

Public-Private Partnerships and Sustainable Development in the European Union

Another Reason to Foster the Promotion of PPPs as Viable Alternatives in the Delivery of Public Services and Infrastructure

This thesis discusses the ability of Public-Private Partnerships (hereinafter PPPs) to generate socio-environmental benefits, thus, their capability to promote sustainable development goals throughout Europe.

In the ongoing process of boosting growth within the European Union, it is crucial to acknowledge that PPPs could be used as effective public delivery means of both economic and socio-environmental gains. Not only the functioning of the Internal Market could be fostered through PPPs, but also other equally important goals of sustainable development could be effectively pursued.

This thesis will preliminarily provide an understanding of the PPP phenomenon as a whole, its legal background and implementation in the Member States studied. Then, the relationship between the concept of sustainable development and public procurement will be examined in order to subsequently delve into the study of PPPs' ability to generate socio-environmental benefits. Furthermore, the scope for sustainable development in the European public contracts and concessions law will be outlined so as to identify the possible spaces for sustainability considerations in PPPs' structures. Next, PPPs' potential socio-environmental benefits will be investigated. Then, it will be studied the scope for sustainable development considerations within domestic policies and relevant public contracts and concessions law regimes of the Member States studied. Thereafter, national representative PPP projects will be identified and case studies will be carried out. Such empirical study will highlight, inter alia, the specific socio-environmental benefits delivered as well as the tender and contractual strategies, inherent in the particular structure of the PPPs studied, which allowed the integration and the generation, along with economic gains, of sustainable benefits. Thus, this study will identify the concrete ways through which sustainable development goals were promoted in the PPPs studied. Lastly, an overview of the research carried out and a picture of the acknowledgments and achievements of this thesis, along with concluding findings and remarks, will be provided.

Therefore, this study recognises PPPs as key elements, not only for the functioning of the Internal Market, but also for the promotion of sustainable development goals, such as social justice issues and shared environmental policy purposes. These may range from climate change concerns and the promotion of energy savings, to alternative energy sources or from energy and resource efficiency, development and environmental sustainability, to high-quality level of public services and infrastructure.

Overall, this thesis argues that, especially in the light of the current European contingencies, the generation of socio-environmental benefits represents another important reason why PPPs should be broadly exploited throughout the European Union as viable alternatives in the delivery of public services and/or infrastructure.