

Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC (Text with EEA relevance)

TITLE I

SCOPE, DEFINITIONS AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES

CHAPTER I

Scope and definitions

Section 1

Subject-matter and definitions

Article 1

Subject-matter and scope

1 This Directive establishes rules on the procedures for procurement by contracting authorities with respect to public contracts as well as design contests, whose value is estimated to be not less than the thresholds laid down in Article 4.

2 Procurement within the meaning of this Directive is the acquisition by means of a public contract of works, supplies or services by one or more contracting authorities from economic operators chosen by those contracting authorities, whether or not the works, supplies or services are intended for a public purpose.

3 The application of this Directive is subject to Article 346 TFEU.

4 This Directive does not affect the freedom of Member States to define, in conformity with Union law, what they consider to be services of general economic interest, how those services should be organised and financed, in compliance with the State aid rules, and what specific obligations they should be subject to. Equally, this Directive does not affect the decision of public authorities whether, how and to what extent they wish to perform public functions themselves pursuant to Article 14 TFEU and Protocol No 26.

5 This Directive does not affect the way in which the Member States organise their social security systems.

6 Agreements, decisions or other legal instruments that organise the transfer of powers and responsibilities for the performance of public tasks between contracting authorities or groupings of contracting authorities and do not provide for remuneration to be given for contractual performance, are considered to be a matter of internal organisation of the Member State concerned and, as such, are not affected in any way by this Directive.

Article 2

Definitions

- 1 For the purposes of this Directive, the following definitions apply:
- (1) ‘contracting authorities’ means the State, regional or local authorities, bodies governed by public law or associations formed by one or more such authorities or one or more such bodies governed by public law;
 - (2) ‘central government authorities’ means the contracting authorities listed in Annex I and, in so far as corrections or amendments have been made at national level, their successor entities;
 - (3) ‘sub-central contracting authorities’ means all contracting authorities which are not central government authorities;
 - (4) ‘bodies governed by public law’ means bodies that have all of the following characteristics:
 - (a) they are established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;
 - (b) they have legal personality; and
 - (c) they are financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law; or are subject to management supervision by those authorities or bodies; or have an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law;
 - (5) ‘public contracts’ means contracts for pecuniary interest concluded in writing between one or more economic operators and one or more contracting authorities and having as their object the execution of works, the supply of products or the provision of services;
 - (6) ‘public works contracts’ means public contracts having as their object one of the following:
 - (a) the execution, or both the design and execution, of works related to one of the activities within the meaning of Annex II;
 - (b) the execution, or both the design and execution, of a work;
 - (c) the realisation, by whatever means, of a work corresponding to the requirements specified by the contracting authority exercising a decisive influence on the type or design of the work;
 - (7) ‘a work’ means the outcome of building or civil engineering works taken as a whole which is sufficient in itself to fulfil an economic or technical function;
 - (8) ‘public supply contracts’ means public contracts having as their object the purchase, lease, rental or hire-purchase, with or without an option to buy, of products. A public supply contract may include, as an incidental matter, siting and installation operations;

- (9) ‘public service contracts’ means public contracts having as their object the provision of services other than those referred to in point 6;
- (10) ‘economic operator’ means any natural or legal person or public entity or group of such persons and/or entities, including any temporary association of undertakings, which offers the execution of works and/or a work, the supply of products or the provision of services on the market;
- (11) ‘tenderer’ means an economic operator that has submitted a tender;
- (12) ‘candidate’ means an economic operator that has sought an invitation or has been invited to take part in a restricted procedure, in a competitive procedure with negotiation, in a negotiated procedure without prior publication, in a competitive dialogue or in an innovation partnership;
- (13) ‘procurement document’ means any document produced or referred to by the contracting authority to describe or determine elements of the procurement or the procedure, including the contract notice, the prior information notice where it is used as a means of calling for competition, the technical specifications, the descriptive document, proposed conditions of contract, formats for the presentation of documents by candidates and tenderers, information on generally applicable obligations and any additional documents;
- (14) ‘centralised purchasing activities’ means activities conducted on a permanent basis, in one of the following forms:
 - (a) the acquisition of supplies and/or services intended for contracting authorities,
 - (b) the award of public contracts or the conclusion of framework agreements for works, supplies or services intended for contracting authorities;
- (15) ‘ancillary purchasing activities’ means activities consisting in the provision of support to purchasing activities, in particular in the following forms:
 - (a) technical infrastructure enabling contracting authorities to award public contracts or to conclude framework agreements for works, supplies or services;
 - (b) advice on the conduct or design of public procurement procedures;
 - (c) preparation and management of procurement procedures on behalf and for the account of the contracting authority concerned;
- (16) ‘central purchasing body’ means a contracting authority providing centralised purchasing activities and, possibly, ancillary purchasing activities;
- (17) ‘procurement service provider’ means a public or private body which offers ancillary purchasing activities on the market;
- (18) ‘written’ or ‘in writing’ means any expression consisting of words or figures which can be read, reproduced and subsequently communicated, including information transmitted and stored by electronic means;
- (19) ‘electronic means’ means electronic equipment for the processing (including digital compression) and storage of data which is transmitted, conveyed and received by wire, by radio, by optical means or by other electromagnetic means;

- (20) ‘life cycle’ means all consecutive and/or interlinked stages, including research and development to be carried out, production, trading and its conditions, transport, use and maintenance, throughout the existence of the product or the works or the provision of the service, from raw material acquisition or generation of resources to disposal, clearance and end of service or utilisation;
- (21) ‘design contests’ means those procedures which enable the contracting authority to acquire, mainly in the fields of town and country planning, architecture and engineering or data processing, a plan or design selected by a jury after being put out to competition with or without the award of prizes;
- (22) ‘innovation’ means the implementation of a new or significantly improved product, service or process, including but not limited to production, building or construction processes, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations inter alia with the purpose of helping to solve societal challenges or to support the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth;
- (23) ‘label’ means any document, certificate or attestation confirming that the works, products, services, processes or procedures in question meet certain requirements;
- (24) ‘label requirements’ means the requirements to be met by the works, products, services, processes or procedures in question in order to obtain the label concerned.

2 For the purpose of this Article ‘regional authorities’ includes authorities listed non-exhaustively in NUTS 1 and 2, as referred to in Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁾, while ‘local authorities’ includes all authorities of the administrative units falling under NUTS 3 and smaller administrative units, as referred to in Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003.

Article 3

Mixed procurement

1 Paragraph 2 shall apply to mixed contracts which have as their subject-matter different types of procurement all of which are covered by this Directive.

Paragraphs 3 to 5 shall apply to mixed contracts which have as their subject-matter procurement covered by this Directive and procurement covered by other legal regimes.

2 Contracts which have as their subject two or more types of procurement (works, services or supplies) shall be awarded in accordance with the provisions applicable to the type of procurement that characterises the main subject of the contract in question.

In the case of mixed contracts consisting partly of services within the meaning of Chapter I of Title III and partly of other services or of mixed contracts consisting partly of services and partly of supplies, the main subject shall be determined in accordance with which of the estimated values of the respective services or supplies is the highest.

3 Where the different parts of a given contract are objectively separable, paragraph 4 shall apply. Where the different parts of a given contract are objectively not separable, paragraph 6 shall apply.

Where part of a given contract is covered by Article 346 TFEU or Directive 2009/81/EC, Article 16 of this Directive shall apply.

4 In the case of contracts which have as their subject-matter procurement covered by this Directive as well as procurement not covered by this Directive, contracting authorities may choose to award separate contracts for the separate parts or to award a single contract. Where contracting authorities choose to award separate contracts for separate parts, the decision as to which legal regime applies to any one of such separate contracts shall be taken on the basis of the characteristics of the separate part concerned.

Where contracting authorities choose to award a single contract, this Directive shall, unless otherwise provided in Article 16, apply to the ensuing mixed contract, irrespective of the value of the parts that would otherwise fall under a different legal regime and irrespective of which legal regime those parts would otherwise have been subject to.

In the case of mixed contracts containing elements of supply, works and service contracts and of concessions, the mixed contract shall be awarded in accordance with this Directive, provided that the estimated value of the part of the contract which constitutes a contract covered by this Directive, calculated in accordance with Article 5, is equal to or greater than the relevant threshold set out in Article 4.

5 In the case of contracts which have as their subject both procurement covered by this Directive and procurement for the pursuit of an activity which is subject to Directive 2014/25/EU, the applicable rules shall, notwithstanding paragraph 4 of this Article, be determined pursuant to Articles 5 and 6 of Directive 2014/25/EU.

6 Where the different parts of a given contract are objectively not separable, the applicable legal regime shall be determined on the basis of the main subject-matter of that contract.

Section 2

Thresholds

Article 4

Threshold amounts

This Directive shall apply to procurements with a value net of value-added tax (VAT) estimated to be equal to or greater than the following thresholds:

- (a) EUR 5 186 000 for public works contracts;
- (b) EUR 134 000 for public supply and service contracts awarded by central government authorities and design contests organised by such authorities; where public supply contracts are awarded by contracting authorities operating in the field of defence, that threshold shall apply only to contracts concerning products covered by Annex III;
- (c) EUR 207 000 for public supply and service contracts awarded by sub-central contracting authorities and design contests organised by such authorities; that threshold shall also apply to public supply contracts awarded by central government authorities that operate in the field of defence, where those contracts involve products not covered by Annex III;
- (d) EUR 750 000 for public service contracts for social and other specific services listed in Annex XIV.

Article 5

Methods for calculating the estimated value of procurement

1 The calculation of the estimated value of a procurement shall be based on the total amount payable, net of VAT, as estimated by the contracting authority, including any form of option and any renewals of the contracts as explicitly set out in the procurement documents.

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 procurement.

2 Where a contracting authority is comprised of separate operational units, account shall be taken of the total estimated value for all the individual operational units.

Notwithstanding the first subparagraph, where a separate operational unit is independently responsible for its procurement or certain categories thereof, the values may be estimated at the level of the unit in question.

3 The choice of the method used to calculate the estimated value of a procurement shall not be made with the intention of excluding it from the scope of this Directive. A procurement shall not be subdivided with the effect of preventing it from falling within the scope of this Directive, unless justified by objective reasons.

4 That estimated value shall be valid at the moment at which the call for competition is sent, or, in cases where a call for competition is not foreseen, at the moment at which the contracting authority commences the procurement procedure, for instance, where appropriate, by contacting economic operators in relation to the procurement.

5 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.

6 In the case of innovation partnerships, the value to be taken into consideration shall be the maximum estimated value net of VAT of the research and development activities to take place during all stages of the envisaged partnership as well as of the supplies, services or works to be developed and procured at the end of the envisaged partnership.

7 With regard to public works contracts, the calculation of the estimated value shall take account of both the cost of the works and the total estimated value of the supplies and services that are made available to the contractor by the contracting authority provided that they are necessary for executing the works.

8 Where a proposed work or a proposed provision of services may result in contracts being awarded 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 4, this Directive shall apply to the awarding of each lot.

9 Where a proposal for the acquisition of similar supplies may result in contracts being awarded in the form of separate lots, account shall be taken of the total estimated value of all such lots when applying points (b) and (c) of Article 4.

Where the aggregate value of the lots is equal to or exceeds the threshold laid down in Article 4, this Directive shall apply to the awarding of each lot.

10 Notwithstanding paragraphs 8 and 9, contracting authorities may award contracts for individual lots without applying the procedures provided for under this Directive, provided that the estimated value net of VAT of the lot concerned is less than EUR 80 000 for supplies or services or EUR 1 million for works. However, the aggregate value of the lots thus awarded without applying this Directive shall not exceed 20 % of the aggregate value of all the lots into which the proposed work, the proposed acquisition of similar supplies or the proposed provision of services has been divided.

11 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, where possible, to take account of the changes in quantity or value which would occur in the course of the 12 months following the initial contract;
- b or the total estimated value of the successive contracts awarded during the 12 months following the first delivery, or during the financial year where that is longer than 12 months.

12 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, where that term is less than or equal to 12 months, the total estimated value for the term of the contract or, where 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.

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

- a insurance services: the premium payable and other forms of remuneration;
- b banking and other financial services: the fees, commissions payable, interest and other forms of remuneration;
- c design contracts: fees, commissions payable and other forms of remuneration.

14 With regard to public service contracts which do not indicate a total price, the basis for calculating the estimated contract value shall be the following:

- a in the case of fixed-term contracts, where that term is less than or equal to 48 months: the total value for their full term;
- b in the case of contracts without a fixed term or with a term greater than 48 months: the monthly value multiplied by 48.

Article 6

Revision of the thresholds and of the list of central government authorities

1 Every two years from 30 June 2013, the Commission shall verify that the thresholds set out in points (a), (b) and (c) of Article 4 correspond to the thresholds established in the World

Trade Organisation Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) and shall, where necessary, revise them in accordance with this Article.

In accordance with the calculation method set out in the GPA, the Commission shall calculate the value of these thresholds on the basis of the average daily value of the euro in terms of the special drawing rights (SDRs), over a period of 24 months terminating on 31 August preceding the revision with effect from 1 January. The value of the thresholds thus revised shall, where necessary, be rounded down to the nearest thousand euros so as to ensure that the thresholds in force provided for by the GPA, expressed in SDRs, are observed.

2 When carrying out the revision pursuant to paragraph 1 of this Article, the Commission shall, in addition, revise:

- a the threshold established in point (a) of the first paragraph of Article 13 by aligning it with the revised threshold applying to public works contracts;
- b the threshold established in point (b) of the first paragraph of Article 13 by aligning it with the revised threshold applying to public service contracts awarded by sub-central contracting authorities.

3 Every two years from 1 January 2014, the Commission shall determine the values, in the national currencies of the Member States, whose currency is not the euro, of the thresholds referred to in points (a), (b) and (c) of Article 4, revised pursuant to paragraph 1 of this Article.

At the same time, the Commission shall determine the value, in the national currencies of the Member States, whose currency is not the euro, of the threshold referred to in point (d) of Article 4.

In accordance with the calculation method set out in the GPA, the determination of such values shall be based on the average daily values of those currencies corresponding to the applicable threshold expressed in euros over the 24 months terminating on 31 August preceding the revision with effect from 1 January.

4 The Commission shall publish the revised thresholds referred to in paragraph 1, their corresponding values in the national currencies referred to in the first subparagraph of paragraph 3, and the value determined in accordance with the second subparagraph of paragraph 3 in the *Official Journal of the European Union* at the beginning of the month of November following their revision.

5 The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 87 to adapt the methodology set out in the second subparagraph of paragraph 1 of this Article to any change in the methodology provided in the GPA for the revision of the thresholds referred to in points (a), (b) and (c) of Article 4 and for the determination of the corresponding values in the national currencies of the Member States, whose currency is not the euro, as referred to in paragraph 3 of this Article.

The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 87 to revise the thresholds referred to in points (a), (b) and (c) of Article 4 pursuant to paragraph 1 of this Article and to revise the thresholds referred to in points (a) and (b) of the first paragraph of Article 13 pursuant to paragraph 2 of this Article.

6 Where it is necessary to revise the thresholds referred to in points (a), (b) and (c) of Article 4 and the thresholds referred to in points (a) and (b) of the first paragraph of Article 13 and time constraints prevent the use of the procedure set in Article 87 and therefore imperative grounds of urgency so require, the procedure provided for in Article 88 shall apply to delegated acts adopted pursuant to the second subparagraph of paragraph 5 of this Article.

7 The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 87 to amend Annex I, in order to update the list of contracting authorities following notifications from Member States, where such amendments prove necessary to correctly identify contracting authorities.

Section 3

Exclusions

Article 7

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

This Directive shall not apply to public contracts and design contests which, under Directive 2014/25/EU, are awarded or organised by contracting authorities exercising one or more of the activities referred to in Articles 8 to 14 of that Directive and are awarded for the pursuit of those activities, to public contracts excluded from the scope of that Directive under Articles 18, 23 and 34 thereof or, when awarded by a contracting authority which provides postal services within the meaning of point (b) of Article 13(2) of that Directive, to contracts awarded for the pursuit of the following activities:

- (a) added value services linked to and provided entirely by electronic means (including the secure transmission of coded documents by electronic means, address management services and transmission of registered electronic mail);
- (b) financial services which are covered by CPV codes 66100000-1 to 66720000-3 and by point (d) of Article 21 of Directive 2014/25/EU and including in particular postal money orders and postal giro transfers;
- (c) philatelic services; or
- (d) logistics services (services combining physical delivery and/or warehousing with other non-postal functions).

Article 8

Specific exclusions in the field of electronic communications

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

For the purposes of this Article, ‘public communications network’ and ‘electronic communications service’ shall have the same meaning as in Directive 2002/21/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽²⁾.

Article 9

Public contracts awarded and design contests organised pursuant to international rules

1 This Directive shall not apply to public contracts and design contests which the contracting authority is obliged to award or organise in accordance with procurement procedures different from those laid down in this Directive established by any of the following:

- a a legal instrument creating international law obligations, such as an international agreement, concluded in conformity with the Treaties, between a Member State and one or more third countries or subdivisions thereof and covering works, supplies or services intended for the joint implementation or exploitation of a project by their signatories;
- b an international organisation.

The Member States shall communicate all legal instruments referred to in point (a) of the first subparagraph of this paragraph to the Commission, which may consult the Advisory Committee on Public Procurement referred to in Article 89.

2 This Directive shall not apply to public contracts and design contests which the contracting authority awards or organises in accordance with procurement rules provided by an international organisation or international financing institution, where the public contracts and design contests concerned are fully financed by that organisation or institution; in the case of public contracts and design contests co-financed for the most part by an international organisation or international financing institution the parties shall agree on applicable procurement procedures.

3 Article 17 shall apply to contracts and design contests involving defence or security aspects which are awarded or organised pursuant to international rules. Paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article shall not apply to those contracts and design contests.

