

Financial Regulation

Article 93

1. Candidates or tenderers shall be excluded from participation in procurement procedure if:

(a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;

(b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of *res judicata*;

(c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;

(d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;

(e) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;

(f) they are currently subject to an administrative penalty referred to in Article 96(1).

Points (a) to (d) of the first subparagraph shall not apply in the case of purchase of supplies on particularly advantageous terms from either a supplier which is definitively winding up its business activities, or from the receivers or liquidators of a bankruptcy, through an arrangement with creditors, or through a similar procedure under national law.

2. Candidates or tenderers shall certify that they are not in one of the situations listed in paragraph 1. However, the contracting authority may refrain from requiring such certification for very low value contracts, as specified in the implementing rules.

For the purpose of the correct application of paragraph 1, the candidate or tenderer, whenever requested by the contracting authority, must:

a) where the candidate or tenderer is a legal entity, provide information on the ownership or on the management, control and power of representation of the legal entity,

b) where subcontracting is envisaged, certify that the subcontractor is not in one of the situations referred to in paragraph 1.

Implementing Rules

Article 133

Illegal activities giving rise to exclusion
(Article 93 and 114 of the Financial Regulation)

The cases referred to in point (e) of Article 93(1) of the Financial Regulation shall be the following:

(a) cases of fraud as referred to in Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995 (*);

(b) cases of corruption as referred to 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, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997 (**);

(c) cases of involvement in a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2(1) of Joint Action 98/733/JHA of the Council (***);

(d) cases of money laundering as defined in Article 1 of Council Directive 91/308/EEC (****).

(*) OJ C 316, 27.11.1995, p. 48.

(**) OJ C 195, 25.6.1997, p. 1.

(***) OJ L 351, 29.12.1998, p. 1.

(****) OJ L 166, 28.6.1991, p. 77.

Article 133a

Application of exclusion criteria and duration of exclusion
(Articles 93, 94, 95 and 96 of the Financial Regulation)

1. In order to determine duration of exclusion and to ensure compliance with the principle of proportionality, the institution responsible shall take into account in particular the seriousness of the facts, including their impact on the Communities' financial interests and image and the time which has elapsed, the duration and recurrence of the offence, the intention or degree of negligence of the entity concerned and the measures taken by the entity concerned to remedy the situation.

When determining the period of exclusion, the institution responsible shall give the candidate or tenderer concerned the opportunity to express their views.

Where the duration of the period of exclusion is determined, in accordance with the applicable law, by the authorities or bodies referred to in Article 95(2) of the Financial Regulation, the Commission shall apply this duration up to the maximum duration laid down in Article 93(3) of the Financial Regulation

2. The period referred to in Article 93(3) of the Financial Regulation is set at a maximum of five years, calculated from the following dates:

(a) from the date of the judgment having the force of *res judicata* in the cases referred to in points (b) and (e) of Article 93(1) of the Financial Regulation;

(b) from the date on which the infringement is committed or, in the case of continuing or repeated infringements, the date on which the infringement ceases, in the cases referred to in Article 93(1)(c) of the Financial Regulation.

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Implementing Rules

3. The implementing rules shall determine the maximum period during which the situations referred to in paragraph 1 give rise to the exclusion of candidates or tenderers from participation in a procurement procedure. The maximum period shall not exceed 10 years.

Article 94

A contract shall not be awarded to candidates or tenderers who, during the procurement procedure for this contract:

- (a) are subject to a conflict of interest;
- (b) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the procurement procedure or fail to supply this information;
- (c) find themselves in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to in Article 93(1), for this procurement procedure;

Article 95

1. A central database shall be set up and operated by the Commission in compliance with Community rules on the protection of personal data. The database shall contain details of candidates and tenderers which is in one of the situations referred to in Articles 93, 94, 96(1)(b) and (2)(a). It shall be common to the institutions, executive agencies and the bodies referred to in Article 185.

2. The authorities of the Member States and third countries as well as the bodies, other than those referred to in paragraph 1, participating in the implementation of the budget in accordance with Articles 53 and 54, shall communicate to the competent authorising officer information on candidates and tenderers which are in one of the situations referred to in Article 93(1)(e), where the conduct of the operator concerned was detrimental to the Communities' financial interests. The authorising officer shall receive this information and request the accounting officer to enter it into the database.

The authorities and bodies mentioned in the first subparagraph shall have access to the information contained in the database and may take it into account, as appropriate and on their own responsibility for the award of contracts associated with the implementation of the budget.

3. Transparent and coherent criteria to ensure proportionate application of the exclusion criteria shall be laid down in the implementing rules. The Commission shall define standardised procedures and technical specifications for the operation of the database.

