

**Question for written answer E-006831/2020
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Catherine Griset (ID)

Subject: Taking geographical criteria into account when evaluating public procurement tenders

As things stand, the principles of non-discrimination and freedom of movement enshrined in the European treaties rule out the use of geographical criteria in competitive tendering and contract award procedures. The constitutional principles of some Member States, including France, do the same.

However, the disastrous economic and social consequences of lockdowns can, if a pragmatic approach is taken, be cushioned by simple decisions. One such decision would be to allow public authorities to award contracts wherever possible to local businesses, in this case SMEs and VSEs, taking their nearby location into account. The latter find it more difficult to withstand major economic shocks than big businesses; this is why easier access to public procurement procedures is so vital for them.

This would boost local economies, limit job losses in rural and outlying areas and thus contribute to economic recovery whilst being environmentally sound.

Given the urgent need for flexibility in applying the principles governing the free movement of goods and competition, and in line with its commitment to fostering economic recovery, will the Commission make recommendations to the Member States urging them to 'buy local'?