ASSORUP
c.f. 96547140580
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PROPOSALS

FOR THE EUROPEAN PROCUREMENT PROFESSIONALIZATION

SUMMARY AND AMENDMENTS

Legislative Context: Revision package of Directives 2014/24/EU, 2014/25/EU and 2014/23/EU.

Proposing Entity: National Association of Sole Project Managers – Republic of Italy

Institutional Contact: Daniele Ricciardi, President of the National Association of Sole Project Managers

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Summary of Impact Assessment and Key Conclusions

The 2014 directives modernized the EU framework but failed to introduce a central professional figure responsible for the entire lifecycle of procurement procedures and related contracts. Increasing complexity—digitalization, quality/price criteria, sustainability, economic security—requires certified skills and clear responsibilities.

ASSORUP proposes the establishment of a European Procurement Manager (EPM), accompanied by:

- Mandatory continuous training and three-tier certification
- Dedicated professional incentives to fund training
- Compulsory professional liability insurance to protect both the individual and public financial interests

Objectives:

- Professionalize procurement management
- Improve quality, competition, and integrity in public administrations
- Reduce litigation, errors, and delays through qualified personnel
- Enhance data collection and traceability in procurement operations

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Structural Gap and Proposed Solution

EU law currently lacks a clearly defined professional figure responsible for the full procurement lifecycle. This results in fragmented competencies across Member States, insufficient training, unattractive career paths, and weak procedural oversight.

Given that public procurement accounts for 14–15% of EU GDP and over €600 billion annually in above-threshold contracts, the risks to integrity, competition, and financial interests are significant. Moreover,

data quality remains poor, limiting policy guidance and oversight.

Reform Goals and Performance Indicators

The reform centers on establishing the EPM as a qualified, accountable EU-level professional overseeing the entire procurement lifecycle. This includes:

- Harmonized qualification standards
- Mandatory continuous training
- Mutual recognition of certification across Member States
- Professional liability insurance
- Dedicated incentive funds

Performance targets within 3 years:

- 80% of tenders managed by certified EPMs
- Minimum 30 hours/year of training per EPM
- 15% reduction in average award times
- 10% reduction in single-bid procedures
- 100% insurance coverage for active EPMs

Policy Options and Preferred Approach

Maintaining the status quo or relying solely on soft law (non-binding recommendations) fails to address competency, integrity, and performance gaps.

ASSORUP recommends a binding legislative intervention:

- Introduce the EPM figure in EU directives
- Mandate training and tiered certification
- Establish incentive funds and compulsory insurance
- Adopt implementing acts to define common standards and monitoring systems

This approach ensures effectiveness and proportionality, allowing Member States flexibility in implementation while minimizing administrative burdens through digitalization and existing training structures.

Stakeholder Impact and Justification

The reform benefits administrations, procurement centers, EPMs, economic operators (especially SMEs), and civil society by:

- Enhancing acquisition quality
- Reducing errors and litigation
- Strengthening competition
- Developing specialized training markets
- Increasing trust and mature use of ESG criteria

Implementation costs (training, certification, insurance, platform updates) are offset by incentive funds and potential EU support. Benefits unfold in two phases:

- Rapid (12–18 months): governance and data improvements
- Structural (24–36 months): procurement quality and competition intensity

The proposal aligns with transparency, proportionality, and good governance principles, addressing information and skill gaps while safeguarding public interests and supporting responsible officials.

Implementation and Monitoring

Implementation relies on:

- EU-wide competency standards for EPMs via Commission implementing acts
- Certification framework with mutual recognition
- National incentive funds (within 12 months) for training, certification, and insurance
- Mandatory professional liability insurance with proportional coverage
- Updated eProcurement platforms and eForms to track EPM identity, certification level, training hours, and insurance status

Monitoring is entrusted to national authorities and the Commission (DG GROW), with annual reports, EU dashboards, and sample audits. Indicators are reviewed biennially to assess the link between qualification and performance.

Proposed Amendments to Directives

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Directive 2014/24/EU – General Sectors

Article 2 – Definitions Add point 6:

"European Procurement Manager (EPM): a qualified, independent professional designated by the contracting authority to oversee the entire procurement lifecycle and ensure compliance with EU and national procurement rules."

Article 18 – European Procurement Manager

Contracting authorities shall designate an EPM for each procedure and contract from the outset, ensuring continuity through planning, design, award, and execution phases.

The EPM's name shall be published in procurement notices.

The EPM shall perform, among others:

- Needs planning
- Procedure selection
- Conflict of interest management
- Award criteria setup and verification
- Procedure execution and award proposal
- Contract execution management
- Monitoring of timelines and payments (including subcontractor payments)
- Reporting and data governance
- Any other procurement-related activity not assigned elsewhere

Member States shall ensure EPMs meet the following qualifications:

- At least 24 hours/year of mandatory training covering EU/national law, integrity, digital procurement/AI, sustainability, execution and risk management
- Certification aligned with the European Qualifications Framework and mutually recognized across Member States

Contracting authorities shall establish a procurement management fund (max 2% of contract base amount) to finance training, certification, and insurance.

At least 50% of the fund shall be allocated to training/certification, and up to 50% to insurance premiums. Unused amounts revert to training/digitalization/insurance.

Incentives shall be disbursed based on EPM-certified activities, with individual caps linked to gross annual salary.

EPMs must hold professional liability insurance proportional to contract value, sector, and complexity. Insurance does not exempt from administrative, civil, or criminal liability.

Incentives shall not burden economic operators or affect bid evaluation.

Article 24 – Conflicts of Interest Add paragraph 4:

“The EPM shall manage conflicts of interest throughout the procurement lifecycle, documenting appropriate measures, subject to oversight by the contracting authority and competent bodies.”

Article 26 – Procedure Selection Add paragraph:

“The procedure selection shall be accompanied by a reasoned opinion from the EPM, demonstrating alignment with competition, proportionality, and the principles of Chapter I of this Directive.”