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General Guidance on Europol Procurement Procedures

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1. Foreword

1.1. Europol Procurement

“Public procurement” means the purchasing of works, supplies and services by public bodies at either national or Union level.

The objective of public procurement is to increase the choice of potential suppliers to public bodies, thereby allowing achieving a better value for money result, while at the same time developing market opportunities for companies.

Europol must respect EU regulations on procurement and budgetary matters when contracting with economic operators. The conclusion of a contract is in principle only possible after the successful completion of a procurement procedure.

In accordance with Article 85 of the Financial Regulation applicable to Europol, Europol complies with the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union (FR)¹ and their Rules of Application (RAP)².

All Europol procurement procedures are centrally managed by the Europol Procurement Office in order to ensure better coherence in the application of the rules and to guarantee compliance with the principles of transparency, proportionality, equal treatment and non-discrimination.

This document is designed to help economic operators with the preparation and submission of requests to participate/tenders in response to procurement procedures issued by Europol.

Tenderers should note that any information contained in the procurement documents can in no way be regarded as a commitment on the part of Europol to enter into any contract.

Europol publishes detailed information related to its procurement procedures on its website: www.europol.europa.eu.

This guidance complements the procurement documents for each specific procedure. The ‘Invitation to tender & tender specifications’ describes the service or supply that Europol intends to purchase, the timetable, the exclusion, selection and award criteria, what the participating economic operators are required to provide as part of their submission and the resulting contractual terms. In case of any inconsistency between these guidelines and the individual ‘Invitation to tender & tender specifications’, the individual ‘Invitation to tender & tender specifications’ shall prevail.

¹ Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council

² Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012

1.2. Types of procedures and terminology

I. Types of procedures

The following different procurement procedures might be used depending on the value and type of contract in accordance with the FR and RAP³:

- Open procedure
- Restricted procedure, including through a dynamic purchasing system
- Negotiated procedure, including without prior publication
- Competitive procedure with negotiation
- Procedures involving a call for expression of interest
- Competitive dialogue
- Innovation partnership
- Design contest

The type of procurement procedure used in each specific procurement is specified in the 'Invitation to tender & tender specifications'.

Depending on the type of procedure used, the procurement procedure can be organised in one step (e.g. the open procedure) or in two steps (e.g. the restricted procedure).

If the procurement procedure is organised in **one step**, economic operators are invited to submit tenders (comprising exclusion, selection documents as well as the technical tender and the financial tender). The contracting authority assesses the exclusion and selection criteria and evaluates the tenders against award criteria in one step.

Unless otherwise stated in the 'Invitation to tender & tender specifications', the procurement procedure is organised in one step.

If the procurement procedure is organised in **two steps**, economic operators are invited to submit requests to participate (comprising exclusion, selection documents). In Step I, the contracting authority assesses the exclusion and selection criteria. Only selected candidates are invited to submit their tenders in Step II. In Step II, the contracting authority checks the compliance of the tenders with the minimum requirements as well as evaluates the tenders against the award criteria.

If the procedure is organised in two steps, this fact is clearly specified in the 'Invitation to tender & tender specifications'.

All procurement procedures for contracts with a value above 15.000 € are depending on the value and type of procedure either published in the OJ S by means of a Contract Notice, or advertised by means of an ex-ante publicity on Europol website.⁴

³ For more information please refer to Article 104 FR and Articles 128-137 RAP

⁴ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/careers-procurement/procurement/ongoing-calls-for-tender>

II. Terminology

'Contracting authority' shall mean Europol

'Economic operator' shall mean any natural or legal person, including a public entity or group thereof that offers supplies, services or works on the market.

'Candidates' shall mean those economic operators who requested to participate in a two-phase procedure.

'Tenderers' shall mean those economic operators who have submitted tenders (whether in a one-phase procedure or in Phase II of a two-phase procedure).

'Invitation' shall refer to the 'Invitation to tender & tender specifications' and, if applicable, also to 'Invitation to Phase II'.

'Tenders' submitted in the context of a procurement procedure are also designated 'offers'.

'TED' shall mean Tenders Electronic Daily database (<http://ted.europa.eu>), where all contract notices published in the Official Journal "S" series (OJ S) are available.

