

Directive 2004/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts (repealed)

DIRECTIVE 2004/18/EC OF THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

of 31 March 2004

on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works
contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 47(2) and Article 55 and Article 95 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission⁽¹⁾,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee⁽²⁾,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions⁽³⁾,

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 251 of the Treaty⁽⁴⁾, in the light of the joint text approved by the Conciliation Committee on 9 December 2003,

Whereas:

- (1) On the occasion of new amendments being made to Council Directives 92/50/EEC of 18 June 1992 relating to the coordination of procedures for the award of public service contracts⁽⁵⁾, 93/36/EEC of 14 June 1993 coordinating procedures for the award of public supply contracts⁽⁶⁾ and 93/37/EEC of 14 June 1993 concerning the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts⁽⁷⁾, which are necessary to meet requests for simplification and modernisation made by contracting authorities and economic operators alike in their responses to the Green Paper adopted by the Commission on 27 November 1996, the Directives should, in the interests of clarity, be recast. This Directive is based on Court of Justice case-law, in particular case-law on award criteria, which clarifies the possibilities for the contracting authorities to meet the needs of the public concerned, including in the environmental and/or social area, provided that such criteria are linked to the subject-matter of the contract, do not confer an unrestricted freedom of choice on the contracting authority, are expressly mentioned and comply with the fundamental principles mentioned in recital 2.
- (2) The award of contracts concluded in the Member States on behalf of the State, regional or local authorities and other bodies governed by public law entities, is subject to the respect of the principles of the Treaty and in particular to the principle of freedom of movement of goods, the principle of freedom of establishment and the principle of freedom to provide services and to the principles deriving therefrom, such as the principle of equal treatment, the principle of non-discrimination, the principle of mutual

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recognition, the principle of proportionality and the principle of transparency. However, for public contracts above a certain value, it is advisable to draw up provisions of Community coordination of national procedures for the award of such contracts which are based on these principles so as to ensure the effects of them and to guarantee the opening-up of public procurement to competition. These coordinating provisions should therefore be interpreted in accordance with both the aforementioned rules and principles and other rules of the Treaty.

- (3) Such coordinating provisions should comply as far as possible with current procedures and practices in each of the Member States.
- (4) Member States should ensure that the participation of a body governed by public law as a tenderer in a procedure for the award of a public contract does not cause any distortion of competition in relation to private tenderers.
- (5) Under Article 6 of the Treaty, environmental protection requirements are to be integrated into the definition and implementation of the Community policies and activities referred to in Article 3 of that Treaty, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development. This Directive therefore clarifies how the contracting authorities may contribute to the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development, whilst ensuring the possibility of obtaining the best value for money for their contracts.
- (6) Nothing in this Directive should prevent the imposition or enforcement of measures necessary to protect public policy, public morality, public security, health, human and animal life or the preservation of plant life, in particular with a view to sustainable development, provided that these measures are in conformity with the Treaty.
- (7) Council Decision 94/800/EC of 22 December 1994 concerning the conclusion on behalf of the European Community, as regards matters within its competence, of the Agreements reached in the Uruguay Round multilateral negotiations (1986 to 1994)⁽⁸⁾, approved in particular the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement, hereinafter referred to as the 'Agreement', the aim of which is to establish a multilateral framework of balanced rights and obligations relating to public contracts with a view to achieving the liberalisation and expansion of world trade.

In view of the international rights and commitments devolving on the Community as a result of the acceptance of the Agreement, the arrangements to be applied to tenderers and products from signatory third countries are those defined by the Agreement. This Agreement does not have direct effect. The contracting authorities covered by the Agreement which comply with this Directive and which apply the latter to economic operators of third countries which are signatories to the Agreement should therefore be in conformity with the Agreement. It is also appropriate that those coordinating provisions should guarantee for Community economic operators conditions for participation in public procurement which are just as favourable as those reserved for economic operators of third countries which are signatories to the Agreement.

- (8) Before launching a procedure for the award of a contract, contracting authorities may, using a technical dialogue, seek or accept advice which may be used in the preparation

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of the specifications provided, however, that such advice does not have the effect of precluding competition.

- (9) In view of the diversity of public works contracts, contracting authorities should be able to make provision for contracts for the design and execution of work to be awarded either separately or jointly. It is not the intention of this Directive to prescribe either joint or separate contract awards. The decision to award contracts separately or jointly must be determined by qualitative and economic criteria, which may be defined by national law.
- (10) A contract shall be deemed to be a public works contract only if its subject matter specifically covers the execution of activities listed in Annex I, even if the contract covers the provision of other services necessary for the execution of such activities. Public service contracts, in particular in the sphere of property management services, may, in certain circumstances, include works. However, insofar as such works are incidental to the principal subject-matter of the contract, and are a possible consequence thereof or a complement thereto, the fact that such works are included in the contract does not justify the qualification of the contract as a public works contract.
- (11) A Community definition of framework agreements, together with specific rules on framework agreements concluded for contracts falling within the scope of this Directive, should be provided. Under these rules, when a contracting authority enters into a framework agreement in accordance with the provisions of this Directive relating, in particular, to advertising, time limits and conditions for the submission of tenders, it may enter into contracts based on such a framework agreement during its term of validity either by applying the terms set forth in the framework agreement or, if all terms have not been fixed in advance in the framework agreement, by reopening competition between the parties to the framework agreement in relation to those terms. The reopening of competition should comply with certain rules the aim of which is to guarantee the required flexibility and to guarantee respect for the general principles, in particular the principle of equal treatment. For the same reasons, the term of the framework agreements should not exceed four years, except in cases duly justified by the contracting authorities.
- (12) Certain new electronic purchasing techniques are continually being developed. Such techniques help to increase competition and streamline public purchasing, particularly in terms of the savings in time and money which their use will allow. Contracting authorities may make use of electronic purchasing techniques, providing such use complies with the rules drawn up under this Directive and the principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination and transparency. To that extent, a tender submitted by a tenderer, in particular where competition has been reopened under a framework agreement or where a dynamic purchasing system is being used, may take the form of that tenderer's electronic catalogue if the latter uses the means of communication chosen by the contracting authority in accordance with Article 42.
- (13) In view of the rapid expansion of electronic purchasing systems, appropriate rules should now be introduced to enable contracting authorities to take full advantage of the possibilities afforded by these systems. Against this background, it is necessary

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to define a completely electronic dynamic purchasing system for commonly used purchases, and lay down specific rules for setting up and operating such a system in order to ensure the fair treatment of any economic operator who wishes to take part therein. Any economic operator which submits an indicative tender in accordance with the specification and meets the selection criteria should be allowed to join such a system. This purchasing technique allows the contracting authority, through the establishment of a list of tenderers already selected and the opportunity given to new tenderers to take part, to have a particularly broad range of tenders as a result of the electronic facilities available, and hence to ensure optimum use of public funds through broad competition.

- (14) Since use of the technique of electronic auctions is likely to increase, such auctions should be given a Community definition and governed by specific rules in order to ensure that they operate in full accordance with the principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination and transparency. To that end, provision should be made for such electronic auctions to deal only with contracts for works, supplies or services for which the specifications can be determined with precision. Such may in particular be the case for recurring supplies, works and service contracts. With the same objective, it must also be possible to establish the respective ranking of the tenderers at any stage of the electronic auction. Recourse to electronic auctions enables contracting authorities to ask tenderers to submit new prices, revised downwards, and when the contract is awarded to the most economically advantageous tender, also to improve elements of the tenders other than prices. In order to guarantee compliance with the principle of transparency, only the elements suitable for automatic evaluation by electronic means, without any intervention and/or appreciation by the contracting authority, may be the object of electronic auctions, that is, only the elements which are quantifiable so that they can be expressed in figures or percentages. On the other hand, those aspects of the tenders which imply an appreciation of non-quantifiable elements should not be the object of electronic auctions. Consequently, certain works contracts and certain service contracts having as their subject-matter intellectual performances, such as the design of works, should not be the object of electronic auctions.
- (15) Certain centralised purchasing techniques have been developed in Member States. Several contracting authorities are responsible for making acquisitions or awarding public contracts/framework agreements for other contracting authorities. In view of the large volumes purchased, those techniques help increase competition and streamline public purchasing. Provision should therefore be made for a Community definition of central purchasing bodies dedicated to contracting authorities. A definition should also be given of the conditions under which, in accordance with the principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment, contracting authorities purchasing works, supplies and/or services through a central purchasing body may be deemed to have complied with this Directive.
- (16) In order to take account of the different circumstances obtaining in Member States, Member States should be allowed to choose whether contracting authorities may use framework agreements, central purchasing bodies, dynamic purchasing systems, electronic auctions or the competitive dialogue procedure, as defined and regulated by this Directive.

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- (17) Multiplying the number of thresholds for applying the coordinating provisions complicates matters for contracting authorities. Furthermore, in the context of monetary union such thresholds should be established in euro. Accordingly, thresholds should be set, in euro, in such a way as to simplify the application of such provisions, while at the same time ensuring compliance with the thresholds provided for by the Agreement which are expressed in special drawing rights. In this context, provision should also be made for periodic reviews of the thresholds expressed in euro so as to adjust them, where necessary, in line with possible variations in the value of the euro in relation to the special drawing right.
- (18) The field of services is best delineated, for the purpose of applying the procedural rules of this Directive and for monitoring purposes, by subdividing it into categories corresponding to particular headings of a common classification and by bringing them together in two Annexes, II A and II B, according to the regime to which they are subject. As regards services in Annex II B, the relevant provisions of this Directive should be without prejudice to the application of Community rules specific to the services in question.
- (19) As regards public service contracts, full application of this Directive should be limited, for a transitional period, to contracts where its provisions will permit the full potential for increased cross-frontier trade to be realised. Contracts for other services need to be monitored during this transitional period before a decision is taken on the full application of this Directive. In this respect, the mechanism for such monitoring needs to be defined. This mechanism should, at the same time, enable interested parties to have access to the relevant information.
- (20) Public contracts which are awarded by the contracting authorities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors and which fall within the scope of those activities are covered by Directive 2004/17/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 coordinating the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors⁽⁹⁾. However, contracts awarded by the contracting authorities in the context of their service activities for maritime, coastal or river transport must fall within the scope of this Directive.
- (21) In view of the situation of effective market competition in the telecommunications sector following the implementation of the Community rules aimed at liberalising that sector, public contracts in that area should be excluded from the scope of this Directive insofar as they are intended primarily to allow the contracting authorities to exercise certain activities in the telecommunications sector. Those activities are defined in accordance with the definitions used in Articles 1, 2 and 8 of Council Directive 93/38/EEC of 14 June 1993 coordinating the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and telecommunications sector⁽¹⁰⁾, such that this Directive does not apply to contracts which have been excluded from the scope of Directive 93/38/EEC pursuant to Article 8 thereof.
- (22) Provision should be made for cases in which it is possible to refrain from applying the measures for coordinating procedures on grounds relating to State security or secrecy, or because specific rules on the awarding of contracts which derive from international

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agreements, relating to the stationing of troops, or which are specific to international organisations are applicable.

- (23) Pursuant to Article 163 of the Treaty, the encouragement of research and technological development is a means of strengthening the scientific and technological basis of Community industry, and the opening-up of public service contracts contributes to this end. This Directive should not cover the cofinancing of research and development programmes: research and development contracts other than those where the benefits accrue exclusively to the contracting authority for its use in the conduct of its own affairs, on condition that the service provided is wholly remunerated by the contracting authority, are not therefore covered by this Directive.
- (24) In the context of services, contracts for the acquisition or rental of immovable property or rights to such property have particular characteristics which make the application of public procurement rules inappropriate.
- (25) The awarding of public contracts for certain audiovisual services in the field of broadcasting should allow aspects of cultural or social significance to be taken into account which render application of procurement rules inappropriate. For these reasons, an exception must therefore be made for public service contracts for the purchase, development, production or co-production of off-the-shelf programmes and other preparatory services, such as those relating to scripts or artistic performances necessary for the production of the programme and contracts concerning broadcasting times. However, this exclusion should not apply to the supply of technical equipment necessary for the production, co-production and broadcasting of such programmes. A broadcast should be defined as transmission and distribution using any form of electronic network.
- (26) Arbitration and conciliation services are usually provided by bodies or individuals designated or selected in a manner which cannot be governed by procurement rules.
- (27) In accordance with the Agreement, the financial services covered by this Directive do not include instruments of monetary policy, exchange rates, public debt, reserve management or other policies involving transactions in securities or other financial instruments, in particular transactions by the contracting authorities to raise money or capital. Accordingly, contracts relating to the issue, purchase, sale or transfer of securities or other financial instruments are not covered. Central bank services are also excluded.
- (28) Employment and occupation are key elements in guaranteeing equal opportunities for all and contribute to integration in society. In this context, sheltered workshops and sheltered employment programmes contribute efficiently towards the integration or reintegration of people with disabilities in the labour market. However, such workshops might not be able to obtain contracts under normal conditions of competition. Consequently, it is appropriate to provide that Member States may reserve the right to participate in award procedures for public contracts to such workshops or reserve performance of contracts to the context of sheltered employment programmes.

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- (29) The technical specifications drawn up by public purchasers need to allow public procurement to be opened up to competition. To this end, it must be possible to submit tenders which reflect the diversity of technical solutions. Accordingly, it must be possible to draw up the technical specifications in terms of functional performance and requirements, and, where reference is made to the European standard or, in the absence thereof, to the national standard, tenders based on equivalent arrangements must be considered by contracting authorities. To demonstrate equivalence, tenderers should be permitted to use any form of evidence. Contracting authorities must be able to provide a reason for any decision that equivalence does not exist in a given case. Contracting authorities that wish to define environmental requirements for the technical specifications of a given contract may lay down the environmental characteristics, such as a given production method, and/or specific environmental effects of product groups or services. They can use, but are not obliged to use appropriate specifications that are defined in eco-labels, such as the European Eco-label, (multi-)national eco-labels or any other eco-label providing the requirements for the label are drawn up and adopted on the basis of scientific information using a procedure in which stakeholders, such as government bodies, consumers, manufacturers, distributors and environmental organisations can participate, and providing the label is accessible and available to all interested parties. Contracting authorities should, whenever possible, lay down technical specifications so as to take into account accessibility criteria for people with disabilities or design for all users. The technical specifications should be clearly indicated, so that all tenderers know what the requirements established by the contracting authority cover.
- (30) Additional information concerning contracts must, as is customary in Member States, be given in the contract documents for each contract or else in an equivalent document.
- (31) Contracting authorities which carry out particularly complex projects may, without this being due to any fault on their part, find it objectively impossible to define the means of satisfying their needs or of assessing what the market can offer in the way of technical solutions and/or financial/legal solutions. This situation may arise in particular with the implementation of important integrated transport infrastructure projects, large computer networks or projects involving complex and structured financing the financial and legal make-up of which cannot be defined in advance. To the extent that use of open or restricted procedures does not allow the award of such contracts, a flexible procedure should be provided which preserves not only competition between economic operators but also the need for the contracting authorities to discuss all aspects of the contract with each candidate. However, this procedure must not be used in such a way as to restrict or distort competition, particularly by altering any fundamental aspects of the offers, or by imposing substantial new requirements on the successful tenderer, or by involving any tenderer other than the one selected as the most economically advantageous.
- (32) In order to encourage the involvement of small and medium-sized undertakings in the public contracts procurement market, it is advisable to include provisions on subcontracting.

