1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1. **General context**

Article 67(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) declares as the European Union’s objective ensuring a high level of security within an area of freedom, security and justice.

To achieve this objective, a more coherent approach on the internal and external aspects of migration management is needed and a correlation should be established between the fight against illegal immigration and the improvement of security at the external borders of the Union, as well as better cooperation and dialogue with third countries for the purposes of dealing with illegal immigration and promoting legal migration.

The Internal Security Strategy for the European Union ('Internal Security Strategy'), adopted by the Council in February 2010, has constituted a shared agenda for tackling these common security challenges and has, inter alia, identified the following relevant strategic objectives for 2010-2014: to strengthen security through border management and to increase Europe’s resilience in the face of crises and disasters. These strategic objectives remain valid and should continue to be pursued.

To promote the implementation of the Internal Security Strategy and to ensure that it becomes an operational reality, the Internal Security Fund (ISF Borders and Visa) was set up.

In May 2015 the European Commission adopted the European Agenda on Migration (EA M) which proposes measures for the short and medium term to respond to current challenges in the area of migration and crises at the EU external border. It identifies four pillars to manage migration better, which includes 'Border management – saving lives and securing external borders'.

Legal basis of ISF Borders and Visa are the following regulations:


The ISF Borders and Visa Regulation sets out two specific objectives, respectively:
(i) supporting a common visa policy to facilitate legitimate travel, provide a high quality of service to visa applicants, ensure equal treatment of third-country nationals and tackle illegal immigration;

(ii) supporting integrated border management, including promoting further harmonisation of border management-related measures in accordance with common Union standards and through the sharing of information between Member States and between Member States and the Frontex Agency, to ensure, on one hand, a uniform and high level of control and protection of the external borders, including by the tackling of illegal immigration and, on the other hand, the smooth crossing of the external borders in conformity with the Schengen acquis, while guaranteeing access to international protection for those needing it, in accordance with the obligations contracted by the Member States in the field of human rights, including the principle of non-refoulement.

In conformity with Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 Article 6.2, in order to implement the ISF Borders and Visa, the Commission has adopted, on 26 May 2015, the 2015 Annual Work Programme for Union Actions, which includes this Call for Proposals.¹

1.2. Specific context for this Call for Proposals

The external Schengen Borders controls are subject to the Schengen Borders Code (SBC) which in particular specifies the relevant travel document checks to be performed. Under guidance of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) more and more travel documents have been and continue to be equipped with an electronic chip. This chip enables storing biometric information of the bearer and permits a strong electronic authentication (called Passive Authentication) of the document even in unattended automated border control scenarios.

The Passive Authentication relies on the presence of public Country Signing Certification Authority (CSCA) certificates which according to EU legislation and ICAO guidelines need to be exchanged between countries. Up to now these exchanges occurred formally and officially between trusted parties. However this formal exchange has proven difficult to implement and the European Commission would like to evaluate the possibilities of performing a centralised role in acquiring, sharing and validating these certificates with Member States without relying exclusively on the formal exchange mechanism.

Genuine CSCA certificates are generally combined in a secure 'container' file called a Masterlist. The Masterlist file is cryptographically signed to prevent changes and to allow authentication of the list itself.

When receiving CSCA certificates via an informal exchange, as it is the case when e-mail is used, and sharing them with third-parties, an important trust element is lost and needs to be compensated by validating the certificate against an important number of actual electronic Machine Readable Travel Documents (eMRTD) seen at border-control.

The Schengen Masterlist Border-Control pilot will test and evaluate the distributed collaborative validation of new CSCA certificates by creating national, local statistics of anonymised (cryptographic) data from eMRTDs seen at border-control. Validated CSCA certificates will be included on the Schengen Masterlist which in turn will be used in the Border-Control pilot to authenticate eMRTDs.

The second objective of the pilot is to enable Member States to acquire experience with electronic authentication of travel documents at border control using a Masterlist.

For the purpose of the pilot a dedicated system will be installed in one border control post (an international airport would be the obvious choice) of each Member State selected for funding in the Call for Proposals. This dedicated system will not be integrated with existing border control applications to avoid extensive IT integration work and is therefore going to

act as a parallel system. This parallel system is configured in order to provide anonymised data on the number of passports secured with the CSCA certificate under validation. The local anonymised statistics on the parallel systems will be deleted at the end of the pilot by the participating authorities.