'E-tendering' shall mean the platform used by Europol for managing calls for tenders. The platform is an extension of TED which consists of the publication of tender documents and the management of questions and answers.

'Contractor' shall mean the candidate/tenderer who has been awarded the contract. Where the procurement documents refer to 'tenderer'/'candidate'/'economic operator' it shall be considered as 'contractor' after signature of the contract.

1.3. Implications of submitting a request to participate/tender

All documents submitted by the tenderer shall automatically become the property of Europol and are deemed confidential.

Requests to participate/tenders shall be submitted strictly in accordance with the conditions set out in the procurement documents. If any other conditions are attached to or referred to in the request to participate/tender, the candidate/tenderer should declare that such conditions are entirely withdrawn.

The period of validity of the tender, during which the tenderer may not modify the terms of the tender in any respect, must be at least six months following the deadline for dispatching tenders. The **successful tenderer** must maintain its offer for a further four months from the date of the written notification of Europol's intention to award it the contract.

Europol reserves the right to decline without further comment any proposal that does not accept its draft contract.

The submitted tender is binding on the tenderer to whom the contract is awarded for the duration of the contract.

All costs incurred for the preparation and submission of tenders are to be borne by the tenderers and will not be reimbursed.

The fact of submitting a request to participate /tender in response to a Europol call for tenders implies that you:

- Accept all terms and conditions as stipulated in the procurement documents;
- Waive your own terms of business;
- Accept the draft contract;
- Accept to receive notification of the outcome of the procedure by electronic means.

The Invitation is in no way binding on Europol. Europol' contractual obligation commences only upon signature of the contract with the successful tenderer.

Up to the point of signature, Europol may cancel the procurement procedure without the candidates or tenderers being entitled to claim any compensation. This decision must be substantiated and the candidates or tenderers notified.

In case candidates/tenderers would like to raise objections or ask questions about the procurement documents they should comply with the procedure indicated in **point 4 below**.

1.4. Language of the request to participate/ tender

Europol's working language is English. Requests to participate/tenders must be submitted in one of the official languages of the European Union. Since Europol's working language is English, Europol would highly appreciate to receive requests to participate/tenders written in English.

2. Access to market, exclusion, selection and award criteria

2.1. Access to the market

Participation in procurement procedures is open on equal terms to all natural and legal persons falling within the scope of the Treaties. This includes all legal entities registered in the EU and all natural persons having their domicile in the EU. Participation is also open to all natural and legal persons registered or having their domicile in a non-EU country which has an agreement with the European Union in the field of public procurement on the conditions laid down in that agreement. The rules of access to the market do not apply to subcontractors.

Participation in procurement procedures shall also be open to international organisations.

2.2. Exclusion criteria

Candidates/tenderers must not be in any of the situations listed in articles 106 and 107 of the FR.

The candidate/tenderer shall be requested to sign a Declaration on honour on exclusion and selection criteria. The template of the declaration is included in the procurement documents.

2.3. Selection criteria

The purpose of the selection criteria is to determine whether the candidate/tenderer has the capacity necessary to implement the contract.

Selection criteria may only relate to the legal and regulatory capacity to pursue the professional activity, the economic and financial capacity, and the technical and professional capacity.

Detailed information about the specific selection criteria for each procurement procedure is provided in the Invitation.

The candidate/tenderer shall be requested to sign a Declaration on honour on exclusion and selection criteria. The template of the declaration is included in the procurement documents.

Any economic operator with a professional conflicting interest which prevents it from performing the contract adequately may be rejected.

In order to meet the selection criteria related to economic and financial capacity or technical and professional capacity, an economic operator may, where appropriate and for a particular contract, rely on the capacities of other entities, regardless of the legal nature of the links which it has with them. It must in that case prove to the contracting authority that it will have at its disposal the resources necessary for performance of the contract, for example by producing an undertaking on the part of those entities to place those resources at its disposal.

If a third party provides the whole or a large part of the financial capacity, the contracting authority may demand that that entity signs the contract, or alternatively, the third party may commit itself to execute the contract jointly and severally with the contractor by providing a letter or intent to that effect. If the third party chooses to sign the contract, then they must meet the exclusion criteria indicated above in **point 2.2** and have access to the market as defined above in **point 2.1**.

