Jargon / tricky language.

As a general principle **use plain English** when writing for the Commission website. The following lists provide alternatives for

(1)	Jargon / unclear names for EU-related concepts
(2)	false friends / tricky language usage

Often, the 'EU aspect' of terms related to the Commission's activities is implicit but needs to be made explicit for non-expert audiences: *acquis* vs. *body of EU law*;

We haven't included the numerous Latin expressions that regularly turn up in Commission texts. Avoid them where at all possible.

But one person's jargon is another person's ordinary professional language. So **use the words your target audience does**.

1. Jargon

Words and terms	Meanings and alternatives
A	
accession	- **joining** - **membership** - **entry**
ACP countries	- **Africa and the Caribbean and Pacific regions**
acquis	- **EU law (the body of laws that countries wishing to join the EU must transpose into their national legislation)** - **EU rules**
active labour-market policies	- **job-creation schemes/measures** - **measures to help the unemployed back to work**
aquaculture	Bigger than 'fish farming', which is the term most people are familiar with. Includes the farming of fish, shellfish and algae. Aquaculture unexplained may be acceptable in specialist texts, though it cannot hurt to be explicit about what it covers. In texts for the general public, definitely add an explanation. Even if *fish farming* doesn't accurately describe the whole sector, it represents a large percentage of it, so this loose label might be permissible for communication purposes in some contexts.

B	
Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA) **European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC)**	- the Commission's top policy advisers
C	
calls for proposals	*Call for proposals* is the proper term, but it might need more explanation depending on the target audience: EU requests for (researchers, etc.) to propose projects for funding requests for project proposals from (researchers, etc.) call for funding (scored highest when tested with website users)
candidate country	- prospective/aspiring/would-be members - possible/likely/potential future member countries - country that is an official candidate for EU membership - countries that are candidates or potential candidates for EU membership - (EU) membership candidate Technically: one step up from having the "prospect" (*perspective*) of EU membership, but *not all candidates have opened formal negotiations*. Some candidates then move on to formal membership (accession) negotiations / the formal pre-membership process of negotiation and reform (adopting established EU law). - At the very least: EU candidate country (the shorthand form (without *EU* or *country*) is not informative.)
CAP / common agricultural policy	(Depending on context and target audience) - EU farm policy / support / subsidies (Even the full term *common agricultural policy* is not widely known outside stakeholder circles. Only real experts for EU agricultural policy will know that term and search for it)
citizens	Bit of a false friend from French *citoyen* and overused in English texts. Calls to mind administrative procedures to become a citizen of another country. - the general public - individuals - people - Europeans

Citizens' Initiative	- new European petitioning system **And/or explain what it is, e.g.:** **initiative allowing the public to petition the Commission** **directly on specific issues. Good to use the** **word** *petition* **somewhere, since this is essentially what it is.**
civil society	**Consider being more specific if possible.** - **interest groups** - **non-governmental organisations** - **non-profit organisations** - **civil society organisations** - **non-government institutions** - **social organisations or groups** **Civil society organisations – non-governmental groups such** **as trade unions, employers' associations and other social** **groups**
cohesion fund(ing)	- regional development/funding/policy/cohesion **(The idea of regional socio-economic disparities is not** **expressed by** *cohesion* **on its own.)**
College	- (body or group of) Commissioners. The Commissioners acting as a group.
comitology (procedure)	**committee procedure** **committees through which national authorities supervise** **Commission implementation of EU law, etc.** **system of national experts supervising the detailed technical** **aspects of implementing EU law, etc.** **The official term is now** *committee procedure*, **though** *comitology* **is still used frequently.**
Commission	**if necessary, add some explanation, e.g.:** **the EU('s) executive (body), the European Commission**
Committee of the Regions	**needs explanation, e.g.:** **the EU's platform for regional interests, the Committee of the Regions** **body representing local and regional authorities across the EU**
common organisation of the market / CMO / common market organisations	- EU support (regime or package) for farms (e.g. for the wine market) - market management regime/mechanisms/measures/scheme

	- commodity regime - market organisation. *Never CMO*
Communication (document)	needs explanation about what it really contains, e.g.: set of (policy) proposals recommendation for national governments
Community	- EU (unless the legal difference between the Communities and the Union absolutely has to be made clear)
compatible with the single market	- does not confer an unfair advantage - does not distort competition (preventing protectionism and stimulating economic activity)
competence (competencies)	- remit - portfolio - brief - area of responsibility - jurisdiction - powers - authority - is an exclusive competence of = is decided by - skills (for a person) *Competence* in its meaning of *the legal authority of a court or other body to deal with a particular matter* is used in the singular only.
convergence criteria	- requirements for joining (the euro) - euro membership requirements
Council (of ministers)	Depending on context and target audience. Non-experts don't know what the Council of ministers is. - EU leaders - EU governments - EU member countries, etc. - EU (agriculture) ministers meeting in Brussels - agriculture Council = meeting of EU agriculture ministers
cross-border	- within the EU

