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**MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC
AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS**

Consultation on the Green Paper on expanding the use of e-Procurement in the EU

General Comments

The Danish government welcomes the initiative by the European Commission to expand the use of electronic procurement within the European Union.

The Danish government agrees that e-Procurement has the potential to yield large efficiency gains in the individual purchases, the overall administration of public procurement and the general functioning of the markets for government contracts.

The Danish government also agrees that expanding the use of e-Procurement will lead to greater accessibility and transparency as a direct result of businesses' possibilities of on-line screening for opportunities and immediate access to tender documentation.

E-Procurement will speed up individual procedures and reduce administrative costs for both economic operators and contracting authorities alike.

Additionally, e-Procurement will promote the integration of EU procurement markets due to the reduction of distance barriers, which traditional paper based environments are hindered by. E-Procurement has the potential to reduce information gaps, thereby widening the pool of possible suppliers and potentially enlarging markets.

Despite these significant potential gains of e-Procurement, it is my impression that the greatest obstacle to the expanding use of e-Procurement is the perception among contracting authorities and suppliers that e-Procurement entails considerable investments and that the benefits hereof are uncertain.

In addition to this, there is a predominant perception among contracting authorities that there are large technological risks attained to a conversion to e-Procurement, which further hinders expansion of e-Procurement.

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Specific Comments

The Danish government would like to applaud the Commission for ensuring that no obstacles exist within the procurement directives for contracting authorities to apply e-Procurement.

The Danish government would also like to stress the importance of encouraging the use of e-Procurement through incentives as opposed to introducing legal requirements. Such incentives should be applied in order to convince contracting authorities to apply e-Procurement. Incentives could be in the form of further reduced time limits or something entirely new.

It is the opinion of the Danish government that standardisation should be a priority for the European Commission in its efforts to promote e-Procurement. The introduction of standards ensures considerable simplification and cost savings.

This standardisation effort should not solely concentrate on e-Procurement platforms. Standardisation of digital signatures in order to promote interoperability must also continue.

The Danish government thus supports the Commissions existing efforts regarding standardisation of digital signatures as these efforts promote more effective e-Procurement systems. These efforts include establishing trust regarding digital signatures and eID and improving ETSI-standards among others. Together these initiatives provide an important step in achieving increased interoperability of digital signatures.

Early experience from Danish contracting authorities also implies that standards and open source components make an excellent foundation for IT-developers to further develop the best possible technical solutions. Open source solutions saves both time and costs for IT-developers who much more easily are able to develop e-Procurement systems and making these available for contracting authorities. The immediate goal hereby should be to increase the supply of digital solutions and thereby competition in order to attain inexpensive prices that small and medium sized enterprises can afford.

The Danish government therefore encourages the Commission to focus its efforts towards the development of standards and open source solutions.