Article 10

Specific exclusions for service contracts

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;
- (b) the acquisition, development, production or co-production of programme material intended for audiovisual media services or radio media services, that are awarded by audiovisual or radio media service providers, or contracts for broadcasting time or programme provision that are awarded to audiovisual or radio media service providers. For the purposes of this point, ‘audiovisual media services’ and ‘media service providers’ shall, respectively, have the same meaning as pursuant to points (a) and (d) of Article 1(1) of Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽³⁾. ‘Programme’ shall have the same meaning as pursuant to point (b) of Article 1(1) of that Directive, but shall also include radio programmes and radio programme materials. Furthermore, for the purposes of this provision, ‘programme material’ shall have the same meaning as ‘programme’;
- (c) arbitration and conciliation services;
- (d) any of the following legal services:

- (i) legal representation of a client by a lawyer within the meaning of Article 1 of Council Directive 77/249/EEC⁽⁴⁾ in:
 - an arbitration or conciliation held in a Member State, a third country or before an international arbitration or conciliation instance; or
 - judicial proceedings before the courts, tribunals or public authorities of a Member State or a third country or before international courts, tribunals or institutions;
- (ii) legal advice given in preparation of any of the proceedings referred to in point (i) of this point or where there is a tangible indication and high probability that the matter to which the advice relates will become the subject of such proceedings, provided that the advice is given by a lawyer within the meaning of Article 1 of Directive 77/249/EEC;
- (iii) document certification and authentication services which must be provided by notaries;
- (iv) legal services provided by trustees or appointed guardians or other legal services the providers of which are designated by a court or tribunal in the Member State concerned or are designated by law to carry out specific tasks under the supervision of such tribunals or courts;
- (v) other legal services which in the Member State concerned are connected, even occasionally, with the exercise of official authority;
- (e) financial services in connection with the issue, sale, purchase or transfer of securities or other financial instruments within the meaning of Directive 2004/39/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽⁵⁾, central bank services and operations conducted with the European Financial Stability Facility and the European Stability Mechanism;
- (f) loans, whether or not in connection with the issue, sale, purchase or transfer of securities or other financial instruments;
- (g) employment contracts;
- (h) civil defence, civil protection, and danger prevention services that are provided by non-profit organisations or associations, and which are covered by CPV codes 75250000-3, 75251000-0, 75251100-1, 75251110-4, 75251120-7, 75252000-7, 75222000-8, 98113100-9 and 85143000-3 except patient transport ambulance services;
- (i) public passenger transport services by rail or metro;
- (j) political campaign services covered by CPV codes 79341400-0, 92111230-3 and 92111240-6, when awarded by a political party in the context of an election campaign.

Article 11

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 law, regulation or published administrative provision which is compatible with the TFEU.

Article 12

Public contracts between entities within the public sector

1 A public contract awarded by a contracting authority to a legal person governed by private or public law shall fall outside the scope of this Directive where all of the following conditions are fulfilled:

- a the contracting authority exercises over the legal person concerned a control which is similar to that which it exercises over its own departments;
- b more than 80 % of the activities of the controlled legal person are carried out in the performance of tasks entrusted to it by the controlling contracting authority or by other legal persons controlled by that contracting authority; and
- c there is no direct private capital participation in the controlled legal person with the exception of non-controlling and non-blocking forms of private capital participation required by national legislative provisions, in conformity with the Treaties, which do not exert a decisive influence on the controlled legal person.

A contracting authority shall be deemed to exercise over a legal person a control similar to that which it exercises over its own departments within the meaning of point (a) of the first subparagraph where it exercises a decisive influence over both strategic objectives and significant decisions of the controlled legal person. Such control may also be exercised by another legal person, which is itself controlled in the same way by the contracting authority.

2 Paragraph 1 also applies where a controlled legal person which is a contracting authority awards a contract to its controlling contracting authority, or to another legal person controlled by the same contracting authority, provided that there is no direct private capital participation in the legal person being awarded the public contract with the exception of non-controlling and non-blocking forms of private capital participation required by national legislative provisions, in conformity with the Treaties, which do not exert a decisive influence on the controlled legal person.

3 A contracting authority, which does not exercise over a legal person governed by private or public law control within the meaning of paragraph 1, may nevertheless award a public contract to that legal person without applying this Directive where all of the following conditions are fulfilled.

- a the contracting authority exercises jointly with other contracting authorities a control over that legal person which is similar to that which they exercise over their own departments;
- b more than 80 % of the activities of that legal person are carried out in the performance of tasks entrusted to it by the controlling contracting authorities or by other legal persons controlled by the same contracting authorities; and
- c there is no direct private capital participation in the controlled legal person with the exception of non-controlling and non-blocking forms of private capital participation required by national legislative provisions, in conformity with the Treaties, which do not exert a decisive influence on the controlled legal person.

For the purposes of point (a) of the first subparagraph, contracting authorities exercise joint control over a legal person where all of the following conditions are fulfilled:

- (i) the decision-making bodies of the controlled legal person are composed of representatives of all participating contracting authorities. Individual representatives may represent several or all of the participating contracting authorities;
- (ii) those contracting authorities are able to jointly exert decisive influence over the strategic objectives and significant decisions of the controlled legal person; and
- (iii) the controlled legal person does not pursue any interests which are contrary to those of the controlling contracting authorities.

4 A contract concluded exclusively between two or more contracting authorities shall fall outside the scope of this Directive where all of the following conditions are fulfilled:

- a the contract establishes or implements a cooperation between the participating contracting authorities with the aim of ensuring that public services they have to perform are provided with a view to achieving objectives they have in common;
- b the implementation of that cooperation is governed solely by considerations relating to the public interest; and
- c the participating contracting authorities perform on the open market less than 20 % of the activities concerned by the cooperation.

5 For the determination of the percentage of activities referred to in point (b) of the first subparagraph of paragraph 1, point (b) of the first subparagraph of paragraph 3 and point (c) of paragraph 4, the average total turnover, or an appropriate alternative activity-based measure such as costs incurred by the relevant legal person or contracting authority with respect to services, supplies and works for the three years preceding the contract award shall be taken into consideration.

Where, because of the date on which the relevant legal person or contracting authority was created or commenced activities or because of a reorganisation of its activities, the turnover, or alternative activity based measure such as costs, are either not available for the preceding three years or no longer relevant, it shall be sufficient to show that the measurement of activity is credible, particularly by means of business projections.

Section 4

Specific situations

Subsection 1

Subsidised contracts and research and development services

Article 13

Contracts subsidised by contracting authorities

This Directive shall apply to the awarding of the following contracts:

- (a) works contracts which are subsidised directly by contracting authorities by more than 50 % and the estimated value of which, net of VAT, is equal to or greater than EUR 5 186 000, where those contracts involve one of the following activities:
 - (i) civil engineering activities as listed in Annex II,

- (ii) building work for hospitals, facilities intended for sports, recreation and leisure, school and university buildings and buildings used for administrative purposes;
- (b) service contracts which are subsidised directly by contracting authorities by more than 50 % and the estimated value of which, net of VAT, is equal to or greater than EUR 207 000 and which are connected to a works contract as referred to in point (a).

The contracting authorities providing the subsidies referred to in points (a) and (b) of the first subparagraph shall ensure compliance with this Directive where they do not themselves award the subsidised contract or where they award that contract for and on behalf of other entities.

Article 14

Research and development services

This Directive shall only apply to public service contracts for research and development services which are covered by CPV codes 73000000-2 to 73120000-9, 73300000-5, 73420000-2 and 73430000-5 provided that both of the following conditions are fulfilled:

- (a) the benefits accrue exclusively to the contracting authority for its use in the conduct of its own affairs, and
- (b) the service provided is wholly remunerated by the contracting authority.

Subsection 2

Procurement involving defence or security aspects

Article 15

Defence and security

1 This Directive shall apply to the awarding of public contracts and to design contests organised in the fields of defence and security, with the exception of the following contracts:

- a contracts falling within the scope of Directive 2009/81/EC;
- b contracts to which Directive 2009/81/EC does not apply pursuant to Articles 8, 12 and 13 thereof.

2 This Directive shall not apply to public contracts and design contests not otherwise exempted under paragraph 1, to the extent that the protection of the essential security interests of a Member State cannot be guaranteed by less intrusive measures, for instance by imposing requirements aimed at protecting the confidential nature of information which the contracting authority makes available in a contract award procedure as provided for in this Directive.

Furthermore, and in conformity with point (a) of Article 346(1) TFEU, this Directive shall not apply to public contracts and design contests not otherwise exempted under paragraph 1 of this Article to the extent that the application of this Directive would oblige a Member State to supply information the disclosure of which it considers contrary to the essential interests of its security.

3 Where the procurement and performance of the public contract or design contest are declared to be secret or must be accompanied by special security measures in accordance with the laws, regulations or administrative provisions in force in a Member State, this Directive shall not apply provided that the Member State has determined that the essential interests concerned cannot be guaranteed by less intrusive measures, such as those referred to in the first subparagraph of paragraph 2.

Article 16

Mixed procurement involving defence or security aspects

1 In the case of mixed contracts which have as their subject-matter procurement covered by this Directive as well as procurement covered by Article 346 TFEU or Directive 2009/81/EC, this Article shall apply.

2 Where the different parts of a given public contract are objectively separable, contracting authorities may choose to award separate contracts for the separate parts or to award a single contract.

Where contracting authorities choose to award separate contracts for separate parts, the decision of which legal regime applies to any one of such separate contracts shall be taken on the basis of the characteristics of the separate part concerned.

Where contracting authorities choose to award a single contract, the following criteria shall apply to determine the applicable legal regime:

- a where part of a given contract is covered by Article 346 TFEU, the contract may be awarded without applying this Directive, provided that the award of a single contract is justified for objective reasons;
- b where part of a given contract is covered by Directive 2009/81/EC, the contract may be awarded in accordance with that Directive, provided that the award of a single contract is justified for objective reasons. This point shall be without prejudice to the thresholds and exclusions for which that Directive provides.

The decision to award a single contract shall not, however, be taken for the purpose of excluding contracts from the application of either this Directive or Directive 2009/81/EC.

3 Point (a) of the third subparagraph of paragraph 2 shall apply to mixed contracts to which both point (a) and point (b) of that subparagraph could otherwise apply.

4 Where the different parts of a given contract are objectively not separable, the contract may be awarded without applying this Directive where it includes elements to which Article 346 TFEU applies; otherwise it may be awarded in accordance with Directive 2009/81/EC.

Article 17

Public contracts and design contests involving defence or security aspects which are awarded or organised pursuant to international rules

1 This Directive shall not apply to public contracts and design contests involving defence or security aspects which the contracting authority is obliged to award or organise in accordance with procurement procedures different from those laid down in this Directive established by any of the following:

- a an international agreement or arrangement, concluded in conformity with the Treaties, between a Member State and one or more third countries or subdivisions thereof and covering works, supplies or services intended for the joint implementation or exploitation of a project by their signatories;
- b an international agreement or arrangement relating to the stationing of troops and concerning the undertakings of a Member State or a third country;
- c an international organisation.

All agreements or arrangements referred to in point (a) of the first subparagraph of this paragraph shall be communicated to the Commission, which may consult the Advisory Committee on Public Procurement referred to in Article 89.

2 This Directive shall not apply to public contracts and design contests involving defence or security aspects which the contracting authority awards in accordance with procurement rules provided by an international organisation or international financing institution, where the public contracts and design contests concerned are fully financed by this organisation or institution. In the case of public contracts and design contests co-financed for the most part by an international organisation or international financing institution the parties shall agree on applicable procurement procedures.

CHAPTER II

General rules

Article 18

Principles of procurement

1 Contracting authorities shall treat economic operators equally and without discrimination and shall act in a transparent and proportionate manner.

The design of the procurement shall not be made with the intention of excluding it from the scope of this Directive or of artificially narrowing competition. Competition shall be considered to be artificially narrowed where the design of the procurement is made with the intention of unduly favouring or disadvantaging certain economic operators.

2 Member States shall take appropriate measures to ensure that in the performance of public contracts economic operators comply with applicable obligations in the fields of environmental, social and labour law established by Union law, national law, collective agreements or by the international environmental, social and labour law provisions listed in Annex X.

Article 19

Economic operators

1 Economic operators that, 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 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, including temporary associations, may participate in procurement procedures. They shall not be required by contracting authorities to have a specific legal form in order to submit a tender or a request to participate.

Where necessary, contracting authorities may clarify in the procurement documents how groups of economic operators are to meet the requirements as to economic and financial standing or technical and professional ability referred to in Article 58 provided that this is justified by objective reasons and is proportionate. Member States may establish standard terms for how groups of economic operators are to meet those requirements.

Any conditions for the performance of a contract by such groups of economic operators, which are different from those imposed on individual participants, shall also be justified by objective reasons and shall be proportionate.

3 Notwithstanding paragraph 2, contracting authorities may require groups of economic operators to assume a specific legal form once they have been awarded the contract, to the extent that such a change is necessary for the satisfactory performance of the contract.

Article 20

Reserved contracts

1 Member States may reserve the right to participate in public procurement procedures to sheltered workshops and economic operators whose main aim is the social and professional integration of disabled or disadvantaged persons or may provide for such contracts to be performed in the context of sheltered employment programmes, provided that at least 30 % of the employees of those workshops, economic operators or programmes are disabled or disadvantaged workers.

2 The call for competition shall make reference to this Article.

Article 21

Confidentiality

1 Unless otherwise provided in this Directive or in the national law to which the contracting authority is subject, in particular legislation concerning access to information, and without prejudice to the obligations relating to the advertising of awarded contracts and to the information to candidates and tenderers set out in Articles 50 and 55, the contracting authority shall not disclose information forwarded to it by economic operators which they have designated as confidential, including, but not limited to, technical or trade secrets and the confidential aspects of tenders.

2 Contracting authorities may impose on economic operators requirements aimed at protecting the confidential nature of information which the contracting authorities make available throughout the procurement procedure.

Article 22

Rules applicable to communication

1 Member States shall ensure that all communication and information exchange under this Directive, in particular electronic submission, are performed using electronic means of communication in accordance with the requirements of this Article. The tools and devices to be used for communicating by electronic means, as well as their technical characteristics, shall be non-discriminatory, generally available and interoperable with the ICT products in general use and shall not restrict economic operators' access to the procurement procedure.

Notwithstanding the first subparagraph, contracting authorities shall not be obliged to require electronic means of communication in the submission process in the following situations:

- a due to the specialised nature of the procurement, the use of electronic means of communication would require specific tools, devices or file formats that are not generally available or supported by generally available applications;
- b the applications supporting file formats that are suitable for the description of the tenders use file formats that cannot be handled by any other open or generally available applications or are under a proprietary licensing scheme and cannot be made available for downloading or remote use by the contracting authority;
- c the use of electronic means of communication would require specialised office equipment that is not generally available to contracting authorities;
- d the procurement documents require the submission of physical or scale models which cannot be transmitted using electronic means.

In respect of communications for which electronic means of communication are not used pursuant to the second subparagraph, communication shall be carried out by post or other suitable carrier or by a combination of post or other suitable carrier and electronic means.

Notwithstanding the first subparagraph of this paragraph, contracting authorities are not obliged to require electronic means of communication in the submission process to the extent that the use of means of communication other than electronic means is necessary either because of a breach of security of the electronic means of communications or for the protection of the particularly sensitive nature of information requiring such a high level of protection that it cannot be properly ensured by using electronic tools and devices that are either generally available to economic operators or can be made available to them by alternative means of access within the meaning of paragraph 5.

It shall be the responsibility of the contracting authorities requiring, in accordance with the second subparagraph of this paragraph, means of communication other than electronic means in the submission process to indicate in the individual report referred to in Article 84 the reasons for this requirement. Where applicable, contracting authorities shall indicate in the individual report the reasons why use of means of communication other than electronic means has been considered necessary in application of the fourth subparagraph of this paragraph.

2 Notwithstanding paragraph 1, oral communication may be used in respect of communications other than those concerning the essential elements of a procurement procedure, provided that the content of the oral communication is documented to a sufficient degree. For this purpose, the essential elements of a procurement procedure include the procurement

documents, requests for participation, confirmations of interest and tenders. In particular, oral communications with tenderers which could have a substantial impact on the content and assessment of the tenders shall be documented to a sufficient extent and by appropriate means, such as written or audio records or summaries of the main elements of the communication.

3 In all communication, exchange and storage of information, contracting authorities shall ensure that the integrity of data and the confidentiality of tenders and requests to participate are preserved. They shall examine the content of tenders and requests to participate only after the time limit set for submitting them has expired.

4 For public works contracts and design contests, Member States may require the use of specific electronic tools, such as of building information electronic modelling tools or similar. In such cases the contracting authorities shall offer alternative means of access, as provided for in paragraph 5, until such time as those tools become generally available within the meaning of the second sentence of the first subparagraph of paragraph 1.

5 Contracting authorities may, where necessary, require the use of tools and devices which are not generally available, provided that the contracting authorities offer alternative means of access.

Contracting authorities shall be deemed to offer suitable alternative means of access in any of the following situations, where they:

- a offer unrestricted and full direct access free of charge by electronic means to those tools and devices from the date of publication of the notice in accordance with Annex VIII or from the date when the invitation to confirm interest is sent. The text of the notice or the invitation to confirm interest shall specify the internet address at which those tools and devices are accessible;
- b ensure that tenderers having no access to the tools and devices concerned, or no possibility of obtaining them within the relevant time limits, provided that the lack of access is not attributable to the tenderer concerned, may access the procurement procedure through the use of provisional tokens made available free of charge online; or
- c support an alternative channel for electronic submission of tenders.

6 In addition to the requirements set out in Annex IV, the following rules shall apply to tools and devices for the electronic transmission and receipt of tenders and for the electronic receipt of requests to participate:

- a information on specifications for the electronic submission of tenders and requests to participate, including encryption and time-stamping, shall be available to interested parties;
- b Member States, or contracting authorities acting within an overall framework established by the Member State concerned, shall specify the level of security required for the electronic means of communication in the various stages of the specific procurement procedure; that level shall be proportionate to the risks attached;
- c where Member States, or contracting authorities acting within an overall framework established by the Member State concerned, conclude that the level of risks, assessed under point (b) of this paragraph, is such that advanced electronic signatures as defined by Directive 1999/93/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽⁶⁾ are required, contracting authorities shall accept advanced electronic signatures supported by a qualified certificate, taking into account whether those certificates are provided by a certificate services provider, which is on a trusted list provided for in Commission Decision 2009/767/EC⁽⁷⁾, created with or without a secure signature creation device, subject to compliance with the following conditions:

- (i) the contracting authorities shall establish the required advanced signature format on the basis of formats established in Commission Decision 2011/130/EU⁽⁸⁾ and shall put in place necessary measures to be able to process these formats technically; in case a different format of electronic signature is used, the electronic signature or the electronic document carrier shall include information on existing validation possibilities, which shall be under the responsibility of the Member State. The validation possibilities shall allow the contracting authority to validate online, free of charge and in a way that is understandable for non-native speakers, the received electronic signature as an advanced electronic signature supported by a qualified certificate.

Member States shall notify information on the provider of validation services to the Commission, which shall make the information received from the Member States available to the public on the Internet;

- (ii) where a tender is signed with the support of a qualified certificate that is included on a trusted list, the contracting authorities shall not apply additional requirements that may hinder the use of those signatures by tenderers.

In respect of documents used in the context of a procurement procedure that are signed by a competent authority of a Member State or by another issuing entity, the competent issuing authority or entity may establish the required advanced signature format in accordance with the requirements set out in Article 1(2) of Decision 2011/130/EU. They shall put in place the necessary measures to be able to process that format technically by including the information required for the purpose of processing the signature in the document concerned. Such documents shall contain in the electronic signature or in the electronic document carrier information on existing validation possibilities that allow the validation of the received electronic signature online, free of charge and in a way that is understandable for non-native speakers.

