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**Day Month 2025, Brussels**

# FEAD calls for mandatory green public procurement with common implementation strategy that ensures operationalisation at all levels

The EU has taken, so far, a voluntary approach to green public procurement (GPP). To this end, important changes introduced in the 2014 Directive[[1]](#footnote-2) have been accompanied by specific [voluntary GPP criteria](https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/green-public-procurement/gpp-criteria-and-requirements_en) developed for certain product groups as well as a series of sector specific Life-cycle costing [(LCC) calculation tools](https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/green-public-procurement/life-cycle-costing_en). Today, **10 years after the adoption of its public procurement Directive, the EU must take a step further to ensure that environmental aspects are the norm in public procurement.** Therefore, **FEAD** **calls for a revision** **of the EU Directives on public procurement to enshrine mandatory GPP.**

Around 14% of the EU’s GDP (around EUR 2 trillion per year) is spent on average on the purchase of services and goods through public procurement. This shows that **green public procurement (GPP) can play a decisive role in fostering circular economy, climate change mitigation and green technology innovation.**

The EU’s voluntary approach to GPP has given room to Member States to come up with various objectives and tools that are currently used at national level (see examples below). However, it is estimated that EU countries make, overall, very limited use of GPP. Based on data from the EU Tenders Electronic Daily (TED) database, most EU MS seem to use GPP in only less than 5% of their procurement contracts while, looking at the application of the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) principle, which allows the incorporation of green criteria in public procurement, the EU average lies at about 40%.[[2]](#footnote-3)

To foster the use of GPP across the EU, harmonised criteria are needed, which will also ensure accountability and comparability of data. Simple and standardised reporting on the use of GPP would ensure a better understanding of the situation in the EU. FEAD welcomes the sectoral work done in the past years. Most recently, notably, in the new Critical Raw Materials Act, which foresees concrete rules on the use of secondary raw materials via green public procurement, and the Ecodesign Regulation, which empowers the Commission to adopt Implementing Acts to develop binding GPP criteria for which ecodesign requirements have been developed. Now, **it will be decisive to implement these new rules as effectively as possible**.

To consolidate these efforts, contributing to its climate and environmental objectives, resource security and strategic autonomy, **the EU shall initiate a revision of the Directives on public procurement to integrate environmental matters in the basic and mandatory procurement principles**. Solid and concrete recommendations have already been made[[3]](#footnote-4) and include the following:

* **The mandatory elements must be integrated, in particular, in Article 18(2) Directive 2014/24/EU, while other relevant provisions must be revised accordingly.**
* **The ‘link to the subject matter’ as a basis for procurement today should not be a technical limitation for GPP and should therefore be integrated or combined with a mandatory life cycle thinking requirement.**
* **Minimum national GPP targets should be introduced with a phase-in approach and a 100% objective at a certain date.**
* **The revision of the Directive and the introduction of targets must be accompanied by an EU-harmonized monitoring and tracking mechanisms as well as effective guidance and information systems.**

The success of green public procurement will depend on its effective implementation, and we can assume that there are a number of factors that are impeding its broader use among public administrations so far. A revision of the EU Directive with a clear regulation and mandate should remove the legal uncertainty linked to the voluntary system. But a legal basis alone will not be sufficient. Therefore, **the EU must take further steps to ensure the implementation of GPP by making it operational in practice and at all different levels of public administrations.** Member States have already developed different initiatives that should be used as basis for establishing mandatory green public procurement at EU level. Some examples are listed below:

