

PRESS RELEASE



Brussels, 11 February 2014

New Public Procurement Directives

The Social Partners in the Contract Catering Sector call on EU Member States to strive for socially responsible tenders

Today's final adoption by the Council of the new Public Procurement Package paves the way for implementation by the EU Member States within two years. In this context, the EU Social Partners in the contract catering sector, EFFAT (European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions) and FoodServiceEurope, call on Member States to seize the opportunities that were lost at EU level.

"While we very much welcome the new general obligation for Member States to ensure that operators comply with their obligations in the fields of environmental and social law when performing public contracts, there still is a lot to be done at national level for this to become a reality, especially in the contract catering sector" stated Harald Wiedenhofer, EFFAT General Secretary.

In particular, it is regrettable that our sector remains subject to a light regime at EU level. Member States, however, are now required to put in place national rules for the award of contracts for social services, including contract catering. It is crucial that Member States seize this opportunity to **impose at national level the obligation for contracting authorities to award contracts in our sector exclusively on the basis of the best price-quality ratio, taking due account of the quality of the services provided.**

"As stated on previous occasions, in a labour intensive sector such as contract catering, bidding for services on the basis of the lowest price only leads to a downward spiral on the quality of the services provided to the detriment of all stakeholders involved, in particular workers. If we are serious about ensuring the best value for money in public procurement and the best possible conditions for the provision of high quality services, we need an ambitious legal framework that ensures operators compete on quality for the provision of the six billion meals they serve across Europe, notably in hospitals, schools and care homes" insisted Rocco Renaldi, FoodServiceEurope Secretary General.

Another key area for our sector where Member States need to make sure the new Directives are successfully implemented regards the fight against abnormally low tenders. We welcome the new obligations for contracting authorities to ask information on tenders considered to be abnormally low and for offers to be rejected where the low price is due to non-compliance with social and environmental standards. It is necessary, however, that Member States make sure these provisions will be effective in practice and to this end we call for a clear definition of abnormally low tenders to be included in the national implementing measures.

"A meaningful effort is required from Member States to ensure additional progress is made towards truly socially responsible tenders" added Mr Wiedenhofer.

"There is still an opportunity to be seized by Member States to put in place the right legal framework for public procurement, one that moves in a positive direction towards a more open, competitive and fair market for the provision of contract catering in public services", concluded Mr Renaldi.

- ENDS -



Note to the Editor:

FoodServiceEurope brings together the national contract catering associations from different EU Member States and leading contract catering companies, representing four fifths of the EU market.

The European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT) is a European Federation representing 120 national trade unions from 38 European countries. EFFAT defends the interests of more than 2.6 million members towards the European Institutions, European industrial federations and enterprise management.

For further information contact:

EFFAT: Kerstin Howald k.howald@effat.org / www.effat.org / +32 2 218 77 30

FoodServiceEurope: Cristina Freitas da Costa cfreitas@foodserviceeurope.org /
<http://www.foodserviceeurope.org> / +32 2 808 06 44