7 The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 87 to amend the technical details and characteristics set out in Annex IV to take account of technical developments.

The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 87 to amend the list set out in points (a) to (d) of the second subparagraph of paragraph 1 of this Article where technological developments render continued exceptions from the use of electronic means of communication inappropriate or, exceptionally, where new exceptions must be provided for because of technological developments.

To ensure the interoperability of technical formats as well as of process and messaging standards, especially in a cross-border context, the Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 87 to establish the mandatory use of such specific technical standards, in particular with regard to the use of electronic submission, electronic catalogues and means for electronic authentication, only where technical standards have been thoroughly tested and proved their usefulness in practice. Before making the use of any technical standard mandatory, the Commission shall also carefully consider the costs that this may entail, in particular in terms of adaptations to existing e-procurement solutions, including infrastructure, processes or software.

Article 23

Nomenclatures

1 Any references to nomenclatures in the context of public procurement shall be made using the Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) as adopted by Regulation (EC) No 2195/2002.

2 The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 87 to adapt the CPV codes referred to in this Directive, whenever changes in the CPV nomenclature must be reflected in this Directive and they do not imply a modification of the scope of this Directive.

Article 24

Conflicts of interest

Member States shall ensure that contracting authorities take appropriate measures to effectively prevent, identify and remedy conflicts of interest arising in the conduct of procurement procedures so as to avoid any distortion of competition and to ensure equal treatment of all economic operators.

The concept of conflicts of interest shall at least cover any situation where staff members of the contracting authority or of a procurement service provider acting on behalf of the contracting authority who are involved in the conduct of the procurement procedure or may influence the outcome of that procedure have, directly or indirectly, a financial, economic or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise their impartiality and independence in the context of the procurement procedure.

TITLE II

RULES ON PUBLIC CONTRACTS

CHAPTER I

Procedures

Article 25

Conditions relating to the GPA and other international agreements

In so far as they are covered by Annexes 1, 2, 4 and 5 and the General Notes to the European Union's Appendix I to the GPA and by the other international agreements by which the Union is bound, contracting authorities shall accord to the works, supplies, services and economic operators of the signatories to those agreements treatment no less favourable than the treatment accorded to the works, supplies, services and economic operators of the Union.

Article 26

Choice of procedures

1 When awarding public contracts, contracting authorities shall apply the national procedures adjusted to be in conformity with this Directive, provided that, without prejudice to Article 32, a call for competition has been published in accordance with this Directive.

2 Member States shall provide that contracting authorities may apply open or restricted procedures as regulated in this Directive.

3 Member States shall provide that contracting authorities may apply innovation partnerships as regulated in this Directive.

4 Member States shall provide that contracting authorities may apply a competitive procedure with negotiation or a competitive dialogue in the following situations:

a with regard to works, supplies or services fulfilling one or more of the following criteria:

- (i) the needs of the contracting authority cannot be met without adaptation of readily available solutions;
- (ii) they include design or innovative solutions;
- (iii) the contract cannot be awarded without prior negotiations because of specific circumstances related to the nature, the complexity or the legal and financial make-up or because of the risks attaching to them;
- (iv) the technical specifications cannot be established with sufficient precision by the contracting authority with reference to a standard, European Technical Assessment, common technical specification or technical reference within the meaning of points 2 to 5 of Annex VII;

b with regard to works, supplies or services where, in response to an open or a restricted procedure, only irregular or unacceptable tenders are submitted. In such situations contracting authorities shall not be required to publish a contract notice where they include in the procedure all of, and only, the tenderers which satisfy the criteria set out in Articles 57 to 64 and which, during the prior open or restricted procedure, submitted tenders in accordance with the formal requirements of the procurement procedure.

In particular, tenders which do not comply with the procurement documents, which were received late, where there is evidence of collusion or corruption, or which have been found by the contracting authority to be abnormally low, shall be considered as being irregular. In particular tenders submitted by tenderers that do not have the required qualifications, and tenders whose price exceeds the contracting authority's budget as determined and documented prior to the launching of the procurement procedure shall be considered as unacceptable.

5 The call for competition shall be made by means of a contract notice pursuant to Article 49.

Where the contract is awarded by restricted procedure or competitive procedure with negotiation, Member States may provide, notwithstanding the first subparagraph of this paragraph, that sub-central contracting authorities or specific categories thereof may make the call for competition by means of a prior information notice pursuant to Article 48(2).

Where the call for competition is made by means of a prior information notice pursuant to Article 48(2), economic operators having expressed their interest following the publication of the prior information notice shall subsequently be invited to confirm their interest in writing by means of an invitation to confirm interest in conformity with Article 54.

6 In the specific cases and circumstances referred to expressly in Article 32, Member States may provide that contracting authorities may apply a negotiated procedure without prior publication of a call for competition. Member States shall not allow the application of that procedure in any other cases than those referred to in Article 32.

Article 27

Open procedure

1 In open procedures, any interested economic operator may submit a tender in response to a call for competition.

The minimum time limit for the receipt of tenders shall be 35 days from the date on which the contract notice was sent.

The tender shall be accompanied by the information for qualitative selection that is requested by the contracting authority.

2 Where contracting authorities have published a prior information notice which was not itself used as a means of calling for competition, the minimum time limit for the receipt of tenders, as laid down in the second subparagraph of paragraph 1 of this Article, may be shortened to 15 days, provided that all of the following conditions are fulfilled:

- a the prior information notice included all the information required for the contract notice in section I of part B of Annex V, in so far as that information was available at the time the prior information notice was published;
- b the prior information notice was sent for publication between 35 days and 12 months before the date on which the contract notice was sent.

3 Where a state of urgency duly substantiated by the contracting authority renders impracticable the time limit laid down in the second subparagraph of paragraph 1, it may fix a time limit which shall be not less than 15 days from the date on which the contract notice was sent.

4 The contracting authority may reduce by five days the time limit for receipt of tenders set out in the second subparagraph of paragraph 1 of this Article where it accepts that tenders may be submitted by electronic means in accordance with the first subparagraph of Article 22(1), and Article 22(5) and (6).

Article 28

Restricted procedure

1 In restricted procedures, any economic operator may submit a request to participate in response to a call for competition containing the information set out in Annex V parts B or C as the case may be by providing the information for qualitative selection that is requested by the contracting authority.

The minimum time limit for receipt of requests to participate shall be 30 days from the date on which the contract notice or, where a prior information notice is used as a means of calling for competition, the invitation to confirm interest was sent.

2 Only those economic operators invited to do so by the contracting authority following its assessment of the information provided may submit a tender. Contracting authorities may limit the number of suitable candidates to be invited to participate in the procedure in accordance with Article 65.

The minimum time limit for the receipt of tenders shall be 30 days from the date on which the invitation to tender was sent.

3 Where contracting authorities have published a prior information notice which was not itself used as a means of calling for competition, the minimum time limit for the receipt of tenders as laid down in the second subparagraph of paragraph 2 of this Article may be shortened to 10 days, provided that all of the following conditions are fulfilled:

- a the prior information notice included all the information required in section I of part B of Annex V, in so far as that information was available at the time the prior information notice was published;
- b the prior information notice was sent for publication between 35 days and 12 months before the date on which the contract notice was sent.

4 Member States may provide that all or specific categories of sub-central contracting authorities may set the time limit for the receipt of tenders by mutual agreement between the contracting authority and the selected candidates, provided that all selected candidates have the same time to prepare and submit their tenders. In the absence of agreement on the time limit for the receipt of tenders, the time limit shall be at least 10 days from the date on which the invitation to tender was sent.

5 The time limit for receipt of tenders provided for in paragraph 2 of this Article may be reduced by five days where the contracting authority accepts that tenders may be submitted by electronic means in conformity with Article 22(1), (5) and (6).

6 Where a state of urgency duly substantiated by the contracting authorities renders impracticable the time limits laid down in this Article, they may fix:

- a a time limit for the receipt of requests to participate which shall not be less than 15 days from the date on which the contract notice was sent;
- b a time limit for the receipt of tenders which shall not be less than 10 days from the date on which the invitation to tender was sent.

Article 29

Competitive procedure with negotiation

1 In competitive procedures with negotiation, any economic operator may submit a request to participate in response to a call for competition containing the information set out in Annex V parts B and C by providing the information for qualitative selection that is requested by the contracting authority.

In the procurement documents, contracting authorities shall identify the subject-matter of the procurement by providing a description of their needs and the characteristics required of the supplies, works or services to be procured and specify the contract award criteria. They shall also indicate which elements of the description define the minimum requirements to be met by all tenders.

The information provided shall be sufficiently precise to enable economic operators to identify the nature and scope of the procurement and decide whether to request to participate in the procedure.

The minimum time limit for receipt of requests to participate shall be 30 days from the date on which the contract notice or, where a prior information notice is used as a means of calling for competition, the invitation to confirm interest was sent. The minimum time limit for the receipt of initial tenders shall be 30 days from the date on which the invitation was sent. Article 28(3) to (6) shall apply.

2 Only those economic operators invited by the contracting authority following its assessment of the information provided may submit an initial tender which shall be the basis for the subsequent negotiations. Contracting authorities may limit the number of suitable candidates to be invited to participate in the procedure in accordance with Article 65.

3 Unless otherwise provided for in paragraph 4, contracting authorities shall negotiate with tenderers the initial and all subsequent tenders submitted by them, except for the final tenders within the meaning of paragraph 7, to improve the content thereof.

The minimum requirements and the award criteria shall not be subject to negotiations.

4 Contracting authorities may award contracts on the basis of the initial tenders without negotiation where they have indicated, in the contract notice or in the invitation to confirm interest, that they reserve the possibility of doing so.

5 During the negotiations, contracting authorities shall ensure the equal treatment of all tenderers. To that end, they shall not provide information in a discriminatory manner which may give some tenderers an advantage over others. They shall inform all tenderers, whose tenders have not been eliminated pursuant to paragraph 6, in writing of any changes to the technical specifications or other procurement documents, other than those setting out the minimum requirements. Following these changes, contracting authorities shall provide sufficient time for tenderers to modify and re-submit amended tenders, as appropriate.

In accordance with Article 21, contracting authorities shall not reveal to the other participants confidential information communicated by a candidate or a tenderer participating in the negotiations without its agreement. Such agreement shall not take the form of a general waiver but shall be given with reference to the intended communication of specific information.

6 Competitive procedures with negotiation may take place in successive stages in order to reduce the number of tenders to be negotiated by applying the award criteria specified in the contract notice, in the invitation to confirm interest or in another procurement document. In the contract notice, the invitation to confirm interest or in another procurement document, the contracting authority shall indicate whether it will use that option.

7 Where the contracting authority intends to conclude the negotiations, it shall inform the remaining tenderers and set a common deadline to submit any new or revised tenders. It shall verify that the final tenders are in conformity with the minimum requirements and comply with Article 56(1), assess the final tenders on the basis of the award criteria and award the contract in accordance with Articles 66 to 69.

Article 30

Competitive dialogue

1 In competitive dialogues, any economic operator may submit a request to participate in response to a contract notice by providing the information for qualitative selection that is requested by the contracting authority.

The minimum time limit for receipt of requests to participate shall be 30 days from the date on which the contract notice was sent.

Only those economic operators invited by the contracting authority following the assessment of the information provided may participate in the dialogue. Contracting authorities may limit the number of suitable candidates to be invited to participate in the procedure in accordance with Article 65. The contract shall be awarded on the sole basis of the award criterion of the best price-quality ratio in accordance with Article 67(2).

2 Contracting authorities shall set out their needs and requirements in the contract notice and they shall define these needs and requirements in that notice and/or in a descriptive document. At the same time and in the same documents, they shall also set out and define the chosen award criteria and set out an indicative timeframe.

3 Contracting authorities shall open, with the participants selected in accordance with the relevant provisions of Articles 56 to 66, 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 procurement with the chosen participants during this dialogue.

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

In accordance with Article 21, contracting authorities shall not reveal to the other participants solutions proposed or other confidential information communicated by a candidate or tenderer participating in the dialogue without its agreement. Such agreement shall not take the form of a general waiver but shall be given with reference to the intended communication of specific information.

4 Competitive dialogues may 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 laid down in the contract notice or in the descriptive document. In the contract notice or the descriptive document, the contracting authority shall indicate whether it will use that option.

5 The contracting authority shall continue the dialogue until it can identify the solution or solutions which are capable of meeting its needs.

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

Those tenders may be clarified, specified and optimised at the request of the contracting authority. However, such clarification, specification, optimisation or additional information may not involve changes to the essential aspects of the tender or of the public procurement, including the needs and requirements set out in the contract

notice or in the descriptive document, where variations to those aspects, needs and requirements 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 in the descriptive document.

At the request of the contracting authority, negotiations with the tenderer identified as having submitted the tender presenting the best price-quality ratio in accordance with Article 67 may be carried out to confirm financial commitments or other terms contained in the tender by finalising the terms of the contract provided this does not have the effect of materially modifying essential aspects of the tender or of the public procurement, including the needs and requirements set out in the contract notice or in the descriptive document and does not risk distorting competition or causing discrimination.

8 Contracting authorities may specify prizes or payments to the participants in the dialogue.

Article 31

Innovation partnership

1 In innovation partnerships, any economic operator may submit a request to participate in response to a contract notice by providing the information for qualitative selection that is requested by the contracting authority.

In the procurement documents, the contracting authority shall identify the need for an innovative product, service or works that cannot be met by purchasing products, services or works already available on the market. It shall indicate which elements of this description define the minimum requirements to be met by all tenders. The information provided shall be sufficiently precise to enable economic operators to identify the nature and scope of the required solution and decide whether to request to participate in the procedure.

The contracting authority may decide to set up the innovation partnership with one partner or with several partners conducting separate research and development activities.

The minimum time limit for receipt of requests to participate shall be 30 days from the date on which the contract notice is sent. Only those economic operators invited by the contracting authority following the assessment of the information provided may participate in the procedure. Contracting authorities may limit the number of suitable candidates to be invited to participate in the procedure in accordance with Article 65. The contracts shall be awarded on the sole basis of the award criterion of the best price-quality ratio in accordance with Article 67.

2 The innovation partnership shall aim at the development of an innovative product, service or works and the subsequent purchase of the resulting supplies, services or works, provided that they correspond to the performance levels and maximum costs agreed between the contracting authorities and the participants.

The innovation partnership shall be structured in successive phases following the sequence of steps in the research and innovation process, which may include the manufacturing of the products, the provision of the services or the completion of the works. The innovation partnership shall set intermediate targets to be attained by the partners and provide for payment of the remuneration in appropriate instalments.

Based on those targets, the contracting authority may decide after each phase to terminate the innovation partnership or, in the case of an innovation partnership with several partners, to reduce the number of partners by terminating individual contracts, provided that the contracting authority has indicated in the procurement documents those possibilities and the conditions for their use.

3 Unless otherwise provided for in this Article, contracting authorities shall negotiate with tenderers the initial and all subsequent tenders submitted by them, except for the final tender, to improve the content thereof.

The minimum requirements and the award criteria shall not be subject to negotiations.

4 During the negotiations, contracting authorities shall ensure the equal treatment of all tenderers. To that end, they shall not provide information in a discriminatory manner which may give some tenderers an advantage over others. They shall inform all tenderers whose tenders have not been eliminated, pursuant to paragraph 5, in writing of any changes to the technical specifications or other procurement documents other than those setting out the minimum requirements. Following those changes, contracting authorities shall provide sufficient time for tenderers to modify and re-submit amended tenders, as appropriate.

In accordance with Article 21, contracting authorities shall not reveal to the other participants confidential information communicated by a candidate or tenderer participating in the negotiations without its agreement. Such agreement shall not take the form of a general waiver but shall be given with reference to the intended communication of specific information.

5 Negotiations during innovation partnership procedures may take place in successive stages in order to reduce the number of tenders to be negotiated by applying the award criteria specified in the contract notice, in the invitation to confirm interest or in the procurement documents. In the contract notice, the invitation to confirm interest or in the procurement documents, the contracting authority shall indicate whether it will use that option.

6 In selecting candidates, contracting authorities shall in particular apply criteria concerning the candidates' capacity in the field of research and development and of developing and implementing innovative solutions.

Only those economic operators invited by the contracting authority following its assessment of the requested information may submit research and innovation projects aimed at meeting the needs identified by the contracting authority that cannot be met by existing solutions.

In the procurement documents, the contracting authority shall define the arrangements applicable to intellectual property rights. In the case of an innovation partnership with several partners, the contracting authority shall not, in accordance with Article 21, reveal to the other partners solutions proposed or other confidential information communicated by a partner in the framework of the partnership without that partner's agreement. Such agreement shall not take the form of a general waiver but shall be given with reference to the intended communication of specific information.

7 The contracting authority shall ensure that the structure of the partnership and, in particular, the duration and value of the different phases reflect the degree of innovation of the proposed solution and the sequence of the research and innovation activities required for the development of an innovative solution not yet available on the market. The estimated value of supplies, services or works shall not be disproportionate in relation to the investment required for their development.

Article 32

Use of the negotiated procedure without prior publication

1 In the specific cases and circumstances laid down in paragraphs 2 to 5, Member States may provide that contracting authorities may award public contracts by a negotiated procedure without prior publication.

2 The negotiated procedure without prior publication may be used for public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts in any of the following cases:

- a where no tenders or no suitable tenders or no requests to participate or no suitable requests to participate have been submitted in response to an open procedure or a restricted procedure, provided that the initial conditions of the contract are not substantially altered and that a report is sent to the Commission where it so requests.

A tender shall be considered not to be suitable where it is irrelevant to the contract, being manifestly incapable, without substantial changes, of meeting the contracting authority's needs and requirements as specified in the procurement documents. A request for participation shall be considered not to be suitable where the economic operator concerned is to be or may be excluded pursuant to Article 57 or does not meet the selection criteria set out by the contracting authority pursuant to Article 58;

- b where the works, supplies or services can be supplied only by a particular economic operator for any of the following reasons:
 - (i) the aim of the procurement is the creation or acquisition of a unique work of art or artistic performance;
 - (ii) competition is absent for technical reasons;
 - (iii) the protection of exclusive rights, including intellectual property rights;

The exceptions set out in points (ii) and (iii) shall only apply when no reasonable alternative or substitute exists and the absence of competition is not the result of an artificial narrowing down of the parameters of the procurement;

- c in so far as is strictly necessary where, for reasons of extreme urgency brought about by events unforeseeable by the contracting authority, the time limits for the open or restricted procedures or competitive procedures with negotiation cannot be complied with. The circumstances invoked to justify extreme urgency shall not in any event be attributable to the contracting authority.

