

## GO EUROPEAN? HOW A EUROPEAN SUPPLIER QUALIFICATION AUTHORITY CAN UNLOCK CROSS-BORDER PROCUREMENT

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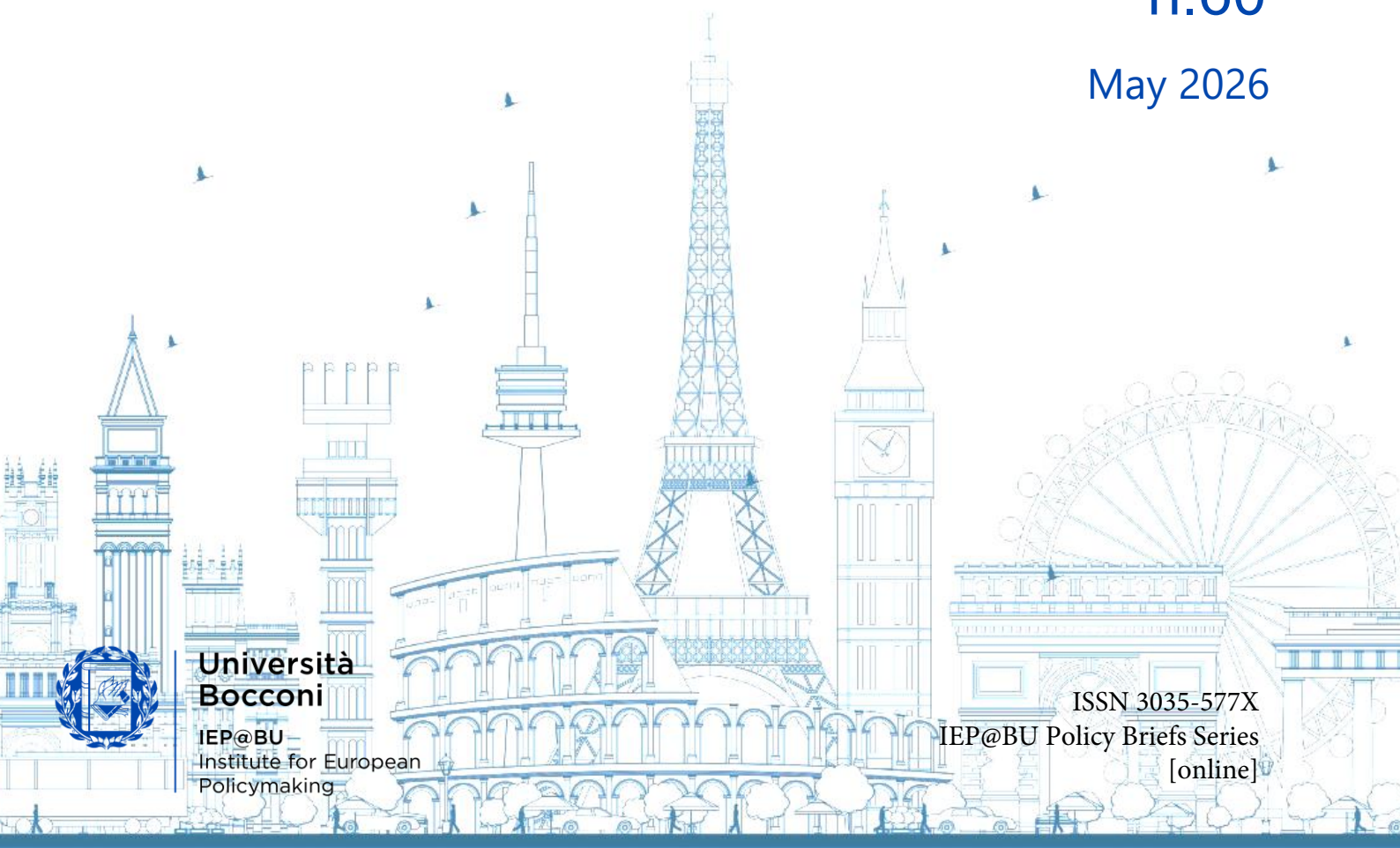


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## Abstract

The European Union market for public procurement is still fragmented. Cross-border participation remains limited, not primarily because of discrimination at the award stage, but due to fragmentation in national supplier qualification systems. Firms face high administrative costs, duplicative verification, and legal uncertainty when demonstrating eligibility across Member States, which discourages participation before tenders are even submitted.