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- (33) Contract performance conditions are compatible with this Directive provided that they are not directly or indirectly discriminatory and are indicated in the contract notice or in the contract documents. They may, in particular, be intended to favour on-site vocational training, the employment of people experiencing particular difficulty in achieving integration, the fight against unemployment or the protection of the environment. For instance, mention may be made, amongst other things, of the requirements — applicable during performance of the contract — to recruit long-term job-seekers or to implement training measures for the unemployed or young persons, to comply in substance with the provisions of the basic International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions, assuming that such provisions have not been implemented in national law, and to recruit more handicapped persons than are required under national legislation.
- (34) The laws, regulations and collective agreements, at both national and Community level, which are in force in the areas of employment conditions and safety at work apply during performance of a public contract, providing that such rules, and their application, comply with Community law. In cross-border situations, where workers from one Member State provide services in another Member State for the purpose of performing a public contract, Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services⁽¹¹⁾ lays down the minimum conditions which must be observed by the host country in respect of such posted workers. If national law contains provisions to this effect, non-compliance with those obligations may be considered to be grave misconduct or an offence concerning the professional conduct of the economic operator concerned, liable to lead to the exclusion of that economic operator from the procedure for the award of a public contract.
- (35) In view of new developments in information and communications technology, and the simplifications these can bring in terms of publicising contracts and the efficiency and transparency of procurement processes, electronic means should be put on a par with traditional means of communication and information exchange. As far as possible, the means and technology chosen should be compatible with the technologies used in other Member States.
- (36) To ensure development of effective competition in the field of public contracts, it is necessary that contract notices drawn up by the contracting authorities of Member States be advertised throughout the Community. The information contained in these notices must enable economic operators in the Community to determine whether the proposed contracts are of interest to them. For this purpose, it is appropriate to give them adequate information on the object of the contract and the conditions attached thereto. Improved visibility should therefore be ensured for public notices by means of appropriate instruments, such as standard contract notice forms and the Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) provided for in Regulation (EC) No 2195/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹²⁾ as the reference nomenclature for public contracts. In restricted procedures, advertisement is, more particularly, intended to enable contractors of Member States to express their interest in contracts by seeking from the contracting authorities invitations to tender under the required conditions.

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- (37) Directive 1999/93/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 1999 on a Community framework for electronic signatures⁽¹³⁾ and Directive 2000/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 June 2000 on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce, in the internal market ('Directive on electronic commerce')⁽¹⁴⁾ should, in the context of this Directive, apply to the transmission of information by electronic means. The public procurement procedures and the rules applicable to service contests require a level of security and confidentiality higher than that required by these Directives. Accordingly, the devices for the electronic receipt of offers, requests to participate and plans and projects should comply with specific additional requirements. To this end, use of electronic signatures, in particular advanced electronic signatures, should, as far as possible, be encouraged. Moreover, the existence of voluntary accreditation schemes could constitute a favourable framework for enhancing the level of certification service provision for these devices.
- (38) The use of electronic means leads to savings in time. As a result, provision should be made for reducing the minimum periods where electronic means are used, subject, however, to the condition that they are compatible with the specific mode of transmission envisaged at Community level.
- (39) Verification of the suitability of tenderers, in open procedures, and of candidates, in restricted and negotiated procedures with publication of a contract notice and in the competitive dialogue, and the selection thereof, should be carried out in transparent conditions. For this purpose, non-discriminatory criteria should be indicated which the contracting authorities may use when selecting competitors and the means which economic operators may use to prove they have satisfied those criteria. In the same spirit of transparency, the contracting authority should be required, as soon as a contract is put out to competition, to indicate the selection criteria it will use and the level of specific competence it may or may not demand of the economic operators before admitting them to the procurement procedure.
- (40) A contracting authority may limit the number of candidates in the restricted and negotiated procedures with publication of a contract notice, and in the competitive dialogue. Such a reduction of candidates should be performed on the basis of objective criteria indicated in the contract notice. These objective criteria do not necessarily imply weightings. For criteria relating to the personal situation of economic operators, a general reference in the contract notice to the situations set out in Article 45 may suffice.
- (41) In the competitive dialogue and negotiated procedures with publication of a contract notice, in view of the flexibility which may be required and the high level of costs associated with such methods of procurement, contracting authorities should be entitled to make provision for the procedure to be conducted in successive stages in order gradually to reduce, on the basis of previously indicated contract award criteria, the number of tenders which they will go on to discuss or negotiate. This reduction should, insofar as the number of appropriate solutions or candidates allows, ensure that there is genuine competition.

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- (42) The relevant Community rules on mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates or other evidence of formal qualifications apply when evidence of a particular qualification is required for participation in a procurement procedure or a design contest.
- (43) The award of public contracts to economic operators who have participated in a criminal organisation or who have been found guilty of corruption or of fraud to the detriment of the financial interests of the European Communities or of money laundering should be avoided. Where appropriate, the contracting authorities should ask candidates or tenderers to supply relevant documents and, where they have doubts concerning the personal situation of a candidate or tenderer, they may seek the cooperation of the competent authorities of the Member State concerned. The exclusion of such economic operators should take place as soon as the contracting authority has knowledge of a judgment concerning such offences rendered in accordance with national law that has the force of *res judicata*. If national law contains provisions to this effect, non-compliance with environmental legislation or legislation on unlawful agreements in public contracts which has been the subject of a final judgment or a decision having equivalent effect may be considered an offence concerning the professional conduct of the economic operator concerned or grave misconduct.
- Non-observance of national provisions implementing the Council Directives 2000/78/EC⁽¹⁵⁾ and 76/207/EEC⁽¹⁶⁾ concerning equal treatment of workers, which has been the subject of a final judgment or a decision having equivalent effect may be considered an offence concerning the professional conduct of the economic operator concerned or grave misconduct.
- (44) In appropriate cases, in which the nature of the works and/or services justifies applying environmental management measures or schemes during the performance of a public contract, the application of such measures or schemes may be required. Environmental management schemes, whether or not they are registered under Community instruments such as Regulation (EC) No 761/2001⁽¹⁷⁾ (EMAS), can demonstrate that the economic operator has the technical capability to perform the contract. Moreover, a description of the measures implemented by the economic operator to ensure the same level of environmental protection should be accepted as an alternative to environmental management registration schemes as a form of evidence.
- (45) This Directive allows Member States to establish official lists of contractors, suppliers or service providers or a system of certification by public or private bodies, and makes provision for the effects of such registration or such certification in a contract award procedure in another Member State. As regards official lists of approved economic operators, it is important to take into account Court of Justice case-law in cases where an economic operator belonging to a group claims the economic, financial or technical capabilities of other companies in the group in support of its application for registration. In this case, it is for the economic operator to prove that those resources will actually be available to it throughout the period of validity of the registration. For the purposes of that registration, a Member State may therefore determine the level of requirements to be met and in particular, for example where the operator lays claim to the financial

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standing of another company in the group, it may require that that company be held liable, if necessary jointly and severally.

- (46) Contracts should be awarded on the basis of objective criteria which ensure compliance with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment and which guarantee that tenders are assessed in conditions of effective competition. As a result, it is appropriate to allow the application of two award criteria only: ‘the lowest price’ and ‘the most economically advantageous tender’.

To ensure compliance with the principle of equal treatment in the award of contracts, it is appropriate to lay down an obligation — established by case-law — to ensure the necessary transparency to enable all tenderers to be reasonably informed of the criteria and arrangements which will be applied to identify the most economically advantageous tender. It is therefore the responsibility of contracting authorities to indicate the criteria for the award of the contract and the relative weighting given to each of those criteria in sufficient time for tenderers to be aware of them when preparing their tenders. Contracting authorities may derogate from indicating the weighting of the criteria for the award in duly justified cases for which they must be able to give reasons, where the weighting cannot be established in advance, in particular on account of the complexity of the contract. In such cases, they must indicate the descending order of importance of the criteria.

Where the contracting authorities choose to award a contract to the most economically advantageous tender, they shall assess the tenders in order to determine which one offers the best value for money. In order to do this, they shall determine the economic and quality criteria which, taken as a whole, must make it possible to determine the most economically advantageous tender for the contracting authority. The determination of these criteria depends on the object of the contract since they must allow the level of performance offered by each tender to be assessed in the light of the object of the contract, as defined in the technical specifications, and the value for money of each tender to be measured.

In order to guarantee equal treatment, the criteria for the award of the contract should enable tenders to be compared and assessed objectively. If these conditions are fulfilled, economic and qualitative criteria for the award of the contract, such as meeting environmental requirements, may enable the contracting authority to meet the needs of the public concerned, as expressed in the specifications of the contract. Under the same conditions, a contracting authority may use criteria aiming to meet social requirements, in response in particular to the needs — defined in the specifications of the contract — of particularly disadvantaged groups of people to which those receiving/using the works, supplies or services which are the object of the contract belong.

- (47) In the case of public service contracts, the award criteria must not affect the application of national provisions on the remuneration of certain services, such as, for example, the services performed by architects, engineers or lawyers and, where public supply contracts are concerned, the application of national provisions setting out fixed prices for school books.

- (48) Certain technical conditions, and in particular those concerning notices and statistical reports, as well as the nomenclature used and the conditions of reference to that

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nomenclature, will need to be adopted and amended in the light of changing technical requirements. The lists of contracting authorities in the Annexes will also need to be updated. It is therefore appropriate to put in place a flexible and rapid adoption procedure for this purpose.

- (49) The measures necessary for the implementation of this Directive should be adopted in accordance with Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission⁽¹⁸⁾.
- (50) It is appropriate that Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom) No 1182/71 of 3 June 1971 determining the rules applicable to periods, dates and time limits⁽¹⁹⁾ should apply to the calculation of the time limits contained in this Directive.
- (51) This Directive should not prejudice the time limits set out in Annex XI, within which Member States are required to transpose and apply Directives 92/50/EEC, 93/36/EEC and 93/37/EEC,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS DIRECTIVE:

TITLE I

DEFINITIONS AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Article 1

Definitions

1 For the purposes of this Directive, the definitions set out in paragraphs 2 to 15 shall apply.

2

- a 'Public contracts' are contracts for pecuniary interest concluded in writing between one or more economic operators and one or more contracting authorities and having as their object the execution of works, the supply of products or the provision of services within the meaning of this Directive.
- b 'Public works contracts' are public contracts having as their object either the execution, or both the design and execution, of works related to one of the activities within the meaning of Annex I or a work, or the realisation, by whatever means, of a work corresponding to the requirements specified by the contracting authority. A 'work' means the outcome of building or civil engineering works taken as a whole which is sufficient of itself to fulfil an economic or technical function.
- c 'Public supply contracts' are public contracts other than those referred to in (b) having as their object the purchase, lease, rental or hire purchase, with or without option to buy, of products.

A public contract having as its object the supply of products and which also covers, as an incidental matter, siting and installation operations shall be considered to be a 'public supply contract'.

- d 'Public service contracts' are public contracts other than public works or supply contracts having as their object the provision of services referred to in Annex II.

A public contract having as its object both products and services within the meaning of Annex II shall be considered to be a ‘public service contract’ if the value of the services in question exceeds that of the products covered by the contract.

A public contract having as its object services within the meaning of Annex II and including activities within the meaning of Annex I that are only incidental to the principal object of the contract shall be considered to be a public service contract.

3 ‘Public works concession’ is a contract of the same type as a public works contract except for the fact that the consideration for the works to be carried out consists either solely in the right to exploit the work or in this right together with payment.

4 ‘Service concession’ is a contract of the same type as a public service contract except for the fact that the consideration for the provision of services consists either solely in the right to exploit the service or in this right together with payment.

5 A ‘framework agreement’ is an agreement between one or more contracting authorities and one or more economic operators, the purpose of which is to establish the terms governing contracts to be awarded during a given period, in particular with regard to price and, where appropriate, the quantity envisaged.

6 A ‘dynamic purchasing system’ is a completely electronic process for making commonly used purchases, the characteristics of which, as generally available on the market, meet the requirements of the contracting authority, which is limited in duration and open throughout its validity to any economic operator which satisfies the selection criteria and has submitted an indicative tender that complies with the specification.

7 An ‘electronic auction’ is a repetitive process involving an electronic device for the presentation of new prices, revised downwards, and/or new values concerning certain elements of tenders, which occurs after an initial full evaluation of the tenders, enabling them to be ranked using automatic evaluation methods.

Consequently, certain service contracts and certain works contracts having as their subject-matter intellectual performances, such as the design of works, may not be the object of electronic auctions.

8 The terms ‘contractor’, ‘supplier’ and ‘service provider’ mean any natural or legal person or public entity or group of such persons and/or bodies which offers on the market, respectively, the execution of works and/or a work, products or services.

The term ‘economic operator’ shall cover equally the concepts of contractor, supplier and service provider. It is used merely in the interest of simplification.

An economic operator who has submitted a tender shall be designated a ‘tenderer’. One which has sought an invitation to take part in a restricted or negotiated procedure or a competitive dialogue shall be designated a ‘candidate’.

9 ‘Contracting authorities’ means the State, regional or local authorities, bodies governed by public law, associations formed by one or several of such authorities or one or several of such bodies governed by public law.

A ‘body governed by public law’ means any body:

- a established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;
- b having legal personality; and

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- c financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law; or subject to management supervision by those bodies; or having an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law.

Non-exhaustive lists of bodies and categories of bodies governed by public law which fulfil the criteria referred to in (a), (b) and (c) of the second subparagraph are set out in Annex III. Member States shall periodically notify the Commission of any changes to their lists of bodies and categories of bodies.

- 10 A ‘central purchasing body’ is a contracting authority which:
- acquires supplies and/or services intended for contracting authorities, or
 - awards public contracts or concludes framework agreements for works, supplies or services intended for contracting authorities.

11

- a ‘Open procedures’ means those procedures whereby any interested economic operator may submit a tender.
- b ‘Restricted procedures’ means those procedures in which any economic operator may request to participate and whereby only those economic operators invited by the contracting authority may submit a tender.
- c ‘Competitive dialogue’ is a procedure in which any economic operator may request to participate and whereby the contracting authority conducts a dialogue with the candidates admitted to that procedure, with the aim of developing one or more suitable alternatives capable of meeting its requirements, and on the basis of which the candidates chosen are invited to tender.

