

**ANNEX I TO THE INVITATION TO TENDER**

**TENDER SPECIFICATIONS**

**ONLINE MEDIA ON EU AFFAIRS**

**DG COMM A6 Media Networks OPEN CALL FOR TENDERS**

**PO/2013-9/A6**

## Table of contents

1. Title of the Tender .....	3
2. Objective and context .....	3
3. Subject of the contract .....	4
3.1. Services required .....	4
3.1.1. Online media .....	4
3.1.2. Editorial approach.....	4
3.1.3. Types of contents .....	5
3.1.4. Content definitions.....	6
3.1.5. Editorial Charter .....	7
3.1.6. Broadcast platform.....	7
3.2. Quality assurance .....	7
3.3. Reports.....	7
3.4. Start-up phase .....	9
3.5. Phasing out and handover requirements .....	9
4. Size of the contract .....	9
5. Contractual framework .....	9
6. Submission of bids.....	9
7. Technical tender .....	10
a. Legal structure.....	10
b. Editorial strategy .....	10
c. Operational organisation .....	10
d. Content management strategy .....	10
e. Information architecture.....	11
f. Usability strategy .....	11
g. Design .....	11
h. Technical implementation .....	11
i. Content channel distribution strategy.....	11
j. Impact .....	12
k. Innovation .....	12
l. Quality plan .....	12
8. Financial offer .....	12
9. Exclusion criteria .....	12
9.1. Declaration of honour and evidence.....	12
9.2. Tenders submitted by consortia – Tenders involving subcontracting.....	13
10. Selection criteria.....	13
10.1. Capacity of the tenderer .....	13
10.2. Additional requirements for joint offers.....	16
10.3. Additional requirements for tenders including subcontracting.....	17
11. Award criteria .....	17
11.1. Technical evaluation .....	17
11.2. Financial evaluation .....	19
11.3. Award of the contract.....	20

## **1. TITLE OF THE TENDER**

ONLINE MEDIA ON EU AFFAIRS (Ref. PO/2013-9/A6).

Development, implementation and management of an online media dedicated to EU affairs.

## **2. OBJECTIVE AND CONTEXT**

Today, EU affairs are under-represented in printed and digital media, in spite of their actual relevance to people's daily life. Reporting on EU affairs is often scarce, irregular, lacks a broader European perspective and citizens do not have any specialized platform where they can find and share quality content on EU affairs.

Yet, the Commission considers that "independent media reporting about EU affairs is an important cornerstone of well-informed EU citizens and European public discourse"<sup>1</sup>. Providing information on EU affairs "characterised by independent, professional and high-quality reporting" has accordingly been included among the 25 actions to improve the daily life of EU citizens proposed by the Commission in 2010<sup>2</sup>.

At the same time, studies show that the Internet's share in the European citizens' habits of media consumption<sup>3</sup> is increasing. Public trust in the information delivered through the Internet is growing and more than 1 in 2 EU citizens use this platform on a daily basis.<sup>4</sup>

In this context, the European Commission wants to create an online media dedicated to provide news and a current overview of the EU affairs, offering a variety of perspectives on the European Union while strengthening the citizens' participation in different European languages.<sup>5</sup>

The overall objective is to increase the information on Europe, diversify the present EU-affairs coverage based on digital platforms, strengthen EU citizens' awareness and understanding of EU affairs and stimulate exchanges of opinions and debate on key current issues.

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<sup>1</sup> "EU citizenship report 2010. Dismantling the obstacles to EU citizens' rights", COM(2010)603 final of 27.10.2010.

<sup>2</sup> "EU citizenship report 2010. Dismantling the obstacles to EU citizens' rights", op.cit.

<sup>3</sup> *Eurobaromètre Standard 78* "Les habitudes médiatiques dans l'Union européenne, TNS Opinion & Social, Automne 2012.

<sup>4</sup> *Eurobaromètre Standard 78* "Les habitudes médiatiques dans l'Union européenne, TNS Opinion & Social, Automne 2012.

