

DGT's Guide to documents



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This document is intended for DGT’s external contractors providing translation services. It offers comprehensive guidance on documents DGT translates. For each type of document, it explains the context in which it is drafted, the intended purpose and quality requirements.

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1. DOCUMENTS TO BE ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION

This category includes documents that DGT translates in the context of the Commission's decision-making process and includes the following types of documents:

- [Legislative documents](#)
- [Communications](#)
- [Other documents adopted by the Commission](#)

Legislative documents

Legislative documents encompass a set of legal instruments that the EU institutions adopt to exercise the Union's competences. Their specific nature, binding force and purpose depend on the type of instrument.

EU legal acts

What follows is an overview of the legal acts of the Union, as listed in [Article 288 TFEU](#):

Regulations¹

Regulations are binding legal acts of general application to abstract categories of persons. They apply automatically as soon as they enter into force. A regulation creates rights and obligations and can therefore be invoked directly before national courts.

Directives²

Directives are binding legal acts of general application addressed to the Member States. Unlike regulations, directives are not directly applicable but must be transposed into the national laws of the Member States. A directive is binding as to the result to be achieved. The Member States decide how to achieve those results.

Decisions³

Decisions are binding legal acts. Unlike regulations and directives, a decision may have one or several addressees and be binding only to them. For example, when the Commission decides to impose a fine on a company for abusing its dominant market position, its decision is addressed and binding to that company. Decisions addressed to one or several specific individuals or companies have direct effect and can therefore be invoked before national courts by the addressees. Decisions of general application enter into force by publication. Decisions specifying to whom they are addressed take effect upon notification.

¹ For more details, see EUR-Lex [Regulations](#).

² For more details see EUR-Lex [Directives](#).

³ For more details see EUR-Lex [Decisions](#).

Recommendations⁴ and opinions⁵

Recommendations and opinions are legal acts with no binding force. They are instruments by which the EU institutions make their views known, suggest a line of action or make a statement without imposing any legal obligation on those to whom they are addressed. Although they do not have legal consequences, they may offer guidance on the interpretation or content of EU law. Recommendations are published in the *Official Journal of the European Union, L series*, while opinions are published in the *Official Journal of the European Union, C series*.

➤ Multilingual law-making

Under the legal requirements of multilingualism⁶, legal acts are adopted and enter into force in the official languages of the Union. The language versions of EU legal acts—more specifically of those of general application—are equally authentic.

The production of multilingual legal acts in the EU relies on the translation, which is part and parcel of the process leading to the adoption of an act. The translation that takes place in this setting is *multilingual law-making*. Translators are called to produce texts that have equal legal effects. Drafting and translation are therefore complementary, and translators are *de facto* multilingual drafters of legal acts.

The EU institutions have compiled several guidelines and conventions applying to the drafting of legal acts. These guidelines and conventions are available in all official languages and give guidance both to drafters and translators.

➤ Legislative versus non-legislative acts

Legislative acts

Regulations, directives and decisions adopted via a legislative procedure—ordinary legislative procedure (OLP) or a special legislative procedure—qualify as ‘legislative acts’.

These acts are adopted by the European Parliament and the Council (OLP), or by the Council alone (special procedures), based on a proposal from the Commission.

Non-legislative acts

Regulations, directives and decisions adopted via a non-legislative procedure are ‘non-legislative acts’.

These include:

- Commission delegated regulations, directives and decisions;
- Commission / Council implementing regulations, directives and decisions (Council implementing acts are adopted by the Council based on a proposal from the Commission); and
- Commission regulations, directives and decisions.

⁴ For more details see EUR-Lex [Recommendations](#).

⁵ For more details see EUR-Lex [Opinions](#).

⁶ See Article 4 of Regulation No 1 of 1958, Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and the references to the official languages of the Union in the treaties.

N.B: The distinction between legislative and non-legislative depends on the procedure under which the act is adopted and does not take into account the content of the act. This distinction is relevant for the EU hierarchy of sources. Legislative acts rank higher than non-legislative acts. In case of conflicting norms, norms emanating from legislative acts prevail over those emanating from non-legislative acts.

➤ Authentic versus non-authentic language versions

As a general rule, legal acts must convey the same meaning and produce the same legal effect in all language versions.

Depending on the type of act, an important distinction is made between authentic and non-authentic language versions:

Authentic language versions

- **Legal acts entering into force by publication** – Regulations, directives and decisions of general application enter into force by publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union, L series*, in the official languages of the Union. The official language versions of these acts are equally authentic and legally binding.
- **Legal acts taking effect upon notification** – Directives and decisions specifying to whom they are addressed (Member States, organisations, companies, etc.) take effect upon notification⁷ to their addressees only in the language(s) of the addressee(s). In this case, only the language versions of their addressees—as clearly identified on the cover page—are authentic and legally binding.

