



ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

**Open call for tenders aimed at selecting experts for
the EU funded project “Monitoring Media Pluralism
in the Digital Era”**

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Contents

CHAPTER I – SCOPE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE	3
Article 1. Definitions.....	3
Article 2. Contracting authority	3
Article 3. Subject	3
Article 4. Conditions for participation to tender.....	5
Article 5. Joint Tenders.....	5
Article 6. Subcontracting	5
CHAPTER II – TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS	6
Article 7. Description of the technical specifications	6
Article 8. Exclusion criteria	8
Article 9. Selection criteria.....	9
Article 10. Award criteria	11
CHAPTER IV - FINAL PROVISIONS	13
Article 11. Payments	13
Article 12. Contract management.....	13
Article 13. List of tender documents	13

CHAPTER I – SCOPE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE

Article 1. Definitions

‘candidate’ means an economic operator that has sought an invitation;

‘contract’ means a public contract awarded by the EUI for the procurement of services/supply;

“EUI” means the European University Institute, which is the contracting authority entrusting the services that are the subject of these tender specifications to the contractor;

“RSCAS” means the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies;

‘contractor’ means to the successful tenderer awarded with the contract;

‘economic operator’ can refer to a ‘work contractor’, ‘supplier’, or ‘service provider’ and means any natural or legal person or public entity or group of such persons and/or entities which offers the execution of works, the supply of products or the provision of services on the market;

‘joint tenders’ means a situation where a *tender* is submitted by a group (with or without legal form) of economic operators regardless of the link they have between them. The group as a whole is considered a *tenderer*;

‘subcontracting’ means the situation where the *contractor* enters into legal commitments with other *economic operators* which will perform part of the *contract* on its behalf. The *contractor* retains full liability towards the *EUI* for performance of the *contract* as a whole;

‘tender’ / ‘offer’ defines the terms upon which the supplier is willing to be bound, which normally include price, date of delivery, payment terms and a description of the services/supplies/works;

‘tenderer’ means an economic operator that has submitted a tender;

‘tender specifications (TS)’ means any documents describing the needs and requirements of the EUI for the purposes of the relevant tender.

Article 2. Contracting authority

This procurement procedure is launched and managed by the *EUI*, that is the contracting authority for the purposes of this procurement procedure, through the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS).

Article 3. Subject

Subject of the contract	The subject of this procurement procedure is the selection of experts for the EU funded project “Monitoring Media Pluralism in the Digital Era”.
Lots	This procurement procedure is divided into lots, as better specified in the following section “estimated value of the contract”. <i>Tenders</i> can be submitted only for one lot. Each lot will be assessed independently of any other lot. <i>Tenders</i> which cover only part of one lot or are declared as being conditional on the award of any other lots are not permitted.
Type of contract	The procedure will result in the conclusion of a multiple framework contract in cascade for each lot, if possible.

	<p><i>Tenderers need to take full account of the provisions of the draft contract as the latter will define and govern the contractual relationship(s) to be established between the EUI and the contractor(s).</i></p>
Duration of the contract	<p>The framework <i>contract</i> to be awarded shall have a duration of 4 years. The details of the initial <i>contract</i> duration and possible renewals are set out in Article I.2 of the draft <i>contract</i>.</p>
Estimated value of the contract	<p>The total estimated value of the procurement procedure for the maximum duration of 4 years, 2 years renewable for 2 more years, is EUR 1.000.000,00 (one million/00).</p> <p>The present open call for tenders foresees the awarding of a framework service contract for each of the following lots whose estimated value for the maximum duration of 4 years is the following:</p> <p>LOT 1 – country expert for Albania – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 2 – country expert for Austria – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 3 – country expert for Belgium – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 4 – country expert for Bulgaria – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 5 – country expert for Croatia – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 6 – country expert for Cyprus – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 7 – country expert for Czech Republic – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 8 – country expert for Denmark – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 9 – country expert for Estonia – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 10 – country expert for Finland – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 11 – country expert for France – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 12 – country expert for Germany – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 13 – country expert for Greece – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 14 – country expert for Hungary – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 15 – country expert for Ireland– estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 16 – country expert for Latvia – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 17 – country expert for Lithuania – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 18 – country expert for Luxembourg – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 19 – country expert for Malta – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 20 – country expert for Montenegro – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 21 – country expert for North Macedonia – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 22 – country expert for Poland – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 23 – country expert for Portugal – estimated value 32.000,00 euro</p>