	- in another/different (EU) country
customs union	**needs explanation:** **no customs duties at internal borders between the EU member states** **common customs duties on imports from outside the EU** **common rules of origin for products from outside the EU**
D	
Decision (Regulation, Directive)	**These are specific types of legislation, which experts will know and understand. For the general public,** *laws* **or** *rules* **is probably enough. But ask yourself whether extra information would be useful to the reader:** **Directives set a goal that all EU countries must achieve, but it is up to the individual countries how they achieve it. Regulations are directly applicable across the EU. Decisions are directly applicable to either an EU country or an individual company, e.g. when the Commission rules on proposed mergers or fines companies for abusing their dominant market position.**
decoupled (payments, i.e. farm subsidies)	- flat-rate *Decoupled* **just means not dependent on production volume.**
delegated acts	**needs explanation:** **non-essential technical amendments (to EU legal acts, by the Commission, without going through the whole lengthy law-making process. Allowed by EP since the Lisbon treaty)**
Delegation, Representation	- (local) EU mission - (local) EU office - EU's representative office - EU office in X country *Delegation* **in English implies a group of representatives sent for a strictly limited time span.** *Representation* **is too generic.**
deliverables	- results - benefits - outcomes
de minimis aid	**needs explanation for non-experts:** **(the level of) subsidies governments can give to companies without having to get EU approval**

	small amounts of state aid that are exempted from Commission approval (no need for 'undertakings' to notify the Commission)
derogation	- exemption - exception - opt-out
DGs	when mentioning DGs, consider explaining what they do or better explaining their role
Directive (Regulation, Decision)	These are specific types of legislation, which experts will know and understand. For the general public, *laws* or *rules* is probably enough. But ask yourself whether extra information would be useful to the reader: Directives set a goal that all EU countries must achieve, but it is up to the individual countries how they achieve it. Regulations are directly applicable across the EU. Decisions are directly applicable to either an EU country or an individual company, e.g. when the Commission rules on proposed mergers or fines companies for abusing their dominant market position.
E	
Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)	very abstract, essentially just *the euro* never use just *EMU*
enlargement	Process whereby countries join the EU. In texts for non-specialists, use something more natural-sounding such as: - expansion - joining
EURES	- European job portal - online jobs service - jobs website - European jobs database (EURES) not: jobs mobility portal
euro area	eurozone (no capital)
European Citizens' Initiative	- European petitioning system explain what it is – an initiative allowing the public to petition the Commission directly on specific issues. Good to use the word *petition* somewhere, since this is essentially what it is.

EuropeAid (cooperation office)	- the EU's development aid office
European Commission	for non-experts add some explanation, e.g.: the EU('s) executive (body), the European Commission
European Council	(depending on context and target audience) - (at the) EU summit - (decision taken by) EU leaders / EU governments
European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC) **predecessor: Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA)**	- the Commission's top policy advisers
European semester	needs explanation: an annual 6-month cycle during which EU governments consult each other to coordinate their economic and budgetary policies an annual cycle of economic policy coordination targeting growth and job creation
European social model	needs explanation: European government intervention through redistribution, high taxes and high public (social) spending / comprehensive welfare cover, etc.
Europe 2020	for non-experts add explanation: the EU's economic growth strategy up to 2020
EU-10	only in statistical tables, but even then add an explanation in text e.g.: *countries that joined (the EU) in 2004*
EU-15	only in statistical tables, but even then add an explanation in text e.g.: *pre-2004 EU countries or members*
EU-25	only in statistical tables, but even then add an explanation e.g.: *EU members before 2007*

EU-28	***Only to be used historically, referring to the time after 2007 but before Brexit*** only in statistical tables, but even then add an explanation
EU-27	Only to be used post-Brexit
ex ante	- upstream - prior - advance
excessive deficit procedure	needs explanation: the threat of sanctions for excessive government deficits and debt (on countries seeking to join the euro)
ex post	- downstream - subsequent
ex post facto	- after the event - retrospectively
F	
fisheries	- fishing - fishing industry - fishing ground - fisheries resources, not fish stocks - sustainable fishing, not sustainable fisheries *Fisheries* is abstract and confusing due to its double meaning (meaning both the business / industry of catching fish and a place where fish are caught).
flexicurity	needs explanation: modernising or reforming labour markets (combining flexibility for employers with security for workers) protecting people not jobs making the job market flexible while maximising security for workers.
free circulation (on the EU market)	- are or can be freely sold throughout the EU
freedom of establishment	Explain for non-experts: - (businesses) setting up outside their home country - freedom to set up (and do) business in any country

