



# SMEs' access to public procurement

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# Background and objective

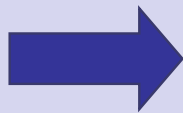
- The public procurement market is large:
  - around 16% of EU's gross domestic product
- European directives apply to around 16% of all public procurement ('European-scale')
- Objective EC DG Enterprise:
  - a greater opening-up of the public procurement market for *SMEs*
- Study objective:
  - measuring the access of SMEs to 'European-scale' public procurement and identifying possibilities to improve the access of SMEs to public procurement





# Approach

- creation of database with PP-contracts and enterprise characteristics
- national situation analysis in all (15) MS
- surveys amongst successful SMEs and awarding authorities
- statistical analysis and reporting
- recommendations



*It was the first time ever that such a study was conducted at European level!*





# Access of SMEs

- Successful involvement of SMEs on PP-market (in 2001): 78% of the winners was an SME
- There is room for improvement since 99.8% in the population of enterprises is SME
- Success of SMEs varies over countries: 65% in UK to 92% in Luxembourg
- SMEs obtain more contracts from local authorities, mostly alone (!), and smaller contracts... than large enterprises





# Experiences of SMEs (EU-level)

- Although successful SMEs are experienced in PP (tender a lot, PP is mostly part of their strategy, and update adm. documents regularly)...
- ...they face the following main problems:  
shortage of information, unclear information, administrative burden, short time span
- Improvement is expected by more (electronic) information and less administrative burden
- SMEs think they benefit from prior information, pre-selection and external help and training



# Experiences of Awarding Authorities (EU-level)

- SMEs' strong point: flexibility
- SMEs' weak points: financial capacity and continuity
- Expected key solutions for improving access of SMEs to public procurement: more and better information, and simplification of rules





# Expectation New Directives

## Main problems SMEs

1. shortage of, and unclear information
2. administrative burdens
3. short time span

## New Directives: solutions?

- ← more electronic information, competitive dialogue
- ← simplification of rules
- ← more clear selection criteria, e-procurement (please, give the extra time to the suppliers)