For the purpose of recourse to the procedure mentioned in the first subparagraph, a public contract is considered to be ‘particularly complex’ where the contracting authorities:

- are not objectively able to define the technical means in accordance with Article 23(3)(b), (c) or (d), capable of satisfying their needs or objectives, and/or
- are not objectively able to specify the legal and/or financial make-up of a project.
- d ‘Negotiated procedures’ means those procedures whereby the contracting authorities consult the economic operators of their choice and negotiate the terms of contract with one or more of these.
- e ‘Design contests’ means those procedures which enable the contracting authority to acquire, mainly in the fields of town and country planning, architecture and engineering or data processing, a plan or design selected by a jury after being put out to competition with or without the award of prizes.

12 ‘Written’ or ‘in writing’ means any expression consisting of words or figures which can be read, reproduced and subsequently communicated. It may include information which is transmitted and stored by electronic means.

13 ‘Electronic means’ means using electronic equipment for the processing (including digital compression) and storage of data which is transmitted, conveyed and received by wire, by radio, by optical means or by other electromagnetic means.

14 The ‘Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV)’ shall designate the reference nomenclature applicable to public contracts as adopted by Regulation (EC) No 2195/2002, while ensuring equivalence with the other existing nomenclatures.

In the event of varying interpretations of the scope of this Directive, owing to possible differences between the CPV and NACE nomenclatures listed in Annex I, or between the CPV and CPC (provisional version) nomenclatures listed in Annex II, the NACE or the CPC nomenclature respectively shall take precedence.

15 For the purposes of Article 13, Article 57(a) and Article 68(b), the following phrases shall have the following meanings:

- a ‘public telecommunications network’ means the public telecommunications infrastructure which enables signals to be conveyed between defined network termination points by wire, by microwave, by optical means or by other electromagnetic means;
- b a ‘network termination point’ means all physical connections and their technical access specifications which form part of the public telecommunications network and are necessary for access to, and efficient communication through, that public network;
- c ‘public telecommunications services’ means telecommunications services the provision of which the Member States have specifically assigned, in particular, to one or more telecommunications entities;
- d ‘telecommunications services’ means services the provision of which consists wholly or partly in the transmission and routing of signals on the public telecommunications network by means of telecommunications processes, with the exception of broadcasting and television.

Article 2

Principles of awarding contracts

Contracting authorities shall treat economic operators equally and non-discriminatory and shall act in a transparent way.

Article 3

Granting of special or exclusive rights: non-discrimination clause

Where a contracting authority grants special or exclusive rights to carry out a public service activity to an entity other than such a contracting authority, the act by which that right is granted shall provide that, in respect of the supply contracts which it awards to third parties as part of its activities, the entity concerned must comply with the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of nationality.

TITLE II

RULES ON PUBLIC CONTRACTS

CHAPTER I

General provisions

Article 4

Economic operators

1 Candidates or tenderers who, under the law of the Member State in which they are established, are entitled to provide the relevant service, shall not be rejected solely on the ground that, under the law of the Member State in which the contract is awarded, they would be required to be either natural or legal persons.

However, in the case of public service and public works contracts as well as public supply contracts covering in addition services and/or siting and installation operations, legal persons may be required to indicate in the tender or the request to participate, the names and relevant professional qualifications of the staff to be responsible for the performance of the contract in question.

2 Groups of economic operators may submit tenders or put themselves forward as candidates. In order to submit a tender or a request to participate, these groups may not be required by the contracting authorities to assume a specific legal form; however, the group selected may be required to do so when it has been awarded the contract, to the extent that this change is necessary for the satisfactory performance of the contract.

Article 5

Conditions relating to agreements concluded within the World Trade Organisation

For the purposes of the award of contracts by contracting authorities, Member States shall apply in their relations conditions as favourable as those which they grant to economic operators of third countries in implementation of the Agreement on Government Procurement (hereinafter referred to as 'the Agreement'), concluded in the framework of the Uruguay Round multilateral negotiations. Member States shall, to this end, consult one another within the Advisory Committee for Public Contracts referred to in Article 77 on the measures to be taken pursuant to the Agreement.

Article 6

Confidentiality

Without prejudice to the provisions of this Directive, in particular those concerning the obligations relating to the advertising of awarded contracts and to the information to candidates and tenderers set out in Articles 35(4) and 41, and in accordance with the national law to which the contracting authority is subject, the contracting authority shall not disclose information forwarded to it by economic operators which they have

designated as confidential; such information includes, in particular, technical or trade secrets and the confidential aspects of tenders.

CHAPTER II

Scope

Section 1

Thresholds

Article 7

Threshold amounts for public contracts

This Directive shall apply to public contracts which are not excluded in accordance with the exceptions provided for in Articles 10 and 11 and Articles 12 to 18 and which have a value exclusive of value-added tax (VAT) estimated to be equal to or greater than the following thresholds:

- (a) EUR 162 000 for public supply and service contracts others than those covered by point (b), third indent, awarded by contracting authorities which are listed as central government authorities in Annex IV; in the case of public supply contracts awarded by contracting authorities operating in the field of defence, this shall apply only to contracts involving products covered by Annex V;
- (b) EUR 249 000
 - for public supply and service contracts awarded by contracting authorities other than those listed in Annex IV,
 - for public supply contracts awarded by contracting authorities which are listed in Annex IV and operate in the field of defence, where these contracts involve products not covered by Annex V,
 - for public service contracts awarded by any contracting authority in respect of the services listed in Category 8 of Annex IIA, Category 5 telecommunications services the positions of which in the CPV are equivalent to CPC reference Nos 7524, 7525 and 7526 and/or the services listed in Annex II B;
- (c) EUR 6 242 000 for public works contracts.

Article 8

Contracts subsidised by more than 50 % by contracting authorities

This Directive shall apply to the awarding of:

- (a) contracts which are subsidised directly by contracting authorities by more than 50 % and the estimated value of which, net of VAT, is equal to or greater than EUR 6 242 000,

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- where those contracts involve civil engineering activities within the meaning of Annex I,
 - where those contracts involve building work for hospitals, facilities intended for sports, recreation and leisure, school and university buildings and buildings used for administrative purposes;
- (b) service contracts which are subsidised directly by contracting authorities by more than 50 % and the estimated value of which, net of VAT, is equal to or greater than EUR 249 000 and which are connected with a works contract within the meaning of point (a).

Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the contracting authorities awarding such subsidies ensure compliance with this Directive where that contract is awarded by one or more entities other than themselves or comply with this Directive where they themselves award that contract for and on behalf of those other entities.

Article 9

Methods for calculating the estimated value of public contracts, framework agreements and dynamic purchasing systems

1 The calculation of the estimated value of a public contract shall be based on the total amount payable, net of VAT, as estimated by the contracting authority. This calculation shall take account of the estimated total amount, including any form of option and any renewals of the contract.

Where the contracting authority provides for prizes or payments to candidates or tenderers it shall take them into account when calculating the estimated value of the contract.

2 This estimate must be valid at the moment at which the contract notice is sent, as provided for in Article 35(2), or, in cases where such notice is not required, at the moment at which the contracting authority commences the contract awarding procedure.

3 No works project or proposed purchase of a certain quantity of supplies and/or services may be subdivided to prevent its coming within the scope of this Directive.

4 With regard to public works contracts, calculation of the estimated value shall take account of both the cost of the works and the total estimated value of the supplies necessary for executing the works and placed at the contractor's disposal by the contracting authorities.

5

- a Where a proposed work or purchase of services may result in contracts being awarded at the same time in the form of separate lots, account shall be taken of the total estimated value of all such lots.

Where the aggregate value of the lots is equal to or exceeds the threshold laid down in Article 7, this Directive shall apply to the awarding of each lot.

However, the contracting authorities may waive such application in respect of lots the estimated value of which net of VAT is less than EUR 80 000 for services or EUR 1 million for works, provided that the aggregate value of those lots does not exceed 20 % of the aggregate value of the lots as a whole.

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- b Where a proposal for the acquisition of similar supplies may result in contracts being awarded at the same time in the form of separate lots, account shall be taken of the total estimated value of all such lots when applying Article 7(a) and (b).

Where the aggregate value of the lots is equal to or exceeds the threshold laid down in Article 7, this Directive shall apply to the awarding of each lot.

However, the contracting authorities may waive such application in respect of lots, the estimated value of which, net of VAT, is less than EUR 80 000, provided that the aggregate cost of those lots does not exceed 20 % of the aggregate value of the lots as a whole.

6 With regard to public supply contracts relating to the leasing, hire, rental or hire purchase of products, the value to be taken as a basis for calculating the estimated contract value shall be as follows:

- a in the case of fixed-term public contracts, if that term is less than or equal to 12 months, the total estimated value for the term of the contract or, if the term of the contract is greater than 12 months, the total value including the estimated residual value;
- b in the case of public contracts without a fixed term or the term of which cannot be defined, the monthly value multiplied by 48.

7 In the case of public supply or service contracts which are regular in nature or which are intended to be renewed within a given period, the calculation of the estimated contract value shall be based on the following:

- a either the total actual value of the successive contracts of the same type awarded during the preceding 12 months or financial year adjusted, if possible, to take account of the changes in quantity or value which would occur in the course of the 12 months following the initial contract;
- b or the total estimated value of the successive contracts awarded during the 12 months following the first delivery, or during the financial year if that is longer than 12 months.

The choice of method used to calculate the estimated value of a public contract may not be made with the intention of excluding it from the scope of this Directive.

8 With regard to public service contracts, the value to be taken as a basis for calculating the estimated contract value shall, where appropriate, be the following:

- a for the following types of services:
 - (i) insurance services: the premium payable and other forms of remuneration;
 - (ii) banking and other financial services: the fees, commissions, interest and other forms of remuneration;
 - (iii) design contracts: fees, commission payable and other forms of remuneration;
- b for service contracts which do not indicate a total price:
 - (i) in the case of fixed-term contracts, if that term is less than or equal to 48 months: the total value for their full term;
 - (ii) in the case of contracts without a fixed term or with a term greater than 48 months: the monthly value multiplied by 48.

9 With regard to framework agreements and dynamic purchasing systems, the value to be taken into consideration shall be the maximum estimated value net of VAT of all the contracts envisaged for the total term of the framework agreement or the dynamic purchasing system.

Section 2

Specific situations

Article 10

Defence procurement

This Directive shall apply to public contracts awarded by contracting authorities in the field of defence, subject to Article 296 of the Treaty.

Article 11

Public contracts and framework agreements awarded by central purchasing bodies

1 Member States may stipulate that contracting authorities may purchase works, supplies and/or services from or through a central purchasing body.

2 Contracting authorities which purchase works, supplies and/or services from or through a central purchasing body in the cases set out in Article 1(10) shall be deemed to have complied with this Directive insofar as the central purchasing body has complied with it.

Section 3

Excluded contracts

Article 12

Contracts in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors

This Directive shall not apply to public contracts which, under Directive 2004/17/EC, are awarded by contracting authorities exercising one or more of the activities referred to in Articles 3 to 7 of that Directive and are awarded for the pursuit of those activities, or to public contracts excluded from the scope of that Directive under Article 5(2) and Articles 19, 26 and 30 thereof.

However, this Directive shall continue to apply to public contracts awarded by contracting authorities carrying out one or more of the activities referred to in Article 6 of Directive 2004/17/EC and awarded for those activities, insofar as the Member State concerned takes advantage of the option referred to in the second subparagraph of Article 71 thereof to defer its application.

Article 13

Specific exclusions in the field of telecommunications

This Directive shall not apply to public contracts for the principal purpose of permitting the contracting authorities to provide or exploit public telecommunications networks or to provide to the public one or more telecommunications services.

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Article 14

Secret contracts and contracts requiring special security measures

This Directive shall not apply to public contracts when they are declared to be secret, when their performance must be accompanied by special security measures in accordance with the laws, regulations or administrative provisions in force in the Member State concerned, or when the protection of the essential interests of that Member State so requires.

Article 15

Contracts awarded pursuant to international rules

This Directive shall not apply to public contracts governed by different procedural rules and awarded:

- (a) pursuant to an international agreement concluded in conformity with the Treaty between a Member State and one or more third countries and covering supplies or works intended for the joint implementation or exploitation of a work by the signatory States or services intended for the joint implementation or exploitation of a project by the signatory States; all agreements shall be communicated to the Commission, which may consult the Advisory Committee for Public Contracts referred to in Article 77;
- (b) pursuant to a concluded international agreement relating to the stationing of troops and concerning the undertakings of a Member State or a third country;
- (c) pursuant to the particular procedure of an international organisation.

Article 16

Specific exclusions

This Directive shall not apply to public service contracts for:

- (a) the acquisition or rental, by whatever financial means, of land, existing buildings or other immovable property or concerning rights thereon; nevertheless, financial service contracts concluded at the same time as, before or after the contract of acquisition or rental, in whatever form, shall be subject to this Directive;
- (b) the acquisition, development, production or co-production of programme material intended for broadcasting by broadcasters and contracts for broadcasting time;
- (c) arbitration and conciliation services;
- (d) financial services in connection with the issue, sale, purchase or transfer of securities or other financial instruments, in particular transactions by the contracting authorities to raise money or capital, and central bank services;
- (e) employment contracts;

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- (f) research and development services other than those where the benefits accrue exclusively to the contracting authority for its use in the conduct of its own affairs, on condition that the service provided is wholly remunerated by the contracting authority.

Article 17

Service concessions

Without prejudice to the application of Article 3, this Directive shall not apply to service concessions as defined in Article 1(4).

Article 18

Service contracts awarded on the basis of an exclusive right

This Directive shall not apply to public service contracts awarded by a contracting authority to another contracting authority or to an association of contracting authorities on the basis of an exclusive right which they enjoy pursuant to a published law, regulation or administrative provision which is compatible with the Treaty.

Section 4

Special arrangement

Article 19

Reserved contracts

Member States may reserve the right to participate in public contract award procedures to sheltered workshops or provide for such contracts to be performed in the context of sheltered employment programmes where most of the employees concerned are handicapped persons who, by reason of the nature or the seriousness of their disabilities, cannot carry on occupations under normal conditions.

The contract notice shall make reference to this provision.

CHAPTER III

Arrangements for public service contracts

Article 20

Service contracts listed in Annex II A

Contracts which have as their object services listed in Annex II A shall be awarded in accordance with Articles 23 to 55.

Article 21

Service contracts listed in Annex II B

Contracts which have as their object services listed in Annex II B shall be subject solely to Article 23 and Article 35(4).

Article 22

Mixed contracts including services listed in Annex II A and services listed in Annex II B

Contracts which have as their object services listed both in Annex II A and in Annex II B shall be awarded in accordance with Articles 23 to 55 where the value of the services listed in Annex II A is greater than the value of the services listed in Annex II B. In other cases, contracts shall be awarded in accordance with Article 23 and Article 35(4).