<sup>5</sup> A project of a similar nature, the Presseurop, was launched by the Commission in 2008 further to a call for tenders. The present call for tenders builds on the experience gained from this project. More information can be found on the Presseurop's website ([www.presseurop.eu](http://www.presseurop.eu)).

### 3. SUBJECT OF THE CONTRACT

#### 3.1. Services required

##### 3.1.1. Online media

The Contractor will have to develop and manage an online media dedicated to EU affairs, where a selection of articles from the international press (paper or online) as well as original contents will be published and distributed. It will include (non-exhaustive list) editorials, thematic and multimedia files, videos, audio, photos, illustrations, graphics, maps and data journalism stories offering a variety of perspectives in a minimum of 10 official EU languages.

The online media will provide the readers fresh content on a daily basis to increase readability and critical understanding of EU affairs, and will allow them to contribute and generate feedback and reactions. Contents will serve pluralism and represent a balanced range of argumentation on key issues, allowing the reader to form his own opinion.

##### 3.1.2. Editorial approach

The online media on EU affairs shall be:

- **A media of reference on EU affairs**, providing citizens and readers with independent, relevant and qualitative information. The aim shall be to offer a right selection of information which makes sense, enlightens and explains, at the right time.
- **A daily "best of the press"**. The online media shall deal with every aspect of European life (in fields as diverse as, but not limited to, politics, society, economy, environment or culture) as felt by Europeans, through a selection of articles from the Member States and to an extent the whole world. It shall inform the public in all the member states (and candidate countries), overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers to create a public news space at a Europe-wide scale.
- **A daily "best of the web"**. A global mass of information is now available on the Internet (through traditional media, blogs, documents or new technologies and networks). However, citizens often lack time to select, prioritize and synthesize data of their interest. By monitoring, researching and publishing content available online, the online media shall offer a selection of contents on EU affairs.
- **A new voice**. Rather than merely a mirror of other media, the online media shall offer as well a new voice and new perspectives on EU affairs by producing original content and serving as a repository to user-generated materials.
- **A place for debate**. The online media cannot remain indifferent to the spread of participatory media (blogs, forums, posts) in the web. On the contrary, its space will be a hub for moderating and organising debates to provide quality exchanges and, in a way, summarize and create opinion.

### 3.1.3. Types of contents

#### 3.1.3.1. Third-party contents

The online media will propose a selection of proven quality articles and other journalistic pieces on EU affairs from sources (printed, online, multimedia...) coming from the different Member States and, as the case may be, also the rest of the world, translated to a minimum of 10 official EU languages.

Articles will be chosen on their ability to:

- report accurately on EU affairs in a way that helps understand how they affect the EU citizens' daily life;
- focus in particular on issues at the top of the EU and Commission agenda (political priorities);
- allow for comparison of different member-state realities with regard to a same issue connected to the EU's affairs;

Articles under this category may interestingly be completed by editorials, summaries, interviews or press reviews (non exhaustive list), or even put together under a single topic or special category when they deal with the same or a similar issue.

The Contractor will monitor world-wide press sources in order to identify contents in line with the prescriptions of article 3.1.4. The selection shall be a mirror of the most trusted media in Europe and around the world and special attention has to be paid to the local press.

At least half of the contents provided by the online media will belong to third-party sources.

#### 3.1.3.2. Original contents

The online media will also feature original content, created by a dedicated editorial team, under the principle: "publish the best, cover the rest". The purpose is to filter, select, and explain the news to the EU citizens, and to do it with quality journalism standards.

Original contents may include (non-exhaustive list) editorials, dossiers, board opinions about hot issues, agenda on EU events or even informative blogs, but also a live –and even to the minute- coverage of the main EU events or issues of special importance which could determine the shape and future of the European Union, such as Council meetings, the Parliamentary campaigns and elections or key developments with EU effects in a member state. These sorts of contents will especially provide an explanatory perspective with a balanced and neutral point of view.