That period of exclusion may be extended to ten years in the event of a repeated offence within five years of the date referred to in points (a) and (b), subject to paragraph 1.

3. Candidates and tenderers shall be excluded from a procurement and grant procedure as long as they are in one of the situations referred to in points (a) and (d) of Article 93(1) of the Financial Regulation.

Article 134

Evidence

(Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation)

1. Candidates and tenderers shall provide a declaration on their honour, duly signed and dated, stating that they are not in one of the situations referred to in Article 93 or 94 of the Financial Regulation.

However, in the case of restricted procedures, competitive dialogue and negotiated procedures after publication of a contract notice, whenever the contracting authority limits the number of candidates to be invited to negotiate or submit a tender, all the candidates shall provide the certificates referred to in paragraph 3.

Depending on its risk assessment, the contracting authority may refrain from requiring the declaration referred to in the first subparagraph for contracts with a value less than or equal to EUR 5 000. However, for contracts referred to in Articles 241(1), 243(1), and 245(1), the contracting authority may refrain from requiring that declaration for contracts with a value less than or equal to EUR 10 000.

2. The tenderer to whom the contract is to be awarded shall provide, within a time-limit defined by the contracting authority and preceding the signature of the contract, the evidence referred to in paragraph 3, confirming the declaration referred to in paragraph 1 in the following cases:

- (a) for contracts awarded by the institutions on their own account, with a value equal to or greater than the thresholds referred to in Article 158;
- (b) for contracts in the field of external actions with a value equal to or greater than the thresholds laid down in Article 241(1)(a), Article 243(1)(a), or Article 245(1)(a).

For contracts with a value less than the thresholds referred to in points (a) and (b), the contracting authority may, where it has doubts as to whether the tenderer to whom the contract is to be awarded is in one of the situations of exclusion, require him to provide the evidence referred to in paragraph 3.

3. The contracting authority shall accept as satisfactory evidence that the candidate or tenderer to whom the contract is to be awarded is not in one of the situations described in point (a), (b) or (e) of Article 93(1) of the Financial Regulation, a recent extract from the judicial record or, failing that, an equivalent document recently issued by a judicial or administrative authority in the country of origin or provenance showing that those requirements are satisfied. The contracting authority shall accept, as satisfactory evidence that the candidate or tenderer is not in the situation described in point (d) of Article 93(1) of the Financial Regulation, a recent certificate issued by the competent authority of the State concerned.

Financial Regulation

Implementing Rules

Article 96

1. The contracting authority may impose administrative or financial penalties on the following:

- (a) candidates or tenderers in the cases referred to in point (b) of Article 94;
- (b) contractors who have been declared to be in serious breach of their obligations under contracts covered by the budget.

In all cases, however, the contracting authority must first give the person concerned an opportunity to present his observations.

2. The penalties referred to in paragraph 1 shall be proportionate to the importance of the contract and the seriousness of the misconduct, and may consist in:

- (a) the exclusion of the candidate or tenderer or contractor concerned from the contracts and grants financed by the budget, for a maximum period of ten years; and/or
- (b) the payment of financial penalties by the candidate or tenderer or contractor up to the value of the contract in question.

Article 114

1. Grant applications shall be submitted in writing.

2. Grant applications shall be eligible if submitted by the following:

- (a) legal persons; grant applications may be eligible if submitted by entities which do not have legal personality under the applicable national law, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf and assume financial liability;
- (b) natural persons in so far as this is required by the nature or characteristics of the action or the objective pursued by the applicant.

3. Grants may not be awarded to applicants who are, at the time of a grant award procedure, in one of the situations referred to in Articles 93(1), 94 and 96(2)(a).

Applicants must certify that they are not in one of the situations referred to in the first subparagraph. However, the authorising officer may refrain from requiring such certification for very low value grants, as specified in the implementing rules.

4. Administrative and financial penalties which are effective, proportionate and dissuasive may be imposed on applicants by the authorising officer, in accordance with Article 96.

Such penalties may also be imposed on beneficiaries who at the moment of the submission of the application or during the implementation of the grant, have made false declarations in supplying the information required by the authorising officer or fail to supply this information.

Where the document or certificate referred to in the first subparagraph is not issued in the country concerned and for the other cases of exclusion referred to in Article 93 of the Financial Regulation, it may be replaced by a sworn or, failing that, a solemn statement made by the interested party before a judicial or administrative authority, a notary or a qualified professional body in his country of origin or provenance.

4. Depending on the national legislation of the country in which the candidate or tenderer is established, the documents referred to in paragraphs 1 and 3 shall relate to legal persons and/or natural persons including, where considered necessary by the contracting authority, company directors or any person with powers of representation, decision-making or control in relation to the candidate or tenderer.