CHAPTER IV

Specific rules governing specifications and contract documents

Article 23

Technical specifications

- 1 The technical specifications as defined in point 1 of Annex VI shall be set out in the contract documentation, such as contract notices, contract documents or additional documents. Whenever possible these technical specifications should be defined so as to take into account accessibility criteria for people with disabilities or design for all users.
- 2 Technical specifications shall afford equal access for tenderers and not have the effect of creating unjustified obstacles to the opening up of public procurement to competition.
- 3 Without prejudice to mandatory national technical rules, to the extent that they are compatible with Community law, the technical specifications shall be formulated:
 - a either by reference to technical specifications defined in Annex VI and, in order of preference, to national standards transposing European standards, European technical approvals, common technical specifications, international standards, other technical reference systems established by the European standardisation bodies or — when these do not exist — to national standards, national technical approvals or national technical specifications relating to the design, calculation and execution of the works and use of the products. Each reference shall be accompanied by the words ‘or equivalent’;
 - b or in terms of performance or functional requirements; the latter may include environmental characteristics. However, such parameters must be sufficiently precise to allow tenderers to determine the subject-matter of the contract and to allow contracting authorities to award the contract;
 - c or in terms of performance or functional requirements as mentioned in subparagraph (b), with reference to the specifications mentioned in subparagraph (a) as a means of presuming conformity with such performance or functional requirements;

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- d or by referring to the specifications mentioned in subparagraph (a) for certain characteristics, and by referring to the performance or functional requirements mentioned in subparagraph (b) for other characteristics.

4 Where a contracting authority makes use of the option of referring to the specifications mentioned in paragraph 3(a), it cannot reject a tender on the grounds that the products and services tendered for do not comply with the specifications to which it has referred, once the tenderer proves in his tender to the satisfaction of the contracting authority, by whatever appropriate means, that the solutions which he proposes satisfy in an equivalent manner the requirements defined by the technical specifications.

An appropriate means might be constituted by a technical dossier of the manufacturer or a test report from a recognised body.

5 Where a contracting authority uses the option laid down in paragraph 3 to prescribe in terms of performance or functional requirements, it may not reject a tender for works, products or services which comply with a national standard transposing a European standard, with a European technical approval, a common technical specification, an international standard or a technical reference system established by a European standardisation body, if these specifications address the performance or functional requirements which it has laid down.

In his tender, the tenderer must prove to the satisfaction of the contracting authority and by any appropriate means that the work, product or service in compliance with the standard meets the performance or functional requirements of the contracting authority.

An appropriate means might be constituted by a technical dossier of the manufacturer or a test report from a recognised body.

6 Where contracting authorities lay down environmental characteristics in terms of performance or functional requirements as referred to in paragraph 3(b) they may use the detailed specifications, or, if necessary, parts thereof, as defined by European or (multi-) national eco-labels, or by and any other eco-label, provided that:

- those specifications are appropriate to define the characteristics of the supplies or services that are the object of the contract,
- the requirements for the label are drawn up on the basis of scientific information,
- the eco-labels are adopted using a procedure in which all stakeholders, such as government bodies, consumers, manufacturers, distributors and environmental organisations can participate, and
- they are accessible to all interested parties.

Contracting authorities may indicate that the products and services bearing the eco-label are presumed to comply with the technical specifications laid down in the contract documents; they must accept any other appropriate means of proof, such as a technical dossier of the manufacturer or a test report from a recognised body.

7 ‘Recognised bodies’, within the meaning of this Article, are test and calibration laboratories and certification and inspection bodies which comply with applicable European standards.

Contracting authorities shall accept certificates from recognised bodies established in other Member States.

8 Unless justified by the subject-matter of the contract, technical specifications shall not refer to a specific make or source, or a particular process, or to trade marks, patents, types or a specific origin or production with the effect of favouring or eliminating certain undertakings or

certain products. Such reference shall be permitted on an exceptional basis, where a sufficiently precise and intelligible description of the subject-matter of the contract pursuant to paragraphs 3 and 4 is not possible; such reference shall be accompanied by the words ‘or equivalent’.

Article 24

Variants

1 Where the criterion for award is that of the most economically advantageous tender, contracting authorities may authorise tenderers to submit variants.

2 Contracting authorities shall indicate in the contract notice whether or not they authorise variants: variants shall not be authorised without this indication.

3 Contracting authorities authorising variants shall state in the contract documents the minimum requirements to be met by the variants and any specific requirements for their presentation.

4 Only variants meeting the minimum requirements laid down by these contracting authorities shall be taken into consideration.

In procedures for awarding public supply or service contracts, contracting authorities which have authorised variants may not reject a variant on the sole ground that it would, if successful, lead to either a service contract rather than a public supply contract or a supply contract rather than a public service contract.

Article 25

Subcontracting

In the contract documents, the contracting authority may ask or may be required by a Member State to ask the tenderer to indicate in his tender any share of the contract he may intend to subcontract to third parties and any proposed subcontractors.

This indication shall be without prejudice to the question of the principal economic operator's liability.

Article 26

Conditions for performance of contracts

Contracting authorities may lay down special conditions relating to the performance of a contract, provided that these are compatible with Community law and are indicated in the contract notice or in the specifications. The conditions governing the performance of a contract may, in particular, concern social and environmental considerations.

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Article 27

Obligations relating to taxes, environmental protection, employment protection provisions and working conditions

1 A contracting authority may state in the contract documents, or be obliged by a Member State so to state, the body or bodies from which a candidate or tenderer may obtain the appropriate information on the obligations relating to taxes, to environmental protection, to the employment protection provisions and to the working conditions which are in force in the Member State, region or locality in which the works are to be carried out or services are to be provided and which shall be applicable to the works carried out on site or to the services provided during the performance of the contract.

2 A contracting authority which supplies the information referred to in paragraph 1 shall request the tenderers or candidates in the contract award procedure to indicate that they have taken account, when drawing up their tender, of the obligations relating to employment protection provisions and the working conditions which are in force in the place where the works are to be carried out or the service is to be provided.

The first subparagraph shall be without prejudice to the application of the provisions of Article 55 concerning the examination of abnormally low tenders.

CHAPTER V

Procedures

Article 28

Use of open, restricted and negotiated procedures and of competitive dialogue

In awarding their public contracts, contracting authorities shall apply the national procedures adjusted for the purposes of this Directive.

They shall award these public contracts by applying the open or restricted procedure. In the specific circumstances expressly provided for in Article 29, contracting authorities may award their public contracts by means of the competitive dialogue. In the specific cases and circumstances referred to expressly in Articles 30 and 31, they may apply a negotiated procedure, with or without publication of the contract notice.

Article 29

Competitive dialogue

1 In the case of particularly complex contracts, Member States may provide that where contracting authorities consider that the use of the open or restricted procedure will not allow the award of the contract, the latter may make use of the competitive dialogue in accordance with this Article.

A public contract shall be awarded on the sole basis of the award criterion for the most economically advantageous tender.

2 Contracting authorities shall publish a contract notice setting out their needs and requirements, which they shall define in that notice and/or in a descriptive document.

3 Contracting authorities shall open, with the candidates selected in accordance with the relevant provisions of Articles 44 to 52, a dialogue the aim of which shall be to identify and define the means best suited to satisfying their needs. They may discuss all aspects of the contract with the chosen candidates during this dialogue.

During the dialogue, contracting authorities shall ensure equality of treatment among all tenderers. In particular, they shall not provide information in a discriminatory manner which may give some tenderers an advantage over others.

Contracting authorities may not reveal to the other participants solutions proposed or other confidential information communicated by a candidate participating in the dialogue without his/her agreement.

4 Contracting authorities may provide for the procedure to take place in successive stages in order to reduce the number of solutions to be discussed during the dialogue stage by applying the award criteria in the contract notice or the descriptive document. The contract notice or the descriptive document shall indicate that recourse may be had to this option.

5 The contracting authority shall continue such dialogue until it can identify the solution or solutions, if necessary after comparing them, which are capable of meeting its needs.

6 Having declared that the dialogue is concluded and having so informed the participants, contracting authorities shall ask them to submit their final tenders on the basis of the solution or solutions presented and specified during the dialogue. These tenders shall contain all the elements required and necessary for the performance of the project.

These tenders may be clarified, specified and fine-tuned at the request of the contracting authority. However, such clarification, specification, fine-tuning or additional information may not involve changes to the basic features of the tender or the call for tender, variations in which are likely to distort competition or have a discriminatory effect.

7 Contracting authorities shall assess the tenders received on the basis of the award criteria laid down in the contract notice or the descriptive document and shall choose the most economically advantageous tender in accordance with Article 53.

At the request of the contracting authority, the tenderer identified as having submitted the most economically advantageous tender may be asked to clarify aspects of the tender or confirm commitments contained in the tender provided this does not have the effect of modifying substantial aspects of the tender or of the call for tender and does not risk distorting competition or causing discrimination.

8 The contracting authorities may specify prices or payments to the participants in the dialogue.

Article 30

Cases justifying use of the negotiated procedure with prior publication of a contract notice

1 Contracting authorities may award their public contracts by negotiated procedure, after publication of a contract notice, in the following cases:

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- a in the event of irregular tenders or the submission of tenders which are unacceptable under national provisions compatible with Articles 4, 24, 25, 27 and Chapter VII, in response to an open or restricted procedure or a competitive dialogue insofar as the original terms of the contract are not substantially altered.

Contracting authorities need not publish a contract notice where they include in the negotiated procedure all of, and only, the tenderers which satisfy the criteria of Articles 45 to 52 and which, during the prior open or restricted procedure or competitive dialogue, have submitted tenders in accordance with the formal requirements of the tendering procedure;

- b in exceptional cases, when the nature of the works, supplies, or services or the risks attaching thereto do not permit prior overall pricing;
- c in the case of services, *inter alia* services within category 6 of Annex II A, and intellectual services such as services involving the design of works, insofar as the nature of the services to be provided is such that contract specifications cannot be established with sufficient precision to permit the award of the contract by selection of the best tender according to the rules governing open or restricted procedures;
- d in respect of public works contracts, for works which are performed solely for purposes of research, testing or development and not with the aim of ensuring profitability or recovering research and development costs.

2 In the cases referred to in paragraph 1, contracting authorities shall negotiate with tenderers the tenders submitted by them in order to adapt them to the requirements which they have set in the contract notice, the specifications and additional documents, if any, and to seek out the best tender in accordance with Article 53(1).

3 During the negotiations, contracting authorities shall ensure the equal treatment of all tenderers. In particular, they shall not provide information in a discriminatory manner which may give some tenderers an advantage over others.

4 Contracting authorities may provide for the negotiated procedure to take place in successive stages in order to reduce the number of tenders to be negotiated by applying the award criteria in the contract notice or the specifications. The contract notice or the specifications shall indicate whether recourse has been had to this option.

Article 31

Cases justifying use of the negotiated procedure without publication of a contract notice

Contracting authorities may award public contracts by a negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice in the following cases:

- (1) for public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts:
 - (a) when no tenders or no suitable tenders or no applications have been submitted in response to an open procedure or a restricted procedure, provided that the initial conditions of contract are not substantially altered and on condition that a report is sent to the Commission if it so requests;
 - (b) when, for technical or artistic reasons, or for reasons connected with the protection of exclusive rights, the contract may be awarded only to a particular economic operator;

- (c) insofar as is strictly necessary when, for reasons of extreme urgency brought about by events unforeseeable by the contracting authorities in question, the time limit for the open, restricted or negotiated procedures with publication of a contract notice as referred to in Article 30 cannot be complied with. The circumstances invoked to justify extreme urgency must not in any event be attributable to the contracting authority;
- (2) for public supply contracts:
- (a) when the products involved are manufactured purely for the purpose of research, experimentation, study or development; this provision does not extend to quantity production to establish commercial viability or to recover research and development costs;
 - (b) for additional deliveries by the original supplier which are intended either as a partial replacement of normal supplies or installations or as the extension of existing supplies or installations where a change of supplier would oblige the contracting authority to acquire material having different technical characteristics which would result in incompatibility or disproportionate technical difficulties in operation and maintenance; the length of such contracts as well as that of recurrent contracts may not, as a general rule, exceed three years;
 - (c) for supplies quoted and purchased on a commodity market;
 - (d) for the purchase of supplies on particularly advantageous terms, from either a supplier which is definitively winding up its business activities, or the receivers or liquidators of a bankruptcy, an arrangement with creditors, or a similar procedure under national laws or regulations;
- (3) for public service contracts, when the contract concerned follows a design contest and must, under the applicable rules, be awarded to the successful candidate or to one of the successful candidates, in the latter case, all successful candidates must be invited to participate in the negotiations;
- (4) for public works contracts and public service contracts:
- (a) for additional works or services not included in the project initially considered or in the original contract but which have, through unforeseen circumstances, become necessary for the performance of the works or services described therein, on condition that the award is made to the economic operator performing such works or services:
 - when such additional works or services cannot be technically or economically separated from the original contract without major inconvenience to the contracting authorities,
 - or
 - when such works or services, although separable from the performance of the original contract, are strictly necessary for its completion.

However, the aggregate value of contracts awarded for additional works or services may not exceed 50 % of the amount of the original contract;

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- (b) for new works or services consisting in the repetition of similar works or services entrusted to the economic operator to whom the same contracting authorities awarded an original contract, provided that such works or services are in conformity with a basic project for which the original contract was awarded according to the open or restricted procedure.

As soon as the first project is put up for tender, the possible use of this procedure shall be disclosed and the total estimated cost of subsequent works or services shall be taken into consideration by the contracting authorities when they apply the provisions of Article 7.

This procedure may be used only during the three years following the conclusion of the original contract.

Article 32

Framework agreements

1 Member States may provide that contracting authorities may conclude framework agreements.

2 For the purpose of concluding a framework agreement, contracting authorities shall follow the rules of procedure referred to in this Directive for all phases up to the award of contracts based on that framework agreement. The parties to the framework agreement shall be chosen by applying the award criteria set in accordance with Article 53.

Contracts based on a framework agreement shall be awarded in accordance with the procedures laid down in paragraphs 3 and 4. Those procedures may be applied only between the contracting authorities and the economic operators originally party to the framework agreement.

When awarding contracts based on a framework agreement, the parties may under no circumstances make substantial amendments to the terms laid down in that framework agreement, in particular in the case referred to in paragraph 3.

The term of a framework agreement may not exceed four years, save in exceptional cases duly justified, in particular by the subject of the framework agreement.

Contracting authorities may not use framework agreements improperly or in such a way as to prevent, restrict or distort competition.

3 Where a framework agreement is concluded with a single economic operator, contracts based on that agreement shall be awarded within the limits of the terms laid down in the framework agreement.

For the award of those contracts, contracting authorities may consult the operator party to the framework agreement in writing, requesting it to supplement its tender as necessary.

4 Where a framework agreement is concluded with several economic operators, the latter must be at least three in number, insofar as there is a sufficient number of economic operators to satisfy the selection criteria and/or of admissible tenders which meet the award criteria.

