

Preface

Writing about corruption is not particularly easy. Writing about corruption in your own country – even less so. However, the effort is worth it if the problematic issues revealed and the suggestions provided bear fruit and change the status quo for the better. Performing the process of awarding public procurements correctly and in the interest of all stakeholders, especially a country's taxpayers, is of extreme significance as well as a very challenging topic, and the search for the right path continues.

This book is aimed at all those who sooner or later face a public procurement award due to the nature of their business or because they have to apply the regulations in their capacity as a contracting authority, as well as to the academics who continue to study this vast subject. Procurements themselves represent an artificial mechanism which seek to protect public resources by creating much stricter rules for spending 'common funds' than are usually found in the relations governing ordinary traders. When a resource is shared, however, determining responsibility for it is often more complex. Who owns the resource actually, who is liable for its distribution and what rules should regulate the transaction can be hard to determine and difficult to oversee. Finally, it is much more challenging to prove theft from the state than from a particular person. That is why in this atypical 'vacuum' of rules and procedures, corrupt practices emerge much more frequently, and because the appetites are much larger, corruption in this sector flourishes abundantly.

Procurement rules will continue to have its ups and downs, and their adaptation to real life will continue much longer. It is for this reason that I hope my work on this book, and the contrast that is made between the different countries, will be taken into account in the implementation of the new procurement rules at European level. Indeed, EU is a community of countries that have agreed to profess the same values, but to be successful the eyes of this alliance must be focused precisely on the 'individual cases'. This is especially true for public procurements and the many corruption opportunities they create.

I would like to thank all who have contributed to bringing this book into being and to helping my analysis of the three Member States researched here acquire meaning and completion.

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Procurement

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