In case of a joint request to participate /tender submitted by a consortium or in the case of subcontracting, the candidate/tenderer shall provide the information and documentation listed below in **point 3**.

2.4. Award criteria

The purpose of the award criteria is to evaluate the technical and financial offers with a view to choosing the most economically advantageous tender.

The award of contracts will be based on one of the three following award methods:

- best price-quality ratio: the contract is awarded taking into account the price or cost and other quality criteria. In this case detailed quality criteria including the maximum scoring for each of them are defined in advance as well as the weighting for quality and price (e.g. 60% quality/40% price).
- lowest price: the contract is awarded to the lowest tender that satisfies the minimum requirements set in the technical specifications;
- lowest cost: the contract is awarded based on a cost-effectiveness approach including life-cycle costing.

Detailed information about the specific award method as well as the specific criteria and weighting applicable to each procurement procedure are provided in the Invitation.

3. Conditions regarding joint requests to participate/ tenders submitted by consortia and subcontracting

If so indicated in the Invitation, certain tasks must be performed directly by the tenderer itself or, where a tender is submitted by a consortium of economic operators, a participant in the consortium.

3.1. Consortia general

Groups of economic operators (consortia) are authorised to submit requests to participate/tenders (joint requests to participate/tenders). In this case, each member of the consortium shall fulfil the requirements and accept the terms and conditions set out in the procurement documents.

The members of the consortium shall designate one member as Consortium Leader with full authority to bind the consortium and each of its members. The Consortium Leader shall act as a single point of contact with Europol in connection with the present procurement procedure.

Europol may not demand that consortia must have a given legal form in order to be allowed to submit a request to participate/tender. However, the consortium selected may be required to adopt a given legal form after it has been awarded the contract and before the contract is signed, if this change is necessary to the proper performance of the contract.

The consortium can take the form of:

- an entity with legal personality recognised by a Member State; or
- an entity without legal personality but offering sufficient protection of Europol's contractual interests, for instance a temporary grouping of service providers or a joint venture.

If the partners of the group have already set up a consortium or similar entity to that end, they should state this in their tender, together with any other relevant information and connected documentation.

Any change in the composition of the consortium during the procurement procedure may lead to the rejection of the corresponding request to participate/tender. Any change in the composition of the consortium after the signature of the contract may lead to the termination of the contract.

An economic operator can only participate once as a tenderer in a procurement procedure, whether as single tenderer, Consortium Leader or partner in a consortium. The economic operator may however agree to act as a subcontractor in a distinct offer from which it is participating as either of the aforementioned options. However, such a situation is not advisable for the high potential of conflicts of interest it may generate.

3.2. Documentation and information to be provided

In the relevant section of the request to participate/tender the role and tasks of each member of the consortium will be clearly identified.

In general, each member of the consortium must provide the same administrative documentation as the Consortium Leader.

The documentation that must be provided is indicated in the Invitation.

3.3. Assessment of consortia

Joint tenders submitted by consortia will be assessed as follows:

The exclusion criteria will be assessed in relation to each member of the consortium individually;

The selection criteria for the economic and financial capacity and technical and professional capacity will be assessed in relation to the combined capacities of all members of the consortium, as a whole, unless specified differently in the Invitation.

The award criteria will be assessed in relation to the tender.

Since all members of the consortium are jointly and severally liable towards Europol for the performance of the contract, statements included in the joint offer saying, for instance:

- that each member of the consortium will be responsible only for a specific part of the contract, or
- that a separate contract should be signed with each member of the consortium if the joint offer is successful,

are incompatible with the principle of joint and several liability.

Europol will disregard any such statement contained in a joint offer, and it reserves the right to reject such tenders without further evaluation, on the grounds that they do not comply with the procurement documents.

3.4. Consortia contract implementation

Once the contract has entered into force, all members of the consortium shall be jointly and severally liable towards Europol for the performance of the contract, they shall comply with the terms and conditions of the contract and ensure the proper execution of their respective share of the services.

