

## CITIZENS' SUMMARY

### MODERNISING PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN THE EU – CONSULTATION STAGE

#### WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

- **Governments and other public authorities** spend considerable amounts of public money buying goods and services through contracts with suppliers (referred to as 'public procurement'). In times of tight public budgets, it is all the more important that they get the best possible procurement outcomes.
- Optimal public purchasing must reconcile a number of objectives.
  - Public purchasers must get the best possible **value for taxpayers' money** without having to invest disproportionate time and money in the procedures.
  - All European businesses must have fair and easy access to public contracts throughout Europe.
  - Public authorities are increasingly called upon to ensure procurement contracts contribute to broader social objectives – by buying goods and services that are **eco-friendly** (e.g. with materials from sustainable sources) and **socially responsible** (e.g. take account of the needs of people with disabilities).
  - There are also mounting calls for public procurement to promote **economic development** by investing in **innovative** products and services.
- In every EU country, the award of public contracts of a certain value must respect procedures laid down in **EU rules**.
- These rules need to ensure that public procurement achieves the above objectives as efficiently as possible.

#### WHAT IS THE EU PLANNING TO DO?

- The EU will propose changes to its public procurement rules by **2012**. But first it wants to organise a [consultation](#), to make sure that future legislation takes account of the views of all interested parties.
- As a first step, the European Commission has published a Green Paper containing its ideas for **simplifying and updating** the existing rules. Amongst other objectives, it aims to:
  - make the awarding of public contracts easier and more flexible
  - further facilitate access to public contracts on an EU-wide basis, especially for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs)
  - enable public contracts to be put to better use in support of other policies.

### WHO WILL THIS HELP?

- **Governments, local authorities and other public bodies** – who have to abide by the EU rules when organising tendering procedures and awarding contracts
- **Companies** that tender for public contracts
- **Anyone interested** in the impact of public procurement (pressure groups, charities and other NGOs, taxpayers, the public).

### HOW CAN I TAKE PART IN THE CONSULTATION?

The [Green Paper](#) will be published on 27 January 2011

You will then have **until 18 April 2011 to comment:**

- by e-mail to: [MARKT-CONSULT-PP-REFORM@ec.europa.eu](mailto:MARKT-CONSULT-PP-REFORM@ec.europa.eu)
- by post to: European Commission, Directorate-General for Internal Market and Services, Unit C3, 1049 Brussels

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTER THE CONSULTATION?

In addition to the Green Paper consultation, the Commission is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the current European public procurement rules.

The results of this review and of the Green Paper consultation will be discussed at a conference on public procurement reform, planned for 30 June 2011 in Brussels.

All these discussions will then feed into the future legislative proposals.