01. European Commission websites overview

Introduction

'European Commission websites' refers to the entire landscape of websites owned by the European Commission's services. Collectively, they represent the Commission's web presence. The definitions, categories, branding and rules that apply to the European Commission's websites and their development can be found below.

Rules

> ⊗ All European Commission websites must follow the rules laid down in the Europa Web Guide.

Categories of European Commission websites

Depending on their type of content, European Commission websites follow specific rules depending on the site category they belong to.

3 websites categories have been defined:

- Core websites
  - there are 2 core websites: the inter-institutional website and the European Commission website
  - host stable, core information, common to most Commission departments
  - have a thematic structure
  - serve as hubs for onward navigation to further thematic or specific content
- Standardised websites
  - give details of policies for which the DG/Executive agency is responsible
  - are strongly aligned with the core sites to provide seamless navigation between core and standardised sites
- Harmonised websites
  - address specific communication needs, and as a result, have specific content and technical needs, e.g. Campaign websites; Event websites; Blogs; Network websites; Partnership websites; Information systems; Internal policy websites

Branding

All European Commission websites are either

- EU branded: should be used for online communication if the mission and content go beyond the activities of one single EU institution or cover a policy, activity or campaign which is either institution-agnostic or common to the different EU institutions and bodies; or
- EC branded: the EC logo should be used, in line with the rules in the Europa Web Guide, for online communication stemming directly from the Commission's actions in its areas of responsibility and its executive role, e.g. legislation and policy initiatives, work programme, services, official documents, news and current affairs (press releases, events, etc.).

URLs

All European Commission websites must be hosted on the 'europa.eu' domain and implement the global banner webtool.

Exceptions:

- for promotional purposes a '.eu' web address can be registered and redirected to the website hosted on the 'europa.eu' domain. See Promotional URLs
- exceptionally, where a site is jointly owned with a third party, it may be hosted outside the 'europa.eu' domain. The address should be decided on with the third party, with preference given to the top-level domain '.eu'. DG Comm must validate this choice

Definitions

European Commission websites

European Commission websites are all websites owned by one of the European Commission departments (Directorates-General, Executive Agencies and Service Departments).

Website

A website is a collection of related web pages

- sharing common characteristics (theme, navigation and visual aspects)
- identified (internally and/or externally) by a site name
- managed and communicated as a single entity
- hosted on a specific instance of a web server

Site owner

As regards the European Commission (including executive agencies), the website owner is the service that does any of the following:

- defines and implements the strategy for the site
- holds direct financial responsibility* for the site
- is accountable for the site

* EU institutions hold direct financial responsibility for a site, if the site is created through a call for tender or by internal means.
They are not considered directly financially responsible for a site if it is developed using EC funding or a grant.

Web page

A webpage is any content encoded in a hypertext formatted document (e.g. HTML). A webpage regroups web assets needed to convey an editorial message and the means to display it correctly.

We can identify two main types of webpages:

- Static – a page where the HTML code is stored on the server in the form that it is delivered to the user. Static webpages typically have a unique URL for each page
- Dynamic – a page that is assembled at the time it is requested. The same URL may display different content depending on user, time, location, etc

Contact and support

If you require further assistance, please contact:

Comm Europa Management

European Commission
DG Communication
Unit B.3
Europa Web Communication

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