The consortium leader – duly authorised by the other members of the consortium, via power of attorney – will be entitled to sign any contractual documents; it shall act as a single point of contact with Europol in connection with the services to be provided under the contract; it shall co-ordinate the provision of the services by the consortium members to Europol; it shall guarantee a proper administration of the contract.

The composition of the consortium and the allocation of tasks among the members of the consortium shall not be altered without prior written information to Europol.

3.5. Subcontracting general

The candidate/tenderer may subcontract the tasks specified in the procurement documents to other economic operators, as long as the supplies and/or services are provided in accordance with the specified requirements and have no impact on the prices proposed in its financial tender.

In case of subcontracting the candidate/tenderer shall clearly state in the section of the request to participate /tender related to the eligibility and capacity:

- which tasks it intends to subcontract and clearly indicate the roles, activities and responsibilities of the subcontractor(s),
- the volume or proportion of the activities likely to be subcontracted.

Any change in subcontracting during the procurement procedure may lead to the rejection of the corresponding request to participate /tender. Any change in subcontracting after the signature of the contract may lead to the termination of the contract.

3.6. Documentation and information to be provided

The documentation that must be provided is indicated in the Invitation.

3.7. Assessment of subcontractors

In case of subcontracting, the request to participate /tender will be assessed as follows:

- the exclusion criteria and the selection criteria for the legal and regulatory capacity will be assessed in relation to each proposed subcontractor individually;
- The selection criteria for the economic and financial capacity and the selection criteria for the technical and professional capacity will be assessed in relation to the combined capacities of the candidate/tenderer and the subcontractor(s), as a whole, depending on the extent to which the subcontractor(s) will put their resources at the disposal of the candidate/tenderer for the performance of the contract;
- the award criteria will be assessed in relation to the tender.

During the procurement procedure, if a subcontractor does not meet the exclusion and selection criteria, the contracting authority will request their replacement with a new subcontractor.

3.8. Subcontracting contract implementation

Once the contract has entered into force, the successful tenderer shall retain full liability towards Europol for the performance of the contract as a whole. Europol will not have any direct legal commitment with the subcontractor(s). Accordingly:

- Europol does not acknowledge any contractual link between itself and subcontractor(s) and will treat all contractual matters (e.g. payment) exclusively with the main contractor, whether or not the tasks are performed by a subcontractor;
- under no circumstances can the main contractor avoid liability towards Europol on the grounds that the subcontractor is at fault.

During the execution of the contract, the contractor will need Europol's express authorisation to replace a subcontractor with another subcontractor and/or to subcontract tasks for which subcontracting was not envisaged in the original tender, in compliance with the provisions on subcontracting foreseen in the contract.

Europol recognises that arrangements in relation to sub-contracting may (within limits) be subject to future change. If the subcontracting arrangement has changed this must be notified to Europol in a signed letter.

4. Contacts between Europol and the tenderers

Contact between Europol and the candidate/tenderer may only take place in exceptional circumstances, under the conditions indicated below.

4.1. Questions and answers before the deadline for submission of requests to participate/tenders

The candidate/tenderer may ask questions (including requests for additional information) solely for the purpose of clarifying the procurement documents.

Any request for additional information must be made in writing only. Further details about submitting questions are specified in the Invitation.

Any answer/additional information provided at the request of an economic operator will be accessible simultaneously to all operators by the same means as for the procurement documents.

Tenderers shall note that Europol is not bound to reply to questions submitted less than six (6) working days before the deadline for dispatch of tenders or requests to participate.

4.2. Amendments to the procurement documents before the deadline for submission of requests to participate/tenders

Europol may modify the procurement documents by amendment if it spots any error, inaccuracy, omission or other clerical error in the procurement documents.

Any amendment/information provided by Europol on its own initiative will be accessible simultaneously to all operators by the same means as for the procurement documents.

In order to allow candidates/tenderers reasonable time in which to take the amendment into account in preparing their requests to participate/tenders, Europol, at its discretion, may extend the deadline for dispatching requests to participate/tenders.

Clarifications and/or amendments will be regarded as an integral part of the procurement documents.