Contracts based on framework agreements concluded with several economic operators may be awarded either:

- by application of the terms laid down in the framework agreement without reopening competition, or
- where not all the terms are laid down in the framework agreement, when the parties are again in competition on the basis of the same and, if necessary, more precisely formulated terms, and, where appropriate, other terms referred to in the specifications of the framework agreement, in accordance with the following procedure:
 - (a) for every contract to be awarded, contracting authorities shall consult in writing the economic operators capable of performing the contract;
 - (b) contracting authorities shall fix a time limit which is sufficiently long to allow tenders for each specific contract to be submitted, taking into account factors such as the complexity of the subject-matter of the contract and the time needed to send in tenders;
 - (c) tenders shall be submitted in writing, and their content shall remain confidential until the stipulated time limit for reply has expired;
 - (d) contracting authorities shall award each contract to the tenderer who has submitted the best tender on the basis of the award criteria set out in the specifications of the framework agreement.

Article 33

Dynamic purchasing systems

1 Member States may provide that contracting authorities may use dynamic purchasing systems.

2 In order to set up a dynamic purchasing system, contracting authorities shall follow the rules of the open procedure in all its phases up to the award of the contracts to be concluded under this system. All the tenderers satisfying the selection criteria and having submitted an indicative tender which complies with the specification and any possible additional documents shall be admitted to the system; indicative tenders may be improved at any time provided that they continue to comply with the specification. With a view to setting up the system and to the award of contracts under that system, contracting authorities shall use solely electronic means in accordance with Article 42(2) to (5).

3 For the purposes of setting up the dynamic purchasing system, contracting authorities shall:

- a publish a contract notice making it clear that a dynamic purchasing system is involved;
- b indicate in the specification, amongst other matters, the nature of the purchases envisaged under that system, as well as all the necessary information concerning the purchasing system, the electronic equipment used and the technical connection arrangements and specifications;
- c offer by electronic means, on publication of the notice and up to the expiry of the system, unrestricted, direct and full access to the specification and to any additional documents and shall indicate in the notice the internet address at which such documents may be consulted.

4 Contracting authorities shall give any economic operator, throughout the entire period of the dynamic purchasing system, the possibility of submitting an indicative tender and of being

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admitted to the system under the conditions referred to in paragraph 2. They shall complete evaluation within a maximum of 15 days from the date of submission of the indicative tender. However, they may extend the evaluation period provided that no invitation to tender is issued in the meantime.

The contracting authority shall inform the tenderer referred to in the first subparagraph at the earliest possible opportunity of its admittance to the dynamic purchasing system or of the rejection of its indicative tender.

5 Each specific contract must be the subject of an invitation to tender. Before issuing the invitation to tender, contracting authorities shall publish a simplified contract notice inviting all interested economic operators to submit an indicative tender, in accordance with paragraph 4, within a time limit that may not be less than 15 days from the date on which the simplified notice was sent. Contracting authorities may not proceed with tendering until they have completed evaluation of all the indicative tenders received by that deadline.

6 Contracting authorities shall invite all tenderers admitted to the system to submit a tender for each specific contract to be awarded under the system. To that end they shall set a time limit for the submission of tenders.

They shall award the contract to the tenderer which submitted the best tender on the basis of the award criteria set out in the contract notice for the establishment of the dynamic purchasing system. Those criteria may, if appropriate, be formulated more precisely in the invitation referred to in the first subparagraph.

7 A dynamic purchasing system may not last for more than four years, except in duly justified exceptional cases.

Contracting authorities may not resort to this system to prevent, restrict or distort competition.

No charges may be billed to the interested economic operators or to parties to the system.

Article 34

Public works contracts: particular rules on subsidised housing schemes

In the case of public contracts relating to the design and construction of a subsidised housing scheme the size and complexity of which, and the estimated duration of the work involved require that planning be based from the outset on close collaboration within a team comprising representatives of the contracting authorities, experts and the contractor to be responsible for carrying out the works, a special award procedure may be adopted for selecting the contractor most suitable for integration into the team.

In particular, contracting authorities shall include in the contract notice as accurate as possible a description of the works to be carried out so as to enable interested contractors to form a valid idea of the project. Furthermore, contracting authorities shall, in accordance with the qualitative selection criteria referred to in Articles 45 to 52, set out in such a contract notice the personal, technical, economic and financial conditions to be fulfilled by candidates.

Where such a procedure is adopted, contracting authorities shall apply Articles 2, 35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43 and 45 to 52.

CHAPTER VI

Rules on advertising and transparency

Section 1

Publication of notices

Article 35

Notices

1 Contracting authorities shall make known, by means of a prior information notice published by the Commission or by themselves on their 'buyer profile', as described in point 2(b) of Annex VIII:

- a where supplies are concerned, the estimated total value of the contracts or the framework agreements by product area which they intend to award over the following 12 months, where the total estimated value, taking into account Articles 7 and 9, is equal to or greater than EUR 750 000.

The product area shall be established by the contracting authorities by reference to the CPV nomenclature;

- b where services are concerned, the estimated total value of the contracts or the framework agreements in each of the categories of services listed in Annex II A which they intend to award over the following 12 months, where such estimated total value, taking into account the provisions of Articles 7 and 9, is equal to or greater than EUR 750 000;
- c where works are concerned, the essential characteristics of the contracts or the framework agreements which they intend to award, the estimated value of which is equal to or greater than the threshold specified in Article 7, taking into account Article 9.

The notices referred to in subparagraphs (a) and (b) shall be sent to the Commission or published on the buyer profile as soon as possible after the beginning of the budgetary year.

The notice referred to in subparagraph (c) shall be sent to the Commission or published on the buyer profile as soon as possible after the decision approving the planning of the works contracts or the framework agreements that the contracting authorities intend to award.

Contracting authorities who publish a prior information notice on their buyer profiles shall send the Commission, electronically, a notice of the publication of the prior information notice on a buyer profile, in accordance with the format and detailed procedures for sending notices indicated in point 3 of Annex VIII.

Publication of the notices referred to in subparagraphs (a), (b) and (c) shall be compulsory only where the contracting authorities take the option of shortening the time limits for the receipt of tenders as laid down in Article 38(4).

This paragraph shall not apply to negotiated procedures without the prior publication of a contract notice.

2 Contracting authorities which wish to award a public contract or a framework agreement by open, restricted or, under the conditions laid down in Article 30, negotiated

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procedure with the publication of a contract notice or, under the conditions laid down in Article 29, a competitive dialogue, shall make known their intention by means of a contract notice.

3 Contracting authorities which wish to set up a dynamic purchasing system shall make known their intention by means of a contract notice.

Contracting authorities which wish to award a contract based on a dynamic purchasing system shall make known their intention by means of a simplified contract notice.

4 Contracting authorities which have awarded a public contract or concluded a framework agreement shall send a notice of the results of the award procedure no later than 48 days after the award of the contract or the conclusion of the framework agreement.

In the case of framework agreements concluded in accordance with Article 32 the contracting authorities are not bound to send a notice of the results of the award procedure for each contract based on that agreement.

Contracting authorities shall send a notice of the result of the award of contracts based on a dynamic purchasing system within 48 days of the award of each contract. They may, however, group such notices on a quarterly basis. In that case, they shall send the grouped notices within 48 days of the end of each quarter.

In the case of public contracts for services listed in Annex II B, the contracting authorities shall indicate in the notice whether they agree to its publication. For such services contracts the Commission shall draw up the rules for establishing statistical reports on the basis of such notices and for the publication of such reports in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 77(2).

Certain information on the contract award or the conclusion of the framework agreement may be withheld from publication where release of such information would impede law enforcement or otherwise be contrary to the public interest, would harm the legitimate commercial interests of economic operators, public or private, or might prejudice fair competition between them.

Article 36

Form and manner of publication of notices

1 Notices shall include the information mentioned in Annex VII A and, where appropriate, any other information deemed useful by the contracting authority in the format of standard forms adopted by the Commission in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 77(2).

2 Notices sent by contracting authorities to the Commission shall be sent either by electronic means in accordance with the format and procedures for transmission indicated in Annex VIII, paragraph 3, or by other means. In the event of recourse to the accelerated procedure set out in Article 38(8), notices must be sent either by telefax or by electronic means, in accordance with the format and procedures for transmission indicated in point 3 of Annex VIII.

Notices shall be published in accordance with the technical characteristics for publication set out in point 1(a) and (b) of Annex VIII.

3 Notices drawn up and transmitted by electronic means in accordance with the format and procedures for transmission indicated in point 3 of Annex VIII, shall be published no later than five days after they are sent.

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Notices which are not transmitted by electronic means in accordance with the format and procedures for transmission indicated in point 3 of Annex VIII, shall be published not later than 12 days after they are sent, or in the case of accelerated procedure referred to in Article 38(8), not later than five days after they are sent.

4 Contract notices shall be published in full in an official language of the Community as chosen by the contracting authority, this original language version constituting the sole authentic text. A summary of the important elements of each notice shall be published in the other official languages.

The costs of publication of such notices by the Commission shall be borne by the Community.

5 Notices and their contents may not be published at national level before the date on which they are sent to the Commission.

Notices published at national level shall not contain information other than that contained in the notices dispatched to the Commission or published on a buyer profile in accordance with the first subparagraph of Article 35(1), but shall mention the date of dispatch of the notice to the Commission or its publication on the buyer profile.

Prior information notices may not be published on a buyer profile before the dispatch to the Commission of the notice of their publication in that form; they shall mention the date of that dispatch.

6 The content of notices not sent by electronic means in accordance with the format and procedures for transmission indicated in point 3 of Annex VIII, shall be limited to approximately 650 words.

7 Contracting authorities must be able to supply proof of the dates on which notices are dispatched.

8 The Commission shall give the contracting authority confirmation of the publication of the information sent, mentioning the date of that publication. Such confirmation shall constitute proof of publication.

Article 37

Non-mandatory publication

Contracting authorities may publish in accordance with Article 36 notices of public contracts which are not subject to the publication requirement laid down in this Directive.

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Section 2

Time limits

Article 38

Time limits for receipt of requests to participate and for receipt of tenders

1 When fixing the time limits for the receipt of tenders and requests to participate, contracting authorities shall take account in particular of the complexity of the contract and the time required for drawing up tenders, without prejudice to the minimum time limits set by this Article.

2 In the case of open procedures, the minimum time limit for the receipt of tenders shall be 52 days from the date on which the contract notice was sent.

3 In the case of restricted procedures, negotiated procedures with publication of a contract notice referred to in Article 30 and the competitive dialogue:

- a the minimum time limit for receipt of requests to participate shall be 37 days from the date on which the contract notice is sent;
- b in the case of restricted procedures, the minimum time limit for the receipt of tenders shall be 40 days from the date on which the invitation is sent.

4 When contracting authorities have published a prior information notice, the minimum time limit for the receipt of tenders under paragraphs 2 and 3(b) may, as a general rule, be shortened to 36 days, but under no circumstances to less than 22 days.

The time limit shall run from the date on which the contract notice was sent in open procedures, and from the date on which the invitation to tender was sent in restricted procedures.

The shortened time limits referred to in the first subparagraph shall be permitted, provided that the prior information notice has included all the information required for the contract notice in Annex VII A, insofar as that information is available at the time the notice is published and that the prior information notice was sent for publication between 52 days and 12 months before the date on which the contract notice was sent.

5 Where notices are drawn up and transmitted by electronic means in accordance with the format and procedures for transmission indicated in point 3 of Annex VIII, the time limits for the receipt of tenders referred to in paragraphs 2 and 4 in open procedures, and the time limit for the receipt of the requests to participate referred to in paragraph 3(a), in restricted and negotiated procedures and the competitive dialogue, may be shortened by seven days.

6 The time limits for receipt of tenders referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3(b) may be reduced by five days where the contracting authority offers unrestricted and full direct access by electronic means to the contract documents and any supplementary documents from the date of publication of the notice in accordance with Annex VIII, specifying in the text of the notice the internet address at which this documentation is accessible.

This reduction may be added to that referred to in paragraph 5.

7 If, for whatever reason, the specifications and the supporting documents or additional information, although requested in good time, are not supplied within the time limits set in Articles 39 and 40, or where tenders can be made only after a visit to the site or after on-the-spot inspection of the documents supporting the contract documents, the time limits for the receipt

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of tenders shall be extended so that all economic operators concerned may be aware of all the information needed to produce tenders.

8 In the case of restricted procedures and negotiated procedures with publication of a contract notice referred to in Article 30, where urgency renders impracticable the time limits laid down in this Article, contracting authorities may fix:

- a a time limit for the receipt of requests to participate which may not be less than 15 days from the date on which the contract notice was sent, or less than 10 days if the notice was sent by electronic means, in accordance with the format and procedure for sending notices indicated in point 3 of Annex VIII;
- b and, in the case of restricted procedures, a time limit for the receipt of tenders which shall be not less than 10 days from the date of the invitation to tender.

Article 39

Open procedures: Specifications, additional documents and information

1 In open procedures, where contracting authorities do not offer unrestricted and full direct access by electronic means in accordance with Article 38(6) to the specifications and any supporting documents, the specifications and supplementary documents shall be sent to economic operators within six days of receipt of the request to participate, provided that the request was made in good time before the deadline for the submission of tenders.

2 Provided that it has been requested in good time, additional information relating to the specifications and any supporting documents shall be supplied by the contracting authorities or competent departments not later than six days before the deadline fixed for the receipt of tenders.

Section 3

Information content and means of transmission

Article 40

Invitations to submit a tender, participate in the dialogue or negotiate

1 In restricted procedures, competitive dialogue procedures and negotiated procedures with publication of a contract notice within the meaning of Article 30, contracting authorities shall simultaneously and in writing invite the selected candidates to submit their tenders or to negotiate or, in the case of a competitive dialogue, to take part in the dialogue.

2 The invitation to the candidates shall include either:

- a copy of the specifications or of the descriptive document and any supporting documents, or
- a reference to accessing the specifications and the other documents indicated in the first indent, when they are made directly available by electronic means in accordance with Article 38(6).

3 Where an entity other than the contracting authority responsible for the award procedure has the specifications, the descriptive document and/or any supporting documents, the invitation shall state the address from which those specifications, that descriptive document and those documents may be requested and, if appropriate, the deadline for requesting such

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documents, and the sum payable for obtaining them and any payment procedures. The competent department shall send that documentation to the economic operator without delay upon receipt of a request.

4 The additional information on the specifications, the descriptive document or the supporting documents shall be sent by the contracting authority or the competent department not less than six days before the deadline fixed for the receipt of tenders, provided that it is requested in good time. In the event of a restricted or an accelerated procedure, that period shall be four days.

5 In addition, the invitation to submit a tender, to participate in the dialogue or to negotiate must contain at least:

- a a reference to the contract notice published;
- b the deadline for the receipt of the tenders, the address to which the tenders must be sent and the language or languages in which the tenders must be drawn up;
- c in the case of competitive dialogue the date and the address set for the start of consultation and the language or languages used;
- d a reference to any possible adjoining documents to be submitted, either in support of verifiable declarations by the tenderer in accordance with Article 44, or to supplement the information referred to in that Article, and under the conditions laid down in Articles 47 and 48;
- e the relative weighting of criteria for the award of the contract or, where appropriate, the descending order of importance for such criteria, if they are not given in the contract notice, the specifications or the descriptive document.