These original contents shall integrate social media items. If required, the work of the editorial team shall focus on creating original stories selecting items from the real-time streams of information coming in from Twitter, Facebook or YouTube (among other sources) and put them together to make cohesive and chronological narratives on EU affairs.

### 3.1.3.3. Multimedia contents

The online media will also make use of rich media and multimedia contents (third-party or originals) such as images, videos, sound bites, infographics, animations, timelines and interactive contents to make stories –original or belonging to other media- more compelling.

The Contractor shall include interactive data visualizations and map mashups that will allow users to explore subjects on their own, depending on their personal interests.

### 3.1.3.4. User-generated contents

The online media will promote audience participation through comments, blogging, social media and other online techniques, as a way of building communities of followers, getting new insights, and promoting discussion and debate. On each page, users will have an opportunity to, at least connect, review, share, and tag (non-exhaustive list) the news and contents they are viewing. This interaction will be encouraged through translations of posts amongst the different linguistic versions.

Free or paid contributors (politicians, experts, analysts, scientists, artists, teachers, NGO representatives, lobbyists, etc.) shall ideally participate as content creators by voluntarily sending posts to be published on the portal, in turn generating reactions and new contents. The aim is to allow citizens' active involvement and debate.

### 3.1.4. Content definitions

Contents will clearly focus on EU affairs from a European perspective, according to the definitions provided below.

For the purpose of the services required in this call for tenders, European Union (EU) affairs are defined as:

- Policies and activities falling within the competencies of the European Union as defined by the EU Treaties and dealt with by the EU institutions and bodies ("policies and activities of the European Union"). A focus on the annual political priorities is required.
- Subjects related to the policies and activities of the European Union occurring within one or more EU member state.
- Subjects in world affairs occurring within or affecting the EU, and having EU-wide implications so as to require reaction at EU level.

EU affairs should be reported on from a broader European perspective, meaning that:

- each selected or created article should have a genuine EU dimension, in particular with an explicit link to the policies and activities of the EU, and/or its implications at EU level;

- each story should strive to avoid purely national or local angles; compared views from different member states and benchmarking should be favoured.

#### 3.1.5. Editorial Charter

The service required prescribes that topics covered in this project must relate to EU affairs, and hence that the contractor acquaints himself with the EU agenda. However, the choice of subject matter and programme content is entirely the responsibility of the contractor. Editorial independence will be guaranteed by the editorial charter of the European Union, which will be an integral part of the contract (see Annex II, Article I.11 of the draft service contract) and applies to:

- the choice of topics to be covered, as long as they comply with the definitions provided under point 3.1.4;
- the type contents and formats.

The contractor journalists and all staff involved will also have to respect the editorial charter of the European Union, as well as the International Federation of Journalists' Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists.

#### 3.1.6. Broadcast platform

In today's digital era, multi-platform distribution is of major importance, as internet and offline platforms are becoming vital in providing content. The Contractor will develop and implement a cross-platform strategy aimed at bringing more audience and making it more loyal.

The selected contents will be translated and published on every linguistic version of the web portal. They will also be available on smart phones, tablets and future comparable devices through free-of-charge applications seeking maximum compatibility with most common standards.

The Contractor has to keep up-to-date with the technological evolution happening during the contract execution.

### **3.2. Quality assurance**

The Contractor will guarantee full quality control of all the services that he provides, in line with the requirements set out in this invitation to tender.

### **3.3. Reports**

At three-month intervals, starting from the date of signature of the contract, the contractor will submit to the Commission activity reports on the implementation of the contract. The reports will be submitted at the latest 30 days after the end of the period covered by the report.

The report(s) covering the start-up phase (if any, see point 3.4) will provide the following information:

- a detailed analysis of the progress made as compared to the set-up plan proposed in the offer, including the actions taken and the means deployed, as well as a justification of the choices made;
- a description of the problems encountered and the solutions provided;
- a list of the pending tasks and projects until the contractor can be fully operational, as well as a time plan for implementation.