3 The negotiated procedure without prior publication may be used for public supply contracts:

- a where the products involved are manufactured purely for the purpose of research, experimentation, study or development; however, contracts awarded pursuant to this point shall not include 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 supplies or installations or as the extension of existing supplies or installations where a change of supplier would oblige the contracting authority to acquire supplies having different technical characteristics which would result in incompatibility or disproportionate technical difficulties in operation and maintenance; the duration of such contracts as well as that of recurrent contracts shall not, as a general rule, exceed three years;

- c for supplies quoted and purchased on a commodity market;
- d for the purchase of supplies or services on particularly advantageous terms, from either a supplier which is definitively winding up its business activities, or the liquidator in an insolvency procedure, an arrangement with creditors, or a similar procedure under national laws or regulations.

4 The negotiated procedure without prior publication may be used for public service contracts, where the contract concerned follows a design contest organised in accordance with this Directive and is to be awarded, under the rules provided for in the design contest, to the winner or one of the winners of the design contest; in the latter case, all winners must be invited to participate in the negotiations.

5 The negotiated procedure without prior publication may be used for new works or services consisting in the repetition of similar works or services entrusted to the economic operator to which 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 pursuant to a procedure in accordance with Article 26(1). The basic project shall indicate the extent of possible additional works or services and the conditions under which they will be awarded.

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 Article 4.

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

CHAPTER II

Techniques and instruments for electronic and aggregated procurement

Article 33

Framework agreements

1 Contracting authorities may conclude framework agreements, provided that they apply the procedures provided for in this Directive.

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

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

2 Contracts based on a framework agreement shall be awarded in accordance with the procedures laid down in this paragraph and in paragraphs 3 and 4.

Those procedures may be applied only between those contracting authorities clearly identified for this purpose in the call for competition or the invitation to confirm interest and those economic operators party to the framework agreement as concluded.

Contracts based on a framework agreement may under no circumstances entail substantial modifications to the terms laid down in that framework agreement, in particular in the case referred to in paragraph 3.

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 economic operator party to the framework agreement in writing, requesting it to supplement its tender as necessary.

4 Where a framework agreement is concluded with more than one economic operator, that framework agreement shall be performed in one of the following ways:

- a following the terms and conditions of the framework agreement, without reopening competition, where it sets out all the terms governing the provision of the works, services and supplies concerned and the objective conditions for determining which of the economic operators, party to the framework agreement, shall perform them; the latter conditions shall be indicated in the procurement documents for the framework agreement;
- b where the framework agreement sets out all the terms governing the provision of the works, services and supplies concerned, partly without reopening of competition in accordance with point (a) and partly with reopening of competition amongst the economic operators parties to the framework agreement in accordance with point (c), where this possibility has been stipulated by the contracting authorities in the procurement documents for the framework agreement. The choice of whether specific works, supplies or services shall be acquired following a reopening of competition or directly on the terms set out in the framework agreement shall be made pursuant to objective criteria, which shall be set out in the procurement documents for the framework agreement. These procurement documents shall also specify which terms may be subject to reopening of competition.

The possibilities provided for under the first paragraph of this point shall also apply to any lot of a framework agreement for which all the terms governing the provision of the works, services and supplies concerned are set out in the framework agreement, regardless of whether all the terms governing the provision of the works, services and supplies concerned under other lots have been set out.

- c where not all the terms governing the provision of the works, services and supplies are laid down in the framework agreement, through reopening competition amongst the economic operators parties to the framework agreement.

5 The competitions referred to in points (b) and (c) of paragraph 4 shall be based on the same terms as applied for the award of the framework agreement and, where necessary, more precisely formulated terms, and, where appropriate, other terms referred to in the procurement documents for 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 not be opened until the stipulated time limit for reply has expired;

- d contracting authorities shall award each contract to the tenderer that has submitted the best tender on the basis of the award criteria set out in the procurement documents for the framework agreement.

Article 34

Dynamic purchasing systems

1 For commonly used purchases the characteristics of which, as generally available on the market, meet the requirements of the contracting authorities, contracting authorities may use a dynamic purchasing system. The dynamic purchasing system shall be operated as a completely electronic process, and shall be open throughout the period of validity of the purchasing system to any economic operator that satisfies the selection criteria. It may be divided into categories of products, works or services that are objectively defined on the basis of characteristics of the procurement to be undertaken under the category concerned. Such characteristics may include reference to the maximum allowable size of the subsequent specific contracts or to a specific geographic area in which subsequent specific contracts will be performed.

2 In order to procure under a dynamic purchasing system, contracting authorities shall follow the rules of the restricted procedure. All the candidates satisfying the selection criteria shall be admitted to the system, and the number of candidates to be admitted to the system shall not be limited in accordance with Article 65. Where contracting authorities have divided the system into categories of products, works or services in accordance with paragraph 1 of this Article, they shall specify the applicable selection criteria for each category.

Notwithstanding Article 28, the following time limits shall apply:

- a the minimum time limit for receipt of requests to participate shall be 30 days from the date on which the contract notice or, where a prior information notice is used as a means of calling for competition, the invitation to confirm interest is sent. No further time limits for receipt of requests to participate shall apply once the invitation to tender for the first specific procurement under the dynamic purchasing system has been sent;
- b the minimum time limit for receipt of tenders shall be at least 10 days from the date on which the invitation to tender is sent. Where appropriate, Article 28(4) shall apply. Article 28(3) and (5) shall not apply.

3 All communications in the context of a dynamic purchasing system shall only be made by electronic means in accordance with Article 22(1), (3), (5) and (6).

4 For the purposes of awarding contracts under a dynamic purchasing system, contracting authorities shall:

- a publish a call for competition making it clear that a dynamic purchasing system is involved;
- b indicate in the procurement documents at least the nature and estimated quantity of the purchases envisaged, as well as all the necessary information concerning the dynamic purchasing system, including how the dynamic purchasing system operates, the electronic equipment used and the technical connection arrangements and specifications;
- c indicate any division into categories of products, works or services and the characteristics defining them;
- d offer unrestricted and full direct access, as long as the system is valid, to the procurement documents in conformity with Article 53.

5 Contracting authorities shall give any economic operator, throughout the entire period of validity of the dynamic purchasing system, the possibility of requesting to participate in the system under the conditions referred to in paragraph 2. Contracting authorities shall finalise their assessment of such requests in accordance with the selection criteria within 10 working days following their receipt. That deadline may be prolonged to 15 working days in individual cases where justified, in particular because of the need to examine additional documentation or to otherwise verify whether the selection criteria are met.

Notwithstanding the first subparagraph, as long as the invitation to tender for the first specific procurement under the dynamic purchasing system has not been sent, contracting authorities may extend the evaluation period provided that no invitation to tender is issued during the extended evaluation period. Contracting authorities shall indicate in the procurement documents the length of the extended period that they intend to apply.

Contracting authorities shall inform the economic operator concerned at the earliest possible opportunity of whether or not it has been admitted to the dynamic purchasing system.

6 Contracting authorities shall invite all admitted participants to submit a tender for each specific procurement under the dynamic purchasing system, in accordance with Article 54. Where the dynamic purchasing system has been divided into categories of works, products or services, contracting authorities shall invite all participants having been admitted to the category corresponding to the specific procurement concerned to submit a tender.

They shall award the contract to the tenderer that submitted the best tender on the basis of the award criteria set out in the contract notice for the dynamic purchasing system or, where a prior information notice is used as a means of calling for competition, in the invitation to confirm interest. Those criteria may, where appropriate, be formulated more precisely in the invitation to tender.

7 Contracting authorities may, at any time during the period of validity of the dynamic purchasing system, require admitted participants to submit a renewed and updated self-declaration as provided for in Article 59(1), within five working days from the date on which that request is transmitted.

Article 59(4) to (6) shall apply throughout the entire period of validity of the dynamic purchasing system.

8 Contracting authorities shall indicate the period of validity of the dynamic purchasing system in the call for competition. They shall notify the Commission of any change in the period of validity, using the following standard forms:

- a where the period of validity is changed without terminating the system, the form used initially for the call for competition for the dynamic purchasing system;
- b where the system is terminated, a contract award notice referred to in Article 50.

9 No charges may be billed prior to or during the period of validity of the dynamic purchasing system to the economic operators interested in or party to the dynamic purchasing system.

Article 35

Electronic auctions

1 Contracting authorities may use electronic auctions, in which new prices, revised downwards, and/or new values concerning certain elements of tenders are presented.

For this purpose, contracting authorities shall structure the electronic auction as a repetitive electronic process, which occurs after an initial full evaluation of the tenders, enabling them to be ranked using automatic evaluation methods.

Certain public service contracts and certain public works contracts having as their subject-matter intellectual performances, such as the design of works, which cannot be ranked using automatic evaluation methods, shall not be the object of electronic auctions.

2 In open or restricted procedures or competitive procedures with negotiation, the contracting authorities may decide that the award of a public contract shall be preceded by an electronic auction when the content of the procurement documents, in particular the technical 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 points (b) or (c) of Article 33(4) and on the opening for competition of contracts to be awarded under the dynamic purchasing system referred to in Article 34.

3 The electronic auction shall be based on one of the following elements of the tenders:

- a solely on prices where the contract is awarded on the basis of price only;
- b on prices and/or on the new values of the features of the tenders indicated in the procurement documents where the contract is awarded on the basis of the best price-quality ratio or to the tender with the lowest cost using a cost-effectiveness approach.

4 Contracting authorities which decide to hold an electronic auction shall state that fact in the contract notice or in the invitation to confirm interest. The procurement documents shall include at least the information set out in Annex VI.

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

A tender shall be considered admissible where it has been submitted by a tenderer, who has not been excluded pursuant to Article 57 and who meets the selection criteria, and whose tender is in conformity with the technical specifications without being irregular or unacceptable or unsuitable.

In particular, tenders which do not comply with the procurement documents, which were received late, where there is evidence of collusion or corruption, or which have been found by the contracting authority to be abnormally low, shall be considered as being irregular. In particular tenders submitted by tenderers that do not have the required qualifications, and tenders whose price exceeds the contracting authority's budget as determined and documented prior to the launching of the procurement procedure shall be considered as unacceptable.

A tender shall be considered not to be suitable where it is irrelevant to the contract, being manifestly incapable, without substantial changes, of meeting the contracting authority's needs and requirements as specified in the procurement documents. A request for participation shall be considered not to be suitable where the economic operator concerned is to be or may be excluded pursuant to Article 57 or does not meet the selection criteria set out by the contracting authority pursuant to Article 58

All tenderers that have submitted admissible tenders shall be invited simultaneously to participate in the electronic auction using, as of the specified date and time, the connections in accordance with the instructions set out in the invitation. The electronic auction may take place in a number of successive phases. The electronic auction shall not start sooner than two working days after the date on which invitations are sent out.

6 The invitation shall be accompanied by the outcome of a full evaluation of the relevant tender, carried out in accordance with the weighting provided for in the first subparagraph of Article 67(5).

The invitation shall also state the mathematical formula to be used in the electronic auction to determine the automatic re-rankings on the basis of the new prices and/or new values submitted. Except where the most economically advantageous offer is identified on the basis of price alone, that formula shall incorporate the weighting of all the criteria established to determine the most economically advantageous tender, as indicated in the notice used as a means of calling for competition or in other procurement documents. 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.

7 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, where this has been previously indicated, communicate other information concerning other prices or values submitted. 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.

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

- a at the previously indicated date and time;
- b when they receive no more new prices or new values which meet the requirements concerning minimum differences, provided that they have previously stated the time which they will allow to elapse after receiving the last submission before they close the electronic auction; or
- c when the previously indicated number of phases in the auction has been completed.

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

9 After closing an electronic auction contracting authorities shall award the contract in accordance with Article 67 on the basis of the results of the electronic auction.

Article 36

Electronic catalogues

1 Where the use of electronic means of communication is required, contracting authorities may require tenders to be presented in the format of an electronic catalogue or to include an electronic catalogue.

Member States may render the use of electronic catalogues mandatory in connection with certain types of procurement.

Tenders presented in the form of an electronic catalogue may be accompanied by other documents, completing the tender.

2 Electronic catalogues shall be established by the candidates or tenderers with a view to participating in a given procurement procedure in accordance with the technical specifications and format established by the contracting authority.

Furthermore, electronic catalogues shall comply with the requirements for electronic communication tools as well as with any additional requirements set by the contracting authority in accordance with Article 22.

3 Where the presentation of tenders in the form of electronic catalogues is accepted or required, contracting authorities shall:

- a state so in the contract notice or in the invitation to confirm interest where a prior information notice is used as a means of calling for competition;
- b indicate in the procurement documents all the necessary information pursuant to Article 22(6) concerning the format, the electronic equipment used and the technical connection arrangements and specifications for the catalogue.

4 Where a framework agreement has been concluded with more than one economic operator following the submission of tenders in the form of electronic catalogues, contracting authorities may provide that the reopening of competition for specific contracts takes place on the basis of updated catalogues. In such a case, contracting authorities shall use one of the following methods:

- a invite tenderers to resubmit their electronic catalogues, adapted to the requirements of the contract in question; or
- b notify tenderers that they intend to collect from the electronic catalogues which have already been submitted the information needed to constitute tenders adapted to the requirements of the contract in question; provided that the use of that method has been announced in the procurement documents for the framework agreement.

5 Where contracting authorities reopen competition for specific contracts in accordance with point (b) of paragraph 4, they shall notify tenderers of the date and time at which they intend to collect the information needed to constitute tenders adapted to the requirements of the specific contract in question and shall give tenderers the possibility to refuse such collection of information.

Contracting authorities shall allow for an adequate period between the notification and the actual collection of information.

Before awarding the contract, contracting authorities shall present the collected information to the tenderer concerned so as to give it the opportunity to contest or confirm that the tender thus constituted does not contain any material errors.

6 Contracting authorities may award contracts based on a dynamic purchasing system by requiring that offers for a specific contract are to be presented in the format of an electronic catalogue.

Contracting authorities may also award contracts based on a dynamic purchasing system in accordance with point (b) of paragraph 4 and paragraph 5 provided that the request for participation in the dynamic purchasing system is accompanied by an electronic catalogue in accordance with the technical specifications and format established by the contracting authority. That catalogue shall be completed subsequently by the candidates, when they are informed of the contracting authority's intention to constitute tenders by means of the procedure set out in point (b) of paragraph 4.

Article 37

Centralised purchasing activities and central purchasing bodies

1 Member States may provide that contracting authorities may acquire supplies and/or services from a central purchasing body offering the centralised purchasing activity referred to in point (a) of point (14) of Article 2(1).

Member States may also provide that contracting authorities may acquire works, supplies and services by using contracts awarded by a central purchasing body, by using dynamic purchasing systems operated by a central purchasing body or, to the extent set out in the second subparagraph of Article 33(2), by using a framework agreement concluded by a central purchasing body offering the centralised purchasing activity referred to in point (b) of point (14) of Article 2(1). Where a dynamic purchasing system which is operated by a central purchasing body may be used by other contracting authorities, this shall be mentioned in the call for competition setting up that dynamic purchasing system.

In relation to the first and second subparagraphs, Member States may provide that certain procurements are to be made by having recourse to central purchasing bodies or to one or more specific central purchasing bodies.

2 A contracting authority fulfils its obligations pursuant to this Directive when it acquires supplies or services from a central purchasing body offering the centralised purchasing activity referred to in point (a) of point (14) of Article 2(1).

Furthermore, a contracting authority also fulfils its obligations pursuant to this Directive where it acquires works, supplies or services by using contracts awarded by the central purchasing body, by using dynamic purchasing systems operated by the central purchasing body or, to the extent set out in the second subparagraph of Article 33(2), by using a framework agreement concluded by the central purchasing body offering the centralised purchasing activity referred to in point (b) of point (14) of Article 2(1).

However, the contracting authority concerned shall be responsible for fulfilling the obligations pursuant to this Directive in respect of the parts it conducts itself, such as:

- a awarding a contract under a dynamic purchasing system, which is operated by a central purchasing body;
- b conducting a reopening of competition under a framework agreement that has been concluded by a central purchasing body;
- c pursuant to points (a) or (b) of Article 33(4), determining which of the economic operators, party to the framework agreement, shall perform a given task under a framework agreement that has been concluded by a central purchasing body.

3 All procurement procedures conducted by a central purchasing body shall be performed using electronic means of communication, in accordance with the requirements set out in Article 22.

4 Contracting authorities may, without applying the procedures provided for in this Directive, award a public service contract for the provision of centralised purchasing activities to a central purchasing body.

Such public service contracts may also include the provision of ancillary purchasing activities.

Article 38

Occasional joint procurement

1 Two or more contracting authorities may agree to perform certain specific procurements jointly.

2 Where the conduct of a procurement procedure in its entirety is carried out jointly in the name and on behalf of all the contracting authorities concerned, they shall be jointly responsible for fulfilling their obligations pursuant to this Directive. This applies also in cases where one contracting authority manages the procedure, acting on its own behalf and on the behalf of the other contracting authorities concerned.

Where the conduct of a procurement procedure is not in its entirety carried out in the name and on behalf of the contracting authorities concerned, they shall be jointly responsible only for those parts carried out jointly. Each contracting authority shall have sole responsibility for fulfilling its obligations pursuant to this Directive in respect of the parts it conducts in its own name and on its own behalf.

Article 39

Procurement involving contracting authorities from different Member States

1 Without prejudice to Article 12, contracting authorities from different Member States may act jointly in the award of public contracts by using one of the means provided for in this Article.

Contracting authorities shall not use the means provided in this Article for the purpose of avoiding the application of mandatory public law provisions in conformity with Union law to which they are subject in their Member State.

2 A Member State shall not prohibit its contracting authorities from using centralised purchasing activities offered by central purchasing bodies located in another Member State.

In respect of centralised purchasing activities offered by a central purchasing body located in another Member State than the contracting authority, Member States may, however, choose to specify that their contracting authorities may only use the centralised purchasing activities as defined in either point (a) or in point (b) of point (14) of Article 2(1).

3 The provision of centralised purchasing activities by a central purchasing body located in another Member State shall be conducted in accordance with the national provisions of the Member State where the central purchasing body is located.

The national provisions of the Member State where the central purchasing body is located shall also apply to the following:

- a the award of a contract under a dynamic purchasing system;
- b the conduct of a reopening of competition under a framework agreement;
- c the determination pursuant to points (a) or (b) of Article 33(4) of which of the economic operators, party to the framework agreement, shall perform a given task.

4 Several contracting authorities from different Member States may jointly award a public contract, conclude a framework agreement or operate a dynamic purchasing system. They may also, to the extent set out in the second subparagraph of Article 33(2), award contracts based on the framework agreement or on the dynamic purchasing system. Unless the necessary elements have been regulated by an international agreement concluded between the Member States concerned, the participating contracting authorities shall conclude an agreement that determines:

- a the responsibilities of the parties and the relevant applicable national provisions;
- b the internal organisation of the procurement procedure, including the management of the procedure, the distribution of the works, supplies or services to be procured, and the conclusion of contracts.

