

The Architects' Council of Europe welcomes the EU Parliament report on public procurement

On 8 September 2025, in the context of the upcoming review of the EU Public Procurement Directive (PPD), the European Parliament adopted a resolution putting forward recommendations to balance efficiency, competition, and economic sustainability in public procurement.

The Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) welcomes this resolution, which identifies significant issues and emphasises key principles that should guide the upcoming revision of the PPD. For a construction project, the procurement phase is crucial, as the choice of procedure, its characteristics, and the project brief greatly influence the design and construction works and the ultimate quality of what is built.

In the EU, more than half of public procurement procedures are still awarded solely on the basis of the lowest price. The Parliament rightly notes that *“awarding public contracts based solely on the lowest price (...) is at the expense of quality, sustainability, social standards”*. Members of the Parliament emphasise that *“more contracts, especially for intellectual services, should be awarded based on the best price-quality ratio, through use of Most Economic Advantageous Tender (MEAT)”*. The ACE calls on the EU to revise the PPD to guarantee high-quality solutions with the best value for money by forbidding the use of lowest price as the sole criterion of choice for intellectual services.

The Parliament recommends that public procurement rules *“take into account the specific nature of different sectors”* and *“tailored provisions in sector-specific regulations (...) to ensure that the overall procurement frameworks align with industry-specific operational and financial realities”*. The ACE considers that the procurement of intellectual services should be treated differently from standard services and calls for the inclusion of a special chapter for intellectual services in the Public Procurement Directive. This special regime should notably mandate quality-based selection criteria and include a definition of adequate procurement thresholds.

The ACE agrees with the Parliament's position that *“more guidance and support for SMEs is crucial to advance their participation in public procurement”* and that there is a *“need for reducing bureaucratic constraints that disproportionately affect SME”*. The ACE calls on the EU to revise the Directive to improve access for SMEs and new entrants by simplifying administrative complexity and recommends the use of more flexible technical and financial criteria (eg. expanding the three-year reference period or reducing the minimum turnover).

ACE President Carl Bäckstrand said on this occasion: *“We believe that public procurement rules can be both simple and effective for contracting authorities and businesses, while reflecting at the same time the inherent complexity of construction projects and setting ambitious quality targets. Public tenders shaped by well-defined qualitative objectives can deliver not only excellent results but also reinforce long-term social equity, environmental responsibility, and economic resilience.”*

In May 2025, the representative organisations of the architectural and consulting engineering professions adopted the [Luxembourg Declaration on Public Procurement](#), a shared commitment to improving procurement practices across Europe in support of design quality, sustainability, and long-term value. The Declaration underlines that “architectural design competitions offer a good way to procure intellectual services, offering quality- and innovation based, project orientated selection procedures” and calls on the EU to promote greater use of design competitions when architectural services are procured.

The Architects' Council of Europe is deeply committed to actively engaging with the EU institutions in the revision of the Public Procurement Directive — to ensure that public contracts prioritise innovation, sustainability, and architectural excellence and empower architects to deliver the highest standards of design and public value.