As soon as publication starts, the reports must include:

- an overview of the main developments from an administrative, technical, organisational, and editorial point of view, including, among others, the steps taken with regard to the communication strategy and the marketing activities developed to enhance the audience;
- a description of the contractor's presence online (on its own website, on partners' websites, and on social media), including the main actions to engage with audience and the users' response;
- a complete list of the contents (third-party contents, original contents, multimedia contents, user-generated contents) published over the three-month period covered by the report, the source from which a content originates in the case of third-party content or user-generated content, as well as its date of publication (also the date of the original publication in the case of third-party content) must be clearly specified;
- the traffic statistics of the contractor's website, including the monthly average number of unique browsers, unique visits, page views, and page views per visit for the three-month period, as well as highlights such as the most popular pages , the most popular languages, and the countries of origin of the website users; year-on-year statistics for all indicators should be provided.
- social media dashboards, reports and charts to measure and visualize social media activity and monitor conversations online.

The last report of each contractual year, or final report, must also include:

- an overview of the structures developed and methods used over the past 12 months in order to ensure effective editorial co-ordination, regular monitoring and quality control, indicating any potential problems encountered and the solutions provided/proposed;
- a content analysis of the productions of the past 12 months, including the main themes covered and the most popular stories and programmes based on audience figures and interest raised on digital platforms;
- a plan for growth of the audience for the next 12 months, including specific and measurable objectives and target dates;



### **3.4. Start-up phase**

The Contractor should be able to start producing the services described above as soon as possible upon the signature of the contract, and at the latest 6 months after commencement of the contract. A start-up phase of a maximum of 6 months will be possible in order to set up the necessary legal, financial, technical and organisational structures where these would not be already in place. During this phase, the Contractor will not be subject to the above obligations. However, the length of the start-up phase will need to be justified with regard to the nature and complexity of the arrangements (this point will be assessed in the light of the award criteria).

### **3.5. Phasing out and handover requirements**

The phasing-out period and contract handover aims to precisely frame the incumbent contractor's responsibilities when handing over the project to a new contractor. More specifically, this comprises, for example, delivery of technical documentation, programmes, content (including audio-visual material) and all knowledge needed by the new contractor to deliver the required services.

## **4. SIZE OF THE CONTRACT**

The maximum budget for this tender is 3 200 000 EUR per year, VAT excluded.

## **5. CONTRACTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The services specified above will be the subject of a Direct Service Contract drawn up between the European Commission (DG Communication) and the tenderer to whom the contract is awarded. The draft contract is attached in Annex II to the Invitation to Tender.

In drawing up his bid, the tenderer should bear in mind the provisions of this draft contract and, notably:

- I.4 Payments arrangements
- I.8 Exploitation of the results
- II.10 Ownership of the results – Intellectual and industrial property
- II.15 Reporting and payments

## **6. SUBMISSION OF BIDS**

The tenderer's bid must comprise:

- The Declaration of Honour concerning the exclusion criteria, duly signed and completed, using the form in Annex III.
- All documents relating to the selection criteria listed under point 10; for those documents, the tenderer will fill in the tables to be found in Annexes IV and V.

- The technical tender, as specified under point 7, in line with the specifications under point 3.
- The financial offer, according to point 8, corresponding to all of the tender specifications, using the table in Annex VI, which must be filled in and signed by the tenderer.

## **7. TECHNICAL TENDER**

Tenderers should include in their bid a technical tender detailing how they will perform the tasks covered by the contract, in compliance with all the requirements of the tender specifications.

### a. Legal structure

A description of the proposed legal status of the potential contractor and its structure, as well as a detailed description accompanied by appropriate graphics of the way it will operate from an editorial, technical and financial point of view, all based on the draft or existing articles of association or statutes.

### b. Editorial strategy

The tenderer should define the guidelines by which all the online content will be governed: values, voice, tone, legal and regulatory concerns, user-generated content, and so on. The tenderer will also define its online editorial calendar, including content life cycles.