	<p>LOT 24 – country expert for Romania – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 25 – country expert for Serbia – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 26 – country expert for Slovakia – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 27 – country expert for Slovenia – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 28 – country expert for Spain – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 29 – country expert for Sweden – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 30 – country expert for The Netherlands – estimated value 32.000,00 euro LOT 31 – country expert for Turkey – estimated value 32.000,00 euro.</p> <p><u>These volumes are estimates only and there is no commitment as to the exact services to be requested.</u></p> <p><u>The actual volumes will depend on the services which the EUI will request through specific contracts, which is conditional to the award to the EUI of the next two grants of the EU funded project “Monitoring Media Pluralism in the Digital Era” for the periods 2024-2025 and 2026-2027.</u></p> <p>In any case the framework contract ceiling, i.e. the maximum amount to be spent under the framework <i>contract</i>, for each lot shall not be exceeded.</p> <p>The EUI may procure additional services from the <i>contractor</i> up to a maximum of 50% of the initial contract value, upon funding availability.</p>
<p>Place of performance</p>	<p>The services will be undertaken at the contractor’s premises.</p>

Article 4. Conditions for participation to tender

If you are interested in this *contract*, you should submit a *tender* in one of the official languages of the European Union (with preference for the use of English) provided you comply with the conditions for participation to tenders as set out in Article 3.4 of [President’s Decision n. 19/2018](#) of 16 May 2018 implementing title V concerning procurement of the EUI’s Financial Rules (Public Procurement Regulation), available for consultation at: <https://www.eui.eu/About/Tenders>.

Article 5. Joint Tenders

Joint tenders are not allowed for this procurement procedure.

Article 6. Subcontracting

All contractual tasks may be subcontracted unless the *tender specifications* expressly reserve the execution of certain critical tasks to the sole *tenderer* itself.

Tenderers are required to give an indication of the tasks of the *contract* that they intend to subcontract when submitting their tender, as well as to identify and describe briefly the envisaged contractual roles/tasks of *subcontractors* meeting the following conditions (hereafter referred to as identified *subcontractors*):

- are not in one of the exclusion situations listed in Article 8;

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- on whose capacities the *tenderer* relies upon to fulfil the selection criteria as described under Article 9.

Changes concerning *subcontractors* identified in the *tender* (withdrawal/replacement of a *subcontractor*, additional subcontracting) during the procurement procedure (after the submission deadline and before *contract* signature) require the prior written approval of the *EUI* subject to the following verifications:

- any new *subcontractor* is not in an exclusion situation;
- the *tenderer* still fulfils the selection criteria and the new *subcontractor* fulfils the selection criteria applicable to it individually, if any;
- the terms of the originally submitted *tender* are not altered substantially, i.e. all the tasks assigned to the former *subcontractor* are taken over by another involved entity, the change does not make the *tender* non-compliant with the *tender specifications*, and the evaluation of award criteria of the originally submitted *tender* is not modified.

Subcontracting to *subcontractors* identified in a tender that was accepted by the *EUI* and resulted in a signed contract, is considered authorised.

CHAPTER II – TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Article 7. Description of the technical specifications

The services that are the subject of this procurement procedure, including any minimum requirements, are described in detail below.

The “Monitoring Media Pluralism in the Digital Era”¹ is the flagship project of the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom (CMPF) at the European University Institute. The Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM) is a tool to assess the potential risks for pluralism in national media systems, with the most recent being the 2022 report, covering 32 European countries (EU 27 plus Albania, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey). This project started as a preparatory action of the European Parliament, and it is now supported by an annual grant awarded by the European Commission to the CMPF.