However, in the case of contracts awarded in accordance with the rules laid down in Article 29, the information referred to in (b) above shall not appear in the invitation to participate in the dialogue but it shall appear in the invitation to submit a tender.

Article 41

Informing candidates and tenderers

1 Contracting authorities shall as soon as possible inform candidates and tenderers of decisions reached concerning the conclusion of a framework agreement, the award of the contract or admittance to a dynamic purchasing system, including the grounds for any decision not to conclude a framework agreement or award a contract for which there has been a call for competition or to recommence the procedure or implement a dynamic purchasing system; that information shall be given in writing upon request to the contracting authorities.

2 On request from the party concerned, the contracting authority shall as quickly as possible inform:

- any unsuccessful candidate of the reasons for the rejection of his application,
- any unsuccessful tenderer of the reasons for the rejection of his tender, including, for the cases referred to in Article 23, paragraphs 4 and 5, the reasons for its decision of non-equivalence or its decision that the works, supplies or services do not meet the performance or functional requirements,
- any tenderer who has made an admissible tender of the characteristics and relative advantages of the tender selected as well as the name of the successful tenderer or the parties to the framework agreement.

The time taken may in no circumstances exceed 15 days from receipt of the written request.

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3 However, contracting authorities may decide to withhold certain information referred to in paragraph 1, regarding the contract award, the conclusion of framework agreements or admittance to a dynamic purchasing system where the release of such information would impede law enforcement, would otherwise be contrary to the public interest, would prejudice the legitimate commercial interests of economic operators, whether public or private, or might prejudice fair competition between them.

Section 4

Communication

Article 42

Rules applicable to communication

1 All communication and information exchange referred to in this Title may be by post, by fax, by electronic means in accordance with paragraphs 4 and 5, by telephone in the cases and circumstances referred to in paragraph 6, or by a combination of those means, according to the choice of the contracting authority.

2 The means of communication chosen must be generally available and thus not restrict economic operators' access to the tendering procedure.

3 Communication and the exchange and storage of information shall be carried out in such a way as to ensure that the integrity of data and the confidentiality of tenders and requests to participate are preserved, and that the contracting authorities examine the content of tenders and requests to participate only after the time limit set for submitting them has expired.

4 The tools to be used for communicating by electronic means, as well as their technical characteristics, must be non-discriminatory, generally available and interoperable with the information and communication technology products in general use.

5 The following rules are applicable to devices for the electronic transmission and receipt of tenders and to devices for the electronic receipt of requests to participate:

- a information regarding the specifications necessary for the electronic submission of tenders and requests to participate, including encryption, shall be available to interested parties. Moreover, the devices for the electronic receipt of tenders and requests to participate shall conform to the requirements of Annex X;
- b Member States may, in compliance with Article 5 of Directive 1999/93/EC, require that electronic tenders be accompanied by an advanced electronic signature in conformity with paragraph 1 thereof;
- c Member States may introduce or maintain voluntary accreditation schemes aiming at enhanced levels of certification service provision for these devices;
- d tenderers or candidates shall undertake to submit, before expiry of the time limit laid down for submission of tenders or requests to participate, the documents, certificates and declarations referred to in Articles 45 to 50 and Article 52 if they do not exist in electronic format.

6 The following rules shall apply to the transmission of requests to participate:

- a requests to participate in procedures for the award of public contracts may be made in writing or by telephone;

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- b where requests to participate are made by telephone, a written confirmation must be sent before expiry of the time limit set for their receipt;
- c contracting authorities may require that requests for participation made by fax must be confirmed by post or by electronic means, where this is necessary for the purposes of legal proof. Any such requirement, together with the time limit for sending confirmation by post or electronic means, must be stated by the contracting authority in the contract notice.

Section 5

Reports

Article 43

Content of reports

For every contract, framework agreement, and every establishment of a dynamic purchasing system, the contracting authorities shall draw up a written report which shall include at least the following:

- (a) the name and address of the contracting authority, the subject-matter and value of the contract, framework agreement or dynamic purchasing system;
- (b) the names of the successful candidates or tenderers and the reasons for their selection;
- (c) the names of the candidates or tenderers rejected and the reasons for their rejection;
- (d) the reasons for the rejection of tenders found to be abnormally low;
- (e) the name of the successful tenderer and the reasons why his tender was selected and, if known, the share of the contract or framework agreement which the successful tenderer intends to subcontract to third parties;
- (f) for negotiated procedures, the circumstances referred to in Articles 30 and 31 which justify the use of these procedures;
- (g) as far as the competitive dialogue is concerned, the circumstances as laid down in Article 29 justifying the use of this procedure;
- (h) if necessary, the reasons why the contracting authority has decided not to award a contract or framework agreement or to establish a dynamic purchasing system.

The contracting authorities shall take appropriate steps to document the progress of award procedures conducted by electronic means.

The report, or the main features of it, shall be communicated to the Commission if it so requests.

CHAPTER VII

Conduct of the procedure

Section 1

General provisions

Article 44

Verification of the suitability and choice of participants and award of contracts

1 Contracts shall be awarded on the basis of the criteria laid down in Articles 53 and 55, taking into account Article 24, after the suitability of the economic operators not excluded under Articles 45 and 46 has been checked by contracting authorities in accordance with the criteria of economic and financial standing, of professional and technical knowledge or ability referred to in Articles 47 to 52, and, where appropriate, with the non-discriminatory rules and criteria referred to in paragraph 3.

2 The contracting authorities may require candidates and tenderers to meet minimum capacity levels in accordance with Articles 47 and 48.

The extent of the information referred to in Articles 47 and 48 and the minimum levels of ability required for a specific contract must be related and proportionate to the subject-matter of the contract.

These minimum levels shall be indicated in the contract notice.

3 In restricted procedures, negotiated procedures with publication of a contract notice and in the competitive dialogue procedure, contracting authorities may limit the number of suitable candidates they will invite to tender, to negotiate or to conduct a dialogue with, provided a sufficient number of suitable candidates is available. The contracting authorities shall indicate in the contract notice the objective and non-discriminatory criteria or rules they intend to apply, the minimum number of candidates they intend to invite and, where appropriate, the maximum number.

In the restricted procedure the minimum shall be five. In the negotiated procedure with publication of a contract notice and the competitive dialogue procedure the minimum shall be three. In any event the number of candidates invited shall be sufficient to ensure genuine competition.

The contracting authorities shall invite a number of candidates at least equal to the minimum number set in advance. Where the number of candidates meeting the selection criteria and the minimum levels of ability is below the minimum number, the contracting authority may continue the procedure by inviting the candidate(s) with the required capabilities. In the context of this same procedure, the contracting authority may not include other economic operators who did not request to participate, or candidates who do not have the required capabilities.

4 Where the contracting authorities exercise the option of reducing the number of solutions to be discussed or of tenders to be negotiated, as provided for in Articles 29(4) and 30(4), they shall do so by applying the award criteria stated in the contract notice, in the specifications or in the descriptive document. In the final stage, the number arrived at shall make for genuine competition insofar as there are enough solutions or suitable candidates.

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Section 2

Criteria for qualitative selection

Article 45

Personal situation of the candidate or tenderer

1 Any candidate or tenderer who has been the subject of a conviction by final judgment of which the contracting authority is aware for one or more of the reasons listed below shall be excluded from participation in a public contract:

- a participation in a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2(1) of Council Joint Action 98/733/JHA⁽²⁰⁾;
- b corruption, as defined in Article 3 of the Council Act of 26 May 1997⁽²¹⁾ and Article 3(1) of Council Joint Action 98/742/JHA⁽²²⁾ respectively;
- c fraud within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention relating to the protection of the financial interests of the European Communities⁽²³⁾;
- d money laundering, as defined in Article 1 of Council Directive 91/308/EEC of 10 June 1991 on prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering⁽²⁴⁾.

Member States shall specify, in accordance with their national law and having regard for Community law, the implementing conditions for this paragraph.

They may provide for a derogation from the requirement referred to in the first subparagraph for overriding requirements in the general interest.

For the purposes of this paragraph, the contracting authorities shall, where appropriate, ask candidates or tenderers to supply the documents referred to in paragraph 3 and may, where they have doubts concerning the personal situation of such candidates or tenderers, also apply to the competent authorities to obtain any information they consider necessary on the personal situation of the candidates or tenderers concerned. Where the information concerns a candidate or tenderer established in a State other than that of the contracting authority, the contracting authority may seek the cooperation of the competent authorities. Having regard for the national laws of the Member State where the candidates or tenderers are established, such requests shall relate to legal and/or natural persons, including, if appropriate, company directors and any person having powers of representation, decision or control in respect of the candidate or tenderer.

2 Any economic operator may be excluded from participation in a contract where that economic operator:

- a is bankrupt or is being wound up, where his affairs are being administered by the court, where he has entered into an arrangement with creditors, where he has suspended business activities or is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure under national laws and regulations;
- b is the subject of proceedings for a declaration of bankruptcy, for an order for compulsory winding up or administration by the court or of an arrangement with creditors or of any other similar proceedings under national laws and regulations;
- c has been convicted by a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* in accordance with the legal provisions of the country of any offence concerning his professional conduct;
- d has been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authorities can demonstrate;

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- e has not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which he is established or with those of the country of the contracting authority;
- f has not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which he is established or with those of the country of the contracting authority;
- g is guilty of serious misrepresentation in supplying the information required under this Section or has not supplied such information.

Member States shall specify, in accordance with their national law and having regard for Community law, the implementing conditions for this paragraph.

- 3 Contracting authorities shall accept the following as sufficient evidence that none of the cases specified in paragraphs 1 or 2(a), (b), (c), (e) or (f) applies to the economic operator:
- a as regards paragraphs 1 and 2(a), (b) and (c), the production of an extract from the ‘judicial record’ or, failing that, of an equivalent document issued by a competent judicial or administrative authority in the country of origin or the country whence that person comes showing that these requirements have been met;
 - b as regards paragraph 2(e) and (f), a certificate issued by the competent authority in the Member State concerned.

Where the country in question does not issue such documents or certificates, or where these do not cover all the cases specified in paragraphs 1 and 2(a), (b) and (c), they may be replaced by a declaration on oath or, in Member States where there is no provision for declarations on oath, by a solemn declaration made by the person concerned before a competent judicial or administrative authority, a notary or a competent professional or trade body, in the country of origin or in the country whence that person comes.

- 4 Member States shall designate the authorities and bodies competent to issue the documents, certificates or declarations referred to in paragraph 3 and shall inform the Commission thereof. Such notification shall be without prejudice to data protection law.

Article 46

Suitability to pursue the professional activity

Any economic operator wishing to take part in a public contract may be requested to prove its enrolment, as prescribed in his Member State of establishment, on one of the professional or trade registers or to provide a declaration on oath or a certificate as described in Annex IX A for public works contracts, in Annex IX B for public supply contracts and in Annex IX C for public service contracts.

In procedures for the award of public service contracts, insofar as candidates or tenderers have to possess a particular authorisation or to be members of a particular organisation in order to be able to perform in their country of origin the service concerned, the contracting authority may require them to prove that they hold such authorisation or membership.

Article 47

Economic and financial standing

- 1 Proof of the economic operator's economic and financial standing may, as a general rule, be furnished by one or more of the following references:

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- a appropriate statements from banks or, where appropriate, evidence of relevant professional risk indemnity insurance;
- b the presentation of balance-sheets or extracts from the balance-sheets, where publication of the balance-sheet is required under the law of the country in which the economic operator is established;
- c a statement of the undertaking's overall turnover and, where appropriate, of turnover in the area covered by the contract for a maximum of the last three financial years available, depending on the date on which the undertaking was set up or the economic operator started trading, as far as the information on these turnovers is available.

2 An economic operator may, where appropriate and for a particular contract, rely on the capacities of other entities, regardless of the legal nature of the links which it has with them. It must in that case prove to the contracting authority that it will have at its disposal the resources necessary, for example, by producing an undertaking by those entities to that effect.

3 Under the same conditions, a group of economic operators as referred to in Article 4 may rely on the capacities of participants in the group or of other entities.

4 Contracting authorities shall specify, in the contract notice or in the invitation to tender, which reference or references mentioned in paragraph 1 they have chosen and which other references must be provided.

5 If, for any valid reason, the economic operator is unable to provide the references requested by the contracting authority, he may prove his economic and financial standing by any other document which the contracting authority considers appropriate.

Article 48

Technical and/or professional ability

1 The technical and/or professional abilities of the economic operators shall be assessed and examined in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3.

2 Evidence of the economic operators' technical abilities may be furnished by one or more of the following means according to the nature, quantity or importance, and use of the works, supplies or services:

- a (i) a list of the works carried out over the past five years, accompanied by certificates of satisfactory execution for the most important works. These certificates shall indicate the value, date and site of the works and shall specify whether they were carried out according to the rules of the trade and properly completed. Where appropriate, the competent authority shall submit these certificates to the contracting authority direct;
- (ii) a list of the principal deliveries effected or the main services provided in the past three years, with the sums, dates and recipients, whether public or private, involved. Evidence of delivery and services provided shall be given:
 - where the recipient was a contracting authority, in the form of certificates issued or countersigned by the competent authority,
 - where the recipient was a private purchaser, by the purchaser's certification or, failing this, simply by a declaration by the economic operator;
- b an indication of the technicians or technical bodies involved, whether or not belonging directly to the economic operator's undertaking, especially those responsible for quality

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- control and, in the case of public works contracts, those upon whom the contractor can call in order to carry out the work;
- c a description of the technical facilities and measures used by the supplier or service provider for ensuring quality and the undertaking's study and research facilities;
 - d where the products or services to be supplied are complex or, exceptionally, are required for a special purpose, a check carried out by the contracting authorities or on their behalf by a competent official body of the country in which the supplier or service provider is established, subject to that body's agreement, on the production capacities of the supplier or the technical capacity of the service provider and, if necessary, on the means of study and research which are available to it and the quality control measures it will operate;
 - e the educational and professional qualifications of the service provider or contractor and/or those of the undertaking's managerial staff and, in particular, those of the person or persons responsible for providing the services or managing the work;
 - f for public works contracts and public services contracts, and only in appropriate cases, an indication of the environmental management measures that the economic operator will be able to apply when performing the contract;
 - g a statement of the average annual manpower of the service provider or contractor and the number of managerial staff for the last three years;
 - h a statement of the tools, plant or technical equipment available to the service provider or contractor for carrying out the contract;
 - i an indication of the proportion of the contract which the services provider intends possibly to subcontract;
 - j with regard to the products to be supplied:
 - (i) samples, descriptions and/or photographs, the authenticity of which must be certified if the contracting authority so requests;
 - (ii) certificates drawn up by official quality control institutes or agencies of recognised competence attesting the conformity of products clearly identified by references to specifications or standards.