A participating contracting authority fulfils its obligations pursuant to this Directive when it purchases works, supplies or services from a contracting authority which is responsible for the procurement procedure. When determining responsibilities and the applicable national law as referred to in point (a), the participating contracting authorities may allocate specific responsibilities among them and determine the applicable provisions of the national laws of any of their respective Member States. The allocation of responsibilities and the applicable national law shall be referred to in the procurement documents for jointly awarded public contracts.

5 Where several contracting authorities from different Member States have set up a joint entity, including European Groupings of territorial cooperation under Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽⁹⁾ or other entities established under Union law, the participating contracting authorities shall, by a decision of the competent body of the joint entity, agree on the applicable national procurement rules of one of the following Member States:

- a the national provisions of the Member State where the joint entity has its registered office;
- b the national provisions of the Member State where the joint entity is carrying out its activities.

The agreement referred to in the first subparagraph may either apply for an undetermined period, when fixed in the constitutive act of the joint entity, or may be limited to a certain period of time, certain types of contracts or to one or more individual contract awards.

CHAPTER III

Conduct of the procedure

Section 1

Preparation

Article 40

Preliminary market consultations

Before launching a procurement procedure, contracting authorities may conduct market consultations with a view to preparing the procurement and informing economic operators of their procurement plans and requirements.

For this purpose, contracting authorities may for example seek or accept advice from independent experts or authorities or from market participants. That advice may be used in the planning and conduct of the procurement procedure, provided that such advice does not have the effect of distorting competition and does not result in a violation of the principles of non-discrimination and transparency.

Article 41

Prior involvement of candidates or tenderers

Where a candidate or tenderer or an undertaking related to a candidate or tenderer has advised the contracting authority, whether in the context of Article 40 or not, or has otherwise been involved in the preparation of the procurement procedure, the contracting authority shall take appropriate measures to ensure that competition is not distorted by the participation of that candidate or tenderer.

Such measures shall include the communication to the other candidates and tenderers of relevant information exchanged in the context of or resulting from the involvement of the candidate or tenderer in the preparation of the procurement procedure and the fixing of adequate time limits for the receipt of tenders. The candidate or tenderer concerned shall only be excluded from the procedure where there are no other means to ensure compliance with the duty to observe the principle of equal treatment.

Prior to any such exclusion, candidates or tenderers shall be given the opportunity to prove that their involvement in preparing the procurement procedure is not capable of distorting competition. The measures taken shall be documented in the individual report required by Article 84.

Article 42

Technical specifications

1 The technical specifications as defined in point 1 of Annex VII shall be set out in the procurement documents. The technical specification shall lay down the characteristics required of a works, service or supply.

Those characteristics may also refer to the specific process or method of production or provision of the requested works, supplies or services or to a specific process for another stage of its life cycle even where such factors do not form part of their material substance provided that they are linked to the subject-matter of the contract and proportionate to its value and its objectives.

The technical specifications may also specify whether the transfer of intellectual property rights will be required.

For all procurement which is intended for use by natural persons, whether general public or staff of the contracting authority, the technical specifications shall, except in duly justified cases, be drawn up so as to take into account accessibility criteria for persons with disabilities or design for all users.

Where mandatory accessibility requirements are adopted by a legal act of the Union, technical specifications shall, as far as accessibility criteria for persons with disabilities or design for all users are concerned, be defined by reference thereto.

2 Technical specifications shall afford equal access of economic operators to the procurement procedure and shall 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 Union law, the technical specifications shall be formulated in one of the following ways:

- a in terms of performance or functional requirements, including environmental characteristics, provided that the parameters are sufficiently precise to allow tenderers to determine the subject-matter of the contract and to allow contracting authorities to award the contract;
- b by reference to technical specifications and, in order of preference, to national standards transposing European standards, European Technical Assessments, common technical specifications, international standards, other technical reference systems established by the European standardisation bodies or - when any of those do not exist - national standards, national technical approvals or national technical specifications relating to the design, calculation and execution of the works and use of the supplies; each reference shall be accompanied by the words ‘or equivalent’;
- c in terms of performance or functional requirements as referred to in point (a), with reference to the technical specifications referred to in point (b) as a means of presuming conformity with such performance or functional requirements;
- d by reference to the technical specifications referred to in point (b) for certain characteristics, and by reference to the performance or functional requirements referred to in point (a) for other characteristics.

4 Unless justified by the subject-matter of the contract, technical specifications shall not refer to a specific make or source, or a particular process which characterises the products or services provided by a specific economic operator, 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 paragraph 3 is not possible. Such reference shall be accompanied by the words ‘or equivalent’.

5 Where a contracting authority uses the option of referring to the technical specifications referred to in point (b) of paragraph 3, it shall not reject a tender on the grounds that the works, supplies or services tendered for do not comply with the technical specifications

to which it has referred, once the tenderer proves in its tender by any appropriate means, including the means of proof referred to in Article 44, that the solutions proposed satisfy in an equivalent manner the requirements defined by the technical specifications.

6 Where a contracting authority uses the option laid down in point (a) of paragraph 3 to formulate technical specifications in terms of performance or functional requirements, it shall not reject a tender for works, supplies or services which comply with a national standard transposing a European standard, a European technical approval, a common technical specification, an international standard or a technical reference system established by a European standardisation body, where those specifications address the performance or functional requirements which it has laid down.

In its tender, the tenderer shall prove by any appropriate means, including those referred to in Article 44, that the work, supply or service in compliance with the standard meets the performance or functional requirements of the contracting authority.

Article 43

Labels

1 Where contracting authorities intend to purchase works, supplies or services with specific environmental, social or other characteristics they may, in the technical specifications, the award criteria or the contract performance conditions, require a specific label as means of proof that the works, services or supplies correspond to the required characteristics, provided that all of the following conditions are fulfilled:

- a the label requirements only concern criteria which are linked to the subject-matter of the contract and are appropriate to define characteristics of the works, supplies or services that are the subject-matter of the contract;
- b the label requirements are based on objectively verifiable and non-discriminatory criteria;
- c the labels are established in an open and transparent procedure in which all relevant stakeholders, including government bodies, consumers, social partners, manufacturers, distributors and non-governmental organisations, may participate;
- d the labels are accessible to all interested parties;
- e the label requirements are set by a third party over which the economic operator applying for the label cannot exercise a decisive influence.

Where contracting authorities do not require the works, supplies or services to meet all of the label requirements, they shall indicate which label requirements are referred to.

Contracting authorities requiring a specific label shall accept all labels that confirm that the works, supplies or services meet equivalent label requirements.

Where an economic operator had demonstrably no possibility of obtaining the specific label indicated by the contracting authority or an equivalent label within the relevant time limits for reasons that are not attributable to that economic operator, the contracting authority shall accept other appropriate means of proof, which may include a technical dossier from the manufacturer, provided that the economic operator concerned proves that the works, supplies or services to be provided by it fulfil the requirements of the specific label or the specific requirements indicated by the contracting authority.

2 Where a label fulfils the conditions provided in points (b), (c), (d) and (e) of paragraph 1 but also sets out requirements not linked to the subject-matter of the contract, contracting

authorities shall not require the label as such but may define the technical specification by reference to those of the detailed specifications of that label, or, where necessary, parts thereof, that are linked to the subject-matter of the contract and are appropriate to define characteristics of this subject-matter.

Article 44

Test reports, certification and other means of proof

1 Contracting authorities may require that economic operators provide a test report from a conformity assessment body or a certificate issued by such a body as means of proof of conformity with requirements or criteria set out in the technical specifications, the award criteria or the contract performance conditions.

Where contracting authorities require the submission of certificates drawn up by a specific conformity assessment body, certificates from equivalent other conformity assessment bodies shall also be accepted by the contracting authorities.

For the purpose of this paragraph, a conformity assessment body shall be a body that performs conformity assessment activities including calibration, testing, certification and inspection accredited in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁰⁾.

2 Contracting authorities shall accept other appropriate means of proof than those referred to in paragraph 1, such as a technical dossier of the manufacturer where the economic operator concerned had no access to the certificates or test reports referred to in paragraph 1, or no possibility of obtaining them within the relevant time limits, provided that the lack of access is not attributable to the economic operator concerned and provided that the economic operator concerned thereby proves that the works, supplies or services provided by it meet the requirements or criteria set out in the technical specifications, the award criteria or the contract performance conditions.

3 Member States shall make available to other Member States, upon request, any information related to the evidence and documents submitted in accordance with Article 42(6), Article 43 and paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article. The competent authorities of the Member State of establishment of the economic operator shall provide this information in accordance with Article 86.

Article 45

Variants

1 Contracting authorities may authorise or require tenderers to submit variants. They shall indicate in the contract notice or, where a prior information notice is used as a means of calling for competition, in the invitation to confirm interest whether or not they authorise or require variants. Variants shall not be authorised without such indication. Variants shall be linked to the subject-matter of the contract.

2 Contracting authorities authorising or requiring variants shall state in the procurement documents the minimum requirements to be met by the variants and any specific requirements for their presentation, in particular whether variants may be submitted only where a tender, which is not a variant, has also been submitted. They shall also ensure that the chosen award

criteria can be applied to variants meeting those minimum requirements as well as to conforming tenders which are not variants.

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

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

Article 46

Division of contracts into lots

1 Contracting authorities may decide to award a contract in the form of separate lots and may determine the size and subject-matter of such lots.

Contracting authorities shall, except in respect of contracts whose division has been made mandatory pursuant to paragraph 4 of this Article, provide an indication of the main reasons for their decision not to subdivide into lots, which shall be included in the procurement documents or the individual report referred to in Article 84.

2 Contracting authorities shall indicate, in the contract notice or in the invitation to confirm interest, whether tenders may be submitted for one, for several or for all of the lots.

Contracting authorities may, even where tenders may be submitted for several or all lots, limit the number of lots that may be awarded to one tenderer, provided that the maximum number of lots per tenderer is stated in the contract notice or in the invitation to confirm interest. Contracting authorities shall indicate in the procurement documents the objective and non-discriminatory criteria or rules they intend to apply for determining which lots will be awarded where the application of the award criteria would result in one tenderer being awarded more lots than the maximum number.

3 Member States may provide that, where more than one lot may be awarded to the same tenderer, contracting authorities may award contracts combining several or all lots where they have specified in the contract notice or in the invitation to confirm interest that they reserve the possibility of doing so and indicate the lots or groups of lots that may be combined.

4 Member States may implement the second subparagraph of paragraph 1 by rendering it obligatory to award contracts in the form of separate lots under conditions to be specified in accordance with their national law and having regard for Union law. In such circumstances the first subparagraph of paragraph 2 and, where appropriate, paragraph 3 shall apply.

Article 47

Setting time limits

1 When fixing the time limits for the receipt of tenders and requests to participate, contracting authorities shall take account of the complexity of the contract and the time required for drawing up tenders, without prejudice to the minimum time limits set out in Articles 27 to 31.

2 Where tenders can be made only after a visit to the site or after on-the-spot inspection of the documents supporting the procurement documents, the time limits for the receipt of

tenders, which shall be longer than the minimum time limits set out in Articles 27 to 31, shall be fixed so that all economic operators concerned may be aware of all the information needed to produce tenders.

3 Contracting authorities shall extend the time limits for the receipt of tenders so that all economic operators concerned may be aware of all the information needed to produce tenders in the following cases:

- a where, for whatever reason, additional information, although requested by the economic operator in good time, is not supplied at the latest six days before the time limit fixed for the receipt of tenders. In the event of an accelerated procedure as referred to in Article 27(3) and Article 28(6), that period shall be four days;
- b where significant changes are made to the procurement documents.

The length of the extension shall be proportionate to the importance of the information or change.

Where the additional information has either not been requested in good time or its importance with a view to preparing responsive tenders is insignificant, contracting authorities shall not be required to extend the time limits.

Section 2

Publication and transparency

Article 48

Prior information notices

1 Contracting authorities may make known their intentions of planned procurements through the publication of a prior information notice. Those notices shall contain the information set out in Annex V part B section I. They shall be published either by the Publications Office of the European Union or by the contracting authorities on their buyer profiles in accordance with point 2(b) of Annex VIII. Where the prior information notice is published by the contracting authorities on their buyer profile, they shall send a notice of the publication on their buyer profile to the Publications Office of the European Union in accordance with Annex VIII. Those notices shall contain the information set out in Annex V part A.

2 For restricted procedures and competitive procedures with negotiation, sub-central contracting authorities may use a prior information notice as a call for competition pursuant to Article 26(5), provided that the notice fulfils all of the following conditions:

- a it refers specifically to the supplies, works or services that will be the subject of the contract to be awarded;
- b it indicates that the contract will be awarded by restricted procedure or competitive procedure with negotiation without further publication of a call for competition and invites interested economic operators to express their interest;
- c it contains, in addition to the information set out in Annex V part B section I, the information set out in Annex V part B section II;
- d it has been sent for publication between 35 days and 12 months prior to the date on which the invitation referred to in Article 54(1) is sent.

Such notices shall not be published on a buyer profile. However, the additional publication at national level pursuant to Article 52, if any, may be made on a buyer profile.

The period covered by the prior information notice shall be a maximum of 12 months from the date the notice is transmitted for publication. However, in the case of public contracts for social and other specific services, the prior information notice referred to in point (b) of Article 75(1) may cover a period which is longer than 12 months.

Article 49

Contract notices

Contract notices shall be used as a means of calling for competition in respect of all procedures, without prejudice to the second subparagraph of Article 26(5) and Article 32. Contract notices shall contain the information set out in Annex V part C and shall be published in accordance with Article 51.

Article 50

Contract award notices

1 Not later than 30 days after the conclusion of a contract or of a framework agreement, following the decision to award or conclude it, contracting authorities shall send a contract award notice on the results of the procurement procedure.

Such notices shall contain the information set out in Annex V part D and shall be published in accordance with Article 51.

2 Where the call for competition for the contract concerned has been made in the form of a prior information notice and the contracting authority has decided that it will not award further contracts during the period covered by the prior information notice, the contract award notice shall contain a specific indication to that effect.

In the case of framework agreements concluded in accordance with Article 33, contracting authorities shall not be bound to send a notice of the results of the procurement procedure for each contract based on that agreement. Member States may provide that contracting authorities shall group notices of the results of the procurement procedure for contracts based on the framework agreement on a quarterly basis. In that case, contracting authorities shall send the grouped notices within 30 days of the end of each quarter.

3 Contracting authorities shall send a contract award notice within 30 days after the award of each contract based on a dynamic purchasing system. They may, however, group such notices on a quarterly basis. In that case, they shall send the grouped notices within 30 days of the end of each quarter.

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

Article 51

Form and manner of publication of notices

1 Notices referred to in Articles 48, 49 and 50 shall include the information set out in Annex V in the format of standard forms, including standard forms for corrigenda.

The Commission shall establish those standard forms by means of implementing acts. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the advisory procedure referred to in Article 89(2).

2 Notices referred to in Articles 48, 49 and 50 shall be drawn up, transmitted by electronic means to the Publications Office of the European Union and published in accordance with Annex VIII. Notices shall be published not later than five days after they are sent. The costs of publication of the notices by the Publications Office of the European Union shall be borne by the Union.

3 Notices referred to in Articles 48, 49 and 50 shall be published in full in the official language(s) of the institutions of the Union chosen by the contracting authority. That language version or those language versions shall constitute the sole authentic text(s). A summary of the important elements of each notice shall be published in the other official languages of the institutions of the Union.

4 The Publications Office of the European Union shall ensure that the full text and the summary of prior information notices referred to in Article 48(2) and calls for competition setting up a dynamic purchasing system, as referred to in point (a) of Article 34(4) continue to be published:

- a in the case of prior information notices, for 12 months or until receipt of a contract award notice as provided for in Article 50 indicating that no further contracts will be awarded during the 12-month period covered by the call for competition. However, in the case of public contracts for social and other specific services, the prior information notice referred to in point (b) of Article 75(1) shall continue to be published until the end of its originally indicated period of validity or until receipt of a contract award notice as provided for in Article 50 indicating that no further contracts will be awarded during the period covered by the call for competition;
- b in the case of calls for competition setting up a dynamic purchasing system, for the period of validity of the dynamic purchasing system.

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

The Publications Office of the European Union shall give the contracting authority confirmation of the receipt of the notice and of the publication of the information sent, indicating the date of that publication. Such confirmation shall constitute proof of publication.

6 Contracting authorities may publish notices for public contracts that are not subject to the publication requirement laid down in this Directive provided that those notices are sent to the Publications Office of the European Union by electronic means in accordance with the format and procedures for transmission indicated in Annex VIII.

Article 52

Publication at national level

1 Notices referred to in Articles 48, 49 and 50 and the information contained therein shall not be published at national level before the publication pursuant to Article 51. However, publication may in any event take place at the national level where contracting authorities have not been notified of the publication within 48 hours after confirmation of the receipt of the notice in accordance with Article 51.

2 Notices published at national level shall not contain information other than that contained in the notices dispatched to the Publications Office of the European Union or published on a buyer profile, but shall indicate the date of dispatch of the notice to the Publications Office of the European Union or its publication on the buyer profile.

3 Prior information notices shall not be published on a buyer profile before the dispatch to the Publications Office of the European Union of the notice of their publication in that form. They shall indicate the date of that dispatch.

Article 53

Electronic availability of procurement documents

1 Contracting authorities shall by electronic means offer unrestricted and full direct access free of charge to the procurement documents from the date of publication of a notice in accordance with Article 51 or the date on which an invitation to confirm interest was sent. The text of the notice or the invitation to confirm interest shall specify the internet address at which the procurement documents are accessible.

Where unrestricted and full direct access free of charge by electronic means to certain procurement documents cannot be offered for one of the reasons set out in the second subparagraph of Article 22(1), contracting authorities may indicate in the notice or the invitation to confirm interest that the procurement documents concerned will be transmitted by other means than electronic means in accordance with paragraph 2 of this Article. In such a case, the time limit for the submission of tenders shall be prolonged by five days, except in the cases of duly substantiated urgency referred to in Article 27(3), Article 28(6) and in the fourth subparagraph of Article 29(1).

Where unrestricted and full direct access free of charge by electronic means to certain procurement documents cannot be offered because contracting authorities intend to apply Article 21(2) of this Directive, they shall indicate in the notice or the invitation to confirm interest which measures aimed at protecting the confidential nature of the information they require and how access can be obtained to the documents concerned. In such case, the time limit for the submission of tenders shall be prolonged by five days, except in the cases of duly substantiated urgency referred to in Article 27(3), Article 28(6) and in the fourth subparagraph of Article 29(1).

2 Provided that it has been requested in good time, the contracting authorities shall supply to all tenderers taking part in the procurement procedure additional information relating to the specifications and any supporting documents not later than six days before the time limit fixed for the receipt of tenders. In the event of an accelerated procedure as referred to in Article 27(3) and Article 28(6), that period shall be four days.

