Mission Report (MIPS OM-22-1965490)  

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: [Blacked out]</th>
<th>Unit: GROW C2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Place: Bordeaux (France)</td>
<td>Date 27-29/06/2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject: Colloque Bordeaux Échanges Européens</td>
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Background

A little over a year ago, Bordeaux Metropole and UGAP (national central purchasing body) contacted us with the idea of organising European exchanges on innovative and responsible public procurement. They wanted to take advantage of the French presidency of the European Union to create a debate at both political and operational levels on the issues of public procurement “committed” to a social and environmental impact.

In order to give the event a European dimension, we helped them to find examples and speakers from other Member States. We also helped them to communicate at European level about this event.

[Blacked out] and [Blacked out] were invited to participate as speakers at this event.

[Blacked out] in her opening speech of the conference stressed the strategic role of sustainable and innovative public procurement.

She underlined the inspiring character of the actions carried out by the Metropolis of Bordeaux in this field for other public buyers in Europe. She also mentioned the various actions that the C2 Unit is carrying out in this field, such as the publication of guidelines on the application of sanctions against Russia, the creation of a digital platform to better connect public purchasers with each other, the forthcoming publication of a Q&A on the issue of price fluctuation...

[Blacked out] presented the results of a survey we conducted on the use of innovation partnerships by public procurers covering the period 2016 – 2021 (slides attached)

[Blacked out] presented the forthcoming SSE action plan and in particular the part dedicated to public procurement.
Here are the key elements of the exchanges that caught our attention:

1. The political nature of public procurement: the main lever for creating the economy of tomorrow

In his speech, the mayor of the city of Bordeaux, Pierre HURMIC (purchasing budget of almost 2 billion euros) insisted on the political nature of public procurement. The city of Bordeaux has adopted a strategic plan for responsible procurement with objectives for innovation and sustainable purchasing. The political ambition is to use the procurement budget to develop innovative and sustainable public services.

Chamber of Commerce of Bordeaux-Gironde underlined the need to develop this approach. He pointed out that public procurement represents 16% of GDP in France. Although 60% of SMEs have access to public contracts in France, in value terms the contracts represent only 30% of the overall value (110 billion Euros in 2020).

Alain Rousset, President of the New Aquitaine region (1 billion purchase budget) strongly emphasised the role of elected representatives as enablers. It is up to the decision-maker to set the course and to help improve the strategic organisation of procurement. Public procurement should help the administration to modernise and face future challenges related to climate change, new societal issues and the necessary digital transformation. It should also help address the citizens’ demand to support local and domestic production and reduce strategic dependencies.
2. Europe must produce the sustainable solutions that public buyers will acquire

Public procurement should enable the development of environmental and social policies in public organisations. The legal framework allows for this, recalled the Ministry of Economy (FR Ministry of Ecology) added that it was necessary to work on the entire value chain, taking into account the economic signal represented by the public procurement. This is a new system to be put in place, particularly to accelerate decarbonisation.

The exchanges brought out the idea that it was necessary to go beyond the issues of preparing the procedure or establishing the right criteria for selecting the offers.

There is a need for public buyers to develop good practice in dialogue with suppliers, particularly to help them develop innovative and sustainable solutions to meet the demand. The European market must develop sustainable and innovative solutions, in particular to overcome the dependence on third countries.

The presentation of examples such as that of the Big Buyers network, which we manage, or the procurement policy of the city of Lisbon showed that the most mature European public buyers are already developing this approach.

The presentation by our colleague of the European Innovation Council was also along these lines. The support programme offered to public buyers to develop co-development practices with innovative companies was of great interest. This shows that the culture of administrations is changing, particularly with regard to building a more partnership-based relationship with suppliers.

Interventions illustrating co-development and partnership approaches may suggest that these methods could help to address the requests of citizens and politicians to reduce strategic dependencies and strengthen European and local markets, while preserving a non-discriminatory approach to procurement.

3. Developing a strategic approach to public procurement

The strategic approach was described as that for public buyers to have a better knowledge of the different markets in which there are important needs but which are the object of very important tension. The idea is to avoid suffering the uncertainties of the market, but to better anticipate them and to work on these particular sectors to emerge new, more innovative and sustainable solutions.

at the OECD, gave as an example what is done in New Zealand where public buyers must declare each year which sectors and markets are strategic for them and the areas of work they are going to develop, notably to follow sustainable development objectives. The discussions then focused on the importance of
data and in particular of having a strategy on data in public procurement in order to better manage strategic purchases.

4. The rise of the social and solidarity economy through public procurement

Bordeaux, as the world capital of the Social and Solidarity Economy, wishes to develop the public purchase of solutions developed by SSE companies. (General Delegate FESS France - Chamber of Social and Solidarity Economy) that in France today the SSE sector represents one job in seven. There is certainly an economic potential to be developed and the role of public buyers is crucial.

Presented the Action Plan that the Commission will launch, in particular to accelerate the awareness of buyers of the existence of this sector and how to acquire solutions to develop social and solidarity economy enterprises.

5. Public procurement at the heart of industrial policy to develop the markets of the future

(General Delegate FESS France - Chamber of Social and Solidarity Economy) referred to the €11 billion purchasing budget concluded the conference by saying "Today, the role of the public purchaser is to bring out the markets of the future". Mobilisation at the political level, whether national or local, is for him an absolute necessity if we really want sustainable procurement to have a real social and environmental impact. It will therefore be necessary to start measuring the effectiveness of what is being put in place and to adjust the actions in order to achieve the objectives set. The challenge, he said, is to work with industry and companies in strategic sectors to develop future solutions with a clear objective: to secure the supply chain. However, in his view, this cannot be achieved without cooperation between public buyers at European level.

In this respect, (Bordeaux Metropole) called for the creation of a European community on these issues. To this end, he invited the organisation of a new conference in two years' time to measure the progress made on this topic.

Some figures

- More than 225 participants were physically present at the conference venue
- More than 775 participants were present online
- The programme and replay of the conference are available on this link: https://www.colloquebee.fr/welcome