A European Supplier Qualification Mechanism is thus needed. It would be cost effective, reduce timelines, and would build a market through trust. Existing approaches, based on decentralised public verification or voluntary private standards are insufficient on all three accounts. The existing Italian SOA provides a model in which accredited entities perform legally binding pre-qualification under public supervision, producing reusable certificates recognised across procedures and, if adopted at the EU level, across borders.

A European framework for supplier qualification could not only strengthen the Single Market, but also provide a credible institutional basis for future strategic procurement initiatives.



## Executive Summary

Forthcoming reforms of EU public procurement coincide with a broader shift toward a more strategic role of the state, in which procurement is expected to deliver sustainability, resilience, innovation and, in sensitive sectors, European preference, alongside value for money. Delivering on these ambitions depends on an often-overlooked institutional layer: supplier qualification, the verification that a firm meets the legal, economic-financial, technical, and organisational requirements needed to execute a public contract.

The two answers currently in place are both inadequate. Fully public, tender-by-tender verification duplicates checks across authorities, lengthens timelines, and increases ex post litigation, with costs amplified across borders, where documentation must typically be legalised and validated in each host country. On the other hand, voluntary private standards such as ISO carry no legal effect on market access and offer limited public assurance. Between these poles lies a more promising institutional space: hybrid systems in which accredited private bodies perform verification under tight public supervision, and the resulting certificate is legally constitutive of access to tenders, reusable across procedures, and binding on contracting authorities. In this regard, the Italian SOA system becomes the gold standard.

Empirical findings (Granickas et al. 2026) show that direct cross-border participation remains extremely limited and is deterred mainly by information gaps and administrative duplication rather than by discrimination at the award stage. Policy attention should therefore shift from the award phase to eligibility, ensuring that participation can occur and markets can form before award criteria are examined. This paper argues that reforming supplier qualification is an effective way, and perhaps the only way, to address this bottleneck.

This brief addresses this question in two steps. First, it identifies the core performance parameters of an optimal qualification regime — cost efficiency, timeline compression, and market-building capacity through trust and reduction of informational asymmetries. Second, it examines the institutional conditions required to deliver these outcomes at European scale, introducing three cumulative levels of reform — validity, equivalence, and legislative convergence

As argued, reusable, legally constitutive pre-bid qualification reduces public verification costs, compresses award timelines, enhances trust, and sharply reduces litigation. Scaled to EU level, this logic makes hybrid qualification the strongest candidate for a cross-border architecture consistent with a 28th regime for public procurement, while also providing a stable frame to clarify third-country access, today legally ambiguous and de facto open to any bidder.

By aligning the three levels of reform with the optimal qualification system identified, we outline three EU policy pathways: strengthened mutual recognition of qualification evidence, an EU-enabled system of harmonised supplier qualification bodies issuing reusable passports, and the creation of a European Supplier Qualification Authority, together with its qualification entity counterparts, similarly to the role of ANAC and the SOAs in Italy.



## A Window of Opportunity — The 28th Regime and the Future of European Procurement

This means that the European Union stands at a rare institutional crossroads, which is opening due to a highly challenging, and fast deteriorating, global context. While highly worrying, this also creates a unique window of opportunity stemming from the convergence of three policy imperatives. First, geopolitical concerns and the pursuit of strategic autonomy are pushing the Union towards 'buy European' logics in public procurement, with or without joint acquisitions (Beetsma & Nicoli 2024). Second, the need to relaunch growth and reduce fragmentation in the Single Market is strengthening the case for a 28th regime. Third, the global technological paradigm is changing at an accelerated pace, driven by the spread of artificial intelligence, the emergence of robotics, and the ever-growing pressure to expand the fight against climate change, including in public procurement (Lappe & Nicoli 2025; Nicoli & Lappe 2025). Taken together, these pressures are redefining procurement as a core instrument of European economic governance, in combination with strategic autonomy and the Single Market agenda. As the forthcoming revision of Directive 2014/24/EU moves to the forefront of the legislative wishlist, policymakers are confronted not merely with questions of procedural simplification but with something more foundational: what kind of institutional architecture should underpin the Single Market for public procurement in the decades ahead?