Article 54

Invitations to candidates

1 In restricted procedures, competitive dialogue procedures, innovation partnerships and competitive procedures with negotiation, contracting authorities shall simultaneously and in writing invite the selected candidates to submit their tenders or, in the case of a competitive dialogue, to take part in the dialogue.

Where a prior information notice is used as a call for competition pursuant to Article 48(2), contracting authorities shall simultaneously and in writing invite the economic operators which have expressed their interest to confirm their continuing interest.

2 The invitations referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall include a reference to the electronic address on which the procurement documents have been made directly available by electronic means. The invitations shall be accompanied by the procurement documents, where those documents have not been the subject of unrestricted and full direct access, free of charge, for the reasons set out in the second or third subparagraph of Article 53(1) and have not already been made otherwise available. In addition, the invitations referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall include the information set out in Annex IX.

Article 55

Informing candidates and tenderers

1 Contracting authorities shall as soon as possible inform each candidate and tenderer 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, not to award a contract for which there has been a call for competition, to recommence the procedure or not to implement a dynamic purchasing system.

2 On request from the candidate or tenderer concerned, the contracting authority shall as quickly as possible, and in any event within 15 days from receipt of a written request, inform:

- a any unsuccessful candidate of the reasons for the rejection of its request to participate,
- b any unsuccessful tenderer of the reasons for the rejection of its tender, including, for the cases referred to in Article 42(5) and (6), 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,
- c any tenderer that 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,
- d any tenderer that has made an admissible tender of the conduct and progress of negotiations and dialogue with tenderers.

3 Contracting authorities may decide to withhold certain information referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2, 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 or would otherwise be contrary to the public interest, would prejudice the legitimate commercial interests of a particular economic operator, whether public or private, or might prejudice fair competition between economic operators.

Section 3

Choice of participants and award of contracts

Article 56

General principles

1 Contracts shall be awarded on the basis of criteria laid down in accordance with Articles 67 to 69, provided that the contracting authority has verified in accordance with Articles 59 to 61 that all of the following conditions are fulfilled:

- a the tender complies with the requirements, conditions and criteria set out in the contract notice or the invitation to confirm interest and in the procurement documents, taking into account, where applicable, Article 45;
- b the tender comes from a tenderer that is not excluded in accordance with Article 57 and that meets the selection criteria set out by the contracting authority in accordance with Article 58 and, where applicable, the non-discriminatory rules and criteria referred to in Article 65.

Contracting authorities may decide not to award a contract to the tenderer submitting the most economically advantageous tender where they have established that the tender does not comply with the applicable obligations referred to in Article 18(2).

2 In open procedures, contracting authorities may decide to examine tenders before verifying the absence of grounds for exclusion and the fulfilment of the selection criteria in accordance with Articles 57 to 64. Where they make use of that possibility, they shall ensure that the verification of absence of grounds for exclusion and of fulfilment of the selection criteria is carried out in an impartial and transparent manner so that no contract is awarded to a tenderer that should have been excluded pursuant to Article 57 or that does not meet the selection criteria set out by the contracting authority.

Member States may exclude the use of the procedure in the first subparagraph for, or restrict it to, certain types of procurement or specific circumstances.

3 Where information or documentation to be submitted by economic operators is or appears to be incomplete or erroneous or where specific documents are missing, contracting authorities may, unless otherwise provided by the national law implementing this Directive, request the economic operators concerned to submit, supplement, clarify or complete the relevant information or documentation within an appropriate time limit, provided that such requests are made in full compliance with the principles of equal treatment and transparency.

4 The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 87 to amend the list in Annex X, where necessary, to add new international agreements that have been ratified by all Member States or where the existing international agreements referred to are no longer ratified by all Member States or they are otherwise changed, for instance in respect of their scope, content or denomination.

Subsection 1

Criteria for qualitative selection

Article 57

Exclusion grounds

1 Contracting authorities shall exclude an economic operator from participation in a procurement procedure where they have established, by verifying in accordance with Articles 59, 60 and 61, or are otherwise aware that that economic operator has been the subject of a conviction by final judgment for one of the following reasons:

- a participation in a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA⁽¹¹⁾;
- b corruption, as defined in Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union⁽¹²⁾ and Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA⁽¹³⁾ as well as corruption as defined in the national law of the contracting authority or the economic operator;
- c fraud within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests⁽¹⁴⁾;
- d terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA⁽¹⁵⁾ respectively, or inciting or aiding or abetting or attempting to commit an offence, as referred to in Article 4 of that Framework Decision;
- e money laundering or terrorist financing, as defined in Article 1 of Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁶⁾;
- f child labour and other forms of trafficking in human beings as defined in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁷⁾.

The obligation to exclude an economic operator shall also apply where the person convicted by final judgment is a member of the administrative, management or supervisory body of that economic operator or has powers of representation, decision or control therein.

2 An economic operator shall be excluded from participation in a procurement procedure where the contracting authority is aware that the economic operator is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions and where this has been established by a judicial or administrative decision having final and binding effect in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established or with those of the Member State of the contracting authority.

Furthermore, contracting authorities may exclude or may be required by Member States to exclude from participation in a procurement procedure an economic operator where the contracting authority can demonstrate by any appropriate means that the economic operator is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions.

This paragraph shall no longer apply when the economic operator has fulfilled its obligations by paying or entering into a binding arrangement with a view to paying the taxes or social security contributions due, including, where applicable, any interest accrued or fines.

3 Member States may provide for a derogation from the mandatory exclusion provided for in paragraphs 1 and 2, on an exceptional basis, for overriding reasons relating to the public interest such as public health or protection of the environment.

Member States may also provide for a derogation from the mandatory exclusion provided in paragraph 2, where an exclusion would be clearly disproportionate, in particular where only minor amounts of taxes or social security contributions are unpaid or where the economic operator was informed of the exact amount due following its breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions at such time that it did not have the possibility of taking measures as provided for in the third subparagraph of paragraph 2 before expiration of the deadline for requesting participation or, in open procedures, the deadline for submitting its tender.

4 Contracting authorities may exclude or may be required by Member States to exclude from participation in a procurement procedure any economic operator in any of the following situations:

- a where the contracting authority can demonstrate by any appropriate means a violation of applicable obligations referred to in Article 18(2);
- b where the economic operator is bankrupt or is the subject of insolvency or winding-up proceedings, where its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by the court, where it is in an arrangement with creditors, where its business activities are suspended or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure under national laws and regulations;
- c where the contracting authority can demonstrate by appropriate means that the economic operator is guilty of grave professional misconduct, which renders its integrity questionable;
- d where the contracting authority has sufficiently plausible indications to conclude that the economic operator has entered into agreements with other economic operators aimed at distorting competition;
- e where a conflict of interest within the meaning of Article 24 cannot be effectively remedied by other less intrusive measures;
- f where a distortion of competition from the prior involvement of the economic operators in the preparation of the procurement procedure, as referred to in Article 41, cannot be remedied by other, less intrusive measures;
- g where the economic operator has shown significant or persistent deficiencies in the performance of a substantive requirement under a prior public contract, a prior contract with a contracting entity or a prior concession contract which led to early termination of that prior contract, damages or other comparable sanctions;
- h where the economic operator has been guilty of serious misrepresentation in supplying the information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of the selection criteria, has withheld such information or is not able to submit the supporting documents required pursuant to Article 59; or
- i where the economic operator has undertaken to unduly influence the decision-making process of the contracting authority, to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the procurement procedure or to negligently provide misleading information that may have a material influence on decisions concerning exclusion, selection or award.

Notwithstanding point (b) of the first subparagraph, Member States may require or may provide for the possibility that the contracting authority does not exclude an economic operator which is in one of the situations referred to in that point, where the contracting authority has established that the economic operator in question will be able to perform

the contract, taking into account the applicable national rules and measures on the continuation of business in the case of the situations referred to in point (b).

5 Contracting authorities shall at any time during the procedure exclude an economic operator where it turns out that the economic operator is, in view of acts committed or omitted either before or during the procedure, in one of the situations referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2.

At any time during the procedure, contracting authorities may exclude or may be required by Member States to exclude an economic operator where it turns out that the economic operator is, in view of acts committed or omitted either before or during the procedure, in one of the situations referred to in paragraph 4.

6 Any economic operator that is in one of the situations referred to in paragraphs 1 and 4 may provide evidence to the effect that measures taken by the economic operator are sufficient to demonstrate its reliability despite the existence of a relevant ground for exclusion. If such evidence is considered as sufficient, the economic operator concerned shall not be excluded from the procurement procedure.

For this purpose, the economic operator shall prove that it has paid or undertaken to pay compensation in respect of any damage caused by the criminal offence or misconduct, clarified the facts and circumstances in a comprehensive manner by actively collaborating with the investigating authorities and taken concrete technical, organisational and personnel measures that are appropriate to prevent further criminal offences or misconduct.

The measures taken by the economic operators shall be evaluated taking into account the gravity and particular circumstances of the criminal offence or misconduct. Where the measures are considered to be insufficient, the economic operator shall receive a statement of the reasons for that decision.

An economic operator which has been excluded by final judgment from participating in procurement or concession award procedures shall not be entitled to make use of the possibility provided for under this paragraph during the period of exclusion resulting from that judgment in the Member States where the judgment is effective.

7 By law, regulation or administrative provision and having regard to Union law, Member States shall specify the implementing conditions for this Article. They shall, in particular, determine the maximum period of exclusion if no measures as specified in paragraph 6 are taken by the economic operator to demonstrate its reliability. Where the period of exclusion has not been set by final judgment, that period shall not exceed five years from the date of the conviction by final judgment in the cases referred to in paragraph 1 and three years from the date of the relevant event in the cases referred to in paragraph 4.

Article 58

Selection criteria

- 1 Selection criteria may relate to:
- a suitability to pursue the professional activity;
 - b economic and financial standing;
 - c technical and professional ability.

Contracting authorities may only impose criteria referred to in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 on economic operators as requirements for participation. They shall limit any requirements

to those that are appropriate to ensure that a candidate or tenderer has the legal and financial capacities and the technical and professional abilities to perform the contract to be awarded. All requirements shall be related and proportionate to the subject-matter of the contract.

2 With regard to suitability to pursue the professional activity, contracting authorities may require economic operators to be enrolled in one of the professional or trade registers kept in their Member State of establishment, as described in Annex XI, or to comply with any other request set out in that Annex.

In procurement procedures for services, in so far as economic operators 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.

3 With regard to economic and financial standing, contracting authorities may impose requirements ensuring that economic operators possess the necessary economic and financial capacity to perform the contract. For that purpose, contracting authorities may require, in particular, that economic operators have a certain minimum yearly turnover, including a certain minimum turnover in the area covered by the contract. In addition, contracting authorities may require that economic operators provide information on their annual accounts showing the ratios, for instance, between assets and liabilities. They may also require an appropriate level of professional risk indemnity insurance.

The minimum yearly turnover that economic operators are required to have shall not exceed two times the estimated contract value, except in duly justified cases such as relating to the special risks attached to the nature of the works, services or supplies. The contracting authority shall indicate the main reasons for such a requirement in the procurement documents or the individual report referred to in Article 84.

The ratio, for instance, between assets and liabilities may be taken into consideration where the contracting authority specifies the methods and criteria for such consideration in the procurement documents. Such methods and criteria shall be transparent, objective and non-discriminatory.

Where a contract is divided into lots this Article shall apply in relation to each individual lot. However, the contracting authority may set the minimum yearly turnover that economic operators are required to have by reference to groups of lots in the event that the successful tenderer is awarded several lots to be executed at the same time.

Where contracts based on a framework agreement are to be awarded following a reopening of competition, the maximum yearly turnover requirement referred to in the second subparagraph of this paragraph shall be calculated on the basis of the expected maximum size of specific contracts that will be performed at the same time, or, where it is not known, on the basis of the estimated value of the framework agreement. In the case of dynamic purchasing systems, the maximum yearly turnover requirement referred to in the second subparagraph shall be calculated on the basis of the expected maximum size of specific contracts to be awarded under that system.

4 With regard to technical and professional ability, contracting authorities may impose requirements ensuring that economic operators possess the necessary human and technical resources and experience to perform the contract to an appropriate quality standard.

Contracting authorities may require, in particular, that economic operators have a sufficient level of experience demonstrated by suitable references from contracts performed in the past. A contracting authority may assume that an economic operator

does not possess the required professional abilities where the contracting authority has established that the economic operator has conflicting interests which may negatively affect the performance of the contract.

In procurement procedures for supplies requiring siting or installation work, services or works, the professional ability of economic operators to provide the service or to execute the installation or the work may be evaluated with regard to their skills, efficiency, experience and reliability.

5 Contracting authorities shall indicate the required conditions of participation which may be expressed as minimum levels of ability, together with the appropriate means of proof, in the contract notice or in the invitation to confirm interest.

Article 59

European Single Procurement Document

1 At the time of submission of requests to participate or of tenders, contracting authorities shall accept the European Single Procurement Document (ESPD), consisting of an updated self-declaration as preliminary evidence in replacement of certificates issued by public authorities or third parties confirming that the relevant economic operator fulfils the following conditions:

- a it is not in one of the situations referred to in Article 57 in which economic operators shall or may be excluded;
- b it meets the relevant selection criteria that have been set out pursuant to Article 58;
- c where applicable, it fulfils the objective rules and criteria that have been set out pursuant to Article 65.

Where the economic operator relies on the capacities of other entities pursuant to Article 63, the ESPD shall also contain the information referred to in the first subparagraph of this paragraph in respect of such entities.

The ESPD shall consist of a formal statement by the economic operator that the relevant ground for exclusion does not apply and/or that the relevant selection criterion is fulfilled and shall provide the relevant information as required by the contracting authority. The ESPD shall further identify the public authority or third party responsible for establishing the supporting documents and contain a formal statement to the effect that the economic operator will be able, upon request and without delay, to provide those supporting documents.

Where the contracting authority can obtain the supporting documents directly by accessing a database pursuant to paragraph 5, the ESPD shall also contain the information required for this purpose, such as the internet address of the database, any identification data and, where applicable, the necessary declaration of consent.

Economic operators may reuse an ESPD which has already been used in a previous procurement procedure, provided that they confirm that the information contained therein continues to be correct.

2 The ESPD shall be drawn up on the basis of a standard form. The Commission shall establish that standard form, by means of implementing acts. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 89(3).

The ESPD shall be provided exclusively in electronic form.

3 Notwithstanding Article 92, the Commission shall review the practical application of the ESPD taking into account the technical development of databases in the Member States and report thereon to the European Parliament and the Council by 18 April 2017.

Where appropriate, the Commission shall make proposals for solutions optimising the cross-border access to such databases and the use of certificates and attestations in the internal market.

4 A contracting authority may ask tenderers and candidates at any moment during the procedure to submit all or part of the supporting documents where this is necessary to ensure the proper conduct of the procedure.

Before awarding the contract, the contracting authority shall, except in respect of contracts based on framework agreements where such contracts are concluded in accordance with Article 33(3) or point (a) of Article 33(4), require the tenderer to which it has decided to award the contract to submit up-to-date supporting documents in accordance with Article 60 and, where appropriate, Article 62. The contracting authority may invite economic operators to supplement or clarify the certificates received pursuant to Articles 60 and 62.

5 Notwithstanding paragraph 4, economic operators shall not be required to submit supporting documents or other documentary evidence where and in so far as the contracting authority has the possibility of obtaining the certificates or the relevant information directly by accessing a national database in any Member State that is available free of charge, such as a national procurement register, a virtual company dossier, an electronic document storage system or a prequalification system.

Notwithstanding paragraph 4, economic operators shall not be required to submit supporting documents where the contracting authority having awarded the contract or concluded the framework agreement already possesses these documents.

For the purpose of the first subparagraph, Member States shall ensure that databases which contain relevant information on economic operators and which may be consulted by their contracting authorities may also be consulted, under the same conditions, by contracting authorities of other Member States.

6 Member States shall make available and up-to-date in e-Certis a complete list of databases containing relevant information on economic operators which can be consulted by contracting authorities from other Member States. Upon request, Member States shall communicate to other Member States any information related to the databases referred to in this Article.

Article 60

Means of proof

1 Contracting authorities may require the certificates, statements and other means of proof referred to in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of this Article and Annex XII as evidence for the absence of grounds for exclusion as referred to in Article 57 and for the fulfilment of the selection criteria in accordance with Article 58.

Contracting authorities shall not require means of proof other than those referred to in this Article and in Article 62. In respect of Article 63, economic operators may rely on any appropriate means to prove to the contracting authority that they will have the necessary resources at their disposal.

2 Contracting authorities shall accept the following as sufficient evidence that none of the cases specified in Article 57 apply to the economic operator:

- a as regards paragraph 1 of that Article, the production of an extract from the relevant register, such as judicial records or, failing that, of an equivalent document issued by a competent judicial or administrative authority in the Member State or country of origin or the country where the economic operator is established showing that those requirements have been met;
- b as regards paragraph 2 and point (b) of paragraph 4 of that Article, a certificate issued by the competent authority in the Member State or country concerned.

Where the Member State or 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 and point (b) of paragraph 4 of Article 57, they may be replaced by a declaration on oath or, in Member States or countries 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 Member State or country of origin or in the Member State or country where the economic operator is established.

A Member State shall, where relevant, provide an official declaration stating that the documents or certificates referred to in this paragraph are not issued or that they do not cover all the cases specified in paragraphs 1 and 2 and point (b) of paragraph 4 of Article 57. Such official declarations shall be made available through the online repository of certificates (e-Certis) referred to in Article 61.

3 Proof of the economic operator's economic and financial standing may, as a general rule, be provided by one or more of the references listed in Annex XII Part I.

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

4 Evidence of the economic operators' technical abilities may be provided by one or more of the means listed in Annex XII Part II, in accordance with the nature, quantity or importance, and use of the works, supplies or services.

5 Upon request, Member States shall make available to other Member States any information relating to the grounds for exclusion listed in Article 57, the suitability to pursue the professional activity, and the financial and technical capacities of tenderers referred to in Article 58, and any information relating to the means of proof referred to in this Article.

Article 61

Online repository of certificates (e-Certis)

1 With a view to facilitating cross-border tendering, Member States shall ensure that the information concerning certificates and other forms of documentary evidence introduced in e-Certis established by the Commission is constantly kept up-to-date.

2 Contracting authorities shall have recourse to e-Certis and shall require primarily such types of certificates or forms of documentary evidence that are covered by e-Certis.

3 The Commission shall make available all language versions of the ESPD in e-Certis.

Article 62

Quality assurance standards and environmental management standards

1 Contracting authorities shall, where they require the production of certificates drawn up by independent bodies attesting that the economic operator complies with certain quality assurance standards, including on accessibility for disabled persons, refer to quality assurance systems based on the relevant European standards series certified by accredited bodies. They shall recognise equivalent certificates from bodies established in other Member States. They shall also accept other evidence of equivalent quality assurance measures where the economic operator concerned had no possibility of obtaining such certificates within the relevant time limits for reasons that are not attributable to that economic operator provided that the economic operator proves that the proposed quality assurance measures comply with the required quality assurance standards.