4.3. Clarifications following dispatch of requests to participate/tenders

After the requests to participate/tenders have been opened, contacts with tenderers must remain exceptional and can be made only on the initiative of Europol.

Such contacts can take place only in the following circumstances:

- if obvious clerical errors in the drafting of the tender need to be corrected or specific or technical elements require confirmation;
- to request additional information or documents on exclusion or selection criteria.

The clarifications may not lead to any alteration of the terms of the tender.

Only in the case of a negotiated procedure, if so stated in the Invitation, Europol may negotiate with tenderers the tenders they have submitted, in order to adapt them to the requirements set out in the procurement documents and in order to choose the most economically advantageous tender. Negotiation of the procurement documents is never allowed. During negotiations equal treatment of all tenderers will be ensured.

5. Submission of requests to participate/tenders, opening and evaluation

5.1. Submission of requests to participate/tenders

Requests to participate/tenders must be dispatched no later than the 'Deadline for dispatching requests to participate/tenders' date indicated in the Invitation.

Depending on the type and value of the procurement procedure, requests to participate/tenders shall be submitted either electronically or as hard-copy via post/courier/hand delivery.

Detailed information about the specific modalities of submission for each procedure is provided in the Invitation.

5.2. Opening session

Requests to participate/tenders submitted in accordance with the specified rules shall be opened by Europol in an opening session.

If so stated in the Invitation or Contract Notice, the opening session is public.

5.3. Formal opening requirements

The main aim of the opening session is to check whether the requests to participate/tenders received are compliant with the following formal requirements:

For requests to participate:

- the request to participate was dispatched before the deadline,

For tenders:

- the tender was dispatched before the deadline,
- the package containing the tender is sealed, in order to guarantee the confidentiality and integrity of data (not applicable when electronic submission of tenders is allowed).

If requests to participate/tenders are not compliant with one of the above requirements they will be rejected.

5.4. Attending the public opening session

The public opening session will take place at Europol's premises on the date and time indicated in the contract notice and in the procurement documents. If the opening session is public, one representative per tenderer is allowed to attend the opening session as an observer.

Should a tenderer wish to be present, it shall inform Europol of the name of its representative by email (procurement@europol.europa.eu) not later than the date and time indicated in the procurement documents.

For security reasons, tenderers who do not register within the given deadline will not be allowed to attend the opening session.

Following the public opening session, and if so requested in writing, all tenderers can receive the record of the opening session including the names of the entities who have submitted an offer.

5.5. Evaluation of requests to participate/tenders

Requests to participate/tenders found compliant during the opening session will be evaluated as specified in the Invitation.

The evaluation will be carried out under the conditions of confidentiality and absence of conflict of interest.

The following aspects will be assessed:

- access to market and exclusion criteria of the candidate/tenderer to participate in the procurement procedure;
- capacity of the candidate/tenderer to perform the contract against the selection criteria;
- compliance with the minimum requirements;
- technical and financial tenders against the pre-defined award criteria.

A request to participate/tender failing to pass a given category of criteria will not be evaluated under the other categories and the candidate/tenderer will be informed of the ground for rejection without being given feedback on the non-assessed content of the tender.

6. Award and signature of the contract with the successful tenderer

6.1. Award and notification of the outcomes of the procurement procedure

Following the finalisation of the evaluation, a decision will be taken about the selection of candidates/award of the contract.

Candidates/tenderers will be simultaneously and individually notified by electronic means as soon as possible about the decision taken on the outcomes of their candidature/tender, including the grounds for any decision to not award the contract or to cancel the procedure.

It is the candidate/tenderer's responsibility to provide a valid e-mail address together with contact details in the request to participate/ tender and to check this e-mail address regularly.

For high value contracts above the Directive threshold (i.e. 135.000 € for services and supplies), the contract will not be signed for 10 days (standstill period), counting from the day after simultaneous dispatch of the notification by electronic means to all tenderers (successful and unsuccessful). Only after the end of this "standstill period" Europol may sign the contract.

6.2. Exclusion criteria documentation

In relation to **point 2.2** above and in particular articles 106 and 107 of the FR the candidate/tenderer (including each consortium member) shall provide, upon request, the evidence specified in the 'Declaration on honour on exclusion and selection criteria'.

