

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of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts (repealed)

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.

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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) [F¹EUR 134 000] 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) [F¹EUR 207 000]
 - 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) [F¹EUR 5 186 000] for public works contracts.

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Textual Amendments

- F1** Substituted by [Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 1336/2013 of 13 December 2013 amending Directives 2004/17/EC, 2004/18/EC and 2009/81/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council in respect of the application thresholds for the procedures for the awards of contract \(Text with EEA relevance\)](#).

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 [^{F1}EUR 5 186 000],
- 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 [^{F1}EUR 207 000] 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.

Textual Amendments

- F1** Substituted by [Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 1336/2013 of 13 December 2013 amending Directives 2004/17/EC, 2004/18/EC and 2009/81/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council in respect of the application thresholds for the procedures for the awards of contract \(Text with EEA relevance\)](#).

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.

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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.

- 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;

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- 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

[^{F2}Article 10

Contracts in the fields of defence and security

Subject to Article 296 of the Treaty, this Directive shall apply to public contracts awarded in the fields of defence and security, with the exception of contracts to which Directive 2009/81/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 on the coordination of procedures for the award of certain works contracts, supply contracts and service contracts by contracting authorities or entities in the fields of defence and security⁽¹⁾ applies.

This Directive shall not apply to contracts to which Directive 2009/81/EC does not apply pursuant to Articles 8, 12 and 13 thereof.]

Textual Amendments

- F2** Substituted by Directive 2009/81/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 on the coordination of procedures for the award of certain works contracts, supply contracts and service contracts by contracting authorities or entities in the fields of defence and security, and amending Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC (Text with EEA relevance).

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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.

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;
- (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).

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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;
 - 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

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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.

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

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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:

- 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;

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- 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;

- (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.

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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 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

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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.

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⁽²⁾;
- b corruption, as defined in Article 3 of the Council Act of 26 May 1997⁽³⁾ and Article 3(1) of Council Joint Action 98/742/JHA⁽⁴⁾ respectively;
- c fraud within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention relating to the protection of the financial interests of the European Communities⁽⁵⁾;
- 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⁽⁶⁾.

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.

[^{X14} Under the same conditions a group of economic operators as referred to in Article 4 may rely on the abilities of participants in the group or of 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.

Editorial Information

X1 Substituted by [Corrigendum to 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](#)

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[supply contracts and public service contracts \(Official Journal of the European Union L 134 of 30 April 2004\).](#)

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

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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 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.

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.

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- (1) [^{F2}OJ L 217, 20.8.2009, p. 76.]
- (2) OJ L 351, 29.12.1998, p. 1.
- (3) OJ C 195, 25.6.1997, p. 1.
- (4) OJ L 358, 31.12.1998, p.2.
- (5) OJ C 316, 27.11.1995, p. 48.
- (6) 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).

Textual Amendments

- F2** Substituted by Directive 2009/81/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 on the coordination of procedures for the award of certain works contracts, supply contracts and service contracts by contracting authorities or entities in the fields of defence and security, and amending Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC (Text with EEA relevance).