3 An economic operator may, where appropriate and for a particular contract, rely on the capacities of other entities, regardless of the legal nature of the links which it has with them. It must in that case prove to the contracting authority that it will have at its disposal the resources necessary for the execution of the contract, for example, by producing an undertaking by those entities to place the necessary resources at the disposal of the economic operator.

4 Under the same conditions a group of economic operators as referred to Article 4 may rely on the abilities of participants in the group or in other entities.

5 In procedures for awarding public contracts having as their object supplies requiring siting or installation work, the provision of services and/or the execution of works, the ability of economic operators to provide the service or to execute the installation or the work may be evaluated in particular with regard to their skills, efficiency, experience and reliability.

6 The contracting authority shall specify, in the notice or in the invitation to tender, which references under paragraph 2 it wishes to receive.

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Article 49

Quality assurance standards

Should they require the production of certificates drawn up by independent bodies attesting the compliance of the economic operator with certain quality assurance standards, contracting authorities shall refer to quality assurance systems based on the relevant European standards series certified by bodies conforming to the European standards series concerning certification. They shall recognise equivalent certificates from bodies established in other Member States. They shall also accept other evidence of equivalent quality assurance measures from economic operators.

Article 50

Environmental management standards

Should contracting authorities, in the cases referred to in Article 48(2)(f), require the production of certificates drawn up by independent bodies attesting the compliance of the economic operator with certain environmental management standards, they shall refer to the Community Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) or to environmental management standards based on the relevant European or international standards certified by bodies conforming to Community law or the relevant European or international standards concerning certification. They shall recognise equivalent certificates from bodies established in other Member States. They shall also accept other evidence of equivalent environmental management measures from economic operators.

Article 51

Additional documentation and information

The contracting authority may invite economic operators to supplement or clarify the certificates and documents submitted pursuant to Articles 45 to 50.

Article 52

Official lists of approved economic operators and certification by bodies established under public or private law

1 Member States may introduce either official lists of approved contractors, suppliers or service providers or certification by certification bodies established in public or private law.

Member States shall adapt the conditions for registration on these lists and for the issue of certificates by certification bodies to the provisions of Article 45(1), Article 45(2) (a) to (d) and (g), Articles 46, Article 47(1), (4) and (5), Article 48(1), (2), (5) and (6), Article 49 and, where appropriate, Article 50.

Member States shall also adapt them to Article 47(2) and Article 48(3) as regards applications for registration submitted by economic operators belonging to a group and claiming resources made available to them by the other companies in the group. In such case, these operators must prove to the authority establishing the official list that

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they will have these resources at their disposal throughout the period of validity of the certificate attesting to their being registered in the official list and that throughout the same period these companies continue to fulfil the qualitative selection requirements laid down in the Articles referred to in the second subparagraph on which operators rely for their registration.

2 Economic operators registered on the official lists or having a certificate may, for each contract, submit to the contracting authority a certificate of registration issued by the competent authority or the certificate issued by the competent certification body. The certificates shall state the references which enabled them to be registered in the list/to obtain certification and the classification given in that list.

3 Certified registration on official lists by the competent bodies or a certificate issued by the certification body shall not, for the purposes of the contracting authorities of other Member States, constitute a presumption of suitability except as regards Articles 45(1) and (2)(a) to (d) and (g), Article 46, Article 47(1)(b) and (c), and Article 48(2)(a)(i), (b), (e), (g) and (h) in the case of contractors, (2)(a)(ii), (b), (c), (d) and (j) in the case of suppliers and 2(a)(ii) and (c) to (i) in the case of service providers.

4 Information which can be deduced from registration on official lists or certification may not be questioned without justification. With regard to the payment of social security contributions and taxes, an additional certificate may be required of any registered economic operator whenever a contract is offered.

The contracting authorities of other Member States shall apply paragraph 3 and the first subparagraph of this paragraph only in favour of economic operators established in the Member State holding the official list.

5 For any registration of economic operators of other Member States in an official list or for their certification by the bodies referred to in paragraph 1, no further proof or statements can be required other than those requested of national economic operators and, in any event, only those provided for under Articles 45 to 49 and, where appropriate, Article 50.

However, economic operators from other Member States may not be obliged to undergo such registration or certification in order to participate in a public contract. The contracting authorities shall recognise equivalent certificates from bodies established in other Member States. They shall also accept other equivalent means of proof.

6 Economic operators may ask at any time to be registered in an official list or for a certificate to be issued. They must be informed within a reasonably short period of time of the decision of the authority drawing up the list or of the competent certification body.

7 The certification bodies referred to in paragraph 1 shall be bodies complying with European certification standards.

8 Member States which have official lists or certification bodies as referred to in paragraph 1 shall be obliged to inform the Commission and the other Member States of the address of the body to which applications should be sent.

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Section 3

Award of the contract

Article 53

Contract award criteria

1 Without prejudice to national laws, regulations or administrative provisions concerning the remuneration of certain services, the criteria on which the contracting authorities shall base the award of public contracts shall be either:

- a when the award is made to the tender most economically advantageous from the point of view of the contracting authority, various criteria linked to the subject-matter of the public contract in question, for example, quality, price, technical merit, aesthetic and functional characteristics, environmental characteristics, running costs, cost-effectiveness, after-sales service and technical assistance, delivery date and delivery period or period of completion, or
- b the lowest price only.

2 Without prejudice to the provisions of the third subparagraph, in the case referred to in paragraph 1(a) the contracting authority shall specify in the contract notice or in the contract documents or, in the case of a competitive dialogue, in the descriptive document, the relative weighting which it gives to each of the criteria chosen to determine the most economically advantageous tender.

Those weightings can be expressed by providing for a range with an appropriate maximum spread.

Where, in the opinion of the contracting authority, weighting is not possible for demonstrable reasons, the contracting authority shall indicate in the contract notice or contract documents or, in the case of a competitive dialogue, in the descriptive document, the criteria in descending order of importance.

Article 54

Use of electronic auctions

1 Member States may provide that contracting authorities may use electronic auctions.

2 In open, restricted or negotiated procedures in the case referred to in Article 30(1)(a), the contracting authorities may decide that the award of a public contract shall be preceded by an electronic auction when the contract specifications can be established with precision.

In the same circumstances, an electronic auction may be held on the reopening of competition among the parties to a framework agreement as provided for in the second indent of the second subparagraph of Article 32(4) and on the opening for competition of contracts to be awarded under the dynamic purchasing system referred to in Article 33.

The electronic auction shall be based:

- either solely on prices when the contract is awarded to the lowest price,
- or on prices and/or on the new values of the features of the tenders indicated in the specification when the contract is awarded to the most economically advantageous tender.

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3 Contracting authorities which decide to hold an electronic auction shall state that fact in the contract notice.

The specifications shall include, *inter alia*, the following details:

- a the features, the values for which will be the subject of electronic auction, provided that such features are quantifiable and can be expressed in figures or percentages;
- b any limits on the values which may be submitted, as they result from the specifications relating to the subject of the contract;
- c the information which will be made available to tenderers in the course of the electronic auction and, where appropriate, when it will be made available to them;
- d the relevant information concerning the electronic auction process;
- e the conditions under which the tenderers will be able to bid and, in particular, the minimum differences which will, where appropriate, be required when bidding;
- f the relevant information concerning the electronic equipment used and the arrangements and technical specifications for connection.

4 Before proceeding with an electronic auction, contracting authorities shall make a full initial evaluation of the tenders in accordance with the award criterion/criteria set and with the weighting fixed for them.

All tenderers who have submitted admissible tenders shall be invited simultaneously by electronic means to submit new prices and/or new values; the invitation shall contain all relevant information concerning individual connection to the electronic equipment being used and shall state the date and time of the start of the electronic auction. The electronic auction may take place in a number of successive phases. The electronic auction may not start sooner than two working days after the date on which invitations are sent out.

5 When the contract is to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender, the invitation shall be accompanied by the outcome of a full evaluation of the relevant tenderer, carried out in accordance with the weighting provided for in the first subparagraph of Article 53(2).

The invitation shall also state the mathematical formula to be used in the electronic auction to determine automatic rerankings on the basis of the new prices and/or new values submitted. That formula shall incorporate the weighting of all the criteria fixed to determine the most economically advantageous tender, as indicated in the contract notice or in the specifications; for that purpose, any ranges shall, however, be reduced beforehand to a specified value.

Where variants are authorised, a separate formula shall be provided for each variant.

6 Throughout each phase of an electronic auction the contracting authorities shall instantaneously communicate to all tenderers at least sufficient information to enable them to ascertain their relative rankings at any moment. They may also communicate other information concerning other prices or values submitted, provided that that is stated in the specifications. They may also at any time announce the number of participants in that phase of the auction. In no case, however, may they disclose the identities of the tenderers during any phase of an electronic auction.

7 Contracting authorities shall close an electronic auction in one or more of the following manners:

- a in the invitation to take part in the auction they shall indicate the date and time fixed in advance;

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- b when they receive no more new prices or new values which meet the requirements concerning minimum differences. In that event, the contracting authorities shall state in the invitation to take part in the auction the time which they will allow to elapse after receiving the last submission before they close the electronic auction;
- c when the number of phases in the auction, fixed in the invitation to take part in the auction, has been completed.

When the contracting authorities have decided to close an electronic auction in accordance with subparagraph (c), possibly in combination with the arrangements laid down in subparagraph (b), the invitation to take part in the auction shall indicate the timetable for each phase of the auction.

8 After closing an electronic auction contracting authorities shall award the contract in accordance with Article 53 on the basis of the results of the electronic auction.

Contracting authorities may not have improper recourse to electronic auctions nor may they use them in such a way as to prevent, restrict or distort competition or to change the subject-matter of the contract, as put up for tender in the published contract notice and defined in the specification.

Article 55

Abnormally low tenders

1 If, for a given contract, tenders appear to be abnormally low in relation to the goods, works or services, the contracting authority shall, before it may reject those tenders, request in writing details of the constituent elements of the tender which it considers relevant.

Those details may relate in particular to:

- a the economics of the construction method, the manufacturing process or the services provided;
- b the technical solutions chosen and/or any exceptionally favourable conditions available to the tenderer for the execution of the work, for the supply of the goods or services;
- c the originality of the work, supplies or services proposed by the tenderer;
- d compliance with the provisions relating to employment protection and working conditions in force at the place where the work, service or supply is to be performed;
- e the possibility of the tenderer obtaining State aid.

2 The contracting authority shall verify those constituent elements by consulting the tenderer, taking account of the evidence supplied.

3 Where a contracting authority establishes that a tender is abnormally low because the tenderer has obtained State aid, the tender can be rejected on that ground alone only after consultation with the tenderer where the latter is unable to prove, within a sufficient time limit fixed by the contracting authority, that the aid in question was granted legally. Where the contracting authority rejects a tender in these circumstances, it shall inform the Commission of that fact.

TITLE III

RULES ON PUBLIC WORKS CONCESSIONS

CHAPTER I

Rules governing public works concessions

Article 56

Scope

This Chapter shall apply to all public works concession contracts concluded by the contracting authorities where the value of the contracts is equal to or greater than EUR 6 242 000.

The value shall be calculated in accordance with the rules applicable to public works contracts defined in Article 9.

Article 57

Exclusions from the scope

This Title shall not apply to public works concessions which are awarded:

- (a) in the cases referred to in Articles 13, 14 and 15 of this Directive in respect of public works contracts;
- (b) by contracting authorities exercising one or more of the activities referred to in Articles 3 to 7 of Directive 2004/17/EC where those concessions are awarded for carrying out those activities.

However, this Directive shall continue to apply to public works concessions awarded by contracting authorities carrying out one or more of the activities referred to in Article 6 of Directive 2004/17/EC and awarded for those activities, insofar as the Member State concerned takes advantage of the option referred to in the second subparagraph of Article 71 thereof to defer its application.

Article 58

Publication of the notice concerning public works concessions

1 Contracting authorities which wish to award a public works concession contract shall make known their intention by means of a notice.

2 Notices of public works concessions shall contain the information referred to in Annex VII C and, where appropriate, any other information deemed useful by the contracting authority, in accordance with the standard forms adopted by the Commission pursuant to the procedure in Article 77(2).

3 Notices shall be published in accordance with Article 36(2) to (8).

4 Article 37 on the publication of notices shall also apply to public works concessions.

Article 59

Time limit

When contracting authorities resort to a public works concession, the time limit for the presentation of applications for the concession shall be not less than 52 days from the date of dispatch of the notice, except where Article 38(5) applies.

Article 38(7) shall apply.

Article 60

Subcontracting

The contracting authority may either:

- (a) require the concessionaire to award contracts representing a minimum of 30 % of the total value of the work for which the concession contract is to be awarded, to third parties, at the same time providing the option for candidates to increase this percentage, this minimum percentage being specified in the concession contract, or
- (b) request the candidates for concession contracts to specify in their tenders the percentage, if any, of the total value of the work for which the concession contract is to be awarded which they intend to assign to third parties.

Article 61

Awarding of additional works to the concessionaire

This Directive shall not apply to additional works not included in the concession project initially considered or in the initial contract but which have, through unforeseen circumstances, become necessary for the performance of the work described therein, which the contracting authority has awarded to the concessionaire, on condition that the award is made to the economic operator performing such work:

- when such additional works cannot be technically or economically separated from the initial contract without major inconvenience to the contracting authorities, or
- when such works, although separable from the performance of the initial contract, are strictly necessary for its completion.

However, the aggregate value of contracts awarded for additional works may not exceed 50 % of the amount of the original works concession contract.

CHAPTER II

Rules on contracts awarded by concessionaires which are contracting authorities

Article 62

Applicable rules

Where the concessionaire is a contracting authority as referred to in Article 1(9), it shall comply with the provisions laid down by this Directive for public works contracts in the case of works to be carried out by third parties.

CHAPTER III

Rules applicable to contracts awarded by concessionaires which are not contracting authorities

Article 63

Advertising rules: threshold and exceptions

1 The Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that public works concessionaires which are not contracting authorities apply the advertising rules defined in Article 64 when awarding works contracts to third parties where the value of such contracts is equal to or greater than EUR 6 242 000.

Advertising shall not, however, be required where a works contract satisfies the conditions listed in Article 31.

The values of contracts shall be calculated in accordance with the rules applicable to public works contracts laid down in Article 9.

2 Groups of undertakings which have been formed to obtain the concession or undertakings related to them shall not be considered third parties.

‘Related undertaking’ shall mean any undertaking over which the concessionaire can exert a dominant influence, whether directly or indirectly, or any undertaking which can exert a dominant influence on the concessionaire or which, as the concessionaire, is subject to the dominant influence of another undertaking as a result of ownership, financial participation or the rules which govern it. A dominant influence on the part of an undertaking is presumed when, directly or indirectly in relation to another undertaking, it:

- a holds a majority of the undertaking's subscribed capital;
- b controls a majority of the votes attached to the shares issued by the undertaking; or
- c can appoint more than half of the undertaking's administrative, management or supervisory body.