Non-authentic language versions

Directives and decisions taking effect upon notification are often translated into all EU official languages and published in the *Official Journal of the European Union, C series*, for information purposes. Such non-authentic language versions are not legally binding. However, they could trigger action.

E.g: A Commission decision declaring a State aid incompatible with the internal market is notified to the Member State concerned and is authentic in the language of that Member State. However, if the conditions set out in [Article 263 TFEU](#) are met, the decision can be challenged by persons to whom it is of direct and individual concern, other than the addressee. The deadline for launching the proceedings is triggered by the publication of all language versions (including the non-authentic ones) in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

N.B.: The same quality requirements apply to authentic and non-authentic language versions of legal acts: they must convey the same meaning and produce the same legal effect in all languages and legal orders.

⁷ See [Article 297 TFEU](#).

➤ Parts of legal acts

Legal acts are drafted according to a standard structure comprising a **title**, a **preamble** (citations and recitals), **enacting terms** (articles) and, where necessary, **annexes**⁸. All these elements are adopted by the legislator and become EU law.

Some acts are also accompanied by an explanatory memorandum and a legislative financial statement. These elements are not part of the standard structure of the act. They are not included in the adopted version as published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* and do not have legal effect:

- An **explanatory memorandum** is included in all Commission legislative proposals and in Commission delegated acts. The purpose of an explanatory memorandum is to explain the rationale behind the act. Explanatory memoranda are usually drafted in a language that is clear, simple and easy to understand for a non-specialist;
- A **legislative financial statement** accompanies any legislative proposal with budgetary consequences.

In the case of legislative proposals, an explanatory memorandum and a financial statement are included in the Commission proposal sent to the co-legislators and are made available to the public in EUR-Lex.

N.B.: Although explanatory memoranda do not have legal effect, they are used by the European Court of Justice when interpreting EU law.

Types of documents and their purpose

Under this category, DGT translates legislative proposals, autonomous acts, correcting acts and corrigenda, international agreements and Commission notices.

➡ Legislative proposals

Under the legislative procedures (ordinary or special), the Commission exercises its right of initiative by tabling proposals for regulations, directives and decisions to be adopted by the legislator (European Parliament and/or Council) or proposals for Council acts, opinions or recommendations.

Regulations, directives and decisions adopted by the legislator under a legislative procedure are legislative acts⁹.

Legislative proposals are preparatory documents and, as such, they are not published in the Official Journal. They are made available in EUR-Lex as COM documents for information purposes in the official language versions.

⁸ *Joint Practical Guide of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission for persons involved in the drafting of European Union legislation*, different parts of the act, Guidelines 7 to 15.

⁹ See [Article 289 TFEU](#).

➤ Commission autonomous acts

The Commission can adopt autonomous acts in the form of Commission regulations, directives or decisions adopted outside the legislative procedure. These are non-legislative acts. Non-legislative acts include delegated or implementing acts adopted by the Commission when it exercises delegated and implementing powers. Commission non-legislative acts are published in the *Official Journal of the European Union, L series*¹⁰, and are legally binding.

— **Delegated acts**¹¹

The Commission adopts delegated acts when a legislative act (the basic act) grants the Commission the power to supplement or modify specific non-essential aspects of the basic act. They are commonly used to (regularly) update legislative acts. A delegated act adopted by the Commission can only enter into force if no objection is raised by the Parliament and the Council.

— **Implementing acts**¹²

The Commission adopts implementing acts when a legislative act (the basic act) grants the Commission the power to establish specific uniform conditions for the implementation of the basic act.

Implementing acts may be adopted in different fields (spending programmes, environmental and health protection, taxation, etc.) and are usually of an administrative or technical nature. They may take the form of financing decisions, authorisation decisions to place certain products on the market, or models for certificates required under EU law. Implementing acts are adopted by the Commission after consulting technical experts from the Member States within the comitology procedure. The European Parliament and the Council are kept informed during the preparation of implementing acts and have a right of scrutiny but cannot block the adoption of implementing acts.

Documents concerning infringement procedures, such as infringement cases, draft reasoned opinions and letters of formal notice, fall under this category.

➤ Correcting acts and corrigenda¹³

Correcting acts and corrigenda are Commission autonomous acts with binding force. The Commission adopts correcting acts or issues corrigenda to correct errors in acts that it has already adopted¹⁴. They are published in the *Official Journal of the European Union, L series*.

The correction procedure is initiated only if the correction is absolutely necessary, i.e. when the error gives rise to doubts as to the intention of the author.

— **Correcting acts** are adopted to correct errors affecting the substance of the act, so-called substantive errors. A correcting act is a new regulation, directive or decision. Correcting acts cannot be used for texts that do not take the form of a binding legal act (recommendations, notices, guidelines, etc.).

¹⁰ See EUR-Lex, [Series and subseries of the Official Journal](#).

¹¹ See [Article 290 TFEU](#) and EUR-Lex [Delegated acts](#).

¹² See [Article 291 TFEU](#) and EUR-Lex [Implementing acts](#).