The MPM tool uses a multi-disciplinary approach, including media law, economics, and political science. Based on 20 indicators, summarizing 200 variables, the MPM covers four areas: fundamental protection, market plurality, political independence, and social inclusiveness. The data collection, based on the MPM questionnaire, is carried out at national level and provides the basis for risk assessments at national, and European level, including a comparative analysis. The results of the MPM are made publicly available and provide valuable insights for policymakers, media professionals, and civil society organisations. The research and implementation of the MPM also keeps informing the annual Rule of Law Report of the EU, as it does since 2020.

In addition to the publication of one annual consolidated report and 32 country reports, the MPM project also includes dissemination and training activities, in particular the organisation of a Summer School for Journalists and Media Practitioners each year and a final conference in Florence.

¹ More information available here: <https://www.eui.eu/research-hub?id=centre-for-media-pluralism-and-media-freedom-cmpf-media-pluralism-monitor-mpm-copy>

The current procurement procedure aims at selecting 31 country experts, as listed in art. 3 of these tender specifications, who will support the CMPF team in the implementation of the 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027 editions of the MPM in their respective countries².

The country expert needs to follow the methodological frame of the MPM instrument, as well as the instructions of the CMPF research team, as closely as possible. The country expert is expected to fulfil the following tasks, which will be run in parallel:

- Collecting, submitting, documenting and referencing the required data regarding each MPM variable and indicator for the years 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026, including justification and/or explanation supporting the provided data whenever necessary, through the database platform provided by the CMPF;
- Elaborating the annual national country reports upon review and validation of the CMPF team;
- Translating the report in his/her own country's administrative language(s) for wider dissemination;
- Assist to the MPM final conference (in-site or online);
- Facilitating the interaction with local stakeholders in the media freedom and pluralism field.

These tasks are expected to be carried out following a timeline to be provided by the CMPF team.

Due to the multidisciplinary character of the study, the contractor is expected to consult and to be assisted with other experts in their respective country. The contractor will choose, contact and work with the additional experts (local national team). The contractor will inform the CMPF research team about any changes and issues related to the work of the team. The CMPF research team will be in contact only with the contractor, unless circumstances demand contact with the additional country experts.

CHAPTER III – EVALUATION AND AWARD CRITERIA

The evaluation of the *tenders* that comply with the submission conditions will consist of the following elements:

- Check if the *tenderer* has access to procurement (see Article 4);
- Verification of administrative compliance (if the *tender* is drawn up in one of the official EU languages and signed by duly authorised legal representative(-s) of the *tenderer*);
- Verification of non-exclusion of *tenderers* on the basis of the exclusion criteria;
- Selection of *tenderers* on the basis of selection criteria;
- Verification of compliance with the minimum requirements defined in the tender specifications;
- Evaluation of *tenders* on the basis of the award criteria.

The *EUI* will evaluate the abovementioned elements in the order that it considers to be the most appropriate. If the evaluation of one or more elements demonstrates that there are grounds for rejection, the *tender* will be rejected and will not be subjected to further full evaluation. The unsuccessful *tenderers* will be informed of the ground for rejection without being given feedback on the non-assessed content of their *tenders*. Only *tenderer(s)* for whom the verification of all elements did not reveal grounds for rejection can be awarded the *contract*.

² Italy is covered by the CMPF team

The evaluation will be based on the information and evidence contained in the *tenders* and, if applicable, on additional information and evidence provided at the request of the *EUI* during the procedure. If any of the declarations or information provided proves to be false, the *EUI* may impose administrative sanctions (exclusion or financial penalties) on the entity providing the false declarations/information.

For the purposes of the evaluation related to exclusion and selection criteria the *EUI* may also refer to publicly available information, in particular evidence that it can access on a national database free of charge.