The global editorial line; the mechanisms to ensure a common understanding of the scope of EU affairs from a European perspective and the criteria used to assess compliance with the terms of reference of the service contract; the editorial arrangements to ensure appropriate follow-up of the EU agenda and integration of compared views from different countries (within and the EU).

The tenderer should also define its SEO (search engine optimization) strategy to improve the site's interaction with both users and search engines.

### c. Operational organisation

A detailed description of the working methods for selection/coordination/translation/publication on all different platforms, and, in particular, the procedure for editorial coordination, monitoring and control, as well as the way coordinating teams at editorial, technical and administrative level will work together.

### d. Content management strategy

The tenderer will define the technologies used to capture, store, deliver, and preserve the online media content (including taxonomy...). Publishing infrastructures, content life cycles and workflows are key considerations of this strategy.

e. Information architecture

A detailed description of the information architecture strategy and the framework for structuring and organizing the online media. The primary goal of this strategy is to provide the end user with access to timely, accurate, and trusted information. The tenderer should propose a sitemap that reflects site navigation (concise and descriptive navigation headings, adherence to the three-click rule, strong information scents...) and main content areas. Wireframes of page content and structure, which indicate how users will interact with the online media must be provided as well (a low-fidelity wireframe of the homepage and one standard second-level content page highlighting the structure and architecture of the site and of the individual pages).

f. Usability strategy

The tenderer will explain how user experience will be effectively integrated and its strategic vision for creating a user-centered design culture.

A detailed description of how the site will comply with the latest W3C specifications (for HTML, CSS, etc.) and WCAG accessibility standards – 2.0 AA for the moment and with the most used technical platforms and browsers. Page upload speed, performance and file optimisation should also be considered.

g. Design

A detailed description of the design concept.

h. Technical implementation

A description of the material and technical means together with the workflow of all operations. The software and the hardware aspects of the technical resources shall also be presented as well as aspects concerning security, vulnerability, performance and backup.

i. Content channel distribution strategy

The tenderer will define how and where content will be made available to users, including the details about the way it will be achieved, and a description of the marketing and communication activities to be developed in order to promote the project. Partnerships with popular media amongst the EU are encouraged.

#### j. Impact

A plan for audience growth with target indicators and realistic and solid assessments about the potential impact of the project in short and medium terms, with a plan setting out the way this will be achieved.

#### k. Innovation

A development plan regarding the tenderer's capacity to include new content and incorporate technical and web improvements during the length of the contract.

The technical tender will be assessed in the light of the quality award criteria set out under point 11.

#### l. Quality plan

The tenderer will include in his bid the quality plan that he proposes to adopt for the performance of the services requested. He will specify how he intends to monitor and ensure high quality and effective follow-up of the services he will be called upon to provide to the Commission during the performance of the contract.

The proposed quality plan will set out, among other things, the various procedures the tenderer intends to implement and the indicators he intends to use to ensure the quality and monitoring of the services performed and compliance with the deadlines.

### **8. FINANCIAL OFFER**

The financial offer must be quoted using the attached form in Annex VI, which must be duly signed and dated.

The price quoted must be all-inclusive and cover all costs related to the performance of the contract as described above.

### **9. EXCLUSION CRITERIA**

Bids from tenderers who do not meet the exclusion criteria referred to in Articles 106 and 107 of the Financial Regulation<sup>6</sup> will not be assessed.

#### **9.1. Declaration of honour and evidence**

Tenderers will provide a declaration on their honour, duly signed and dated, stating that they are not in one of the exclusion situations, using the form provided in Annex III to the invitation to tender.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:298:0001:0096:EN:PDF>

The tenderer to whom it is proposed to award the contract will provide, within a time-limit specified by the contracting authority and prior to the signature of the contract, the necessary evidence in support of his declaration.

These supporting documents must be valid on the date of the deadline for submission of tenders and, at all events, must have been issued within the 12 months preceding that date.

Depending on the national legislation of the country in which the tenderer is established, the necessary evidence 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 tenderer.