2. **Priorities of this Call for Proposals**

The present Call for Proposals aims at funding projects on the topic of a field experiment on the use and management of a Schengen Masterlist for border-control. The pilot for border-control is well defined in scope and implementation. Project applications must strictly follow the requirements and clearly indicate a detailed national implementation.

The European Commission will provide participating authorities with a custom-built system (referred to as "the SW package") that automatically collects specific data elements from the passport (when read by the passport reader), anonymises these data and aggregates them locally to produce the required information for the CSCA validation. The SW package is subject to the signing of a loan-agreement allowing its use for 12 months.

As the preferred option, the company providing the software package would provide a "one-stop-shop" solution comprising a laptop (+OS), a full-page passport reader, a USB drive and all software pre-installed and configured. This package must be paid directly by the participating authority to the provider. The participating authority becomes owner of this equipment (except for the custom-built software).

This stand-alone system comprised of computer (including screen, keyboard and mouse) and passport reader needs to be installed in a manual border-control booth at an international airport chosen by the participating authority. The international airport should be chosen to allow a maximum number of different nationalities to pass border-control.

The company providing this system would also provide a "training and support package" for the installation, configuration, training and support of the system. This training and support package must be paid directly by the participating authority to the provider. The system will generate a fully anonymised XML statistics file, locally stored on the computer, continuously updated with non-personal eMRTD data coming from an eMRTD which is placed on the passport reader. For the purposes of the pilot, the cryptographic security features of a number of eMRTDs (what is usually called electronic passport or chip-passports) will need to be recorded at the border crossing on this 'parallel test system'. Since this test system is standalone, the reading of the passport does not feed the operational border control system. As the collection of data for the pilot involves this "double work", the border-guard on duty in the specific manual inspection booth is expected to regularly, but not necessarily systematically and certainly not obligatory, place an eMRTD on the passport reader of this parallel system. The objective is only to have a wide range of different eMRTD encounters for different issuing countries and not an exhaustive collection of cryptographic security features of all eMRTDs used for crossing a given border control post.

In an agreement with the responsible border control entity, the European Commission will send a new CSCA certificate when it becomes available (which is outside Commission's control), to be validated, by normal e-mail. This CSCA certificate will be copied to a USB drive and imported into the standalone system which will try to 'match' the (anonymous) DocumentSigners previously collected, to the new CSCA in question. The system will generate a PDF validation form which should in turn be copied onto the USB drive and subsequently be sent back via normal e-mail to the European Commission. The PDF form will contain no personal data what-so-ever.

At regular times (dependent on the availability of new or updated certificates) the European Commission will request the responsible border-control entity to use a new Masterlist which will also be distributed by normal e-mail. The new Masterlist will be installed timely and adequately on the parallel test-system. The correct functioning of the
new Masterlist will be communicated via simple e-mail feedback, as it is an ordinary status feed-back.

The manual control booth should allow for a maximum number of eMRTD encounters from different countries, where possible including EU/SAC countries.

As a summary, the participating authority is expected to:
1. Order the test system from the provider.
2. Organise the installation of this system inside a border-control booth at an international airport of their choice.
3. Allocate the necessary staff for training and for using the parallel test system;
4. Provide instructions to staff for reading eMRTDs on the parallel test system and for performing CSCA certificate validation when requested by the Commission and providing subsequent feedback to the Commission.

The authority should include all these costs under the pilot costs of this Call for Proposals. The applicants are expected to give information on how they will assure that the 'parallel system' installed will be used regularly by different border-guards. The applicants should designate a person within the organisation of the participating authority who is responsible for the pilot-project and is physically located around the pilot airport location.

Applicants should have the operational capacity to closely follow the Schengen Masterlist project and should attend the scheduled meetings whenever possible.

Any actions under this Call for Proposals shall respect and shall be implemented in line with the rights and principles enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Applications should pay appropriate attention to the effects of the project on individual rights and freedoms, as well as to possible remedies. In addition, any action under this Call for Proposals should comply with all relevant ethical principles and all applicable international, EU and national law on ethical issues while carrying out the project.