Please note that the signature of the contract between Europol and the successful tenderer may be conditional upon provision of the documentary evidence from the successful tenderer.

Europol may request the above-mentioned documentary evidence for each subcontractor as well.

NB: As the time limit for submitting the above-mentioned documentation is in general very short, we strongly recommend that the tenderer starts gathering the requested documents (especially in case of joint venture/subcontracting, including the relevant documents for consortium partners/subcontractors as soon as possible in order to have the documents ready to be sent to Europol in case it is awarded the contract. This will allow reducing the time line to sign the awarded contract with Europol).

6.3. Selection criteria documentation

Documentation concerning selection criteria must specifically relate to the candidate/tenderer and any consortium members or subcontractors. The selection

criteria remain applicable throughout the whole performance of the contract, i.e. the contractor must comply with these criteria at all times.

The documentation shall be submitted to Europol as specified in the Invitation.

If so requested by Europol, the successful candidate/tenderer shall submit the originals/ certificates / documents for conformity check prior to the signature of the contract.

6.4. Additional administrative documentation

Please be informed that, unless they are already listed in the European Commission's contractor database, the successful tenderer will be asked to submit to Europol completed print outs of the European Commission's Legal Entity Form and Financial Identification Form and the required supporting documents before signature of the contract. Further information on these forms can be found on the European Commission Website under:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm

and

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm

Please note that the provision of the above-mentioned administrative documentation is necessary in order to prepare the contract and to authorise payments.

7. Other relevant information

7.1. Electronic exchange of documents

It is intended that the ordering and invoicing documents will have to be exchanged between the contracting parties via electronic means.

At the request of Europol, the use of such applications will become mandatory during the performance of the contract.

The ordering procedure may cover the steps going from the request for tenders to the signature of specific contracts or order forms.

The electronic documents are exchanged using the e-PRIOR platform, either via a system-to-system connection (web services) or through a web application (the Supplier Portal).

The related documentation can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/informatics/supplier_portal/index_en.htm

Tenderers should be aware of the fact that other applications currently under development may be implemented on a voluntary basis during the contract execution.

7.2. Protection of personal data

If processing your reply to the invitation to tender involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as your name, address and CV), such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, your replies to the questions and any personal data requested are required to evaluate your tender in accordance with the specifications of the invitation to tender and will be processed solely for that purpose by the evaluation committee. Details concerning the processing of your personal data are available on the privacy statement at:

<https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-documents/privacy-statement-for-europol-procurement> .

Tenderers are informed that for the purpose of safeguarding the financial interest of the Communities, their personal data may be transferred to internal audit services, to the European Court of Auditors, to the Financial Irregularities Panel and/or to the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

7.3. Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES)

Your personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) if you are in one of the situations mentioned in Article 106 of the Financial Regulation⁵. For more information, see the Privacy Statement on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm .

7.4. Disclaimer

Europol reserves the right to accept or reject any request to participate /tender and to annul the process and reject all request to participate /tenders at any time prior to the contract signature, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected economic operators.

Europol will not be responsible for, or pay for, expenses or losses that may be incurred by the candidate/tenderer in the preparation of its request to participate /tender and/or during the evaluation period.

Product names and trademarks: whenever the procurement documents mention a specific product name or trademark and a sufficiently precise and fully intelligible description is not possible, such mention should be understood as referring to that product or its equivalent, unless specified otherwise in the given procedure.

⁵ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 (OJ L 298 of 26.10.2012, p. 1) as amended.

Europol Public Information

Once the contract has entered into force, the prices indicated in the financial proposal of the successful tenderer may be revised under the conditions laid down in the contract.

7.5. Complaints

If you require further information on calls for tenders or related matters, please contact us at:

Europol Procurement Office

EUROPOL

Eisenhowerlaan 73

2517 KK The Hague

The Netherlands

procurement@europol.europa.eu

The court responsible for hearing annulment procedures is the General Court of the European Union (<http://curia.europa.eu>).

The European Ombudsman investigates complaints about maladministration in the institutions and bodies of the European Union (<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu>).