The exhaustive list of such undertakings shall be included in the application for the concession. That list shall be brought up to date following any subsequent changes in the relationship between the undertakings.

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Article 64

Publication of the notice

1 Works concessionaires which are not contracting authorities and which wish to award works contracts to a third party shall make known their intention by way of a notice.

2 Notices shall contain the information referred to in Annex VII C and, where appropriate, any other information deemed useful by the works concessionaire, in accordance with the standard form adopted by the Commission in accordance with the procedure in Article 77(2).

3 The notice shall be published in accordance with Article 36(2) to (8).

4 Article 37 on the voluntary publication of notices shall also apply.

Article 65

Time limit for the receipt of requests to participate and receipt of tenders

In works contracts awarded by a works concessionaire which is not a contracting authority, the time limit for the receipt of requests to participate, fixed by the concessionaire, shall be not less than 37 days from the date on which the contract notice was dispatched and the time limit for the receipt of tenders not less than 40 days from the date on which the contract notice or the invitation to tender was dispatched.

Article 38(5), (6) and (7) shall apply.

TITLE IV

RULES GOVERNING DESIGN CONTESTS

Article 66

General provisions

1 The rules for the organisation of design contests shall be in conformity with Articles 66 to 74 and shall be communicated to those interested in participating in the contest.

2 The admission of participants to design contests shall not be limited:

- a by reference to the territory or part of the territory of a Member State;
- b on the grounds that, under the law of the Member State in which the contest is organised, they would be required to be either natural or legal persons.

Article 67

Scope

1 In accordance with this Title, design contests shall be organised by:

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- a contracting authorities which are listed as central government authorities in Annex IV, starting from a threshold equal to or greater than EUR 162 000;
 - b contracting authorities not listed in Annex IV, starting from a threshold equal to or greater than EUR 249 000;
 - c by all the contracting authorities, starting from a threshold equal to or greater than EUR 249 000 where contests concern services in category 8 of Annex II A, category 5 telecommunications services, the positions of which in the CPV are equivalent to reference Nos CPC 7524, 7525 and 7526 and/or services listed in Annex II B.
- 2 This Title shall apply to:
- a design contests organised as part of a procedure leading to the award of a public service contract;
 - b design contests with prizes and/or payments to participants.

In the cases referred to in (a) the threshold refers to the estimated value net of VAT of the public services contract, including any possible prizes and/or payments to participants.

In the cases referred to in (b), the threshold refers to the total amount of the prizes and payments, including the estimated value net of VAT of the public services contract which might subsequently be concluded under Article 31(3) if the contracting authority does not exclude such an award in the contest notice.

Article 68

Exclusions from the scope

This Title shall not apply to:

- (a) design contests within the meaning of Directive 2004/17/EC which are organised by contracting authorities exercising one or more of the activities referred to in Articles 3 to 7 of that Directive and are organised for the pursuit of such activities; nor shall it apply to contests excluded from the scope of this Directive.

However, this Directive shall continue to apply to design contests awarded by contracting authorities carrying out one or more of the activities referred to in Article 6 of Directive 2004/17/EC and awarded for those activities, insofar as the Member State concerned takes advantage of the option referred to in the second subparagraph of Article 71 thereof to defer its application;

- (b) contests which are organised in the same cases as those referred to in Articles 13, 14 and 15 of this Directive for public service contracts.

Article 69

Notices

1 Contracting authorities which wish to carry out a design contest shall make known their intention by means of a contest notice.

2 Contracting authorities which have held a design contest shall send a notice of the results of the contest in accordance with Article 36 and must be able to prove the date of dispatch.

Where the release of information on the outcome of the contest would impede law enforcement, be contrary to the public interest, prejudice the legitimate commercial

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interests of a particular enterprise, whether public or private, or might prejudice fair competition between service providers, such information need not be published.

3 Article 37 concerning publication of notices shall also apply to contests.

Article 70

Form and manner of publication of notices of contests

1 The notices referred to in Article 69 shall contain the information referred to in Annex VII D in accordance with the standard model notices adopted by the Commission in accordance with the procedure in Article 77(2).

2 The notices shall be published in accordance with Article 36(2) to (8).

Article 71

Means of communication

1 Article 42(1), (2) and (4) shall apply to all communications relating to contests.

2 Communications, exchanges and the storage of information shall be such as to ensure that the integrity and the confidentiality of all information communicated by the participants in a contest are preserved and that the jury ascertains the contents of plans and projects only after the expiry of the time limit for their submission.

3 The following rules shall apply to devices for the electronic receipt of plans and projects:

- a the information relating to the specifications which is necessary for the presentation of plans and projects by electronic means, including encryption, shall be available to the parties concerned. In addition, the devices for the electronic receipt of plans and projects shall comply with the requirements of Annex X;
- b the Member States may introduce or maintain voluntary arrangements for accreditation intended to improve the level of the certification service provided for such devices.

Article 72

Selection of competitors

Where design contests are restricted to a limited number of participants, the contracting authorities shall lay down clear and non-discriminatory selection criteria. In any event, the number of candidates invited to participate shall be sufficient to ensure genuine competition.

Article 73

Composition of the jury

The jury shall be composed exclusively of natural persons who are independent of participants in the contest. Where a particular professional qualification is required from participants in a contest, at least a third of the members of the jury shall have that qualification or an equivalent qualification.

Article 74

Decisions of the jury

- 1 The jury shall be autonomous in its decisions or opinions.
- 2 It shall examine the plans and projects submitted by the candidates anonymously and solely on the basis of the criteria indicated in the contest notice.
- 3 It shall record its ranking of projects in a report, signed by its members, made according to the merits of each project, together with its remarks and any points which may need clarification.
- 4 Anonymity must be observed until the jury has reached its opinion or decision.
- 5 Candidates may be invited, if need be, to answer questions which the jury has recorded in the minutes to clarify any aspects of the projects.
- 6 Complete minutes shall be drawn up of the dialogue between jury members and candidates.

TITLE V

STATISTICAL OBLIGATIONS, EXECUTORY POWERS AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 75

Statistical obligations

In order to permit assessment of the results of applying this Directive, Member States shall forward to the Commission a statistical report, prepared in accordance with Article 76, separately addressing public supply, services and works contracts awarded by contracting authorities during the preceding year, by no later than 31 October of each year.

Article 76

Content of statistical report

- 1 For each contracting authority listed in Annex IV, the statistical report shall detail at least:
 - a the number and value of awarded contracts covered by this Directive;
 - b the number and total value of contracts awarded pursuant to derogations to the Agreement.
- As far as possible, the data referred to in point (a) of the first subparagraph shall be broken down by:
- a the contract award procedures used; and
 - b for each of these procedures, works as given in Annex I and products and services as given in Annex II identified by category of the CPV nomenclature;

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- c the nationality of the economic operator to which the contract was awarded.

Where the contracts have been concluded according to the negotiated procedure, the data referred to in point (a) of the first subparagraph shall also be broken down according to the circumstances referred to in Articles 30 and 31 and shall specify the number and value of contracts awarded, by Member State and third country of the successful contractor.

2 For each category of contracting authority which is not given in Annex IV, the statistical report shall detail at least:

- a the number and value of the contracts awarded, broken down in accordance with the second subparagraph of paragraph 1;
- b the total value of contracts awarded pursuant to derogations to the Agreement.

3 The statistical report shall set out any other statistical information which is required under the Agreement.

The information referred to in the first subparagraph shall be determined pursuant to the procedure under Article 77(2).

Article 77

Advisory Committee

1 The Commission shall be assisted by the Advisory Committee for Public Contracts set up by Article 1 of Decision 71/306/EEC⁽²⁵⁾ (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Committee’).

2 Where reference is made to this paragraph, Articles 3 and 7 of Decision 1999/468/EC shall apply, in compliance with Article 8 thereof.

3 The Committee shall adopt its rules of procedure.

Article 78

Revision of the thresholds

1 The Commission shall verify the thresholds established in Article 7 every two years from the entry into force of this Directive and shall, if necessary, revise them in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 77(2).

The calculation of the value of these thresholds shall be based on the average daily value of the euro, expressed in SDRs, over the 24 months terminating on the last day of August preceding the revision with effect from 1 January. The value of the thresholds thus revised shall, where necessary, be rounded down to the nearest thousand euro so as to ensure that the thresholds in force provided for by the Agreement, expressed in SDRs, are observed.

2 At the same time as the revision under paragraph 1, the Commission, in accordance with the procedure under Article 77(2), shall align:

- a the thresholds established in (a) of the first subparagraph of Article 8, in Article 56 and in the first subparagraph of Article 63(1) on the revised threshold applying to public works contracts;

- b the thresholds established in (b) of the first subparagraph of Article 8, and in Article 67(1)(a) on the revised threshold applying to public service contracts concluded by the contracting authorities referred to in Annex IV;
- c the threshold established in Article 67(1)(b) and (c) on the revised threshold applying to public service contracts awarded by the contracting authorities not included in Annex IV.

3 The value of the thresholds set pursuant to paragraph 1 in the national currencies of the Member States which are not participating in monetary union is normally to be adjusted every two years from 1 January 2004 onwards. The calculation of such value shall be based on the average daily values of those currencies expressed in euro over the 24 months terminating on the last day of August preceding the revision with effect from 1 January.

4 The revised thresholds referred to in paragraph 1 and their corresponding values in the national currencies referred to in paragraph 3 shall be published by the Commission in the *Official Journal of the European Union* at the beginning of the month of November following their revision.

Article 79

Amendments

- 1 In accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 77(2), the Commission may amend:
- a the technical procedures for the calculation methods set out in the second subparagraph of Article 78(1) and in Article 78(3);
 - b the procedures for the drawing-up, transmission, receipt, translation, collection and distribution of the notices referred to in Articles 35, 58, 64 and 69 and the statistical reports provided for in the fourth subparagraph of Article 35(4), and in Articles 75 and 76;
 - c the procedures for specific reference to specific positions in the CPV nomenclature in the notices;
 - d the lists of bodies and categories of bodies governed by public law in Annex III, when, on the basis of the notifications from the Member States, these prove necessary;
 - e the lists of central government authorities in Annex IV, following the adaptations necessary to give effect to the Agreement;
 - f the reference numbers in the nomenclature set out in Annex I, insofar as this does not change the material scope of this Directive, and the procedures for reference to particular positions of this nomenclature in the notices;
 - g the reference numbers in the nomenclature set out in Annex II, insofar as this does not change the material scope of this Directive, and the procedures for reference in the notices to particular positions in this nomenclature within the categories of services listed in the Annex;
 - h the procedure for sending and publishing data referred to in Annex VIII, on grounds of technical progress or for administrative reasons;
 - i the technical details and characteristics of the devices for electronic receipt referred to in points (a), (f) and (g) of Annex X.

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Article 80

Implementation

1 The Member States shall bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this Directive no later than 31 January 2006. They shall forthwith inform the Commission thereof.

When Member States adopt these measures, they shall contain a reference to this Directive or be accompanied by such reference on the occasion of their official publication. The methods of making such reference shall be laid down by Member States.

2 Member States shall communicate to the Commission the text of the main provisions of national law which they adopt in the field covered by this Directive.

Article 81

Monitoring mechanisms

In conformity with Council Directive 89/665/EEC of 21 December 1989 on the coordination of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the application of review procedures to the award of public supply and public works contracts⁽²⁶⁾, Member States shall ensure implementation of this Directive by effective, available and transparent mechanisms.

For this purpose they may, among other things, appoint or establish an independent body.

Article 82

Repeals

Directive 92/50/EEC, except for Article 41 thereof, and Directives 93/36/EEC and 93/37/EEC shall be repealed with effect from the date shown in Article 80, without prejudice to the obligations of the Member States concerning the deadlines for transposition and application set out in Annex XI.

References to the repealed Directives shall be construed as references to this Directive and shall be read in accordance with the correlation table in Annex XII.

Article 83

Entry into force

This Directive shall enter into force on the day of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Article 84

Addressees

This Directive is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Strasbourg, 31 March 2004.

For the European Parliament

The President

P. COX

For the Council

The President

D. ROCHE

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- (1) [OJ C 29 E, 30.1.2001, p. 11](#) and [OJ C 203 E, 27.8.2002, p. 210](#).
- (2) [OJ C 193, 10.7.2001, p. 7](#).
- (3) [OJ C 144, 16.5.2001, p. 23](#).
- (4) Opinion of the European Parliament of 17 January 2002 ([OJ C 271 E, 7.11.2002, p. 176](#)), Council Common Position of 20 March 2003 ([OJ C 147 E, 24.6.2003, p. 1](#)) and Position of the European Parliament of 2 July 2003 (not yet published in the Official Journal). Legislative Resolution of the European Parliament of 29 January 2004 and Decision of the Council of 2 February 2004.
- (5) [OJ L 209, 24.7.1992, p. 1](#). Directive as last amended by Commission Directive 2001/78/EC ([OJ L 285, 29.10.2001, p. 1](#)).
- (6) [OJ L 199, 9.8.1993, p. 1](#). Directive as last amended by Commission Directive 2001/78/EC.
- (7) [OJ L 199, 9.8.1993, p. 54](#). Directive as last amended by Commission Directive 2001/78/EC.
- (8) [OJ L 336, 23.12.1994, p. 1](#).
- (9) See p. 1 of this Official Journal.
- (10) [OJ L 199, 9.8.1993, p. 84](#). Directive as last amended by Commission Directive 2001/78/EC ([OJ L 285, 29.10.2001, p. 1](#)).
- (11) [OJ L 18, 21.1.1997, p. 1](#).
- (12) [OJ L 340, 16.12.2002, p.1](#).
- (13) [OJ L 13, 19.1.2000, p. 12](#).
- (14) [OJ L 178, 17.7.2000, p. 1](#).
- (15) Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation ([OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16](#)).
- (16) Council Directive 76/207/EEC of 9 February 1976 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions ([OJ L 39, 14.2.1976, p. 40](#)). Directive amended by Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ([OJ L 269, 5.10.2002, p. 15](#)).
- (17) Regulation (EC) No 761/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2001 allowing a voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) ([OJ L 114, 24.4.2001, p. 1](#)).
- (18) [OJ L 184, 17.7.1999, p. 23](#).
- (19) [OJ L 124, 8.6.1971, p. 1](#).
- (20) [OJ L 351, 29.12.1998, p. 1](#).
- (21) [OJ C 195, 25.6.1997, p. 1](#).
- (22) [OJ L 358, 31.12.1998, p.2](#).
- (23) [OJ C 316, 27.11.1995, p. 48](#).
- (24) [OJ L 166, 28.6.1991, p. 77](#). Directive as amended by Directive 2001/97/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 December 2001 ([OJ L 344, 28.12.2001, p. 76](#)).
- (25) [OJ L 185, 16.8.1971, p. 15](#). Decision as amended by Decision 77/63/EEC ([OJ L 13, 15.1.1977, p. 15](#)).
- (26) [OJ L 395, 30.12. 1989, p. 33](#). Directive as amended by Directive 92/50/EEC.