2 Where contracting authorities require the production of certificates drawn up by independent bodies attesting that the economic operator complies with certain environmental management systems or standards, they shall refer to the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) of the Union or to other environmental management systems as recognised in accordance with Article 45 of Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 or other environmental management standards based on the relevant European or international standards by accredited bodies. They shall recognise equivalent certificates from bodies established in other Member States.

Where an economic operator had demonstrably no access to such certificates, or no possibility of obtaining them within the relevant time limits for reasons that are not attributable to that economic operator, the contracting authority shall also accept other evidence of environmental management measures, provided that the economic operator proves that these measures are equivalent to those required under the applicable environmental management system or standard.

3 Upon request, Member States shall make available to other Member States, in accordance with Article 86, any information relating to the documents produced as evidence of compliance with quality and environmental standards referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2.

Article 63

Reliance on the capacities of other entities

1 With regard to criteria relating to economic and financial standing as set out pursuant to Article 58(3), and to criteria relating to technical and professional ability as set out pursuant to Article 58(4), 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. With regard to criteria relating to the educational and professional qualifications as set out in point (f) of Annex XII Part II, or to the relevant professional experience, economic operators may however only rely on the capacities of other entities where the latter will perform the works or services for which these capacities are required. Where an economic operator wants to rely on the capacities of other entities, it shall prove to the contracting authority that it will have at its disposal the resources necessary, for example, by producing a commitment by those entities to that effect.

The contracting authority shall, in accordance with Articles 59, 60 and 61, verify whether the entities on whose capacity the economic operator intends to rely fulfil the relevant selection criteria and whether there are grounds for exclusion pursuant to Article 57. The contracting authority shall require that the economic operator replaces an entity which does not meet a relevant selection criterion, or in respect of which there are compulsory grounds for exclusion. The contracting authority may require or may be required by the Member State to require that the economic operator substitutes an entity in respect of which there are non-compulsory grounds for exclusion.

Where an economic operator relies on the capacities of other entities with regard to criteria relating to economic and financial standing, the contracting authority may require that the economic operator and those entities be jointly liable for the execution of the contract.

Under the same conditions, a group of economic operators as referred to in Article 19(2) may rely on the capacities of participants in the group or of other entities.

2 In the case of works contracts, service contracts and siting or installation operations in the context of a supply contract, contracting authorities may require that certain critical tasks be performed directly by the tenderer itself or, where the tender is submitted by a group of economic operators as referred to in Article 19(2), by a participant in that group.

Article 64

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

1 Member States may establish or maintain either official lists of approved contractors, suppliers or service providers or provide for a certification by certification bodies complying with European certification standards within the meaning of Annex VII.

They shall inform the Commission and the other Member States of the address of the certification body or the body responsible for the official lists, to which applications shall be sent.

2 Member States shall adapt the conditions for registration on the official lists referred to in paragraph 1 and for the issue of certificates by certification bodies to the provisions of this subsection.

Member States shall also adapt those conditions to Article 63 as regards applications for registration submitted by economic operators belonging to a group and claiming resources made available to them by the other companies in the group. In such cases, those operators shall prove to the authority establishing the official list that they will have those resources at their disposal throughout the period of validity of the certificate attesting to their registration on the official list and that throughout the same period those companies continue to fulfil the qualitative selection requirements encompassed by the official list or certificate on which operators rely for their registration.

3 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.

Those certificates shall state the references which enabled those economic operators to be registered on the official list or to obtain certification and the classification given in that list.

4 Certified registration on official lists by the competent bodies or a certificate issued by the certification body shall constitute a presumption of suitability with regard to requirements for qualitative selection encompassed by the official list or certificate.

5 Information that can be deduced from registration on official lists or certification shall 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 to be awarded.

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.

6 The requirements of proof for the criteria for qualitative selection encompassed by the official list or certificate shall comply with Article 60 and, where appropriate, Article 62. For any registration of economic operators of other Member States on an official list or for their certification, no further proof or statements shall be required other than those requested of national economic operators.

Economic operators may request at any time their registration on an official list or the issuance of a certificate. They shall be informed within a reasonably short period of time of the decision of the authority drawing up the official list or of the competent certification body.

7 Economic operators from other Member States shall 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.

8 Upon request, Member States shall make available to other Member States any information relating to the documents produced as evidence that the economic operators fulfil the requirements to be registered on the official list of approved economic operators or as evidence that economic operators from another Member State possess an equivalent certification.

Subsection 2

Reduction of numbers of candidates, tenders and solutions

Article 65

Reduction of the number of otherwise qualified candidates to be invited to participate

1 In restricted procedures, competitive procedures with negotiation, competitive dialogue procedures and innovation partnerships, contracting authorities may limit the number of candidates meeting the selection criteria that they will invite to tender or to conduct a dialogue, provided the minimum number, in accordance with paragraph 2, of qualified candidates is available.

2 The contracting authorities shall indicate, in the contract notice or in the invitation to confirm interest, 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 number of candidates shall be five. In the competitive procedure with negotiation, in the competitive dialogue procedure and in the innovation partnership the minimum number of candidates 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. However, where the number of candidates meeting the selection criteria and the minimum levels of ability as referred to in Article 58(5) is below the minimum number, the contracting authority may continue the procedure by inviting the candidates with the required capabilities. In the context of the same procedure, the contracting authority shall not include economic operators that did not request to participate, or candidates that do not have the required capabilities.

Article 66

Reduction of the number of tenders and solutions

Where contracting authorities exercise the option of reducing the number of tenders to be negotiated as provided for in Article 29(6) or of solutions to be discussed as provided for in Article 30(4), they shall do so by applying the award criteria stated in the procurement documents. In the final stage, the number arrived at shall make for genuine competition in so far as there are enough tenders, solutions or qualified candidates.

Subsection 3

Award of the contract

Article 67

Contract award criteria

1 Without prejudice to national laws, regulations or administrative provisions concerning the price of certain supplies or the remuneration of certain services, contracting authorities shall base the award of public contracts on the most economically advantageous tender.

2 The most economically advantageous tender from the point of view of the contracting authority shall be identified on the basis of the price or cost, using a cost-effectiveness approach, such as life-cycle costing in accordance with Article 68, and may include the best price-quality ratio, which shall be assessed on the basis of criteria, including qualitative, environmental and/or social aspects, linked to the subject-matter of the public contract in question. Such criteria may comprise, for instance:

- a quality, including technical merit, aesthetic and functional characteristics, accessibility, design for all users, social, environmental and innovative characteristics and trading and its conditions;
- b organisation, qualification and experience of staff assigned to performing the contract, where the quality of the staff assigned can have a significant impact on the level of performance of the contract; or
- c after-sales service and technical assistance, delivery conditions such as delivery date, delivery process and delivery period or period of completion.

The cost element may also take the form of a fixed price or cost on the basis of which economic operators will compete on quality criteria only.

Member States may provide that contracting authorities may not use price only or cost only as the sole award criterion or restrict their use to certain categories of contracting authorities or certain types of contracts.

3 Award criteria shall be considered to be linked to the subject-matter of the public contract where they relate to the works, supplies or services to be provided under that contract in any respect and at any stage of their life cycle, including factors involved in:

- a the specific process of production, provision or trading of those works, supplies or services; or
- b a specific process for another stage of their life cycle,

even where such factors do not form part of their material substance.

4 Award criteria shall not have the effect of conferring an unrestricted freedom of choice on the contracting authority. They shall ensure the possibility of effective competition and shall be accompanied by specifications that allow the information provided by the tenderers to be effectively verified in order to assess how well the tenders meet the award criteria. In case of doubt, contracting authorities shall verify effectively the accuracy of the information and proof provided by the tenderers.

5 The contracting authority shall specify, in the procurement documents, the relative weighting which it gives to each of the criteria chosen to determine the most economically advantageous tender, except where this is identified on the basis of price alone.

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

Where weighting is not possible for objective reasons, the contracting authority shall indicate the criteria in decreasing order of importance.

Article 68

Life-cycle costing

1 Life-cycle costing shall to the extent relevant cover parts or all of the following costs over the life cycle of a product, service or works:

- a costs, borne by the contracting authority or other users, such as:
 - (i) costs relating to acquisition,
 - (ii) costs of use, such as consumption of energy and other resources,
 - (iii) maintenance costs,
 - (iv) end of life costs, such as collection and recycling costs.
- b costs imputed to environmental externalities linked to the product, service or works during its life cycle, provided their monetary value can be determined and verified; such costs may include the cost of emissions of greenhouse gases and of other pollutant emissions and other climate change mitigation costs.

2 Where contracting authorities assess the costs using a life-cycle costing approach, they shall indicate in the procurement documents the data to be provided by the tenderers and the

method which the contracting authority will use to determine the life-cycle costs on the basis of those data.

The method used for the assessment of costs imputed to environmental externalities shall fulfil all of the following conditions:

- a it is based on objectively verifiable and non-discriminatory criteria. In particular, where it has not been established for repeated or continuous application, it shall not unduly favour or disadvantage certain economic operators;
- b it is accessible to all interested parties;
- c the data required can be provided with reasonable effort by normally diligent economic operators, including economic operators from third countries party to the GPA or other international agreements by which the Union is bound.

3 Whenever a common method for the calculation of life-cycle costs has been made mandatory by a legislative act of the Union, that common method shall be applied for the assessment of life-cycle costs.

A list of such legislative acts, and where necessary the delegated acts supplementing them, is set out in Annex XIII. The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 87 concerning the update of that list, when an update of the list is necessary due to the adoption of new legislation making a common method mandatory or the repeal or modification of existing legal acts.

Article 69

Abnormally low tenders

1 Contracting authorities shall require economic operators to explain the price or costs proposed in the tender where tenders appear to be abnormally low in relation to the works, supplies or services.

2 The explanations referred to in paragraph 1 may in particular relate to:

- a the economics of the manufacturing process, of the services provided or of the construction method;
- b the technical solutions chosen or any exceptionally favourable conditions available to the tenderer for the supply of the products or services or for the execution of the work;
- c the originality of the work, supplies or services proposed by the tenderer;
- d compliance with obligations referred to in Article 18(2);
- e compliance with obligations referred to in Article 71;
- f the possibility of the tenderer obtaining State aid.

3 The contracting authority shall assess the information provided by consulting the tenderer. It may only reject the tender where the evidence supplied does not satisfactorily account for the low level of price or costs proposed, taking into account the elements referred to in paragraph 2.

Contracting authorities shall reject the tender, where they have established that the tender is abnormally low because it does not comply with applicable obligations referred to in Article 18(2).

4 Where a contracting authority establishes that a tender is abnormally low because the tenderer has obtained State aid, the tender may 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 compatible with the internal market within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU. Where the contracting authority rejects a tender in those circumstances, it shall inform the Commission thereof.

5 Upon request, Member States shall make available to other Member States by means of administrative cooperation any information at its disposal, such as laws, regulations, universally applicable collective agreements or national technical standards, relating to the evidence and documents produced in relation to details listed in paragraph 2.

CHAPTER IV

Contract performance

Article 70

Conditions for performance of contracts

Contracting authorities may lay down special conditions relating to the performance of a contract, provided that they are linked to the subject-matter of the contract within the meaning of Article 67(3) and indicated in the call for competition or in the procurement documents. Those conditions may include economic, innovation-related, environmental, social or employment-related considerations.

Article 71

Subcontracting

1 Observance of the obligations referred to in Article 18(2) by subcontractors is ensured through appropriate action by the competent national authorities acting within the scope of their responsibility and remit.

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

3 Member States may provide that at the request of the subcontractor and where the nature of the contract so allows, the contracting authority shall transfer due payments directly to the subcontractor for services, supplies or works provided to the economic operator to whom the public contract has been awarded (the main contractor). Such measures may include appropriate mechanisms permitting the main contractor to object to undue payments. The arrangements concerning that mode of payment shall be set out in the procurement documents.

4 Paragraphs 1 to 3 shall be without prejudice to the question of the main contractor's liability.

5 In the case of works contracts and in respect of services to be provided at a facility under the direct oversight of the contracting authority, after the award of the contract and at the latest when the performance of the contract commences, the contracting authority shall require the main contractor to indicate to the contracting authority the name, contact details and legal representatives of its subcontractors, involved in such works or services, in so far as known at this point in time. The contracting authority shall require the main contractor to notify the contracting authority of any changes to this information during the course of the contract as

well as of the required information for any new subcontractors which it subsequently involves in such works or services.

Notwithstanding the first subparagraph, Member States may impose the obligation to deliver the required information directly on the main contractor.

Where necessary for the purposes of point (b) of paragraph 6 of this Article, the required information shall be accompanied by the subcontractors' self-declarations as provided for in Article 59. The implementing measures pursuant to paragraph 8 of this Article may provide that subcontractors which are presented after the award of the contract shall provide the certificates and other supporting documents instead of the self-declaration.

The first subparagraph shall not apply to suppliers.

Contracting authorities may extend or may be required by Member States to extend the obligations provided for in the first subparagraph to for instance:

- a supply contracts, to services contracts other than those concerning services to be provided at the facilities under the direct oversight of the contracting authority or to suppliers involved in works or services contracts;
- b subcontractors of the main contractor's subcontractors or further down the subcontracting chain.

6 With the aim of avoiding breaches of the obligations referred to in Article 18(2), appropriate measures may be taken, such as:

- a Where the national law of a Member State provides for a mechanism of joint liability between subcontractors and the main contractor, the Member State concerned shall ensure that the relevant rules are applied in compliance with the conditions set out in Article 18(2).
- b Contracting authorities may, in accordance with Articles 59, 60 and 61, verify or may be required by Member States to verify whether there are grounds for exclusion of subcontractors pursuant to Article 57. In such cases, the contracting authority shall require that the economic operator replaces a subcontractor in respect of which the verification has shown that there are compulsory grounds for exclusion. The contracting authority may require or may be required by a Member State to require that the economic operator replaces a subcontractor in respect of which the verification has shown that there are non-compulsory grounds for exclusion.

7 Member States may provide for more stringent liability rules under national law or to go further under national law on direct payments to subcontractors, for instance by providing for direct payments to subcontractors without it being necessary for them to request such direct payment.

8 Member States having chosen to provide for measures pursuant to paragraphs 3, 5 or 6 shall, by law, regulation or administrative provisions and having regard for Union law, specify the implementing conditions for those measures. In so doing, Member States may limit their applicability, for instance in respect of certain types of contracts, certain categories of contacting authorities or economic operators or as of certain amounts.

Article 72

Modification of contracts during their term

1 Contracts and framework agreements may be modified without a new procurement procedure in accordance with this Directive in any of the following cases:

- a where the modifications, irrespective of their monetary value, have been provided for in the initial procurement documents in clear, precise and unequivocal review clauses, which may include price revision clauses, or options. Such clauses shall state the scope and nature of possible modifications or options as well as the conditions under which they may be used. They shall not provide for modifications or options that would alter the overall nature of the contract or the framework agreement;
- b for additional works, services or supplies by the original contractor that have become necessary and that were not included in the initial procurement where a change of contractor:
 - (i) cannot be made for economic or technical reasons such as requirements of interchangeability or interoperability with existing equipment, services or installations procured under the initial procurement; and
 - (ii) would cause significant inconvenience or substantial duplication of costs for the contracting authority.

However, any increase in price shall not exceed 50 % of the value of the original contract. Where several successive modifications are made, that limitation shall apply to the value of each modification. Such consecutive modifications shall not be aimed at circumventing this Directive;

- c where all of the following conditions are fulfilled:
 - (i) the need for modification has been brought about by circumstances which a diligent contracting authority could not foresee;
 - (ii) the modification does not alter the overall nature of the contract;
 - (iii) any increase in price is not higher than 50 % of the value of the original contract or framework agreement. Where several successive modifications are made, that limitation shall apply to the value of each modification. Such consecutive modifications shall not be aimed at circumventing this Directive;
- d where a new contractor replaces the one to which the contracting authority had initially awarded the contract as a consequence of either:
 - (i) an unequivocal review clause or option in conformity with point (a);
 - (ii) universal or partial succession into the position of the initial contractor, following corporate restructuring, including takeover, merger, acquisition or insolvency, of another economic operator that fulfils the criteria for qualitative selection initially established provided that this does not entail other substantial modifications to the contract and is not aimed at circumventing the application of this Directive; or
 - (iii) in the event that the contracting authority itself assumes the main contractor's obligations towards its subcontractors where this possibility is provided for under national legislation pursuant to Article 71;
- e where the modifications, irrespective of their value, are not substantial within the meaning of paragraph 4.

Contracting authorities having modified a contract in the cases set out under points (b) and (c) of this paragraph shall publish a notice to that effect in the *Official Journal of the European Union*. Such notice shall contain the information set out in Annex V part G and shall be published in accordance with Article 51.

2 Furthermore, and without any need to verify whether the conditions set out under points (a) to (d) of paragraph 4 are met, contracts may equally be modified without a new procurement procedure in accordance with this Directive being necessary where the value of the modification is below both of the following values:

- (i) the thresholds set out in Article 4; and
- (ii) 10 % of the initial contract value for service and supply contracts and below 15 % of the initial contract value for works contracts.

However, the modification may not alter the overall nature of the contract or framework agreement. Where several successive modifications are made, the value shall be assessed on the basis of the net cumulative value of the successive modifications.

3 For the purpose of the calculation of the price mentioned in paragraph 2 and points (b) and (c) of paragraph 1, the updated price shall be the reference value when the contract includes an indexation clause.

4 A modification of a contract or a framework agreement during its term shall be considered to be substantial within the meaning of point (e) of paragraph 1, where it renders the contract or the framework agreement materially different in character from the one initially concluded. In any event, without prejudice to paragraphs 1 and 2, a modification shall be considered to be substantial where one or more of the following conditions is met:

- a the modification introduces conditions which, had they been part of the initial procurement procedure, would have allowed for the admission of other candidates than those initially selected or for the acceptance of a tender other than that originally accepted or would have attracted additional participants in the procurement procedure;
- b the modification changes the economic balance of the contract or the framework agreement in favour of the contractor in a manner which was not provided for in the initial contract or framework agreement;
- c the modification extends the scope of the contract or framework agreement considerably;
- d where a new contractor replaces the one to which the contracting authority had initially awarded the contract in other cases than those provided for under point (d) of paragraph 1.

5 A new procurement procedure in accordance with this Directive shall be required for other modifications of the provisions of a public contract or a framework agreement during its term than those provided for under paragraphs 1 and 2.