This question has acquired new urgency in the context of a broader debate about whether the Union should develop what scholars and practitioners have termed a "28th regime" — an optional, directly applicable EU-level legal framework that would operate alongside, rather than replace, the twenty-seven national procurement systems. The concept draws inspiration from analogous experiments in European private law and company law, where optional EU instruments have successfully created spaces for cross-border economic activity without requiring full harmonisation of national rules. Applied to procurement, a 28th regime could offer contracting authorities and economic operators the ability to opt into a common European framework, with uniform qualification criteria, standardised verification procedures, and a legally constitutive certificate of supplier capacity recognised in all Member States.

The timing of this debate is not coincidental, as inadequacy in front of global challenges is exposing the limits of fragmented national procurement systems. When the European Commission mobilises joint procurement for defence capabilities, or when member states are asked to coordinate infrastructure investment under the umbrella of NextGenerationEU, the absence of interoperable trust mechanisms creates tangible friction. Moreover, the data revolution in procurement — driven by the Public Procurement Data Space, eForms standardisation, and the digitalisation of contracting authority platforms — has revealed that the bottleneck in cross-border procurement is no longer primarily informational. Data availability is improving; what is missing is an institutional architecture capable of converting that data into interoperable legal certainty about supplier capacity.

Public procurement is a key pillar of Europe's economy, particularly in a period marked by challenges so broad that state power has returned to the centre of political debate. The public sector accounts, in the EU, for approximately 45% of GDP; procurement activities alone represent nearly a third of that, or approximately 14% of GDP. Public procurement is therefore not only economically crucial, but also strategically fundamental, since it is the tool that allows public authorities to gain access to goods, services and infrastructure needed to pursue their goals.

For a long time, public procurement activities were considered very close to any other market, which implied that particular attention had to be paid to ensure equality of treatment of companies. This, coupled with the progressive retreat since 1987 of the public sector from direct market intervention



and the dominance of state aid and competition policy, meant that for nearly three decades, price alone constituted the main parameter of comparison between competing offers. This is now changing in fundamental ways.

Since 2019, the European Commission has explicitly pursued a strategic procurement agenda, aimed at empowering public authorities not just to gain access to goods, services and infrastructure, but also to pursue strategic objectives — prioritising green products, goods manufactured in specific regions, and leveraging economies of scale and monopsony power. Enabling strategic procurement without undoing the fundamental principle of fair competition is, however, easier said than done. Hence, the European system of public procurement has grown immensely complicated, heavily segmented along national borders, which makes cross-border operations exceedingly complex.

The forthcoming revision of Directive 2014/24/EU and its sister directives aims to simplify and streamline the use of procurement as a strategic tool for public policy. At the highest level of abstraction, proposed changes aim at fundamentally changing the way public procurement officers see the act of procuring, so as to include strategic considerations like mainstreaming non-price criteria, introducing 'buy European' or European-preference measures in key sectors, and encouraging joint procurement for strategic investment.

A second line of intervention pertains to the modernisation of procurement practices. The EU is accelerating the shift toward modern, data-driven procurement. The launch of the Public Procurement Data Space (PPDS) fits this agenda, aiming at standardising and making interoperable procurement data across member states. Another major track of reform is improving the fairness of access to procurement tenders, particularly for SMEs and new entrants, both domestically and cross-border.

If these new strategic, growth-oriented, and sustainability-related rules remain primarily national in their design and verification, they risk further fragmenting the regulatory space of European public procurement and thereby hindering the Single Market. Mechanisms that ensure cross-border recognition and usability of compliance and qualification decisions in public procurement are therefore more urgent than ever.

## Optimal Supplier Qualification parameters

Supplier qualification is a cornerstone of effective public procurement, yet it is a significant friction point for both buyers and suppliers. Qualification systems directly shape speed, competition, and procurement market dynamics. Well-designed qualification systems reduce the need for repetitive, case-by-case verification of suppliers' technical, financial, and professional capacity, allowing contracting authorities to accelerate procedures and focus resources on evaluation and contract management rather than administrative checks.

To perform well, alternative supplier qualification systems need to score high under three parameters: cost, timeline dilation, and market-building, which requires trust building and reduction in informational asymmetries.