If such proofs were already presented for the purpose of another procurement procedure and provided that they are not more than one year old starting from the issuing date and that they are still valid, the 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.

## **9.2. Tenders submitted by consortia – Tenders involving subcontracting**

In the case of tenders submitted by consortia or groups of service providers, all the economic operators involved in the tender must provide evidence that none of the exclusion criteria for participation in or award of the contract applies to them, by providing a declaration of honour, duly dated and signed (Annex III).

The tenderer to whom the contract is awarded must provide, within the time-limit specified by the awarding authority and prior to the signature of the contract, the evidence listed above, confirming the declaration of honour, for each member of the consortium or group of service providers.

In the case of tenders involving subcontracting, and when requested by the contracting authority, the tenderer shall submit a declaration on honour from the intended subcontractor that he is not in one of the situations referred to in Articles 106 and 107 of the Financial Regulation. In case of doubt on this declaration on their honour, the contracting authority shall request the evidence referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4 of art.143 of the Rules of Application. Paragraph 5 of art.143 shall apply, where appropriate.

## **10. SELECTION CRITERIA**

### **10.1. Capacity of the tenderer**

The tenderer must demonstrate sufficient economic, financial, technical and professional capacity to be able to perform the tasks as specified in point 3 of these specifications.

An economic operator may, where appropriate and for a particular contract, rely on the capacities of other entities to achieve the required level of economic, financial and technical capacity, regardless of the legal nature of the links that it has with them (subcontractor, parent company, third party). 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 (see Points 10.2 and 10.3 below).

If a third party provides the whole or a very large part of the financial capacity, the contracting authority may demand that that entity signs the contract or that it provides a joint and several first-call guarantee, should that tender be awarded the contract.

The tenderer must provide proof of his capacity by enclosing the following information and documents with his tender. The contracting authority may waive the obligation of a tenderer to submit the documentary evidence referred to in paragraph 10.1.a) to 10.1.c) if such evidence has already been submitted for the purposes of another procurement procedure and still complies with Point 10.1.

#### a) Legal capacity and bank details

The tenderer will provide a 'Legal Entity File (LEF)' and a 'Bank Account File (BAF)' duly completed and signed, with the necessary annexes. The forms to be used are available at the following addresses:

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/legal\\_entities/legal\\_entities\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm)

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/financial\\_id/financial\\_id\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm)

#### b) Financial and economic capacity

Evidence of financial and economic standing has to be provided by the following documents:

- balance sheets or extracts from balance sheets for the last three years for which accounts have been closed, where publication of the balance sheet is required under the company law of the country in which the economic operator is established;
- tables I and II in Annex V duly completed, signed and dated, with all relevant data extracted from the balance sheets in Euro. These tables must also be provided on CD/DVD/USB.

If, for some exceptional reason which the contracting authority considers justified, the tenderer is unable to provide the references requested by the contracting authority, he may prove his economic and financial capacity by any other means which the contracting authority considers appropriate (bank guarantee, evidence of professional risk indemnity insurance, etc.).

#### c) Technical and professional capacity

The tenderer must demonstrate convincingly that he has the ability to undertake the tasks requested.

- **Criterion 1: Skills and experience related to digital communications**

- Capacity to manage large-scale contracts covering services under this tender.
- Capacity to meet online-user needs, including user-centric design and usability testing.
- Ability to deliver creative and innovative solutions.

As evidence, he will provide a list of 2 to 5 projects carried out in the past five years, for a minimum value of 2 million €, showing at best his capacity in European journalism.

- **Criterion 2: Proven multilingual capacity**

Tenderers must have the linguistic skills needed, or be able to mobilise rapidly the resources necessary to perform the requested services in the languages covered by this tender (min 10 EU languages). They must also possess the ability to draft all types of texts and materials related to the services covered by this tender and write and express themselves in English and French.

Minimum threshold:

Capacity to manage online communications in at least 10 official EU languages.