* Denmark launched in 2020 a [strategy](https://oes.dk/indkoeb/strategy-for-green-public-procurement/) with reduction targets and other concrete initiatives, including partnerships for green public procurement to develop common procurement criteria for some product categories.
* France launched its [2022-2025 National Plan for Sustainable Purchases](https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/documents/PNAD-PAGEAPAGE-SCREEN(3).pdf), which includes a non-binding objective of 100% of public procurements including at least one environmental criterion by 2025.
* Sweden launched an Ecologically Sustainable Procurement tool ([EKU tool](https://eku.nu/)), which includes information such as life-cycle cost calculations for various products and training material.
* In the Netherlands, they have a digital environmental assessment tool, [DuboCalc](https://www.dubocalc.nl/), to quickly and easily calculate the environmental costs of design variants of civil engineering works. In addition, a [CO2 performance ladder](https://www.co2-prestatieladder.nl/en) is also in place.
* In Italy, the use of minimum environmental criteria (MECs) is mandatory since 2015[[4]](#footnote-5) and is today included in its Public Procurement Code. The system also considers the Ecolabel certification and life cycle costing (LCC) among the award criteria based on the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT), as well as the evaluation of greenhouse gas emissions, to be calculated according to the European Commission’s recommendation.[[5]](#footnote-6)
* Germany included a ‘consideration requirement’ in its [Federal Climate Change Act](https://www.bmuv.de/fileadmin/Daten_BMU/Download_PDF/Gesetze/ksg_final_en_bf.pdf). This means that ‘when planning, selecting and making investments and procurements, the Federation shall examine how each of these operations can contribute to the achievement of the climate targets’. ‘Where there are two or more planning, selection and implementation options for investments and procurements, preference shall be given, after balancing against other relevant criteria pertaining to the purpose of the investment, to the option or options with which the aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions over the whole lifetime of the capital good or procured item can be achieved at the lowest cost. In addition, ‘when cost-effectiveness criteria are applied, costs and savings over the entire lifetime of the investment or procurement in question shall be the basis of any comparison. Due consideration shall be given to the expected costs of climate action to the national economy’.

Moreover, FEAD highlights further aspects to ensure successful implementation of mandatory green public procurement:

* **Ensure that circular procurement has a prominent role according to its environmental and climate benefits. This means, focusing on criteria to procure products that are recyclable and that contain recycled content.**
* Prioritise and develop strong digital solution tools.
* Provide guidance to public procurers on which environmental labels and certification schemes may be used.
* Consider the need to prioritise certain product categories, such as plastics, textiles or construction products.
* Promote the application of a Rating Systems for sustainable construction and for infrastructure that promote and recognise green purchasing strategies, based on the logic of the circular economy.
* Consider ISO 20400.
* Standardise reporting via the EU tendering platform to follow up on the use of environmental considerations in MS’ procurements.
* Develop harmonized training programs, including components that support assessment of circularity elements. Educational material must also demonstrate the societal and monetary value of GPP practices to build stronger political buy-in. Training may be included under ERASMUS or other EU training module to cover the costs.
* Prioritise the development and adoption of implementing acts to the ESPR containing mandatory GPP requirements that foster circularity in this mandate.
* Prioritise the development and adoption of delegated acts specifying mandatory minimum environmental sustainability requirements for construction products to foster circularity in this mandate.
* Ensure that authorities at all levels give procurement officers a clear mandate and adequate financial resources to play a strategic role in implementing and monitoring GPP practices.

***FEAD is the European Waste Management Association, representing the private waste and resource management industry across Europe****, including 20 national waste management federations and more than 3,000 waste management companies. Private waste management companies operate in 60% of municipal waste markets in Europe and in 75% of industrial and commercial waste. This means more than 320,000 local jobs, fuelling €5 billion of investments into the economy every year. For more information, please contact:*

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**Annex: relevant graphs and data**

A close-up of a map

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A graph of a bar chart

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*Images and data above from Sapir, A., Schraepen, T. and Tagliapietra, S., Green Public Procurement: A Neglected Tool in the European Green Deal Toolbox?, Intereconomics, 2022, 57(3), 175-178*

A diagram of a diagram

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*Image on the left from Stockholm Environment Institute, February 2023, Green Public Procurement: a key to decarbonizing construction and road transport in the EU*

1. Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Sapir, A., Schraepen, T. and Tagliapietra, S., ‘Green Public Procurement: A Neglected Tool in the European Green Deal Toolbox?’, *Intereconomics*, 2022, 57(3), 175-178, <https://www.intereconomics.eu/contents/year/2022/number/3/article/green-public-procurement-a-neglected-tool-in-the-european-green-deal-toolbox.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. K Pouikli, ‘Towards Mandatory Green Public Procurement (GPP) Requirements under the

   EU Green Deal: Reconsidering the Role of Public Procurement as an Environmental Policy

   Tool’ (2021) ERA Forum 715-716, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12027-020-00635-5> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Law No 221, dated 28 December 2015, <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2016/1/18/16G00006/sg> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. More information at Iurascu, A., ‘How Will the Adoption of Mandatory GPP Criteria Change the Game? Lessons from the Italian Experience’, EPPPL 1|2023, <https://epppl.lexxion.eu/article/EPPPL/2023/1/4> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)