



G L O B E
EUROPEAN UNION EU

Event Summary

“Circular Procurement in Built Urban Infrastructure - How to embed circularity principles in public procurement contracts?”

European Parliament — May 24, 2016

Sirpa Pietikäinen opened the meeting by welcoming participants and stating that sustainable construction should be based on best available technologies combined with the use of indicators so one can measure what is best practice. She added the importance of integration and the need to maintain a high level of ambition.

Paul Mul (Royal HaskoningDHV) presented the results of a study that was conducted at the request of several members of the Bee Group. The study was considered necessary because the Circular Economy Action Package mentions the construction sector but falls short of identifying specific objectives. He described the four barriers identified by the study: insufficient supply, a lack of demand, absence of verification methods, and not enough incentives. He mentioned that he would like to see a refinement of the preliminary recommendations as a key outcome of the discussion and include these in the final report.

Yvette Watson (National Library of the Netherlands) started her presentation of the planned renovation of the 35-year old library building by mentioning that already 95% of building materials can be recycled. A major objective, therefore, is to use only recycled materials in the library’s renovation. She considered listening to stakeholders in the renovation process (market expertise) more important than relying on existing building requirements (regulations), which are often outdated. The National Library chooses its partners in the renovation based on how their ambition matches its vision (alternative bidding process). Only after these partners are selected is work started on the design of the renovated building. A documented understanding of the make-up of the building is required and different ownership models (lease) are considered in the planning. Yvette argued that there are no sustainable materials or buildings, only the sustainable use thereof.

Paul Mul then presented the study's preliminary recommendations as both feasible and able to deliver results: 1. setting up a platform for actors in the value chain to gather and share information and 2. creating incentives for by integrating resource efficiency in existing policies (e.g., energy performance of buildings).

The ensuing discussion showed that thinking in silos should be avoided and developing a more integrated solution will be necessary. Especially collaboration on projects (co-creation) is very important. There are many initiatives in the private sector and undertaken by public authorities but alignment is often missing. Criteria are necessary to develop Green Public Procurement (GPP) but a better understanding of these criteria is equally important. Regulatory incentives remain necessary in addition to voluntary compliance.

Many different factors decide how and where a building is built. "Building Passports" could offer a solution to document the make-up of a building (which materials have been used and where?). You cannot have a smart building without promoting the smart use of that building.

Retained ownership applied lighting, flooring — even steel beams — is an important development although leasing and the use of recycled content often require developing a different business model and a changing relationship with suppliers. Existing legal provisions regarding ownership often stand in the way of a different system.

Sharing information online could provide an incentive to use sustainable building methods but companies are often unfamiliar with the existence of this kind of information. Geographical similarities support the adoption of best practices. Training of procurement managers can be helpful but have to take into account large differences that exist between countries.

Conclusions and recommendations:

1. GPP platforms for the exchange of knowledge, experience, and (local) solutions could be instrumental to develop and professionalize GPP in general; introduce circularity aspects and exchange learnings: e.g., asking the right questions and use of building passports. Networks for nearly zero energy buildings could be useful to develop nearly zero impact. Training is a crucial to get the learnings implemented.

2. Investigating synergies between policies driving resource efficiency and other policies is seen as useful, especially with policies aimed at improving energy efficiency. Energy efficiency and resource efficiency of buildings should be discussed simultaneously when designing and renovating a building.

Jo Leinen closed the meeting by thanking participants for a very inspiring discussion. He considered the integration of circularity principles in Green Public Procurement complex but doable. He admired the work done by the pioneers but recognized the need for general principles and some regulation.