

Why is the UK still playing by EU procurement rules tha...

Published: January 14, 2026, 5:02 pm

For the second time in a few days I want to share an editorial by Bew Wray from [Common A.M., which is published by Common Scot](#), which in turn is linked to Common Weal. As Ben says this morning:

The extent of how clueless Ministers are is frightening. In the House of Commons on Wednesday, Scottish Secretary Alister Jack was asked about the awarding of a major contract at the £2 billion Neart na Gaoithe Offshore Wind Farm off the coast of Fife to Indonesia, while the manufacturing workers at nearby BiFab missed out. The contract could have created a 1,000 jobs at the Fife yards, instead the manufacturing of the sleeves will travel across half the globe, generating significant carbon emissions from the shipping alone. Jack blithely responded that it is just "the market economy at work". That dogma doesn't stand up to an ounce of scrutiny. The Scottish Government licensed the offshore wind farm. The UK Government set the basis for renewables subsidies through Contracts for Difference. The EU restricted what subsidies are possible through public procurement and state aid rules. The company which won the contract, EDF Renewables, is owned by the French state. The Indonesian firm which won the sub-contract off EDF, Saipem, is owned by Italian conglomerate ENI, and benefits from operating in an 'enterprise zone' which offers special tax, regulation and infrastructure incentives, and with few workers rights. The state has had a role to play in shaping this 'market' every step of the way. Trade unions are rightly angry about Jack's remark. The promised green jobs boom has not come because the sector is dominated by multinationals (some owned by other country's states) which know how to rig public procurement processes and state aid rules to maximise their profits. Meanwhile, the local supply chains we need for the zero-carbon transition are undermined, and the farce of offshoring contracts around the world to build a windfarm in Scotland in the middle of a Climate Emergency continues. There is a small window of opportunity to rewrite the rules on procurement and state aid as Britain exits the EU in such a way that it is fit for the zero-carbon transition, but with Minister's like Jack in charge talking nonsense about an imaginary free-market, there's little hope that anything other than corporate interest will win out.

What's really quite bizarre is that despite leaving the EU the UK is still determinedly

playing by rules that no one else seems to think apply to them when it comes to procurement, and UK jobs losses are happening as a result.

The big question is, why is that?