Article 8. Exclusion criteria

The *tenderer* must not be in one of the exclusion situations listed below:

- a. is 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. has been convicted of an offence concerning their grave professional conduct by a final judgment of a competent judicial authority or administrative decision or decisions of international organisations;
- c. is not in compliance with the 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 Italy being the country of establishment of the *EUI* or those of the country where the contract is to be performed. This breach needs to have been established by a judgment or administrative decision having final and binding effect in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which the economic operator is established or of those of Italy being the country of establishment of the *EUI*;
- d. has been the subject of a final judgment for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorist-related offences, child labour or other forms of trafficking in human beings or any other illegal activity, where such illegal activity is detrimental to the *EUI*'s financial interests;
- e. has been in serious breach of a contract financed by the *EUI* or have been the subject of an offense of serious irregularity established by a final judgment of a competent judicial authority or administrative decision;
- f. is subject to an administrative penalty for being guilty of grave professional misconduct, or of having made substantial errors or committed irregularities or fraud, or have been declared to be in breach of their obligations under contracts covered by the *EUI*'s budget (Article 41 of the *EUI*'s Public Procurement Regulation (President's Decision No. 19/2018 of 16th May 2018).

In addition to the above, *contracts* cannot be awarded to a *tenderer* who, during the procurement procedure, is proven to be:

- g. subject to a conflict of interest in connection with the *contract* which cannot be effectively remedied by other less intrusive measures;
- h. guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the *EUI* as a condition of participation in the *contract* procedure or fail to supply this information.

Evidence requested:

The *tenderer* must certify that it is not in one of the exclusion situations by providing in the *tender* a signed and dated Declaration on Honour available in Annex II A. In case of

subcontracting, such declaration on honour should be included in the offer also for each identified *subcontractor*.

The *EUI* reserves the right to verify the information and to request further supporting evidence prior to the signature of the *contract*.

Considering the growing relevance of the MPM in informing the EU media policy and the annual EU Rule of Law assessment, the *contractor* will take necessary steps to ensure that his/her affiliated organization is not unduly influencing the process or outcome of the CMPF research.

The *contractor* will notify the CMPF of any changes to their own status that could affect the conflict-of-interest policy (below).

Actual or potential conflicts of interest include:

- an individual that is working or has worked in an official capacity or speaking on behalf of a government agency within the past (assessed) year in matters relevant to the Media Pluralism Monitor (e.g. Media Regulatory agencies or Ministry sections in charge of media or journalists-related issues);
- an individual who is working or has worked as a consultant for a government agency within the past (assessed) year in matters relevant to the Media Pluralism Monitor (e.g. Media Regulatory agencies or Ministry sections in charge of media or journalists-related issues);
- an individual who carries out partisan-political activities, supporting a particular candidate or political party as part of their regular work. This does not rule out individuals who take positions on particular legislation or regulation;
- an individual with ties of familiarity to a government employee directly involved with the agenda that MPM assesses.

Article 9. Selection criteria

General requirements:

The *tenderer* must have the following minimum requirements to perform the *contract*:

- a) being compliant with obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions for workers, according to the current legislation, and application of employment conditions envisaged in the sector's national collective labour agreement;
- b) being compliant with the current labour laws and regulations;
- c) being compliant with the current health and safety laws and regulations;
- d) being compliant with the current environmental laws and regulations;

Technical and professional requirements:

- **in case the tenderer is a natural person (expert):**
 - e) the *tenderer* must have a master degree in Law, Social Sciences or Economics, Communication, Journalism, and Media Studies;
 - f) proven experience in the field of media freedom, internet freedom, human rights and democratic standards, media policy, journalism, media economics, big data, disinformation or connected topics;
 - g) experience in data analysis and qualitative and quantitative research methodologies for media policies, attested by professional experience;

- h) experience in research and report writing for academic and/or international projects, attested by professional experience and relevant publications;
- i) experience with carrying out research and analyses of data for the specific country of competence, attested by professional experience and relevant publications;
- j) mother tongue or equivalent language capabilities necessary to perform the data collection and translating the MPM report in the country's administrative language;
- k) fluency in English, both spoken and written (CEFR level or equivalent: C1 or above).