Article 73

Termination of contracts

Member States shall ensure that contracting authorities have the possibility, at least under the following circumstances and under the conditions determined by the applicable national law, to terminate a public contract during its term, where:

- (a) the contract has been subject to a substantial modification, which would have required a new procurement procedure pursuant to Article 72;
- (b) the contractor has, at the time of contract award, been in one of the situations referred to in Article 57(1) and should therefore have been excluded from the procurement procedure;

- (c) the contract should not have been awarded to the contractor in view of a serious infringement of the obligations under the Treaties and this Directive that has been declared by the Court of Justice of the European Union in a procedure pursuant to Article 258 TFEU.

TITLE III

PARTICULAR PROCUREMENT REGIMES

CHAPTER I

Social and other specific services

Article 74

Award of contracts for social and other specific services

Public contracts for social and other specific services listed in Annex XIV shall be awarded in accordance with this Chapter, where the value of the contracts is equal to or greater than the threshold indicated in point (d) of Article 4.

Article 75

Publication of notices

1 Contracting authorities intending to award a public contract for the services referred to in Article 74 shall make known their intention by any of the following means:

- a by means of a contract notice, which shall contain the information referred to in Annex V Part H, in accordance with the standard forms referred to in Article 51; or
- b by means of a prior information notice, which shall be published continuously and contain the information set out in Annex V Part I. The prior information notice shall refer specifically to the types of services that will be the subject of the contracts to be awarded. It shall indicate that the contracts will be awarded without further publication and invite interested economic operators to express their interest in writing.

The first subparagraph shall, however, not apply where a negotiated procedure without prior publication could have been used in conformity with Article 32 for the award of a public service contract.

2 Contracting authorities that have awarded a public contract for the services referred to in Article 74 shall make known the results of the procurement procedure by means of a contract award notice, which shall contain the information referred to in Annex V Part J, in accordance with the standard forms referred to in Article 51. They may, however, group such notices on a quarterly basis. In that case, they shall send the grouped notices within 30 days of the end of each quarter.

3 The Commission shall establish the standard forms referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article by means of implementing acts. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the advisory procedure referred to in Article 89(2).

4 The notices referred to in this Article shall be published in accordance with Article 51.

Article 76

Principles of awarding contracts

1 Member States shall put in place national rules for the award of contracts subject to this Chapter in order to ensure contracting authorities comply with the principles of transparency and equal treatment of economic operators. Member States are free to determine the procedural rules applicable as long as such rules allow contracting authorities to take into account the specificities of the services in question.

2 Member States shall ensure that contracting authorities may take into account the need to ensure quality, continuity, accessibility, affordability, availability and comprehensiveness of the services, the specific needs of different categories of users, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, the involvement and empowerment of users and innovation. Member States may also provide that the choice of the service provider shall be made on the basis of the tender presenting the best price-quality ratio, taking into account quality and sustainability criteria for social services.

Article 77

Reserved contracts for certain services

1 Member States may provide that contracting authorities may reserve the right for organisations to participate in procedures for the award of public contracts exclusively for those health, social and cultural services referred to in Article 74, which are covered by CPV codes 75121000-0, 75122000-7, 75123000-4, 79622000-0, 79624000-4, 79625000-1, 80110000-8, 80300000-7, 80420000-4, 80430000-7, 80511000-9, 80520000-5, 80590000-6, from 85000000-9 to 85323000-9, 92500000-6, 92600000-7, 98133000-4, 98133110-8.

2 An organisation referred to in paragraph 1 shall fulfil all of the following conditions:

- a its objective is the pursuit of a public service mission linked to the delivery of the services referred to in paragraph 1;
- b profits are reinvested with a view to achieving the organisation's objective. Where profits are distributed or redistributed, this should be based on participatory considerations;
- c the structures of management or ownership of the organisation performing the contract are based on employee ownership or participatory principles, or require the active participation of employees, users or stakeholders; and
- d the organisation has not been awarded a contract for the services concerned by the contracting authority concerned pursuant to this Article within the past three years.

3 The maximum duration of the contract shall not be longer than three years.

4 The call for competition shall make reference to this Article.

5 Notwithstanding Article 92, the Commission shall assess the effects of this Article and report to the European Parliament and the Council by 18 April 2019.

CHAPTER II

Rules governing design contests

Article 78

Scope

This Chapter shall apply to:

- (a) design contests organised as part of a procedure leading to the award of a public service contract;
- (b) design contests with prizes or payments to participants.

In the cases referred to in point (a) of the first paragraph of this Article, the threshold referred to in Article 4 is calculated on the basis of the estimated value net of VAT of the public service contract, including any possible prizes or payments to participants.

In the cases referred to in point (b) of the first paragraph of this Article, the threshold refers to the total amount of the prizes and payments, including the estimated value net of VAT of the public services contract which might subsequently be concluded under Article 32(4) if the contracting authority has announced its intention to award such contract in the contest notice.

Article 79

Notices

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

Where they intend to award a subsequent service contract pursuant to Article 32(4), this shall be indicated in the contest notice.

2 Contracting authorities that have held a design contest shall send a notice of the results of the contest in accordance with Article 51 and shall be able to prove the date of dispatch.

Where the release of information on the outcome of the contest would impede law enforcement, would be contrary to the public interest or would prejudice the legitimate commercial interests of a particular enterprise, whether public or private, or might prejudice fair competition between service providers, such information may be withheld from publication.

3 The notices referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article shall be published in accordance with Article 51(2) to (6) and Article 52. They shall include the information set out respectively in Annex V parts E and F in the format of the standard forms.

The Commission shall establish the standard forms by means of implementing acts. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the advisory procedure referred to in Article 89(2).

Article 80

Rules on the organisation of design contests and the selection of participants

- 1 When organising design contests, contracting authorities shall apply procedures which are adapted to the provisions of Title I and this Chapter.
- 2 The admission of participants to design contests shall not be limited:
 - a by reference to the territory or part of the territory of a Member State;
 - b on the grounds that, under the law of the Member State in which the contest is organised, they would be required to be either natural or legal persons.
- 3 Where design contests are restricted to a limited number of participants, the contracting authorities shall lay down clear and non-discriminatory selection criteria. In any event, the number of candidates invited to participate shall be sufficient to ensure genuine competition.

Article 81

Composition of the jury

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

Article 82

Decisions of the jury

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

TITLE IV

GOVERNANCE

*Article 83***Enforcement**

1 In order to effectively ensure correct and efficient implementation, Member States shall ensure that at least the tasks set out in this Article are performed by one or more authorities, bodies or structures. They shall indicate to the Commission all authorities, bodies or structures competent for those tasks.

2 Member States shall ensure that the application of public procurement rules is monitored.

Where monitoring authorities or structures identify by their own initiative or upon the receipt of information specific violations or systemic problems, they shall be empowered to indicate those problems to national auditing authorities, courts or tribunals or other appropriate authorities or structures, such as the ombudsman, national parliaments or committees thereof.

3 The results of the monitoring activities pursuant to paragraph 2 shall be made available to the public through appropriate means of information. These results shall also be made available to the Commission. For instance, they may be integrated in the monitoring reports referred to in the second subparagraph of this paragraph.

By 18 April 2017 and every three years thereafter Member States shall submit to the Commission a monitoring report covering, where applicable, information on the most frequent sources of wrong application or of legal uncertainty, including possible structural or recurring problems in the application of the rules, on the level of SME participation in public procurement and about prevention, detection and adequate reporting of cases of procurement fraud, corruption, conflict of interest and other serious irregularities.

The Commission may, not more than every three years, request Member States to provide information on the practical implementation of national strategic procurement policies.

For the purposes of this paragraph and paragraph 4 of this Article, ‘SME’ shall be understood as defined in Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC⁽¹⁸⁾.

On the basis of the data received under this paragraph, the Commission shall regularly issue a report on the implementation and best practices of national procurement policies in the internal market.

4 Member States shall ensure that:

- a information and guidance on the interpretation and application of the Union public procurement law is available free of charge to assist contracting authorities and economic operators, in particular SMEs, in correctly applying the Union public procurement rules; and
- b support is available to contracting authorities with regard to planning and carrying out procurement procedures.

5 Member States shall, without prejudice to the general procedures and working methods established by the Commission for its communications and contacts with Member States, designate a point of reference for cooperation with the Commission as regards the application of public procurement legislation.

6 Contracting authorities shall, at least for the duration of the contract, keep copies of all concluded contracts with a value equal to or greater than:

- a 1 000 000 EUR in the case of public supply contracts or public service contracts;
- b 10 000 000 EUR in the case of public works contracts.

Contracting authorities shall grant access to those contracts; however, access to specific documents or items of information may be denied to the extent and on the conditions provided for in the applicable Union or national rules on access to documents and data protection.

Article 84

Individual reports on procedures for the award of contracts

1 For every contract or framework agreement covered by this Directive, and every time a dynamic purchasing system is established, 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 where applicable, the results of the qualitative selection and/or reduction of numbers pursuant to Articles 65 and 66, namely:
 - (i) the names of the selected candidates or tenderers and the reasons for their selection;
 - (ii) the names of the candidates or tenderers rejected and the reasons for their rejection;
- c the reasons for the rejection of tenders found to be abnormally low;
- d the name of the successful tenderer and the reasons why its tender was selected and, where known, the share of the contract or framework agreement which the successful tenderer intends to subcontract to third parties; and, where known at this point in time, the names of the main contractor's subcontractors, if any;
- e for competitive procedures with negotiations and competitive dialogues, the circumstances as laid down in Article 26 which justify the use of those procedures;
- f for negotiated procedures without prior publication, the circumstances referred to in Article 32 which justify the use of this procedure;
- g where applicable, the reasons why the contracting authority has decided not to award a contract or framework agreement or to establish a dynamic purchasing system;
- h where applicable, the reasons why other means of communication than electronic means have been used for the submission of tenders;
- i where applicable, conflicts of interests detected and subsequent measures taken.

This report shall not be required in respect of contracts based on framework agreements where these are concluded in accordance with Article 33(3) or point (a) of Article 33(4).

To the extent that the contract award notice drawn up pursuant to Article 50 or Article 75(2) contains the information required in this paragraph, contracting authorities may refer to that notice.

2 Contracting authorities shall document the progress of all procurement procedures, whether or not those are conducted by electronic means. To that end, they shall ensure that they keep sufficient documentation to justify decisions taken in all stages of the procurement procedure, such as documentation on communications with economic operators and internal deliberations, preparation of the procurement documents, dialogue or negotiation if any, selection and award of the contract. The documentation shall be kept for a period of at least three years from the date of award of the contract.

3 The report, or its main elements, shall be communicated to the Commission or the competent authorities, bodies or structures referred to in Article 83 where they so request.

Article 85

National reporting and statistical information

1 The Commission shall review the quality and completeness of data that can be extracted from the notices, referred to in Articles 48, 49, 50, 75 and 79, which are published in accordance with Annex VIII.

Where the quality and completeness of the data referred to in the first subparagraph of this paragraph is not compliant with the obligations stipulated in Article 48(1), Article 49, Article 50(1), Article 75(2) and Article 79(3), the Commission shall request complementary information from the Member State concerned. Within a reasonable time, the Member State concerned shall supply the missing statistical information requested by the Commission.

2 By 18 April 2017 and every three years thereafter, Member States shall forward to the Commission a statistical report for procurement which would have been covered by this Directive if its value had exceeded the relevant threshold laid down in Article 4, indicating an estimation of the aggregated total value of such procurement during the period concerned. That estimation may in particular be based on data available under national publication requirements or on sample-based estimates.

That report may be included in the report referred to in Article 83(3).

3 Member States shall make available to the Commission information on their institutional organisation related to the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of this Directive, as well as on national initiatives taken to provide guidance on or assist in implementation of Union rules on public procurement, or to respond to challenges confronting the implementation of those rules.

That information may be included in the report referred to in Article 83(3).

Article 86

Administrative cooperation

1 Member States shall provide mutual assistance to each other, and shall put in place measures for effective cooperation with one another, in order to ensure exchange of information

on issues referred to in Articles 42, 43, 44, 57, 59, 60, 62, 64 and 69. They shall ensure the confidentiality of the information which they exchange.

2 The competent authorities of all Member States concerned shall exchange information in compliance with personal data protection rules provided for in Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁹⁾ and Directive 2002/58/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽²⁰⁾.

3 To test the suitability of using the Internal Market Information System (IMI) established by Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 for the purpose of exchanging information covered by this Directive, a pilot project shall be launched by 18 April 2015.

TITLE V

DELEGATED POWERS, IMPLEMENTING POWERS AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 87

Exercise of the delegation

1 The power to adopt delegated acts is conferred on the Commission subject to the conditions laid down in this Article.

2 The power to adopt delegated acts referred to in Articles 6, 22, 23, 56 and 68 shall be conferred on the Commission for an indeterminate period of time from 17 April 2014.

3 The delegation of power referred to in Articles 6, 22, 23, 56 and 68 may be revoked at any time by the European Parliament or by the Council. A decision to revoke shall put an end to the delegation of the power specified in that decision. It shall take effect the day following the publication of the decision in the *Official Journal of the European Union* or at a later date specified therein. It shall not affect the validity of any delegated acts already in force.

4 As soon as it adopts a delegated act, the Commission shall notify it simultaneously to the European Parliament and to the Council.

5 A delegated act adopted pursuant to Articles 6, 22, 23, 56 and 68 shall enter into force only where no objection has been expressed either by the European Parliament or by the Council within a period of two months of notification of the act to the European Parliament and the Council or if, before the expiry of that period, the European Parliament and the Council have both informed the Commission that they will not object. That period shall be extended by two months at the initiative of the European Parliament or of the Council.

Article 88

Urgency procedure

1 Delegated acts adopted under this Article shall enter into force without delay and shall apply as long as no objection is expressed in accordance with paragraph 2. The notification of a delegated act to the European Parliament and to the Council shall state the reasons for the use of the urgency procedure.

2 Either the European Parliament or the Council may object to a delegated act in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 87(5). In such a case, the Commission shall

repeal the act without delay following the notification of the decision to object by the European Parliament or by the Council.

Article 89

Committee procedure

1 The Commission shall be assisted by the Advisory Committee on Public Procurement established by Council Decision 71/306/EEC⁽²¹⁾. That committee shall be a committee within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011.

2 Where reference is made to this paragraph, Article 4 of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall apply.

3 Where reference is made to this paragraph, Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall apply.

Article 90

Transposition and transitional provisions

1 Member States shall bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this Directive by 18 April 2016. They shall forthwith communicate to the Commission the text of those measures.

2 Notwithstanding paragraph 1 of this Article, Member States may postpone the application of Article 22(1) until 18 October 2018, except where use of electronic means is mandatory pursuant to Articles 34, 35 or 36, Article 37(3), Article 51(2) or Article 53.

Notwithstanding paragraph 1 of this Article, Member States may postpone the application of Article 22(1) for central purchasing bodies until 18 April 2017.

Where a Member State chooses to postpone the application of Article 22(1), that Member State shall provide that contracting authorities may choose between the following means of communication for all communication and information exchange:

- a electronic means in accordance with Article 22;
- b post or other suitable carrier;
- c fax;
- d a combination of those means.

3 Notwithstanding paragraph 1 of this Article, Member States may postpone the application of the second subparagraph of Article 59(2) until 18 April 2018.

4 Notwithstanding paragraph 1 of this Article, Member States may postpone the application of the second subparagraph of Article 59(5) until 18 October 2018.

5 Notwithstanding paragraph 1 of this Article, Member States may postpone the application of Article 61(2) until 18 October 2018.

6 When Member States adopt the measures referred to in paragraphs 1 to 5, they shall contain a reference to this Directive or be accompanied by such a reference on the occasion of their official publication. Member States shall determine how such reference is to be made.

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

Article 91

Repeals

Directive 2004/18/EC is repealed with effect from 18 April 2016.

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

Article 92

Review

The Commission shall review the economic effects on the internal market, in particular in terms of factors such as the cross-border award of contracts and transaction costs, resulting from the application of the thresholds set in Article 4 and report thereon to the European Parliament and the Council by 18 April 2019.

The Commission shall, where possible and appropriate, consider suggesting an increase of the threshold amounts applicable under the GPA during the next round of negotiations. In the event of any change to the threshold amounts applicable under the GPA, the report shall, where appropriate, be followed by a proposal for a legal act amending the thresholds set out in this Directive.

Article 93

Entry into force

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

Article 94

Addressees

This Directive is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Strasbourg, 26 February 2014.

For the European Parliament

The President

M. SCHULZ

For the Council

The President

D. KOURKOULAS

- (1) Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS) ([OJ L 154, 21.6.2003, p. 1](#)).
- (2) Directive 2002/21/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services (Framework Directive) ([OJ L 108, 24.4.2002, p. 33](#)).
- (3) Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) ([OJ L 95, 15.4.2010, p. 1](#)).
- (4) Council Directive 77/249/EEC of 22 March 1977 to facilitate the effective exercise by lawyers of freedom to provide services ([OJ L 78, 26.3.1977, p. 17](#)).
- (5) Directive 2004/39/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 on markets in financial instruments amending Council Directives 85/611/EEC and 93/6/EEC and Directive 2000/12/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Council Directive 93/22/EEC ([OJ L 145, 30.4.2004, p. 1](#)).
- (6) Directive 1999/93/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 1999 on a Community framework for electronic signatures ([OJ L 13, 19.1.2000, p. 12](#)).
- (7) Commission Decision 2009/767/EC of 16 October 2009 setting out measures facilitating the use of procedures by electronic means through the points of single contact under Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on services in the internal market ([OJ L 274, 20.10.2009, p. 36](#)).
- (8) Commission Decision 2011/130/EU of 25 February 2011 establishing minimum requirements for the cross-border processing of documents signed electronically by competent authorities under Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on services in the internal market ([OJ L 53, 26.2.2011, p. 66](#)).
- (9) Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) ([OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 19](#)).
- (10) Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 setting out the requirements for accreditation and market surveillance relating to the marketing of products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 339/93 ([OJ L 218, 13.8.2008, p. 30](#)).
- (11) Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA of 24 October 2008 on the fight against organised crime ([OJ L 300, 11.11.2008, p. 42](#)).
- (12) [OJ C 195, 25.6.1997, p. 1](#).
- (13) Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA of 22 July 2003 on combating corruption in the private sector ([OJ L 192, 31.7.2003, p. 54](#)).
- (14) [OJ C 316, 27.11.1995, p. 48](#).
- (15) Council Framework Decision of 13 June 2002 on combating terrorism ([OJ L 164, 22.6.2002, p. 3](#)).
- (16) Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2005 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing ([OJ L 309, 25.11.2005, p. 15](#)).
- (17) Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA ([OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1](#)).
- (18) Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, ([OJ L 124, 20.5.2003, p. 36](#)).
- (19) Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data ([OJ L 281, 23.11.1995, p. 31](#)).
- (20) Directive 2002/58/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 2002 concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector (Directive on privacy and electronic communications) ([OJ L 201, 31.7.2002, p. 37](#)).

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally adopted).

- (21) Council Decision 71/306/EEC of 26 July 1971 setting up an Advisory Committee for Public Works Contracts ([OJ L 185, 16.8.1971, p. 15](#)).