European Parliament supports sustainable public procurement

The existing EU rules on public procurement are currently being revised and the European Commission (EC) is expected to issue a legislative proposal on 13 December 2011 to review the existing EU Public Procurement Directives. The proposal will later be agreed upon by the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament (EP). In this context the EP has adopted on 25 October 2011, a resolution that confirms the interpretation of the EU rules by the European Court of Justice, which allows public authorities to compare products on the basis of how they have been produced. The EP also asks for clearer rules that allow the integration of sustainability criteria at each stage of the procurement process.

The EP resolution recognizes that whether or not a product has been sustainably produced is one of the characteristics that public authorities should look at when they compare different bids. This confirms that contracting authorities wishing to buy Fair Trade products can openly state so in the technical specifications of their calls for tenders. See the text of the resolution here.

The FTAO and the Network for Sustainable Public Procurement are pleased that all their five key demands have been partially or fully taken-up by the EP resolution, but there are still a number of issues that need improvement or clarification during the EU legislative making process. Read the five key demands here.

To discuss next steps and to reflect on how to integrate sustainability in the new EU rules on public procurement, the Network for Sustainable Development in Public Procurement organised a workshop on 10 October 2011. At this meeting Sergi Corbálan explained how to counter-argue the common myths on sustainable procurement.

The network also met the Members of the European Parliament; Marc Tarabella and Barbara Weiler, from the Socialists and Democrats (S&D) Group, during a workshop on the revision of the Public Procurement Directives organised on 20 October 2011 by the S&D group.