	- operate abroad
free movement of workers (e.g. promoting this in the EU)	- helping workers to find jobs in another EU country
frontier worker	- working in one country, living in another - cross-border commuter - cross-border worker
fundamental freedoms (etc.)	- democratic values and practices
G	
grandfather (verb)	needs explanation: to exempt existing practices from a new law, so the law only applies to people who start new practices of that type.
green paper	needs explanation: consultation paper/document discussion paper/document
H	
High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy	(depending on context) - foreign policy chief
human capital (investment in …)	(depending on context and target audience) - people and their skills - education and training
I	
inter alia	- including - partly - for example - among other things - in particular
intergovernmental conference	- negotiations - talks - constitutional convention - 2007 IGC = *formal treaty talks* or *reform treaty talks*

in toto	- completely - as a whole - entirely
IUU fishing	- illegal fishing (acronym stands for Illegal, Unreported & Unregulated)
L	
Lisbon strategy/agenda	risk of confusion with Lisbon treaty, add or replace with an explanatory phrase, e.g.: EU competitiveness strategy or drive EU strategy for economic growth and job creation EU growth and jobs strategy EU growth and job creation drive to develop a leading-edge knowledge economy, etc.
M	
mainstreaming	Refers to the process of taking into account goals such as gender-equality & climate-protection when developing programmes, laws, etc. that at first glance might seem unrelated. - enshrining/anchoring in law and practice - establishing across the board - in all policies - X in other EU policies
Member States	In all contexts except the most legal, we recommend: - EU members - national governments, national authorities (particularly when talking about something *they* must do, such as transpose a directive.)
methodologies	often *methods* is all that is meant
millennium development goals	- UN development goals - poverty-reduction goals
mobile jobseekers	- people looking for work outside their home region/country
modalities	- arrangements - procedures - terms of implementation - details/rules for implementation

monetary stability	- stable prices (i.e. low inflation and reduced external currency shocks)
multiannual financial framework (MFF)	**needs explanation:** **medium-term EU budget** **budget plans for the next 7 years** **7-year EU budget** **budget cap** **cap on spending**
multilingualism	**It's probably clearer to say what is really meant, e.g.:** - **(foreign) languages** - **multilingual communication** - **foreign language use** - **language policy** - **learning languages** - **language learning** - **language skills.**
N	
negative evolution (of the economy)	- **(economic) downturn** - **decline** - **slump**
(European) Neighbourhood policy	**needs explanation:** **EU support programme for countries around its eastern and southern borders / countries in eastern Europe and the Mediterranean**
O	
OLAF	**Add an explanation:** - **EU anti-fraud office**
ordinary legislative procedure	**needs explanation:** - the standard way EU legislation is now adopted
P	
Permanent Representative	- **(top) EU diplomat**
post hoc	- **after this**
Presidency (of the	**for non-EU-experts explain or use alternative:**

council)	- the 6-month rotating/unofficial leadership of the EU - six-month stint in charge of EU affairs - country in charge of, at the helm (of), etc.
proactive	- active - energetic
proportionality	add explanation for non-EU-experts: limiting EU action to the minimum needed (to achieve the goals in the Treaties)
provisions	- laws - rules - points of (EU law)
public procurement	from contractor's perspective: - public (or government) contracts - tenders
R	
reflection group	- high-level working party - panel on future challenges / the future direction of
Regulation (Directive, Decision)	These are specific types of legislation, which experts will know and understand. For the general public, *laws* or *rules* is probably enough. But ask yourself whether extra information would be useful to the reader: Directives set a goal that all EU countries must achieve, but it is up to the individual countries how they achieve it. Regulations are directly applicable across the EU. Decisions are directly applicable to either an EU country or an individual company, e.g. when the Commission rules on proposed mergers or fines companies for abusing their dominant market position.
Representation, Delegation	- (local) EU mission - (local) EU office - EU's representative office - EU office in X country *Delegation* in English implies a group of representatives sent for a strictly limited time span. *Representation* is too generic.
Research framework programme (e.g.	- EU's (past) research (funding) programme

