EX ANTE PUBLICITY FOR NEGOTIATED PROCEDURE FOR LOW VALUE CONTRACTS

JUST/2019/RRAC/FW/RIGH/0178

STUDY ON RIGHT-WING VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND HATE SPEECH ONLINE

1. Contracting authority

European Commission

Directorate-General Justice and Consumers

Directorate C

Unit C2

Rue Montoyer 59

Brussels 1049

2. Negotiated procedure for low value contract

Expressions of interest should be submitted in one of the official languages of the European Union by electronic means at the following address: JUST-04-PROCUREMENT@ec.europa.eu.

Inclusion on the list entails no obligation on the part of the contracting authority concerning the conclusion of contracts.

3. Information and documents to be provided

Interested parties should provide their full contact details.

4. General description of the procedure

Interested parties are invited to submit an expression of interest in accordance with the rules set out in this notice.

The contracting authority will invite all economic operators who have expressed their interest to submit a tender and will send them the tender specifications relating to the contract in question.

5. Protection of personal data

If processing your expression of interest involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as your 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, your reply to this notice and any personal data requested are required for the purposes indicated above in point 4 and will be processed solely for those purposes by the contracting authority indicated in point 1, which is also acting as data controller. Details concerning the processing of your personal data are available on the privacy statement at: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/explained/management/protecting/privacy_statement_edes_en.pdf

Your personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) by the responsible Authorizing Officer of the Commission, should you be in one of the

situations mentioned in Article 106 of the Financial Regulation (regulation EU/EURATOM 966/2012 of 25 October 2012 as amended).

6. Use of the list resulting from this notice

The list resulting from this ex ante publicity will be used exclusively for selection of candidates to be invited in a negotiated procedure for low value contracts.

7. Full description of the fields covered by the call for expressions of interest

The Commission, in the context of its work on the implementation of the Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online and the EU Internet Forum[1], have identified the need for further research to better understand the landscape, nature and scale of the activities of violent right wing extremists online and the manifestations in terms of hateful material.

The contract is aimed to map how violent right wing extremists messages are expressed in digital environments, unveiling ecosystems where organised groups use various internet platform to spread extremist ideologies, hatred and intolerance.

It is important to note that while there is not a common definition of violent right-wing extremism, research[2] suggests that right-wing extremist ideology can be categorised into racial nationalism (white supremacy or racism), cultural nationalism (e.g. arguing that Western culture must be protected), ethnic nationalism (e.g. arguing that people with different ethnic origins should not mix).

The study shall cover digital environments with diverse ideological profiles, including mainstream platforms that attract individuals who sympathise with violent right-wing extremist views. The contractor shall monitor several different platforms/environments: large discussion forums such as Stormfront and VNN forum, news outlets such as Daily Stormer and The Right Stuff, video-sharing platforms such as YouTube and Dailymotion and social media platforms such as Twitter, Gab, Dissenter and BitChute.

In order to attain a comprehensive view of the environments, the study shall be performed using an interdisciplinary mixed methods-approach – i.e. technologies from computer science to analyse and collect relevant data, linguistic analysis to grasp important concepts and jargon, and a framework of psychological theories to understand the intra- and interpersonal processes that serve to evolve and maintain extremist beliefs in digital environments. The contractor shall record and compile all the data and provide an outcome to the Commission in the form of a report, which shall include, maps, graphs and visualisation of patterns.

The following tasks are to be carried out:

- Active screening in different EU Member States of violent right-wing extremist content in different digital environments – discussion forums, news outlets, video-sharing platforms and social media, including open social media, “free-speech” and ideological platforms, that have a high number of visitors from EU Member States. The study will focus on content spread in English, Italian, German, and Swedish. The contractor will add one additional language which is deemed relevant for the topic and which ensures a balanced geographical scope of the EU.

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/counter-terrorism/terrorist-content-online_en#eu_internet_forum

[2] https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Extreme-Right-Violence-and-Terrorism-Concepts-Patterns-and-Responses.pdf

- Analysis of up to 10 online platforms, including the number of active users, the number of visitors, location of visitors, and common discussion topics. The analysis will include selection of violent right-wing extremist content (messages) and usernames (if they are active on different environments) promoting violence based on the use of different ideologies, language and symbols (describing the linguistic features and jargon used), perception about the enemies (demonization and dehumanisation), conspiracy theories (and to what extent they are a part of the discussions on the different platforms), and hate (the level of hate on the different platforms and what groups or individuals hatred is directed to)
- Delivering to the Commission the results of the study in the form of a report that will look into how different online platforms are being used by violent right-wing extremists and individuals to propagandise and promote terrorism and violence, trends and patterns of behaviour adopted by violent right-wing extremists and how they opt to use different platforms.
- Candidates will be requested to prove sound scientific expertise in detecting violent right-wing extremist content on digital environments as well as sound knowledge and familiarity with the landscape of violent right-wing extremism online. In particular, the candidates should also prove sound knowledge regarding extremist ideologies, psychological and conspiracy theories as well hate speech (in particular as referred to in the 2008 Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia).
- Candidates will also be requested to follow ethical considerations concerning integrity versus security while conducting the study, ensuring that the presentation of the identified violent right-wing extremist content is on an aggregated level, protecting the integrity of the individual platform users, and ensuring that methods used comply with the general ethical guidelines and the General Data Protection Regulation.

Detailed requirements regarding selection criteria will be specified in the tender specifications.

The indicative amount for these activities is set at €120 000.

8. Place of delivery

European Commission premises.

9. Deadline for expressions of interest

The interested economic operators should express their interest at the latest on 1 April 2020.

10. Ex-post transparency

Details on the contractors who have concluded a contract of more than €15 000 awarded following the procedure set out at point 4 shall be published on the website of the contracting authority no later than 30 June of the year following contract award. These details include name, locality (address for legal persons and region of origin for natural persons), amount, and subject of the contract. For natural persons, the information shall be removed two years after the year of contract award.