**Procurement costs and timeline dilation.** The public economic rationale for a hybrid supplier certification system is quite strong. In a case-by-case, public verification system the entire cost of verification (and its legal weight, too) is borne by the public, and therefore the total cost for the authority increases mechanically with the number of bidders. Self-certification would not be a



credible solution given the great differences in corporate cultures across member-states, the risk of differentiated interpretation of the norms, and the risk of legal challenges faced by the public. Under private certification, by contrast, compliance costs are borne upfront by firms and incorporated into bids, therefore not impacting the Public Authority. Furthermore, Public certification costs scale with the number of competitors, whereas private certification costs are delinked from competition and decline with the reusability of certification. Now, private certification can take different forms, including labelling. However, public procurement markets are highly regulated markets, with strong legal safeguards that are in place to ensure the most level-playing-field possible. This means that companies losing out on a bid have always right to legal recourse (and rightly so) if they believe that the principle of equality of treatment has been violated. Since labelling companies carry no legal responsibility for their activities, the legal responsibility is borne by the public authorities, potentially leading to growing costs, uncertainty, and dilated timelines. Instead, a system of pre-certification authorities can be made legally responsible for the veracity of said certification, completely transferring the legal risk from the public to semi-private, notary-like entities. Table 1 below summarises this reasoning, comparing various approaches to supplier qualification to identify optimal models.

Approach/Parameter	Cost	Time dilation	Legal responsibility	Trust-building	Informational asymmetry reduction
<i>Public verification</i>	High, borne by public	Long	Borne by public	High	High
<i>Notary-like certification</i>	Medium, borne by privates	Short	Borne by certifying authority	High	High
<i>Private labelling (e.g. ISO)</i>	Low, borne by privates	Short	Borne by public & privates	Low	Moderate
<i>Self-certification</i>	Very low, borne by privates	Short	Borne by public & privates	Low	None

**Trust building and Market-making.** Trust building refers to the extent to which the results of a compliance or qualification assessment are trustworthy to multiple purchasing authorities, across borders, and therefore support the creation of strategic public procurement markets. It is an essential component of market-making, especially cross-border.

In short, notary-like qualification regimes score higher in trust than ISO certifications because the certifying authority exercises a quasi-public verification function, operating under explicit public mandate and continuous supervision. Unlike fully private certifications, such as ISOs - where certification bodies compete primarily on service provision and bear limited regulatory responsibility- a fully-functioning system of supplier certification assigns to the certifying authority a function that substitutes ex ante qualification checks by contracting authorities.

More in detail, without any sort of supplier qualification, the uncertainty about the genuine technical and financial suitability of a firm falls entirely on the contracting authority, which has to assess it case by case, tender by tender. Supplier qualification reallocates this risk: it transfers it ex ante to a specialised certification body. The contracting authority can then engage in the transaction because uncertainty has been “priced” through an already aggregated, standardised, and transparent form.



Some supplier certification systems imply competition between certifying bodies (this is often the case with private certifications like ISO); in other cases, notary-like bodies (like the Italian SOA) produce legally valid certificates at a fixed cost. In both cases, the problem that certification bodies try to address – informational asymmetry about the quality of a supplier – is reduced. The certifying entity converts private information into a publicly legible price signal. When the presence or absence of a certain feature is a condition for the transaction to take place (which is often the case in public procurement, even more so when strategic public procurement is at play) the presence of an informational gap between buyers (contracting authorities) and sellers (firms) can even prevent transactions from occurring at all. The certification process, therefore, is instrumental to the creation of the market itself; its capacity to do so is proportional to the reduction in informational asymmetry. However, the reduction in informational asymmetry is not equal among all systems of certification. Notably, because purely private certifications imply a degree of competition between certifying authorities, they necessarily result in lower prices, but also lower certainty about the quality of the certification itself. A private certification, like an ISO, competes to acquire clients — the firms requesting certification — typically in a context where demand is voluntary and the value of the certificate depends on its market diffusion rather than its rigour. This generates a structural downward pressure on assessment quality: a certifier that applies overly stringent standards loses clientele to more accommodating competitors, without any institutional mechanism to internalise the social cost of erroneous certifications. This is the classic race-to-the-bottom dynamic in private certification unanchored to public accountability. In short, they produce a signal, but the signal is noisy and relatively ineffective in addressing information asymmetries in ways that can really enhance public trust. Conversely, a notary-like approach guarantees an equal and symmetrical reduction in information asymmetry, resulting in a standardised signal of verified quality. In turn, notary-like systems, like the Italian one, can shift legal risks to the certifying authority, further enhancing trust.