7th research framework programme / FP7)	- EU's main [funding programme for scientific research](#), Horizon 2020
S	
Schengen area	**for non-experts add explanation:** - **no-border zone** - **border-free area** - **passport-free travel**
'Six pack'	**needs explanation, e.g.:** the [2010 proposals for 6 EU regulations](#) to improve monitoring and control of member countries' budgets and public debt
Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)	**In most cases, you can use *small businesses* instead. Note that even the Commission is using the term in legislation (see [Small Business Act](#)).** **Use *SMEs* only if your readers will likely know it so well that they search for it. Even then, work alternative terms into your text:** - **small businesses / firms** - **small and mid-size businesses / companies** small and medium-sized businesses / companies
social dialogue	**For non-experts:** - **labour relations** - **staff-management negotiations/relations** - **employers and unions** - **a constructive relationship/dialogue between employers and workers**
social enterprise	**needs explanation:** businesses whose primary purpose is social, rather than to maximise profit distribution to private owners or shareholders businesses that have philanthropic goals, like charities and non-profit bodies often a non-profit organisation
social partners	**for non-experts:** - **employers and (trade) unions** - **employers and workers** - **employers and workers' groups**

	- **employers' groups and workers movements**
solidarity	- **social justice/fairness** - **support** - **cooperation** *Solidarity* **has a narrower usage in English than French.**
stabilisation & association agreement	**add explanation or use alternative:** - **pre-membership talks or stage**
stakeholders	**specify what groups are actually being consulted, e.g.:** - **groups affected by (our) policy (on …)** - **groups concerned/involved…** - **consumers/workers** - **business, authorities – and their representative groups (trade federations, consumer organisations, unions)** - **producers, retailers, etc.**
subsidiarity (principle)	**for non-experts add explanation, e.g.:** **Principle whereby the EU only takes action if it's more effective than nationally, regionally or locally taken action does not respect subsidiarity or proportionality = exceeds the EU's powers or remit** **decentralisation (principle)** **prioritising action by national governments**
T	
tertiary education	- **post-secondary education** - **higher and further education**
Treaty of Rome	- **EU's founding treaty**
TV without frontiers	- **EU broadcasting rules** - **rules on audiovisual content**
U	
Union	**Not used in English as a synonym for** *EU*.
V	
vade mecum	- **handbook** - **manual** - **(operating) instructions**

W	
white paper	needs explanation, e.g.: **EU (policy) paper** **EU proposals** **set of proposals** **proposal paper** **blueprint**
wholesale energy markets	**for non-experts add explanation:** **markets where gas and electricity generating and trading companies supply energy to energy retailers (the companies that sell us our gas and electricity)**

2. False Friends / Tricky language

Words and terms	Meanings and alternatives
A	
actor(s)	from the French *acteurs* - interested group - body - organisation - party - participant - interest - interest group - player - those involved - operator
actual	means *real* or *true* **Don't confuse with the French *actuel*, Dutch *actueel*, German *aktuell*, Italian *attuale* and Portuguese *atual*, which mean *current* or *topical*.**

actually	1. in fact *"we must pay attention to what young people are actually doing"* 2. used to emphasize that something someone has said or done is surprising. *"he actually expected me to be pleased about it!"*
assist at	means *to help* not *to attend* Don't confuse with the French *assister à* and similar expressions in other Romance languages.
B	
biannual / biennial	- twice a year / every two years - (biannual is almost always misused)
bi-weekly, bi-monthly	- twice a week / twice a month
C	
control	means: 1. to exercise power over/to be in charge or command of something 2. to limit / to restrict something Don't confuse with the French *contrôler*, German *kontrollieren* and similar words in other languages. It doesn't mean to *audit*, *check, monitor* or *verify.*
D	
delay	In English, if something is delayed, it means it is late, postponed or held up, i.e. the time limit has passed. Don't confuse with the French *délai*, which refers to a period of time or a time limit or deadline.
E	
eventual / eventually	means *in the end* Don't confuse with the French *éventuellement* and the German *eventuell*, which mean *possibly*.
F	
foresee(n)	means to *predict* or *forecast* the future, usually involving a crystal ball Don't confuse with the French *prévoir/ prévu* and similar expressions in other Romance languages. The French terms

	are often used to refer to the provisions laid down in legislation. In this sort of context, the best straight equivalent is *provide for*. alternatives: - planned - forecast - scheduled - envisaged - set out in
G	
global	- comprehensive - joint - overall - integrated
I	
informatic(s)	- IT - computer or computing (as adjective) - computerised - electronic
L	
level (e.g. at EU/national/regional level)	Don't overuse. Useful alternatives are: - across the EU - nationally - regionally - in every (EU) country
P	
project	The French *projet* does not always translate as *project* in English. For example, *projet de budget* means draft budget and *projet de loi* means bill or draft law.
pursuant to	- under
R	
reinforce (strengthen)	Avoid overuse – from French *renforcer* - improve

	- enhance - consolidate - boost - energise - increase - tighten - revitalise - expand - step up - put greater emphasis on - focus more on
S	
sensible	**means** *reasonable* **Don't confuse with the French** *sensible* **and the German** *sensibel*, **which mean** *sensitive*.