¹³ Correcting acts and corrigenda concern acts adopted by the Commission. The Commission can also decide to issue corrigenda concerning documents addressed to other institutions.

¹⁴ Each institution corrects errors in the act it has adopted. Acts of the EP and the Council adopted jointly are corrected by the Council, after obtaining consent from the EP.

- **Corrigenda** are adopted to correct obvious errors not affecting the substance of the act. A corrigendum consists of a list of errors and their corrections, or can replace the whole text. It is not a new regulation, directive or decision.

↻ International agreements

International agreements are binding legal acts concluded between the Union and third countries or international organisations. They are published in all languages in the *Official Journal of the European Union, C series*, and create rights and obligations for the European institutions and the Member States.

Once an international agreement is concluded, it becomes part of EU law and is directly applicable in the Member States. Member States ensure compliance with the agreement and take the necessary measures to implement its provisions in their national legal systems.

↻ Commission notices

The Commission can adopt notices to clarify or provide an interpretation of prescribed rules (guidelines or others). Commission notices are used mostly in the competition and State aid policy areas and bind the Commission's autonomy. They are published in all languages in the *Official Journal of the European Union, C series*. Their publication is meant to make known as widely as possible the Commission's interpretation of binding rules and they must be available in all languages before adoption (since all languages are adopted). These interpretative documents have the same binding force as legal acts.

Specifications and quality requirements

Legal acts need to be implemented and enforced uniformly across the Member States. Their translation should therefore support their consistent interpretation and application, in line with the general principles of law, such as equality before the law (the law should be equally accessible and comprehensible for all) and legal certainty (it should be possible to foresee how the law will be applied).

Inaccurate or inconsistent content and terminology leaves room for ambiguity, contradiction or doubt as to the meaning of a norm. It can lead to inconsistencies in the interpretation and application of EU law, causing legal uncertainty and hindering effective implementation.

In addition to the standard quality requirements, specific requirements apply to style, linguistic norms and design:

Style

All language versions must comply with drafting and stylistic rules, formalised formulations and templates¹⁵. The general drafting principles applying to EU legislation in all language versions are established in the *Joint Practical Guide (JPG)*¹⁶. The JPG sets out that legal acts should be perceived by those who apply or interpret them in the Member State (officials, judges, lawyers, etc.) *'not as translations in a negative sense but as texts which conform to a certain legislative style'*, i.e. they should reflect the specific nature of EU law and its terminology. Translations of legislative acts

¹⁵ The applicable legislative drafting resources exist in all language versions and can be provided by the requesting language department.

¹⁶ *Joint Practical Guide of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission for persons involved in the drafting of European Union legislation.*

	must comply with the <i>Joint Handbook for the presentation and drafting of acts subject to the ordinary legislative procedure (JH)</i> , and the <i>Manual of Precedents</i> which is the Council's supplement to the JPG. The translation of legal acts is also subject to the Interinstitutional Style Guide (ISG), language-specific style guides, Normative Memories, LegisWrite and other sector-specific templates.
Linguistic norm	Legal acts must comply with the formalised and established rules of the language laid out in the specific language section of the Interinstitutional Style Guide .
Design	Language versions of legal acts must meet presentation requirements. This includes adherence to the corresponding LegisWrite templates.

Communications

This sub-category covers communications from the Commission and communications to the Commission.

Types of documents and their purpose

Communications are soft law instruments adopted by the Commission with no binding force. They often contain important policy positions, guidance, or recommendations. ‘Communications from the Commission’ and ‘Communications from the Commission to the other institutions’ are Commission autonomous acts, while ‘Communications to the Commission’ are not.

Some communications are adopted in policy areas where the Union only has competences to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States, such as education and vocational training¹⁷.

- 1) **Communications from the Commission** are generally used to explain the Commission’s political vision and choices and convince the audience that these are well-founded and justified. Communications from the Commission are published in all languages in the *Official Journal of the European Union, C series*.
- 2) **Communications from the Commission to the other institutions**. The Commission can address communications to one or several institutions to set out its position. These documents examine the political conditions required to solve problems and put forward proposals for the short, medium or long term. They are available in all languages in EUR-Lex (COM documents).
- 3) **Communications to the Commission** are internal administrative documents that make it possible for a Commissioner to provide information to the other Commissioners. They are available only in the procedural languages (English, French and German) and are not published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Specifications and quality requirements

Communications issued by the Commission are informative documents, often exposing factual arguments or conveying a political message in a persuasive way. They refer to specific EU policies,

¹⁷ See in particular [Article 6 TFEU](#).

legal frameworks or, ongoing or future initiatives, and may target various audiences, such as policymakers, experts, or the general public.

The translation of communications must adapt to the target language and cultural context to maintain the intended impact. Translations should read like originals.