Furthermore, in a system marked by high information asymmetries, trust-building becomes a critical mechanism for reducing litigation. Cross-border procurement amplifies this dynamic: an issue as simple as a contested translation or an unclear documentary equivalence can give rise to litigation, since the procedural ground for dispute is not the substance of the bid but the eligibility of the credentials supporting it. The more fragmented the qualification environment, the more numerous the points at which such disputes can arise. Where qualification is instead settled *ex ante* through a standardised, legally constitutive certificate, an entire category of admission-stage disputes is removed at the source.

Trust building and information asymmetry reductions have important implications for the European scalability of any supplier qualification system. A single market for public procurement does not exist by normative decree: it exists when public operators from different countries are genuinely willing to let companies from different countries compete with each other, and this requires that each can assess the reliability of counterparties and institutions with which it interacts. Today, a German firm considering participation in an Italian tender — or vice versa — faces a structural opacity problem: it does not know the qualification standards applied in the other country, cannot interpret the documentation produced, and has no guarantee that the foreign contracting authority will read its own credentials equivalently. In other words, cross-border procurement across separate jurisdictions **escalates the information asymmetry problem**, and therefore the relative value of notary-like and fully private certifications.



## Qualification regimes across the European Union

Available evidence shows that qualification regimes shape cross-border participation as much as procurement rules themselves. Analyses of EU procurement data for 2018–2023 indicate that only around 2-4% of contracts, by value or number, are awarded directly to firms established in another Member State. Commission evaluations consistently find that the primary constraint is not discrimination at the award stage, but the fact that foreign firms often do not submit bids at all—particularly in works contracts, where qualification and capacity requirements are more stringent and sector-specific.

Against this background, Member States are, in practice, confronted with three distinct policy options for organising supplier qualification regimes, each reflecting a different allocation of responsibility for verification and standard-setting.

The first option is a centralised, government-run qualification system, in which a public authority maintains a single register of pre-qualified suppliers. Examples include Spain's ROLECE and the central professional registries used in France. This model offers uniform standards, legal certainty, and strong public oversight, but can entail significant administrative burden and slower updating of supplier information.

The second option is a decentralised, contracting-authority-led model, under which each contracting authority verifies suppliers independently within individual procedures. This approach, common in Germany, the Netherlands, and the Nordic countries, maximises flexibility and openness to competition, but leads to duplication of effort, higher transaction costs for both buyers and suppliers, and limited reusability of qualification data across borders.

The third option is a delegated or hybrid model, where qualification is carried out by accredited private or semi-private entities under public supervision. Italy's pre-qualification system for public works is a prominent example. This approach can combine standardisation with operational efficiency and technical expertise, but requires robust accreditation and oversight mechanisms to ensure trust and consistency.

Taken together, these three models represent the core institutional design choices available to policymakers, with trade-offs between standardisation, flexibility, administrative efficiency, and market accessibility, particularly for cross-border bidders.

## The Italian system in detail

The Italian qualification system is an attestation mechanism that ensures companies meet legal, financial, and technical requirements to participate in public works contracts. It applies only to public works above €150,000, and not to services or supplies. In practice, a SOA certification is a mandatory qualification for companies that want to bid on public construction or infrastructure contracts.

Certification is issued by independent, authorised SOA bodies, which operate under the supervision of the Italian Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC). A first defining feature of the Italian system is that SOA entities are delegated a quasi-notarial function, with SOA certificates bearing public validity, and are subject to a strictly limited and exclusive business scope. Therefore, SOAs exercise a public-interest function and are legally prohibited from operating outside the narrowly defined scope set by



the Code.

A second, and particularly distinctive, feature of the Italian model is that SOA certification constitutes a "necessary and sufficient" condition under the Public Contracts Code for admission to public works tenders. Contracting authorities are neither permitted nor required to conduct parallel or supplementary assessments of those same requirements. This principle has been consistently reaffirmed through administrative case law and regulatory practice, including multiple rulings by administrative courts.