- **in case the tenderer is a legal person subcontracting the performance of part of all the tasks to a natural person (expert):**

- l) any proof concerning the legal status of the legal person;
- m) the *tenderer* must propose to subcontract the tasks to be performed to an expert who must have a master degree in Law, Social Sciences or Economics, Communication, Journalism, and Media Studies;

In addition, the *tenderer* must propose to subcontract the tasks to be performed to an expert who must have:

- n) proven experience in the field of media freedom, internet freedom, human rights and democratic standards, media policy, journalism, media economics, big data, disinformation or connected topics;
- o) experience in data analysis and qualitative and quantitative research methodologies for media policies, attested by professional experience;
- p) experience in research and report writing for academic and/or international projects, attested by professional experience and relevant publications;
- q) experience with carrying out research and analyses of data for the specific country of competence, attested by professional experience and relevant publications;
- r) mother tongue or equivalent language capabilities necessary to perform the data collection and translating the MPM report in the country's administrative language;
- s) fluency in English, both spoken and written (CEFR level: C1 or above).

❖ **Documents to be submitted with the tender as part of Envelope n.1 – Administrative Documents/Technical offer (please, for more details on the submission process, see point 3 of the letter of invitation to tender):**

- **In case the tenderer is a natural person (expert):**
 - a signed and dated Declaration on Honour available in Annex II A;
 - an updated CV and a copy of a valid ID.
- **In case the tenderer is a legal person subcontracting the performance of the tasks to a natural person (expert):**
 - both the legal person and the natural person (expert) must fill and sign a copy of the Declaration on Honour available in Annex II A (one copy to be filled and signed by the legal person and copy to be filled and signed by the natural person (expert));
 - any proof concerning the legal status of the legal person;
 - an updated CV and copy of a valid ID of the expert proposed for subcontracting.

The *EUI* reserves the right to perform sample checks in order to verify the accuracy of the statements submitted by *tenderers*.

Tenderers that are not compliant with the applicable minimum requirements shall be rejected.

Article 10. Award criteria

Only the *tenders* submitted by *tenderers* meeting the requirements of the exclusion and selection criteria will be evaluated in terms of quality and price. The *contract* shall be awarded according to the “**most economically advantageous tender**” criterion following the assessment of the best quality/price ratio made by the competent evaluation committee which will assign a score to each *tender* to a maximum of 100 points, based on the following parameters:

MAXIMUM SCORE	
Technical and quality evaluation	70/100
Financial evaluation (price)	30/100

The total score of the *tender* shall be the sum of the technical and financial score obtained.

The *tenderer* obtaining the highest overall score shall be awarded with the *contract*.

A - Allocation of points for technical and quality evaluation criteria

To each criterion will be assigned a certain weight, with the maximum amount being equal to 70 points, which, multiplied by the coefficient of quality assigned at the discretion of the evaluation committee (between 0 and 1, as shown in Table II), will determine the score assigned to each *tender*, as indicated in the following Table I.

The Technical offer shall be considered to be:

- in case the *tenderer* is a natural person: her/his updated CV;
- in case the *tenderer* is a legal person: the updated CV of the expert proposed for subcontracting.