All language versions should comply with the [Interinstitutional Style Guide](#) and language-specific style guides, and follow the clear writing rules¹⁸. However, unlike legal acts, communications are not drafted in accordance with standardised structure and formulations. Translations do not need to follow the form or stick to sentence structures. Sentences may be split, merged, restructured or reorganised.

Other documents adopted by the Commission

This sub-category covers Commission communications and opinions during an ongoing legislative procedure; replies to the Court of Auditors reports; reports to other institutions; Green and White Papers; documents linked to the budgetary cycle; replies to European Parliament questions (QE); replies to the opinion of a national parliament; and working documents.

Types of documents and their purpose

This sub-category brings together official documents that the Commission adopts in reply to a legal obligation or to pursue political purposes. These documents have no binding force.

➔ Commission communications and opinions during an ongoing legislative procedure¹⁹

During a legislative procedure (ordinary or special), the Commission may adopt communications on Council positions and opinions on the European Parliament's amendments. These documents are available in all language version in EUR-Lex as COM documents.

- A **Communication on the Council position at first reading**²⁰ is needed when, under the ordinary legislative procedure (OLP), the European Parliament closes its first reading and the Council, not approving the European Parliament's position, adopts instead its own position. The Commission therefore adopts a communication to inform the European Parliament of its reasons for accepting, supporting or opposing the Council position. These communications are adopted by the College in the procedural languages and transmitted to the institutions in all language versions. They are drafted in line with a specific LegisWrite template (SJ-028).
- The **Commission** adopts **opinions on the European Parliament's amendments**²¹ to accept or reject one or more amendments proposed by the European Parliament during the OLP. The Commission's opinion is required even if the European Parliament and the Council have reached an agreement and must confirm the Commission's support for the compromise. Commission

¹⁸ [How to write clearly - Publications Office](#).

¹⁹ See [Article 294 TFEU](#).

²⁰ The formal title is *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament pursuant to Article 294(6) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union concerning the position of the Council on the adoption of a [...]*.

²¹ The formal title is *Opinion of the Commission pursuant to Article 294(7)(c) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, on the European Parliament's amendments to the Council's position*.

opinions on the European Parliament's amendments are drafted in line with specific LegisWrite templates (SJ-029_S or SJ-029_P).

➔ Commission's replies to Court of Auditors reports

The Court of Auditors provides the European Parliament and the Council with a statement of assurance as to the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the transactions²². Pursuant to the Financial Regulation, the Court's Draft Annual Reports are sent to the Commission, which must provide its replies to the Court of Auditors. The Court of Auditors' annual report accompanied by the replies is published in the *Official Journal of the European Union, C series*.

➔ Commission reports to the other institutions

Reports from the Commission generally fulfil an obligation or respond to an invitation to present reports. Such obligations can be imposed by the Treaties or by a legislative act or may be requested by the Council.

➔ Green papers and White papers

Green and White papers are preparatory documents with a pre-legislative function. They have a consultative character, outlining the Commission's ideas and presenting specific proposals for action.

- A **Green paper** is a document that launches a debate with the public. It presents an overview of the facts and regulatory situation in a given area and examines the need to take specific measures.
- A **White paper** aims to stimulate debate among key players by launching a new public consultation and defining a more precise framework for action compared to a Green paper.

➔ Commission replies to the European Parliament's questions (QE)

The Commission replies to questions from the European Parliament on matters falling within its competences and sphere of responsibility²³. Parliamentary questions are one of the ways by which the European Parliament exercises democratic control over the Commission. Responding to them in an appropriate manner is therefore part of the interinstitutional obligations of the Commission. Parliamentary questions are answered by the competent Commissioner on behalf of the Commission, following endorsement by the College (adoption procedure). The Commission's replies aim to address the concerns and inquiries raised by the European Parliament and provide it with relevant information, explanations and updates. Replies to written questions are published in the *Official Journal of the European Union, C series*.

➔ Commission's replies to the opinion of a national Parliament

As part of its written contacts with national parliaments, the Commission replies to reasoned opinions issued under the subsidiarity control mechanism and to opinions received in the framework of the political dialogue. Commission's replies to national parliaments should offer precise answers to the arguments that have been raised and convey the key political messages behind the Commission's

²² See [Article 287 TFEU](#).

²³ See [Article 230 TFEU](#).

proposals. The Commission has issued practical guidelines for drafting these replies, establishing basic guidance on their form and style.

➤ Commission working documents

The Commission can adopt working documents (also called “working papers”) when it is required to present the groundwork for debate on specific matters, for example to guide a discussion during a Council meeting at the ministerial level. Working documents can cover a wide range of affairs and are always geared towards providing information on certain policies, programmes and legislative proposals or in support of current policies. Such documents do not represent, however, the Commission's definitive stance on the subject. They are relatively rare and should not be confused with Commission staff working documents (explained under category 2).

Specifications and quality requirements

Documents adopted by the Commission in reply to legal obligations or to pave the way to new legislation are factual documents with a formal character. Translators need to understand the procedure and the context the document refers to. White and Green papers usually form part of a wider public consultation that may feed into legislative proposals.