3. **Timetable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Date and time or indicative period</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Publication of the call</td>
<td>04/03/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Deadline for submitting applications</td>
<td>15/04/2016 – 12:00 CET</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Evaluation period</td>
<td>April-May 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Information to applicants</td>
<td>End May 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Signature of Grant Agreement</td>
<td>June-July 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Starting date of the action</td>
<td>As of June 2016</td>
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</table>

4. **Budget available**

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of projects is estimated at EUR 100,000. The Commission reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.
5. Admissibility Requirements

Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to in section 3.

Applications must be submitted in writing to the functional mailbox HOME-ISF@ec.europa.eu using the Application Form provided (including all parts of the Application Package, see section 12).

Applications must be drafted in one of the EU official languages. English is preferred in order to speed up the evaluation procedure.

Projects cannot be scheduled to last more than 12 months. Applications for projects scheduled to run for a longer period will be rejected.

Failure to comply with these requirements will lead to the rejection of the application.

6. Eligibility Criteria

6.1. Eligible applicants and applications

In order to be eligible for a grant, the Applicant must be:

a) a public body;

b) established in a Member State participating in the ISF Borders and Visa instrument;

c) established in a Member State which complies with the following criteria:

- its authorities do not use a Masterlist (or a national trusted collection of certificates) for manual border-control purposes;
- the presence of ABC eGates in the chosen airport, actually working for EU citizens;
- the presence of Framework Contracts. Its authorities can rely on existing Framework contracts and/or service providers which can be contracted without the need for a National call for tender.

Supporting documents: In order to assess the Applicants’ eligibility, a Declaration of Honour, which must be printed out, signed by the authorised signatory and included (as a scanned document) in the Application Package, must be provided by the Applicant (Annex 1). Other supporting documents may be requested at a later stage.

6.2. Eligible activities

The following types of activities are eligible under this Call for Proposals:

- All activities directly related to the description under chapter 2

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2 The project duration may be extended during its implementation for duly justified reasons subject to the Commission’s approval via an amendment to the Grant Agreement.

3 All EU Member States, including the Schengen Associated Countries, with the exception of United Kingdom and Ireland, are participating in the ISF Borders and Visa instrument. Legal entities established in the United Kingdom (unless the United Kingdom decides to opt in and to participate in the ISF Borders and Visa) or Ireland cannot participate in this call.
7. **Exclusion Criteria**

Applicants will be excluded from participating in the Call for Proposals procedure and from the grant award if they are in any of the situations referred to in articles 131(4) of the EU Financial Regulation\(^4\), i.e. one of the following situations:

7.1. **Exclusion from participation in the Call for Proposals**

(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 or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of a Member State 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 including by decisions of the EIB and international organisations;

(d) they are not in compliance with their 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 Belgium or those of the country where the action is to be implemented;

(e) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such an illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;

(f) they are currently subject to an administrative penalty for: being guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Commission as a condition of participation in a procurement or grant award procedure or for failing to supply this information; or having been declared to be in serious breach of its obligations under grant agreements or contracts financed by the Union's budget.

7.2. **Exclusion from award**

Applicants will not be granted financial assistance if, in the course of the grant award procedure, they:

(a) are subject to a conflict of interest in connection with the action;

(b) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Commission as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure or fail to supply this information;

(c) find themselves in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to in section 7.1.

Administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on Applicants and Co-applicants who are guilty of misrepresentation.

**Supporting documents:** In order to evaluate Applicants against exclusion criteria, a Declaration of Honour must be provided by the Applicant (Annex 1) and each Co-applicant (Annex 2) certifying that they are not in one of the situations described above. Annex 1

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and Annex 2 must be printed out, signed by the relevant authorised signatory and included (as a scanned document) in the Application Package.

8. **SELECTION CRITERIA**

8.1. Financial capacity

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out and to participate in its funding.

However, the financial capacity assessment is not applicable to public bodies. Therefore they do not need to submit any supporting documents for financial capacity.

8.2. Operational capacity

Applicants must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed action. This capacity shall be assessed based on the experience of the Applicants and each Co-applicant or, as an alternative, on the relevant experience of their directly involved employees.