As evidence, the tenderer will provide a list of staff involved in the project, showing at best their linguistic capacities in the number of languages proposed by the offer. At least 1 member of the team should have native-level language skills per language proposed by the related offer. This will be guaranteed by an appropriate certificate or past relevant experience.

- **Criterion 3: Human resources**

Required human resources to perform the contract in line with best professional practice:

The team delivering the services should include, as a minimum, the following profiles:

- Project Manager: At least 5 years' experience in project management, including control of delivered service, client orientation and conflict resolution experience in projects of similar size (worth at least 2 million €) and coverage (international scope), with experience in managing a team of at least 10 people.
- Editor in chief: Relevant higher education degree and at least 5 years' experience in media amongst which three as editor in chief.
- Experts in journalism / journalists: Relevant higher education degree and 3 years' professional experience in the field of journalism, with trained multimedia skills and a proven interest for European subjects (degree or European experience).

- Social-media expert/Conversation manager: Relevant higher education degree and 3 years' professional experience in the field of social-media management.
- Information architect/Usability consultant: Relevant higher education degree and 3 years' professional experience in user research, digital strategy, information architecture and interaction/user-centred design.
- Web developer: Relevant higher education degree and 3 years' professional experience in building internet solutions and developing applications based on web technologies.
- Designer/integrator: Relevant higher education degree and 3 years' professional experience in web-design and integration. As a designer: ability to work closely with information architect and usability consultant to translate their wireframes and recommendations into top quality design. As an integrator: ability to transform the design into HTML/CSS/Javascript and integrate it into the CMS systems.
- Webmaster: At least 3 years' experience in multilingual websites' management, webmastering and updating web specials (CMS / HTML / GFX / Flash...).

As evidence, the tenderer will provide the educational and qualifications of the persons who will provide the services for this tender (CVs), including the management staff. Each CV provided should indicate the intended function in the delivery of the services.

The use of the European CV format Europass is recommended; it can be downloaded at

<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae>

- **Criterion 4: Technical resources**

Tenderers must possess the technical equipment and infrastructure needed to perform the services requested.

As evidence, the tenderer will provide a detailed list including description of the infrastructure, tools and equipment available to perform the services requested under this call for tender.

The infrastructure and equipment available should include, as a minimum, one Central Headquarters location in the EU allowing for the gathering of coordination staff: editor-in-chief, webmaster and journalists for at least half of the languages of the related tender (the other half may work in other member states); and the technical facilities required to develop and manage a multilingual web portal.

## **10.2. Additional requirements for joint offers**

In the case of a tender submitted by a consortium, each member must provide evidence of his economic and financial standing (see point 10.1.b).

In addition, the following elements must also be provided in the offer:



- a document with the name of the company designated to represent the consortium, with the credentials of the person designated to sign the contract and/or to act as the point of contact with the Commission for the consortium;
- a document stating clearly the composition and constitution of the grouping or similar entity (company/temporary association/...), and the legal form their cooperation would take, should they be awarded the contract and if this change is necessary for proper performance of the contract;
- A letter signed by each member stating its commitment to execute the services in the tender, clearly indicating its role, qualifications and experience.

### **10.3. Additional requirements for tenders including subcontracting**

In the case of a tender which includes subcontractors, the tenderer must provide evidence of the economic and financial standing (see point 10.1.b) of each subcontractor whose tasks represent more than 20% of the contract in value.

In addition, the following elements must also be provided in the offer:

- a document stating clearly the identity, roles, activities and responsibilities of the subcontractor(s) and specifying the volume/proportion of the tasks of (each of) the subcontractor(s), as well as a description of the quality control measures which will be applied to the tasks to be carried out by (each of) the subcontractor(s);
- A letter of intent by (each of) the subcontractor(s) stating their unambiguous undertaking to collaborate with the tenderer should he win the contract and the extent of the resources that he will put at the tenderer's disposal for the performance of the contract.

Otherwise, a document should be provided stating that the tenderer does not intend to subcontract and that he/she will inform the Commission of any change in this situation. The Commission reserves the right to judge if such a change would be acceptable.