Translations must be adapted to the target audience, such as other institutions, experts, or the general public, and ensure clarity. Terminology is particularly important, especially for Green and White papers paving the way for new legislation. Language versions should comply with the [Interinstitutional Style Guide](#) and language specific style guides. However, unlike legal acts, these documents are not drafted in accordance with standardised structure or formulations. Translations do not need to follow the form or stick to sentence structures. Sentences may be split, merged, restructured or reorganised.

2. OTHER COMMISSION DOCUMENTS NOT TO BE ADOPTED

This category includes documents that DGT translates outside the Commission's decision-making process. It covers the following types of documents:

- [Procurement, funding and EPSO documents](#)
- [Procedural documents](#)
- [Official documents](#)
- [Outreach and communication documents](#)

Procurement and EPSO documents

This sub-category covers documents that DGT translates in the context of calls for tenders, proposals and expression of interest, and EPSO competitions. These documents are translated into the required official languages.

Types of documents and their purpose

➤ Calls for tenders, proposals and expression of interest

These documents are translated in the context of the procedures by which the Commission awards tenders or grants. General rules on procurement and funding programmes, including on the content and publication of the supporting documents, are laid down in the Financial Regulation²⁴. The Commission also provides extensive guidance on procurements and grants. Each call for tender, proposal or expression of interest has its own criteria, requirements and steps. The text of the call specifies, inter alia, the eligibility, exclusion, selection and award criteria.

➤ EPSO documents

EPSO documents are translated as part of a procedure that ends in a formal decision with a direct legal effect (recruitment), against which those affected have a right to appeal. Under this sub-category, DGT translates different types of documents, such as notices of open competition or general rules governing open competitions.

Specifications and quality requirements

These documents must ensure accessibility and equal opportunities. Depending on the type of document, translators need to understand the context and the administrative applicable it refers to.

Translations must adapt to the target audience to the extent possible and comply with the [Interinstitutional Style Guide](#) and language-specific style guides and any relevant templates. Although these documents are not drafted in accordance with standardised structure or formulations, it is recommended to adhere to the sentence structure.

²⁴ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, [EUR-Lex - 32018R1046](#).

Procedural documents

This sub-category covers procedural documents for the Court of Justice, the General Court and the Civil Service jurisdiction, or national courts (*mémoires*).

Types of documents and their purpose

Procedural documents are documents that the Commission submits as a party in cases brought before the EU courts – the Court of Justice, the General Court, and the Civil Service Tribunal – or national courts. The Legal Service of the Commission drafts and files the necessary legal documents to present the Commission's arguments and positions in these proceedings. These documents are translated into French, since this is the main working language of the EU courts.

Specifications and quality requirements

Procedural documents are legal documents drafted in great detail by lawyers, who ensure that they are well reasoned and present the legal arguments in a precise manner.

Translations must be factually correct and properly convey the meaning and legal arguments. Translators need to understand the applicable rules, procedures, and the context and concepts the document refer to. Terms must be appropriate to the subject field and procedure. They must be used consistently both within the document itself and with related documentation, earlier exchanges or procedural steps in the file. Translations should be adequate to the legal context. They require adherence to the rules of procedure of the courts²⁵ and to the legal argumentation and style.

Official documents

This sub-category covers staff working documents, reports, administrative notices, and outgoing correspondence.

Types of documents and their purpose

The specific nature of these documents lies in their role as authoritative sources of information. They serve various administrative, informational and communication purposes related to the Commission's areas of responsibility, such as policy development, legislative proposals, economic analysis, regulatory compliance or administrative procedures.

Staff working documents

Staff working documents (SWDs) are factual and informative documents with no legal effect. SWDs reflect the position of the authoring service in the Commission and do not commit the Commission to a position. Therefore, they are not adopted or approved by the College. There are two types of SWDs: SWDs linked to a legislative act and stand-alone SWDs:

- **SWDs linked to an act** subject to a legislative procedure are informative supporting documents, such as impact assessments and summaries of impact assessments, or factual documents clarifying the proposal and the context of the act that they accompany. Summaries of impact

²⁵ See [Rules of Procedure of the General Court](#) and [Practice Rules for the Implementation of the Rules of Procedure of the General Court](#).

assessments are translated into all official languages, published on EurLex and transmitted to the Member States.

- **Stand-alone SWDs** contain factual information that are not binding on the Commission. They may be used in the legislative process to clarify a proposal already submitted by the Commission, or to set out the position of the EU and/or Member States in international fora within the framework of the general guidelines laid down by the Commission. Stand-alone SWDs are not translated. However, the procedural language versions (EN, FR and DE) are needed for summaries of evaluations and fitness checks, and all official languages versions are needed for summaries of impact assessments.