5. Where they have doubts as to whether candidates or tenderers are in one of the situations of exclusion, contracting authorities may themselves apply to the competent authorities referred to in paragraph 3 to obtain any information they consider necessary about that situation.

6. The contracting authority may waive the obligation of a candidate

or tenderer to submit the documentary evidence referred to in paragraph 3 if such evidence has already been submitted to it for the purposes of another procurement procedure and provided that the documents are not more than one year old starting from their issuing date and that they are still valid.

In such a case, the candidate or tenderer shall declare on his honour that the documentary evidence has already been provided in a previous procurement procedure and confirm that no changes in his situation have occurred.

7. When requested by the contracting authority, the candidate or tenderer shall submit a declaration on honour from the intended subcontractor that he is not in one of the situations referred to in Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation.

In case of doubt on this declaration on the honour, the contracting authority shall request the evidence referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4. Paragraph 5 shall apply, where appropriate.

Article 134a

Central database
(Article 95 of the Financial Regulation)

1. The institutions, executive agencies and bodies referred to in Article 95(1) of the Financial Regulation shall transmit to the Commission, in the format established by the Commission, information identifying the economic operators which are in one of the situations referred to in Articles 93, 94, 96(1)(b) and 96(2)(a) of the Financial Regulation, the grounds for exclusion and the duration of the period of exclusion.

They shall also transmit information concerning persons with powers of representation, decision making or control over economic operators which are legal entities, when these persons have found themselves in one of the situations referred to in Articles 93, 94, 96(1)(b) and 96(2)(a) of the Financial Regulation.

The authorities and bodies referred to in Article 95(2) of the Financial Regulation shall transmit to the Commission, in the format established by the Commission:

(a) information identifying the following persons who are in one of the situations referred to in Article 93(1)(e) of the Financial Regulation, where their conduct was detrimental to the Communities' financial interests:

(i) the economic operators;

(ii) persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control over economic operators which are legal entities;

(b) the type of their conviction;

(c) the duration of the period of exclusion from procurement procedures, where applicable.

2. The institutions, agencies, authorities and bodies referred to in paragraph 1 shall designate the persons authorised to communicate to and receive from the Commission the information contained in the database.

In the case of the institutions, agencies, authorities and bodies referred to in Article 95(1) of the Financial Regulation, the designated persons shall address the information as soon as possible to the accounting officer of the Commission, and request, as appropriate, entry, modification or removal of data in the database.

In the case of the authorities and bodies referred to in Article 95(2) of the Financial Regulation, the designated persons shall address the requisite information to the Commission authorising officer responsible for the programme or action concerned, within three months of the issue of the relevant judgement.

The accounting officer of the Commission shall enter, modify or remove data in the database. He shall, via a secured protocol, provide on a monthly basis validated data contained in the database to the designated persons.

3. The institutions, agencies, authorities and bodies referred to in paragraph 1 shall certify to the Commission that the information communicated by them was established and transmitted in accordance with the principles set out in Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and in Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the protection of personal data.

In particular, they shall inform in advance all economic operators or persons referred to in paragraph 1 that their data may be included in the database and communicated by the Commission to the designated persons referred to in paragraph 2. They shall update, where appropriate, the information transmitted, following rectification or erasure or any modification of data.

Any party entered in the database shall have the right to be informed of the data stored concerning that party, upon request to the accounting officer of the Commission.

4. Member States shall take appropriate measures to assist the Commission in order to manage the database efficiently, in compliance with Directive 95/46/EC.

Appropriate arrangements shall be laid down in the agreements with the authorities of third countries and all bodies referred to in Article 95(2) of the Financial Regulation, in order to ensure compliance with these provisions and with the principles concerning the protection of personal data.

Article 134b

Administrative and financial penalties
(Articles 96 and 114 of the Financial Regulation)

1. Without prejudice to the application of penalties laid down in the contract, candidates or tenderers and contractors who have made false declarations, have made substantial errors or committed irregularities or fraud, or have been found in serious breach of their contractual obligations may be excluded from all contracts and grants financed by the Community budget for a maximum of five years from the date on which the infringement is established as confirmed following an adversarial procedure with the contractor.

That period may be extended to ten years in the event of a repeated offence within five years of the date referred to in the first subparagraph.

2. Tenderers or candidates who have made false declarations, have committed substantial errors, irregularities or fraud, may also be subject to financial penalties representing 2% to 10% of the total estimated value of the contract being awarded.

Contractors who have been found in serious breach of their contractual obligations may be subject to financial penalties representing 2% to 10% of the total value of the contract in question.

That rate may be increased to 4% to 20% in the event of a repeat infringement within five years of the date referred to in the first subparagraph of paragraph 1.

3. The institution shall determine the administrative or financial penalties taking into account in particular the elements referred to in Article 133a(1).