However, the operational capacity assessment is not applicable to public bodies. Therefore they do not need to submit any supporting documents for operational capacity.

9. **AWARD CRITERIA**

Eligible applications and their proposed action will be assessed on the basis of the following award criteria:

- **Relevance**: applications will be assessed on the extent to which they match the expected outcomes as identified in this Call for Proposals (section 2 above) and in the relevant EU strategic documents and/or action plans (section 1 above) (30 points)

- **Quality**: applications will be assessed with regards to the appropriateness of their design and planned implementation, taking into account the envisaged activities, methodology, organisation and strategy. (20 points)

- **Cost-effectiveness**: applications will be assessed with regards to whether the costs of the proposed action are adequate to the activities and proportionate to the expected results (40 points)

- **European added value**: the project activities, outcomes and impact should have a future EU relevance in the area of border-control; (20 points).

Applications that pass the threshold of minimum 65 points will be considered for funding within the limits of the available budget.

The European Commission will then prepare an award decision listing the projects proposed for award, projects on reserve list and rejected projects.

10. **LEGAL COMMITMENTS**

A Commission award decision does not represent a legal or financial commitment. The award of each grant is subject to the conclusion of a Grant Agreement in writing.

In the event a grant is awarded by the Commission, a Grant Agreement, drawn up in euro and detailing the conditions and level of funding, will be sent to the Coordinator, as well as instructions on how to formalise the obligations of the parties.
Please note that the award of a grant does not establish any entitlement for subsequent years.

11. **FINANCIAL PROVISIONS**

11.1. General Principles

a) **Non-cumulative award**

An action may only receive one grant from the EU budget. In no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget. To ensure this, applicants shall indicate the sources and amounts of Union funding received or applied for the same action or part of the action or for its functioning during the same financial year as well as any other funding received or applied for the same action (Application Form, section 2.1 and 2.2).

b) **Non-retroactivity**

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed. A grant may be awarded for an action which has already begun only where the Applicant can demonstrate the need to start the action before the Grant Agreement is signed. In any case, costs eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application.

c) **Co-financing**

Co-financing means that the resources which are necessary to carry out the action may not be entirely provided by the EU grant.

Co-financing of the action may take the form of:

- the Beneficiary's own resources,
- income generated by the action,
- financial contributions from third parties.

d) **Balanced budget**

The Budget Estimate of the action is to be attached to the Application Form. It must have revenue and expenditure in balance and must be drawn up in euro.

Beneficiaries with general accounts in a currency other than the euro shall convert costs incurred in another currency into euro at the average of the daily exchange rates published in the C series of Official Journal of the European Union, determined over the corresponding reporting period. Where no daily euro exchange rate is published in the Official Journal of the European Union for the currency in question, conversion shall be made at the average of the monthly accounting rates established by the Commission and published on its website (http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm), determined over the corresponding reporting period.

Beneficiaries with general accounts in euro shall convert costs incurred in another currency into euro according to their usual accounting practices.

Where the implementation of the action requires the award of procurement contracts (implementation contracts), the Beneficiary must award the contract to the bid offering best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interests and retain the documentation for the event of an audit. Detailed information on subcontracting is provided in the Guide for Applicants.

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5 For further guidance on exchange rate please consult the Guide for Applicants.
e) **Financial support to third parties**

The applications may not envisage provision of financial support to third parties.

f) **Non-profit rule**

EU grants may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action. Profit shall be defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs incurred by the Beneficiary, when the request is made for payment of the balance. In this respect, where a profit is made, the Commission shall be entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the Beneficiary to carry out the action.

11.2. **Maximum amount requested**

The EU grant is limited to a maximum co-funding rate of 95% of the total eligible costs of the action.

Consequently, part of the total eligible expenses entered in the Budget Estimate must be financed from sources other than the EU grant (see section 11.1.c).

The Commission reserves the right to reduce the estimated costs in the Budget Estimate, if they are deemed as ineligible.

11.3. **Payment arrangements**

A pre-financing payment corresponding to maximum 80% of the EU grant amount will be transferred to the Coordinator after the signature of the Grant Agreement by both parties and in accordance with its terms.