➔ Notices for the Official Journal

These are official notices published by the Commission in relation to the implementation of policy fields such as competition (prior notification of a concentration, non-opposition to a notified concentration, etc.), agriculture (protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications), mobility and transport. They are published in the *Official Journal of the European Union, C series*.

➔ Reports

These are informative documents, authored by supporting working, high-level, expert groups, etc., in the framework of their reporting obligation. These documents should not be confused with the Commission reports under category 1.

➔ Administrative notices

These are notices, forms and informational messages for Commission internal communication and documentation. They are authored by DG Human Resources and [PMO](#) and help ensure that relevant information is shared among Commission staff, supporting coordination, collaboration and the smooth functioning of the organisation. They are usually translated into the procedural languages only, with a special linguistic regime sometimes applying to some non-procedural languages (IT, ES and NL), especially when such documents are intended for retired Commission staff.

➔ Outgoing correspondence

Documents under this sub-category are authored by the Commission services in reply to correspondence received by the Commission from citizens, associations, etc. They cover a vast array of subjects, from access to documents to requests for information from the media.

Specifications and quality requirements

Official documents authored by the Commission services are an authoritative source of information. They should comply with style guides and linguistic conventions, and attention should be paid to accuracy and terminology.

Outreach and communication documents

This sub-category covers public consultation documents, communication and information materials (press releases, memos, background briefings, op-eds, newsletters, web content, speeches, articles,

and presentations), and awareness raising, guidance and educational documents (guidelines, leaflets, booklets, handbooks, studies, etc.).

Types of documents and their purpose

Outreach and communication documents encompass a wide range of written materials produced by the Commission to disseminate information, raise awareness, educate, engage and consult the public. Their purpose is to provide reliable, clear, consistent and transparent information to citizens; explain the Commission's priorities, policies and initiatives; bring Europe closer to its citizens and promote their participation in the political processes; and enhance the general interest in the European Union.

➔ Public consultations²⁶

These documents are designed to engage EU citizens in the regulatory process. They are used to seek feedback, opinions and contributions from citizens, businesses and civil-society organisations to ensure a more inclusive and participatory approach to policy development.

➔ Communication and information

These documents are designed to share important information about policies, initiatives, regulations, and developments related to the Commission's work. They aim to inform the public and stakeholders about various topics, such as upcoming events, legislative proposals, research findings, guidelines or public consultations.

➔ Guidelines, leaflets, booklets and similar

These documents serve as tools to raise awareness and educate the public about specific issues, challenges or opportunities. They may provide background information, explain complex concepts or offer guidance to help individuals and organisations better understand particular topics, programmes or policies.

Specifications and quality requirements

Outreach and communication documents are key in shaping the public perception and reputation of the Commission. Their specific tone and style align with the Commission's branding and messaging. Information must be correct, reliable and accessible. Translations should be fluent and read like originals. They should comply with style guides and linguistic conventions, and attention should be paid to accuracy and terminology.

3. DOCUMENTS ADDRESSED TO THE COMMISSION

This category includes incoming documents that DGT translates in the context of the EU legislative process or relating to the role of the Commission as guardian of the treaties. It covers the following types of documents:

- [Legislation and related instruments](#)
- [MS communications directly related to legal/financial operations](#)

²⁶ See [Consultations \(europa.eu\)](#).

- [Other communications from MS and other governmental bodies](#)
- [Communications from non-governmental bodies](#)

Legislation and related instruments

This sub-category covers Member States (MS) proposals for EU legislative action, MS reports to be used in drafting EU regulations/decisions, notification of MS legislation and other measures transposing EU law (including correlation tables), MS court judgements, international agreements relating to EU law and statutory MS reporting on the implementation of EU law.

Types of documents and their purpose

These documents are submitted by MS or other official bodies in the course of the same formal (administrative) procedures that involve [legislative documents](#). They act as a catalyst for the Commission's legislative work or directly respond to EU legislation. While normally intended for internal use and not for publication, these documents often feed directly into the wording of Commission texts and/or provide verification of MS compliance with EU law.

➤ **MS proposals for EU legislative action**

These are formal proposals and justifications for legislation that MS would like the Commission services to carry forward.

➤ **MS reports to be used in drafting EU regulations/decisions**

These are reports submitted by MS to the Commission – and usually directly requested by the Commission – to serve as input for the drafting of EU legal acts. The material received may or may not serve as direct textual input, but invariably contains essential information and insights.

➤ **Notification of MS legislation transposing EU law**

These documents contain the texts of Member State legislation intended to transpose EU legislation, enabling the Commission to verify proper transposition of specific acts by the required transposition deadline(s). They may also include correspondence (correlation) tables which identify and cite the relevant Member State provisions, article by article, alongside the EU provisions for purposes of comparison.

➤ **Notification of other measures transposing EU law**

These documents contain the texts of MS measures other than legislation intended to transpose aspects of EU law, enabling the Commission to verify proper transposition of specific acts by the required transposition deadline(s). They may also include notification of updates to national measures pertaining to specific issues in particular domains (e.g. under the Euratom Treaty).

