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Facilitating SMEs' Access to the Public (e)Procurement Market: Consip's Experience

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Agenda

- SMEs in the EU
 - SMEs in Italy
 - Actions undertaken by Consip to support SME's
 - The “Sportelli in Rete”
 - Conclusions
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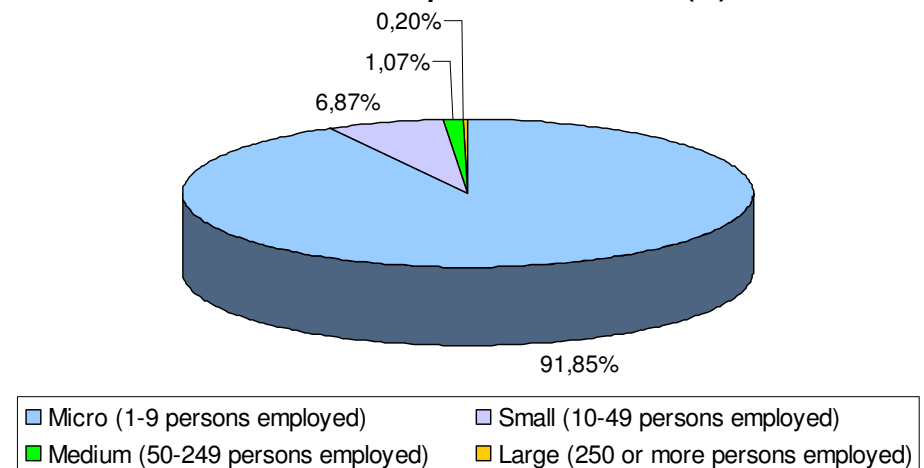


Relevant data on SMEs in the European Union

In the EU-27, almost 20 mln enterprises are active in the non-financial sector. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises play a crucial role in the European Economy...

- ❑ 19,6 million of Small and Medium Enterprises in Europe provide jobs to almost 85 million people
- ❑ By contrast, there are only about 40.000 Large enterprises which account for only 0,20 % of all enterprises
- ❑ The vast majority of enterprises in Europe are SMEs (99,80 %)
- ❑ Among SMEs, over 91 % are Micro enterprises, each of them employing less than 10 employees

Number of enterprises in the EU-27 (%)



*Source: Eurostat, *Statistic in Focus*, n. 31/2008. On data EU-27 (2005).

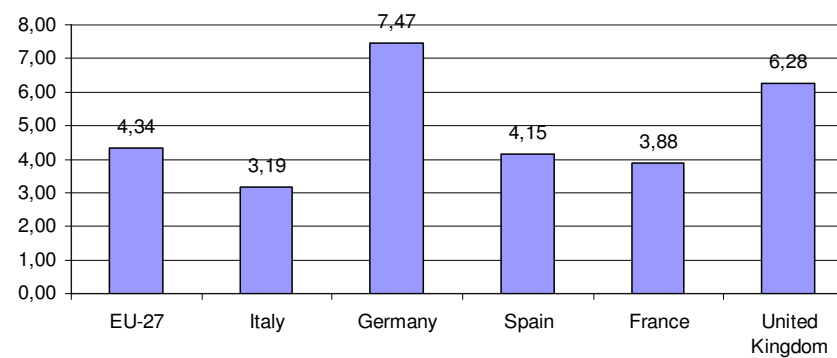


Key data

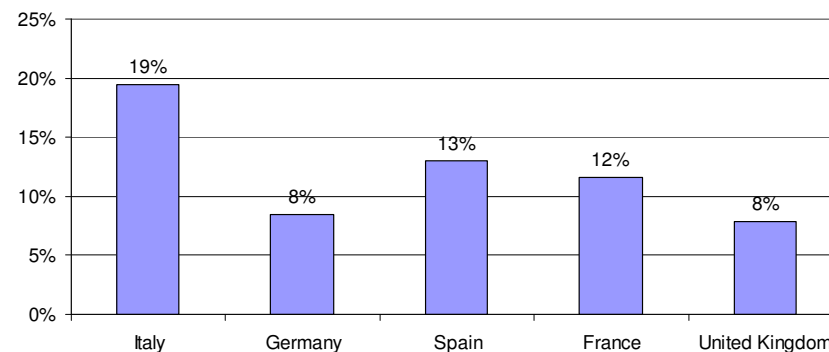
- ❑ The average EU-27 enterprise employs slightly more than 4 people, even though figures vary greatly from country to country
- ❑ Italian average is below the EU-27 average

- ❑ *Italy hosts the highest number of SMEs in Europe*

Average number of employees per firm



Number of SMEs by country (%)



An efficient "Public Procurement system" should pay attention to the involvement of SMEs

*Source: Eurostat, Statistic in Focus, n. 31/2008. On data EU-27 (2005).

Actions undertaken by Consip to support SMEs

Fostering participation of SMEs to frame contracts

- Soften constraints on Joint Bidding
- Increase the number of (geographical) lots
- Reduce the length of contracts;
- identify participation requirements tailored only on aspects directly related to the contract



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Actions undertaken by Consip to support SMEs



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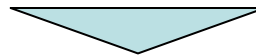
Fostering the use of eprocurement tools

- Permanent working tables with suppliers' institutional representatives

- Training events

- Supplier Training Desks ("Sportelli in Rete")

- Marketplace for goods and services (Mepa):
 - spot purchases below EU threshold
 - today compulsory for PAs
 - suited for territorial and local markets (SMEs)
 - cuts SMEs selling costs
 - increases SMEs visibility vs. Public Administrations



- 90% of enterprises registered to MEPA are SMEs
- 50% of the SME's are micro enterprises (7 employees)
- more than 60% of the value of orders transacted was handled by SMEs with 1 to 14 employees

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Actions undertaken by Consip to support SMEs “Sportelli in Rete” (Supplier Training Desks)

Description

Since 2004 Consip has strengthened its cooperation with the suppliers' institutional representatives by setting up **Supplier Training Desks**, at the enterprises Associations' territorial offices, that supply training and assistance to local enterprises on the use of electronic procurement tools.

Goals

- Overcome the initial resistance of SMEs in the use of ICT tools
- increase the participation of SME in Consip's activities, especially at the local and regional level and to support them in the use of eProcurement tools
- Training on the use of the marketplace and on the opportunities it offers (“multiplication effect”)
- Support SMEs during their first use of the marketplace (registration to the platform, eCatalogue creations, reply to a RfQ...)

Today 130 desks in 19 Regions

Over 25% of enterprises using the MEPA have been trained by the Desks

EUROPEAN CODE OF BEST PRACTICES

Section “*Ensuring access to relevant information and training*”

Information centers

Best practices at a national level

Italy

“In Italy, the central purchasing body (CONSIP) is developing a project called ‘Sportelli in Rete’ aimed at creating, in co-operation with partners, local desks and structures that help enterprises, particularly SMEs, to increase their participation in award procedures and to improve their familiarity with e-procurement tools”