The SOA system reallocates a specific segment of the procurement function — namely, the ex ante verification of eligibility requirements — to a strictly regulated private sector operating under public oversight, while all procurement decisions remain firmly within the competence of contracting authorities. The state does not merely outsource a service but it delegates ex ante verification while retaining full control over the qualification framework, eligibility criteria, thresholds, enforcement mechanisms, and legal consequences of certification. It does so avoiding the race-to-the bottom typically characterizing private certification markets like ISO: In fact, the SOA system breaks this perverse mechanism through an element that ISO systems structurally cannot incorporate: the constitutive legal effect of the certificate. Because SOA attestation is, by law, a necessary and sufficient condition for participation in covered tenders, its value does not depend on voluntary market diffusion but on its legal validity — and that validity is maintained by public authority, not by the market. This means that a SOA certifier cannot compete by lowering standards without losing public accreditation, which is the very source of the value of the certificate it issues, but by improving efficiency, speed, and service quality. It is this hybrid architecture — market incentives channelled within a perimeter of public accountability — that makes the SOA model institutionally superior to ISO certifications as the foundation for a genuine Single Market in public procurement. In practice, current SOA certificates confirm that a firm meets all requirements in the following areas:

- Legal standing (duly registered and authorised)
- Financial capacity (minimum turnover and liquidity thresholds)
- Technical qualifications (past experience)
- Organisational structure (adequate staff, equipment, and quality-management systems)

Currently, SOA certificates focus on public construction works and are issued by category of works — for example: civil and industrial buildings, roads, highways, railways, or electrical systems. Each category includes different classifications based on the maximum contract value for which the firm is qualified (from Class I = €258,000 to Class VIII = above €15.5 million).<sup>1</sup> A similar certification approach could easily be widened to other categories of activities (e.g. the presence of sustainable supply lines, or the product origins), and for different contract values, assessing the firm's capacity not only to deliver, in principle, goods or services which nominally meet certain criteria, but to do so at scale.

Finally, the system includes a public certifications database which accelerates verification from

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<sup>1</sup> Firms apply to a SOA certification body, submitting financial statements, documentation relating to previous public and private contracts, as well as staff qualifications and technical documentation. Certification is valid for five years, with a mandatory mid-term verification at year three (the so-called *verifica triennale*).



contracting authorities. All certifications are recorded in ANAC's digital systems, and contracting authorities verify SOA compliance through the ANAC database before awarding contracts.

## Towards a European System of Supplier Qualification

As discussed in this paper, systems that legally pre-certify certain features of suppliers can contribute to substantially speeding up bidding processes and reducing costs. Analysis of firms' perspectives (Granickas et al. 2026) shows that EU-wide systems of supplier certification may be critical in extending the capacity of firms to act cross-border, thereby reinforcing the Single Market. In the previous sections, we discussed in detail (1) what criteria make for a good supplier qualification approach, and (2) how do these systems compare across the EU. However, simply representing a good self-standing system does not warrant that such system is easily scalable cross-border. The transition from twenty-seven fragmented national qualification regimes towards a European system of supplier qualification further requires that the system scales well. In practice, the scalability requirement is delivered by three distinct dimensions: cross-border validity, cross-border equivalence, and cross-border legislation. The three dimensions are cumulative (table 2): while the latter requires stronger action of the former, each amplifies the effectiveness of the others.

**Table 2 — The three dimensions of European qualification reform**

Level	Dimension	Description	Tools (existing and potential)
01	Validity	Supporting documents issued in one Member State must carry legal effect in others, as admissible evidence in tender procedures.	ESPD; e-Certis; common digital passports; ex lege recognition.
02	Equivalence	The substance of the requirements certified — for example categories, classes, fiscal and financial compliance — must be mapped and validated across national systems	OG/OS categories; IMPIC-type registers; CPV standardisation., e-Certis
03	Legislative convergence	National laws governing qualification and tender admission must converge on common standards, supported by public accountability.	Public oversight (coordination of ANAC-like authorities); coordination of national legislation through Directives; shared liability regime for certifiers through Regulations.



## Three policy pathways

**Table 3 — Policy pathways assessed against the three levels of convergence**

	Policy 1: Mutual Recognition	Policy 2: Coordinated National Systems	Policy 3: European Supplier Qualification Authority
Validity (Level 01)	addressed.	addressed.	addressed.
Equivalence (Level 02)	Not addressed.	addressed.	addressed.
Legislative convergence (Level 03)	Not addressed.	Partially addressed.	addressed.