The Commission will establish the amount of the final payment to be made to the Coordinator on the basis of the calculation of the final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, the Beneficiaries will be required to reimburse the amount paid in excess by the Commission through a recovery order.

12. **PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS**

Applications must be submitted electronically to the functional mailbox [HOME-ISF@ec.europa.eu](mailto:HOME-ISF@ec.europa.eu) in accordance with the formal requirements set out under section 5 and by the deadline set out under section 3, after which the Commission will not accept any application.

No modification to the application is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed. However, if there is a need to clarify certain aspects or for the correction of clerical mistakes, the Commission may contact the Applicant during the evaluation process. Failure to respond by the deadline set may lead to rejection of the application. Applicants must take the necessary steps to ensure that they can respond rapidly until the end of the selection process.

Applications that are not submitted to the above email address or within the deadline shall not be considered for evaluation.

Applications must be submitted using the forms and templates provided. If the forms or templates are altered, the application may be rejected.

**Application for one project**

The Applicant may submit one application under this Call for Proposals. Given the nature of this call, no partnerships or co-applicants are expected.

**The Application Package to be submitted**

Please read carefully the Guide for Applicants for details and explanations concerning the compulsory documents to be submitted as a complete Application Package.
Each Application Package must include **ALL the following compulsory documents:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Package</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of the Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annexes 1-8</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANNEXES</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>To be provided by</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annex 1</td>
<td>Declaration of Honour</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 2</td>
<td>Partnership Declaration</td>
<td>Not applicable for this Call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 3*</td>
<td>Letter of support</td>
<td>Entity that wishes to support the project without being Applicant or Co-applicant, i.e. it cannot incur costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 4*</td>
<td>Financial Capacity Form (Excel)</td>
<td>Not applicable for public bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 5*</td>
<td>Balance sheet and profit and loss account or business plan</td>
<td>Not applicable for public bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 6*</td>
<td>List of projects or CVs</td>
<td>Not applicable for public bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 7*</td>
<td>Audit report</td>
<td>Not applicable for public bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 8</td>
<td>Checklist</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
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* if applicable

All the templates of the Application Package will be sent to all the participating entities in the Schengen Masterlist project (this includes all Member States).

Applicants are advised to consult the Call for Proposals webpage regularly during the period leading up to the submission deadline in case announcements, updates or frequently asked questions are published.

Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the selection process.

**Contacts**

Questions may be sent by e-mail to: HOME-ISF@ec.europa.eu indicating clearly the reference of the Call for Proposals. Question submitted later than 7 days before the submission deadline, i.e. after 08/04/2016 will not be considered and thus not answered.

The Commission shall reply according to the code of good administrative behaviour within 15 working days from the receipt of the question. In the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Commission cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of Applicants or actions or on the outcome of the Call for Proposals before the official announcement of results.

**13. PUBLICITY**

13.1. By the Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union’s contribution in all publications or in conjunction with activities for which the grant is used. Please refer to the Grant Agreement for more details.
13.2. By the Commission

All information relating to grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on an internet site of the European Union institutions no later than the 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded. The Commission will publish the following information:

- name and address of the beneficiary,
- subject of the grant,
- amount awarded.

Upon a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the Beneficiary, the publication shall be waived if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

14. DATA PROTECTION

The reply to any Call for Proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the specifications of the Call for Proposal and will be processed solely for that purpose by the department responsible for the EU programme concerned. Details concerning the processing of personal data are available on the privacy statement at:


Personal data may be registered in the Early Warning System (EWS) only or both in the EWS and Central Exclusion Database (CED) by the Accounting Officer of the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- the Commission Decision 2008/969 of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (for more information see the Privacy Statement on:

or

- the Commission Regulation 2008/1302 of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database (for more information see the Privacy Statement on:

15. MEANS OF REDRESS

If, at any stage of the administrative treatment of grant applications, the persons or entities concerned consider that they have been affected by an instance of maladministration, they may, irrespective of any other means of redress, make a complaint to the European Ombudsman in accordance with Article 228(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and as provided by the Parliament Decision of 9 March 1994 on the regulations and general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman’s duties published in Official Journal L 113 of 4 May 1994.