years.

Investment Plan for Europe - state of play as of March 2016, including a break-down by sector and by country:

http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/publications/investment-plan-state-play-march-2016_en

First EIB project in Sweden under the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)

The [European Investment Bank \(EIB\)](#), [Mirova](#) and [Eolus](#) have signed a contract to provide financing for the construction of Langmarken, an onshore wind farm located in the Värmland County in Sweden.

The EIB co-investment amounting to up to €16 million is the first renewable energy co-investment made by the EIB through the EFSI.

INTERNAL MARKET

Electronic procurement at the heart of the public procurement reform

The 'once-only' principle is one of the main guiding ideas of the reform: each document will be provided to the public authorities only once so that they can check eligibility.

The Commission's initiatives for boosting the uptake and interoperability of e-procurement solutions include:

- ESPD (European Single Procurement Document): a self-declaration form for proving that a bidder fulfils the exclusion and selection criteria (e.g. they have paid taxes and have sufficient financial standing). Evidence will only have to be provided by the tender winners.

While a paper form of the ESPD exists, it is meant to be used exclusively electronically.

There are two possibilities to generate an e-ESPD:

- (a) a free [online service](#) and
 - (b) a structured data exchange for public buyers, providers of e-procurement solutions or any other party interested in integrating it into their solutions;
- [e-Certis](#): a mapping tool that helps participants of public procurement procedures identify and compare different certificates requested in procurement procedures across the EU;
 - Commission support to the member states in their transition to end-to-end e-procurement by co-funding the integration of ESPD and e-Certis into existing solutions, facilitating the exchange of best practice, and providing tailor-made training sessions and assistance in the design of national e-procurement strategies

The transition to e-procurement is expected to continue until October 2018, when e-submission will become mandatory for all types of public procurement.

Commission urges member states to comply with the Services Directive in the area of regulated professions

National rules in Austria, Cyprus and Germany still include excessive and unjustified obstacles in the area of professional services.

The Commission action concerns:

- legal form and excessive shareholding requirements and restrictions on multidisciplinary companies for architects and engineers in Austria;
- shareholding requirements for all engineering professions, including civil engineers and architects in Cyprus;
- minimum and maximum tariffs for architects and engineers in Germany.

These member states now have two months to notify the Commission of measures taken to remedy the situation; otherwise, the Commission may decide to refer them to the Court of Justice of the EU.

Revamped EURES network

The European Employment Services (EURES) network will be open to more partners and more jobs will be advertised on its job portal.

The number of employees working in other member states - not including frontier cross-border workers - is only 7.5 million people or 3.1% of the active population.



The smarter new EURES portal should automatically match CVs with suitable job offers.

EU FUNDS & PROGRAMMES

€3.3 billion transport infrastructure investment in Poland

Ten major projects will receive contributions from the Cohesion Fund (€1.2 billion) and the European Regional Development Fund (€493 million).

The objective of these major projects is to ensure investments for jobs and growth under the [Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment](#), Priority Axis 3, development of [TEN-T core network](#) and multimodal transport.

[Open Data Portal for the ESI Funds 2014-2020](#)

[EU cohesion policy in Poland 2014-2020](#)

€200 million CEF energy call for proposals

The EU money, made available under the [Connecting Europe Facility \(CEF\)](#), is for projects that will help complete a reliable and sustainable EU-wide energy system.

The EU money is expected to act as a catalyst to speed up the implementation of the projects and attract investment from the private and public sectors.

The deadline to submit applications is 28 April 2016.

The [Investment Plan for Europe \(EFSI\)](#) already helped to finance [21 projects](#) in the energy and climate action sector.

€131 million programme to modernise public administrations

The new [ISA²](#) programme – Interoperability Solutions for European Public Administrations is officially launched.

The €131 million programme (2016-2020) will ensure seamless electronic cross-border or cross-sector interaction between European public administrations.

€38 million for new development programmes in Sri Lanka

The focus is on long-term support of the country's transition to becoming an upper middle income country.

€30 million will go to the programme 'Integrated Rural Development in the Most Vulnerable Districts of the Central and Uva Provinces' and €8 million is directed towards trade related assistance.

https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/countries/sri-lanka_en

Additional €10 million support to Cuba

The funding will help build the capacities of the Cuban public administration and sustainable food production.

https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/countries/cuba_en

Major increase in EU contribution to improve global health

The EU's financial contribution of €470 million for the period 2017-2019 represents an increase of €100 million or 27% in comparison to previous years.



This grant supports the **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**,

a public-private partnership and the single most important external financier of the health sector in many African countries.

MISCELLANEOUS

Next steps for Europe after the Paris agreement

The Commission presented an [assessment](#) of the implications that the global climate agreement, adopted in Paris in December 2015, will have for the EU.

BUILD UP: new website launched

The European Portal for Energy Efficiency in Buildings, is a comprehensive database of information.



It covers news, events, case studies, webinars, links to publications, and other resources on energy efficiency in buildings.

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