### Option 1 — Strengthened Mutual Recognition

A first, less ambitious option is to pursue stronger enforcement of mutual recognition of relevant documentation across Member States. A mutual recognition system would greatly facilitate cross-border operations of firms. This could apply to fiscal, financial, and previous experience documentation, and would build on the creation of common digital product passports, the extension of the ESPD, and the Public Procurement Data Space.

### Option 2 — European System of Supplier Qualifications (Coordinated National Systems)

A second option would be a European System of Supplier Qualifications. Under this option, the EU public procurement reform would harmonise qualification systems across the EU by encouraging Member States to allow private, accredited pre-qualification bodies to operate under a harmonised regulatory framework. In this approach, supplier qualification — particularly for works and infrastructure contracts — would be delegated to nationally-licensed private entities that apply national and EU-defined criteria, while public authorities and legislators in each member state retain rule-setting powers, oversight, and legal responsibility for procurement decisions.

For example, in Italy the SOA qualification certificate is a single document that includes specific categories and classifications. Under this policy proposal, a company could hold a similar document for another Member State reflecting national legislation, all within a single EU-recognised qualification passport. Countries could opt in and offer the possibility of using the EU-wide passport while maintaining their current qualification process. This approach would already generate a positive impact without disrupting markets.

### Option 3 — European Supplier Qualification Authority

Finally, the most ambitious policy option would be to create a genuine European Supplier Qualification Authority, establishing a European system of qualification for works and infrastructure procurement, operating in tandem with private authorised certifiers, similarly to the Italian model of ANAC and the SOAs discussed in this brief. Under this model, economic operators could obtain a single, EU-recognised qualification certifying their technical, financial, and professional capacity,



reusable across Member States and contracting authorities. Such a system could be operated either by a central EU body, similar to Italys ANAC, or through nationally designated entities that apply fully harmonised EU rules, with data integrated into shared infrastructures such as the Public Procurement Data Space.

An EU-wide qualification would significantly reduce duplication, accelerate procurement, and lower entry costs for cross-border bidders, particularly in complex infrastructure markets. At the same time, this option would require a high degree of political agreement, careful calibration to respect subsidiarity and proportionality, and robust governance to ensure trust, oversight, and adaptability across diverse national construction markets.

## Conclusions

This paper has argued that supplier qualification should be treated as a central design variable in the forthcoming reform of EU public procurement, rather than as a purely technical or procedural accessory to tendering. As the Union moves towards a more strategic procurement paradigm — embedding sustainability, resilience, innovation, and potentially European-preference objectives — the administrative and verification burdens associated with participation are likely to rise. Without institutional redesign, this trajectory risks narrowing bidder pools, reducing cross-border participation, and weakening the Single Market effects that EU procurement law is intended to deliver.

The analysis identified core performance dimensions for any qualification regime alongside three dimensions that a European qualification system must address: validity, equivalence, and legislative convergence. These criteria matter acutely in works and infrastructure markets, where execution risk is high and contracting authorities must assess complex, experience-based capacity claims. Digitalisation and structured data initiatives such as eForms and the Public Procurement Data Space improve the availability and interoperability of procurement information, but they do not by themselves resolve the bottleneck of consistent, accountable interpretation and verification.

The Italian qualification system offers a particularly instructive model because it converts qualification from an ad hoc, tender-by-tender exercise into a reusable, legally constitutive market access instrument. Its hybrid governance arrangement — accredited private bodies performing verification under tight public supervision, with the resulting certificate becoming a necessary and sufficient condition for participation — offers a concrete institutional template for the EU level. The market-making analogy explored in this paper clarifies both why this architecture works and why it cannot be replicated by voluntary ISO-type schemes: the constitutive legal effect of the certificate, anchored to public authority, is precisely what prevents the race to the bottom that characterises unregulated private certification markets.

The 28th regime discussions underway in Brussels provide an unprecedented opportunity to operationalise these insights. A voluntary European procurement qualification framework, accessible to all operators across the Single Market, would complement rather than replace national systems, preserve subsidiarity, and yet deliver the interoperable trust that cross-border procurement currently lacks. Evidence confirms that this is what firms themselves want: a common language of verified quality that travels across borders. A European system of pre-qualification, designed with the institutional lessons of the Italian model in mind, could provide precisely that.



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