

Procurement alert

European Procurement Reform gathers pace

As you may have seen in some of our latest briefings, the EU continues to progress the new public procurement directives. Only last week, the European Parliament announced that it has reached political agreement with the Council and European Commission on the public sector and utilities directives, whilst provisional agreement on the new concessions directive has also now been reached.

The new provisions are expected to improve legal security for public authorities and economic operators across Europe when cooperating on infrastructure projects or the provision of services to the public. Some of the key areas negotiated by the European Parliament are as follows:

- Contracting authorities will be afforded **greater flexibility to make certain strategic choices** when procuring works, goods or services to achieve specific societal goals, in particular through the inclusion of environmental, social or innovation-related criteria in the award process. This will be done in such a way to ensure that award criteria are still objective at all times.
- A standard **European Single Procurement Document** will be introduced, allowing authorities in all member states to share information on bidders and **reducing the administration and cost** involved with a procurement process.
- **Innovation Partnerships** will be introduced, which will involve contractors entering into a structured partnership with an authority to encourage the development of innovative services, goods and works.

The draft directives now await formal approval by the Council and the European Parliament's Internal Market Committee, following which they are expected to be put to plenary vote

in the European Parliament in the autumn. It was originally expected that the new directive would come into force in the UK as early as June 2014, but until now, progress has been not been as rapid as had been expected. It is not certain, therefore, that the June 2014 target will be met.

We will continue to keep track of the progress of the new rules and update you whenever there are significant developments. If you would like to find out more about the European procurement reform programme, please contact a member of our public procurement team, whose contact details are set out below.



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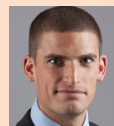


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