➤ **National court judgments relating to EU law**

These documents are the full or partial text of judgments issued by MS courts in cases involving the implementation and/or interpretation of EU law at a national level.

↪ International agreements relating to EU law

These documents contain the texts of international agreements concluded between MS or between MS and third countries and/or international organisations, which must comply with EU law (pursuant to [Article 351 TFEU](#) if concluded prior to accession; in full if concluded after accession) but which do not create rights and obligations for the EU as a whole or for the European institutions. They are translated for informational purposes to verify compliance with EU law but do not become part of EU law.

↪ Statutory MS reporting on implementation of EU law

These are communications from MS sent in compliance with EU law to report on how the MS has implemented given provisions of EU law.

Specifications and quality requirements

These documents provide proof of MS compliance with EU legal acts or directly concern current or future EU legal acts. They are drafted in the languages of the MS. To be handled by Commission staff in different steps and phases, they need to be translated into a widely understood language which is now most often English.

Inaccurate translations can lead to misinterpretation of MS law, with significant legal, political and financial consequences. It can lead to inconsistencies in the interpretation of MS application of EU law, causing legal uncertainty and exposing the Commission to political, financial and reputational risks.

While MS legislation is not strictly speaking subject to EU legislation drafting principles, any quoted portions of EU legislation are subject to these principles. In addition, it is advisable that translated MS legislation reflect the style of EU legislation as much as possible, for ease of reading and consistency of understanding. Translations of legislative documents must also comply with the [Interinstitutional Style Guide](#), language-specific style guides and other sector-specific templates.

MS communications directly related to legal/financial operations

This sub-category covers opinions of MS parliaments, MS queries on interpretation of EU law, MS replies to reasoned opinions / letters of formal notice or EU pilot cases, MS financial information (including mandatory annual VAT statements), submissions requesting derogations from EU law, complaints regarding alleged infringements of EU law, applications for grants under EU law and competition bids, and MS submissions in State aid cases and other cases/investigations.

Types of documents and their purpose

These documents are submitted by MS or other external parties in the course of the same formal (administrative) procedures that involve text categories 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 or 2.2 above. In many cases they are submitted to comply with EU legislation and/or concern EU legal/financial procedures. While normally intended for Commission's internal use and not for publication, these documents have a direct effect on the efficient working of the Commission.

➔ **Opinions of MS parliaments**

These are opinions issued by MS parliaments on the Commission's legislative and political initiatives or policies. This is an integral part of the EU law-making process. Both national parliament opinions and the Commission's replies thereto are published online.

➔ **MS queries on interpretation of EU law**

These documents are sent by MS (or competent authorities/entities acting on their behalf) to request clarification or advice on implementing or transposing EU law. They may eventually give rise to a correcting act or corrigendum.

➔ **MS replies to reasoned opinions / letters of formal notice**

These documents are MS responses to reasoned opinions or letters of formal notice sent by the Commission as part of an infringement process. They are translated to facilitate handling of the procedure and may become part of a legal case if the matter results in legal action being taken.

➔ **MS replies to EU Pilot cases**

These documents are MS responses to so-called [EU Pilot](#) cases, enabling informal dialogue between the Commission and the MS on issues relating to potential breaches of EU law before the Commission launches an infringement process. They are translated to facilitate handling of the procedure and may become part of a legal case if the matter results in legal action being taken.

➔ **Financial information (incl. mandatory annual VAT statements)**

These documents contain important financial information requested of MS by the Commission to enable the latter to effectively discharge its financial supervisory role. Such input is often mandated by EU law and periodic in nature.

➔ **Submissions requesting derogations from EU law**

These are formal applications submitted to the Commission from MS (or competent authorities/entities acting on their behalf) to request a derogation, i.e. permission to be exempted from a particular obligation laid down by an EU legislative act. They may include evidence to justify the grounds for the derogation.

➔ **Complaints regarding alleged infringements of EU law**

These are submissions intended to draw the Commission's attention to instances of potential non-compliance with EU law. Depending on the outcome of the Commission's enquiries into the matter, they may ultimately become part of a legal case.

➔ **Applications for grants under EU law and competition bids**

These documents are sent by the MS in the context of the procedures by which the Commission awards tenders or grants. They can involve significant financial amounts.

➔ **MS submissions in State aid cases and other cases/investigations**

These documents are sent by the Member States in the context of imminent or ongoing investigations with financial, legal or political ramifications.

Specifications and quality requirements

These documents are formal communications from MS and are drafted in great detail, often by lawyers, who ensure that they are well-reasoned and precisely present the legal arguments.

Translations must take into account the legal context. Terms must be appropriate to the subject field and procedure. Translators need to understand the applicable rules (including, where applicable, financial rules), procedures and context the document refers to, and have a solid understanding of the legal concepts involved to ensure accurate terminology. Their translation requires adherence to legal drafting conventions and to legal argumentation and style. Language versions should comply with the [Interinstitutional Style Guide](#), language-specific style guides and any relevant templates.

