

DRAFT MINUTES

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE EURIM PUBLIC PROCUREMENT WORKING PARTY held at The Post Office, 49 Featherstone Street, London EC1 on Monday 17th May 1999

1. The Chairman gave a report on activities since the previous meeting. Shortly after it the Commissioners had “resigned” and it had therefore seemed inappropriate to rush to publish a report that might be overtaken by events. She had now had confirmation that there had been no recent activity within DGXV and that they were expected to go straight to legislation without further consultation. It was agreed that the Commission’s failure to follow its own processes was a point that should be stressed.
2. A revised draft of the status report had now been drafted and was tabled. It had been sent to Michael Tappin’s office for comment but their response would not be available until the end of the week. Members of the committee were invited to make their comments within the same time scale and the paper would then be finalised and submitted for publication within EURIM.
3. Michael Tappin had confirmed he would give his support to the planned workshop and the Chairman had indicated that his participation would be welcome whether or not he was returned at the June elections. The workshop would now be held after the Euro Elections but before the end of the summer session, preferably in early July. The principal focus would be on providing information to MEPs but MPs would also be made welcome. The preferred venue was at the European Parliament building in Queen Anne’s Gate, with 1 The Abbey Garden as the fall-back. IW confirmed that Andersen’s would make a presentation, which would be by Steve Dempsey if the date was suitable for him. This contributions would examine current and future trends in IT procurement, examine the problems faced within the EU and comment on Monti’s statement. A second speaker would be sought, ideally someone with good experience in both the public and private sectors- The rest of the meeting would comprise a structured discussion between working party members and parliamentarians. The background information provided should include case studies (which MJ agreed to help BN compile) and a list of practices/activities that were common in the private sector but prohibited by the public procurement rules. The message to be put across was that current regulations prevent the UK from being competitive because of the costs diverted to the procurement process. The processes also stifled innovation because they effectively prevented government from giving a lead to new ideas. The legislative package was expected in October/November and the working party should offer to provide a prompt and authoritative reaction to it.
4. It was noted that the Public Accounts Committee was due to publish a report focusing on procurement of IT and that this was holding up other possible action within the UK. It would probably be appropriate for the working party to publish comments on the report in due course.
5. Efforts would continue to get the active involvement of a DTI representative in the working party. RG had contacts through his involvement in their electronic procurement group.