Any tenderer with a professional conflict of interest that may affect the performance of the contract may be rejected on the basis of not fulfilling selection criteria for professional capacity.

## **11. AWARD CRITERIA**

Bids from tenderers who do not satisfy the exclusion/selection criteria will not be considered for the award of the contract.

The contract will be awarded to the tender offering the best value for money on the basis of the following criteria:

### **11.1. Technical evaluation**

The technical tender to be submitted as part of the bid (see point 7) will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria.

The result of the technical evaluation is the sum of the number of points obtained as a result of the evaluation of each criterion. Only those bids which are awarded at least 60% for each criterion and a total score of at least 70 points will be considered for the award of the contract.

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Explanation of the criterion's scope</b>	<b>Maximum number of points</b>	<b>Minimum points to be obtained</b>
1. <u>Editorial approach</u> (45 points)	Quantity and quality of original sources monitored, in every Member State, both at national and local level, and also all over the world.	10	6
	Total volume/spread of the different published contents (third-party contents, original contents, multimedia contents, user-generated contents).	10	6
	Number of EU languages and share of the EU population covered, geographical and cultural balance of this choice.	10	6
	Relevance of the team of journalists / specialists of EU affairs, in the different languages, efficacy of the methodology for monitoring sources and for selecting EU affairs contents.	5	3
	Understanding of the scope of EU affairs with a European perspective. Ability to combine different angles, propose compared views and overcome purely local angles in order to provide a transnational dimension.	5	3
	Effectiveness of the editorial arrangements put in place in order to ensure appropriate follow-up of the EU agenda and reporting on key political priorities.	5	3
2. <u>Social media/ participative/ dialogue strategy</u> (10 points)	Effectiveness of the strategy to attract readers and promote active participation, as well as the use of social media as part of this strategy.	5	3
	Creation and development of a dialog platform amongst the different linguistic versions and possibilities of user-generated contents.	5	3
3. <u>Usability strategy, Information architecture and</u>	Quality, interactivity and dynamism of the website and its capacity to attract readers.	5	3

<u>design</u> (10 points)	Functionalities of the web portal and services available through the different online platforms in the different languages	5	3
<u>4. Technical implementation</u> (10 points)	The suitability of the technical setup designed to ensure effective information sharing, exchange of materials, language support, and web interaction on a daily basis.	5	3
	Flexibility and innovation, capacity to include new contents and incorporate technical and web improvements.	5	3
<u>5. Quality of the method proposed for the work and for the day-to-day management of the work</u> (15 points)	The suitability of the editorial, organisational, and technical arrangements put in place in order to ensure commitment to the objectives by all members, as well as the quality of the editorial team in charge of co-ordinating the work.	5	3
	Relevance of the process of selection/coordination/translation/publication of contents, and quality check along the process	5	3
	The suitability of the quality control mechanisms put in place in order to ensure respect of the editorial line and the programming schedule, as well as content relevance according to the definitions and objectives set out in the present tender specifications.	5	3
<u>6. Impact and plan for growth</u> (10 points)	Indicators for the target audience, as from the beginning and throughout the contract.	5	3
	Promotion and marketing actions to increase the audience of the project notably through partnerships and events.	5	3
Total		100	60

## 11.2. Financial evaluation

For the financial bid, the tenderer must use the Price Offer in Annex VI.

Any omission or amendment to the original Price Offer will cause the bid to be considered null and void.

The Price Offer will be used to compare the price of the offers, as listed in Annex VI.

### **11.3. Award of the contract**

The contract will be awarded to the tender offering the best value for money, achieving the highest score obtained by applying the following formula:

$$\text{Bid score}(i) = (0.70 \times Q(i)/100) + (0.30 \times P^*/P(i))$$

W here:

Q(i) is the score obtained in the technical evaluation of the bid(i);

P\* is the lowest price among all the bids satisfying the qualitative criteria;

P(i) is the price for bid (i) quoted in the Price Offer.