Other communications from MS and other governmental bodies

This sub-category covers replies to Green papers, White papers, questionnaires, etc.; submissions in response to other forms of consultation; submissions relating to statutory audits/inspections; notification of approvals, mutual recognition, dangerous products, etc.; MS submissions for publication on EU websites; correspondence from MEPs; submissions from EFTA Member States and third countries; and submissions from provincial/regional governments.

Types of documents and their purpose

These documents are submitted by MS or other governmental bodies in the course of the same procedures that involve text categories 1.3 or 2.4 above. While normally intended for internal use and not for publication, these documents can affect the analysis of input and be used as a basis for further action.

➔ **Replies to Green papers, White papers, questionnaires, etc.**

These documents are sent by bodies that have been invited to participate in a consultation process and discuss specific topics at EU level (Green papers) or to discuss proposals for EU action in a particular area (White papers).

➔ **Submissions in response to other forms of consultation**

These are replies to targeted consultation papers issued by the Commission concerning the implementation of EU law or with a view to drafting guidelines in specific policy areas or potential legislative amendments. The responses may feed into legislative amendments and other texts issued by the Commission.

➔ **Submissions relating to statutory audits/inspections**

These documents are communications from MS concerning audit and/or inspection activities associated with the implementation of EU law and/or deployment of funding conducted by the Commission, MS authorities or other entities.

➔ Notification of approvals, mutual recognition, dangerous products, etc.

These documents, which can be highly detailed and technical, are intended either to certify that products subject to mutual recognition have been approved or recognised by the individual MS or to flag up dangerous products in circulation at EU level. Dangerous product notifications are published on Commission websites and may be used as a basis for information or recall campaigns in the interests of public safety.

➔ MS submissions for publication on EU websites

These are documents submitted by Member States for publication on EU websites, either requested by the Commission or sent on the initiative of the Member State. They may cover a wide range of topics and be published for varying periods of time.

➔ Correspondence from MEPs

These are documents sent to the Commission by Members of the European Parliament on a wide range of subject matters. The submissions may be solicited or unsolicited and deal with topics of interest and/or concern to the Commission or the MEP in question.

➔ Submissions from EFTA Member States and third countries

These are documents sent to the Commission by official authorities of [EFTA](#) Member States and third countries on a wide range of subject matters. The submissions may be solicited or unsolicited and deal with topics of interest and/or concern to the Commission or the authority in question.

➔ Submissions from provincial/regional governments

These are documents sent to the Commission by Member States' provincial or regional governments on a wide range of subject matters. The submissions may be solicited or unsolicited and deal with topics of interest and/or concern to the Commission or the government in question.

Specifications and quality requirements

These documents are formal communications from official governmental bodies, often in response to formal EU procedures. As such, their translation requires attention to accuracy and terminology, and compliance with style and linguistic norms.

Communications from non-governmental bodies

This sub-category covers medical reports concerning Commission staff; submissions from lobby groups, businesses, professional associations and NGOs; press articles from MS or third-country publications; and correspondence from private citizens.

Types of documents and their purpose

These documents are usually not for publication and are translated for informational purposes. They may relate to text category 2.4 above and will often influence or be influenced by documents falling under text category 2.3 above. The difference between these documents and documents under category 3.3 (which also relate to category 2.4) is that these documents are written and/or sent by

non-governmental bodies such as lobby groups, professional associations, publications, medical or legal professionals or even private citizens, and therefore they do not have the same formal character as documents translated under the previous category.

➔ **Medical reports concerning Commission staff**

These documents are medical reports submitted by Commission staff members or their health care providers to enable the Commission to make HR decisions concerning that staff member. They are often used by the Commission in its role as employer to make decisions regarding hiring staff, approving long-term sick leave, reimbursing medical expenses, etc. and often contain sensitive information. Personal data should be removed by the requester prior to translation.

➔ **Submissions from lobby groups, businesses, professional associations, NGOs**

These documents are intended to draw attention to the real or potential impact of EU policy decisions or legislation on specific groups or sectors, or to provide information on situations of potential concern that may warrant investigation by the Commission.

➔ **Press articles from MS or third-country publications**

These documents are press articles by publications in MS or third countries. They are usually translated only for informational purposes but in some cases the Commission may decide to take action on the basis of the information they contain.

➔ **Correspondence from private citizens**

These are unsolicited submissions addressed to the Commission or individual Commissioners from private citizens on their own initiative, either directly or via their legal representative.

Specifications and quality requirements

‘Communications from non-governmental bodies’ are informative documents for internal use and are usually not for publication. They may be responses to Commission requests for input, or they may be intended to alert the Commission to potential infringements of rights. The translation of these documents requires attention to accuracy and terminology and compliance with style and linguistic norms..