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Simplifying public procurement would help Welsh businesses

EFA press release from Jill Evans MEP

Plaid MEP **Jill Evans** has welcomed calls by the European Parliament to simplify rules on public procurement to make it easier for small and medium sized businesses to win public sector contracts.

MEPs have been voting today ahead of an EU law due in December to revise public procurement rules. Smaller businesses tend to win a proportionately smaller share of public contracts than their economic share suggests they should, so MEPs want the rules to be changed.

More than £4 billion is spent by the public sector in Wales every year so there is great potential for economic and social benefit if the system is simplified.

Speaking after the vote, **Jill Evans** MEP said:

"Many small businesses are struggling in this very tough economic climate. Making it easier for them to compete for public sector contracts would be a major boost, and help protect jobs in local communities. We are talking about more than £4 billion spent by the public sector every year.

"I know that the Remploy factory in the Rhondda, for example, has said that their future could be secured with just one local authority's IT contracts.

"The bidding process for public sector work can often be dauntingly complicated and costly and this puts smaller firms at a disadvantage from the start.

"Bids for contracts should be judged on economic, social and environmental criteria rather than just looking for the cheapest deal.

"European procurement laws will be revised at the end of this year. We've made it very clear that they need to be simplified. Adopting an electronic tendering and application process could make things easier and more transparent. Whole lifecycle costs should also be taken into account.

"The system we have now puts smaller firms at a disadvantage and this has to change. There is enormous potential to use public spending to support local businesses and jobs. It's regrettable that the Welsh government

are not doing more to make this happen for Welsh businesses."

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