*International Conference*

**Next Generation Procurement**

***Anac’s President Giuseppe Busia***

“We are really happy to host this Conference because we recognize we live in a complex and at the same time highly stimulating era, where every decision today holds significant weight for the future, for the next generations.

It is essential to be informed and aware of both the challenges and opportunities we have, to act with the highest level of coordination at European level.

This is why events like this are invaluable.

In these challenging times, marked by strong international tensions and conflicts, it is a true joy for us to unite here representatives of institutions, experts and professionals from different countries to peacefully and with a constructive approach discuss relevant topics of shared interest.

**Public procurement** is a key enabler for implementing long-term public policies, shaping the fabric of our economies and societies.

This sector is crucial for the well-being of European and non European citizens and for our future development.

As a key government activity, public procurement has the power to transform lives, generate social value, and build a vision for the future.

The decisions we make today—especially in what and how we buy—will define the quality of life tomorrow and the legacy we leave for future generations.

Therefore, it is imperative that we regulate, organize, and monitor public procurement with the utmost care. This vigilance not only guards against corruption and criminal infiltration but also ensures sound governance and effective administration.

Aware of this, in planning and organizing this meeting, we have chosen to favour a future-oriented vision focused on people and their needs. We hope that this approach will be stimulating and engaging and that the debate will bring many suggestions and ideas, encouraging us to work even better and in an even more integrated and shared way.

This event will also be an opportunity to discuss the challenges encountered in achieving the objectives of the 2014 EU directives on public procurement (simplifying procurement procedures, increasing SME participation, implementing strategic objectives) and to open up avenues for necessary developments. Although the *European Public Procurement Data Space* and *national reforms*have led to some EU-wide progress and some strong country-level results, progress has been uneven and still faces an uphill battle. Therefore,governments, companies, and EU citizens cannotyet leverage procurement to promote greater social inclusion and environmental sustainability in Europe. This must be our challenge and our goal: using public procurement to achieve a fairer, greener and more inclusive Europe.

Given this objective, what are the actual opportunities and possibilities for action ahead of us? In these days, we will try to provide some answers.

Each of the two days of the conference will include panels with wide-ranging talks on the perspectives of the sector: how procurement can concretely improve the lives of Europeans; the importance of sustainable procurement beyond compliance with green criteria; how to unlock social value in procurement; and future challenges for the public procurement community in Europe.

Sustainability is a strategic direction that goes beyond the requirements of legislation or economics; it is above all a vision of the future that gives us a road map and shows governments how to best invest public money, generating value for people. Today, it is no longer enough to make cost-effective purchases in compliance with legality. Public administrations have a duty to be more ambitious: they must buy to make our societies more inclusive, to protect the planet, to increase collective well-being, to fully realise human rights. In short, they must use public procurement to build fairer countries for future generations by embedding social values ​​into their purchases. In this sense, sustainability must become the cornerstone of the procurement system, since only socially responsible procurement can produce prosperity, that is, the multidimensional development that ensures a real improvement in the quality of life.

Such ambitious goals cannot be achieved alone: we must join forces and establish a large international network to share experiences, good practices, ideas, inspirations, at the same time raising awareness among governments and involving citizens. For this reason, there is a strong need to create a public procurement community in Europe, and we, authorities who have already been engaged for years in regulating and monitoring the procurement sector, must promote this change with strength and conviction, taking advantage of opportunities such as this one.

Today talking about public procurement also means dealing with democracy, the environment, human rights and new technologies. It is necessary to explore new approaches and new perspectives to make public policies truly effective, also on a social and ethical level, always placing the human being at the center of the system, as the beneficiary and protagonist.

From this point of view, the opportunities of the digital transition appear crucial in terms of transparency and simplification, compliance and efficiency. Better data and digitalisation enable new forms of collaboration with citizens and businesses to monitor procurement, improve processes and broaden democratic participation in public decision-making. In this perspective, procurement information systems should be open by design and as much as possible harmonised at the European level.

Furthermore, the issue of corruption preventionmust always remain in the foreground; a topic closely connected to those of efficiency and strategic vision. In fact, integrity is the prerequisite for a model aiming at sustainability and inclusion, especially in a global context like the present one, where even crime has branched out and globalized. The fight against corruption today, when supplier networks are global and the future of the next generations is threatened by unfair practices, is inseparable from the protection of human rights and the environment.

Moments of elevated and participatory reflection such as this are surely the best way to ensure that we are not taken by surprise and will be ready to face the new challenges that lie ahead. Experiences like this can broaden our vision and help us move away from short-term action and transform public procurement for people and the planet. There is not much time to act.

We, as the National Anti-corruption Authority, will try to contribute to the debate with our proven experience in the sector, illustrating the results already achieved, especially in the field of digitalisation, and the critical issues identified, and indicating practicable solutions also with a view to an increasingly integrated European market.

We strongly believe that events like the one taking place today and tomorrow provide unique opportunities to learn from each other, deepen the analysis of the phenomena and share good practices in carrying out our tasks”.