TABLE I			
DESCRIPTION		MAX SCORE	
A	Evaluation of the CV of the expert undertaking the tasks		<u>70</u>
	A1	Education qualifications in the media field. Points allocated as follow: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-Doctoral studies: 10 points • Ph.D: 7,5 points • Master’s Degree: 5 points • Bachelor’s Degree: 2,5 points • No university qualifications (diplomas, etc.): 0 points 	<u>10</u>
	A2	Working experience in media freedom, internet freedom, human rights and democratic standards, media policy, journalism, media economics, big data, disinformation or connected topics. Points allocated as follow: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 or > 20 years: 20 points (1 point per year) • 16-19: 16-19 points (1 point per year) 	<u>20</u>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11-15 years: 11-15 points (1 point per year) • 7-10 years: 7-10 points (1 point per year) • 4-6 years: 4-6 points (1 point per year) • < 3 years: 0-3 points (1 point per year) 	
A3	<p>Relevant publications in media freedom, internet freedom, human rights and democratic standards, media policy, journalism, media economics, big data, disinformation or connected topics.</p> <p>Points allocated as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 19 high-level publications: 10 points • Up to 18 high-level publications: 7-9 points (1 point per 2 publications) • Up to 12 high-level publications: 4-6 points (1 point per 2 publications) • Up to 6 high-level publications: 0-3 points (1 point per 2 publications) 	<u>10</u>
A4	<p>Experience in data analysis and qualitative and quantitative research methodologies for media policies.</p> <p>Points allocated as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • > 8 research studies: 5 points • 3-8 research studies: 1,5-4 points (1 point per 2 studies) • Up to 2 research studies: 0-1 points (1 point per 2 studies) 	<u>5</u>
A5	<p>Experience in research and report writing for academic, institutional and/or international projects.</p> <p>Points allocated as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • > 8 reports: 5 points • 3-8 reports: 1,5-4 points (1 point per 2 reports) • Up to 2 reports: 0-1 points (1 point per 2 reports) 	<u>5</u>
A6	<p>Experience with carrying out research and analyses of data for the specific country of competence.</p> <p>Points allocated as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 or > 20 years: 20 points (1 point per year) • 16-19: 16-19 points (1 point per year) • 11-15 years: 11-15 points (1 point per year) • 7-10 years: 7-10 points (1 point per year) • 4-6 years: 4-6 points (1 point per year) • < 3 years: 0-3 points (1 point per year) 	<u>20</u>

The minimum score for technical and quality criteria is 50/70. *Tenders* who fail to achieve this minimum score for the technical *offer* shall not proceed to the point of assessment for the financial *offer*.

In the case of award, the entire technical *offer* (CV) shall complete the *tender specifications* and shall form part of the *contract*.

It should be noted that the coefficients of quality will be attributed on the basis as set out in Table II:

B - Allocation of points for financial evaluation criteria

The maximum price that can be offered by the *tenderer* per lot is EUR 8.000,00 (eight thousand/00) per year. Any financial offer exceeding such amount shall be rejected.

The maximum points available for the price (30 points) shall be assigned to the *tender* proposing the best price.

The other *tenders* shall be given scores (rounded to two decimal places, if necessary) proportional to the ratio between the best price offered and that offered by each *tenderer*.

$P = 30 \times \frac{\text{Best price offered}}{\text{Price offered}}$
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P = points assigned to the *tender*.

The price considered for evaluation will be the total price of the *tender*, covering all the requirements set out in these *tender specifications*.

The *tenderer* shall submit a financial *offer* using the form Annex II B.

CHAPTER IV - FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 11. Payments

The experts shall be paid, upon request by the EUI to provide the services indicated in the present tender specifications and to be better specified in the specific contracts that will implement the framework contract to be awarded at the end of the call for tenders, as follows:

- pre-financing payment equal to 25% of the total price referred to in the relevant *specific contract*, upon signature of the latter;
- interim payment equal to 25% of the total price referred to in the relevant *specific contract*, upon completion of the data collection phase and upon acceptance by the EUI];
- payment of the balance equal to 50% of the total price referred to in the relevant *specific contract*, upon conclusion of the tasks performed and upon acceptance by the EUI of the final outcome.

Please be aware that contractors must ensure compliance with all provisions on taxes and social security applicable in their country of fiscal residence, as it is their sole responsibility.

Article 12. Contract management

For the *EUI*, the reference person for the *contract* management delegated by the Director of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS) is the following:

- the Project Manager, Elisabetta Airaghi.

Article 13. List of tender documents

The tender documents of the present procurement procedure are composed of the draft contract, the invitation letter, these *tender specifications* - TS (Annex I) and the contractor's *tender* (Annex II), including the following annexes:

- Annex II A – Declaration on honour;
- Annex II B – Financial *offer*.