

03. Legal notice and copyright

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General legal requirements

Rules

All content published on Europa - whether online versions of official documents or content adapted to the Web - must meet the following legal requirements:

- legal notice and copyright - see below
- [cookies](#)
- disclaimer - see below
- data protection notice - see [Data Protection](#)
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines - see [Accessibility](#)

Guidelines

- define who will manage requests from third parties to reproduce content/pages from your site. If necessary, European Commission staff can contact the Central IP Service for support. See [Contact and support](#) (EU Login required) for details.
- if you want to publish content that your unit/DG has not produced itself, check its copyright status first. If the content was produced outside the European institutions, check that it is free of copyright before using it, otherwise acquire copyright clearance

References

- [SEC\(1999\)1410](#) ([PDF](#) - [Word](#)) sets out the specifications for the first two standard clauses and other specific clauses.
- [Annex to SEC\(1999\)1410](#) ([PDF](#) - [Word](#)) contains the texts in the other languages (not available when the document was published)
- [Regulation 45/2001 on the processing of personal data](#) [120KB].
- [Commission Decision \(2011/833/EU\) on the reuse of Commission documents](#) - the current EC policy on re-use of European Commission documents

Legal notice and copyright

Rules

Appropriate disclaimers and notices must be inserted in precise terms and wherever relevant.

Why?

- all works such as publications or documents issued by the European Union institutions and bodies, irrespective of the medium, are subject to copyright, whether or not this is explicitly stated, except for works excluded from copyright protection by the relevant applicable law
- it is essential to ensure the protection of the European Union's intellectual property rights with regard to works disseminated via the Europa website
- the rights of third-party literary or artistic works incorporated in EU websites and electronic documents must be protected

Guidelines

EU copyright

For literary (articles/studies/reports/etc. or excerpts thereof) or artistic (photos/graphs/drawings/etc.) works prepared by EU statutory personnel within the context of their work for the EU institutions or bodies, the copyright rests with the European Union, in accordance with Article 18 of the Staff Regulations of officials of the European Communities.

For contributions/articles/studies/reports/etc. prepared by external companies/contractors on commission for EU institutions or bodies, and subject to standard EU service/study contracts, the general terms and conditions stipulate that any results or rights, including copyright and other intellectual or industrial property rights obtained in performance of the contract, shall be owned exclusively by the European Union, except where copyright or any other right of ownership already exists prior to the entering into force of the contract.

The use by an EU institution or body of contributions/articles/studies/reports/etc. submitted by third-party experts or groups of experts is subject to a 'publication/translation rights agreement'.

The European Commission has a reuse policy regarding its works that is implemented by [Commission Decision of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents](#) . According to Article 2(1), this Decision only applies to public documents produced by the Commission or by public and private entities on its behalf.

Third-party copyright

Whenever third-party literary (articles/studies/reports/etc. or excerpts thereof) or artistic (photos/graphs/drawings/etc.) work is included within an EU website or electronic document, whatever the medium, the institution or body shall be responsible for obtaining the author's or, as the case may be, right-holder's permission in writing and shall pay any fees required for the rights granted and ensure that appropriate acknowledgement is given in the publication.

So-called 'royalty free' images or photos found on the Internet or purchased on CD-ROM are not public domain and are copyright protected. Therefore it is essential to respect all terms of use specified.

For this purpose, an agreement setting out basic formal conditions shall be concluded between the DG or other originating department and the author /copyright holder of this material. Whereas the ownership remains with the author/copyright holder, a 'publication/translation rights agreement' not only authorises the EU to use/publish/translate the material, but also authorises the EU to permit further use/reproduction/translation thereof. It also states, if relevant, that the author/copyright holder has obtained unfettered rights for the reuse in his work of materials on which copyright or any other right of ownership already exists. A duly signed original of such agreements shall be kept within the relevant files. For further information, please contact op-info-copyright@publications.europa.eu.

Moreover, when using third-party material, whether textual or artistic, appropriate acknowledgement must be given to the author/copyright holder thereof (for photos, for example, a concise caption can be inserted). An additional courtesy acknowledgement may be mentioned as follows: 'Reproduced with kind permission of the author(s)'.

Links to external websites

Any EU institution or body wishing to create a link to a third-party website shall make prior enquiries about the terms and conditions set out on the website concerned, and it shall keep thereto. Furthermore, notifying the webmaster of a third-party website of the creation of a link from the EU 'EUROPA' website is considered a matter of 'netiquette' and legal caution.

In general, only link to pages that provide high-quality content that is different from the information on your page but relevant to it. Remember the Commission is not legally responsible for the content of the sites you link to, but their quality, content and tone should not reflect badly on the Commission.

Copyright notice

Rules

It is a legal requirement to display the copyright notice at the top of every page of the Europa website.

Guidelines

A general copyright notice is included in the "Legal notice" service which defines the limits of responsibility and draws attention to the copyright restrictions of the Europa website.

Reuse policy does not apply to works created by other EU Institutions or bodies. This difference is reflected in the following 2 copyright notices.

European Commission website notice

[Read the specific copyright notice for the European Commission website](#)

Inter-institutional websites notice

[Read the copyright notice for websites on europa.eu](#)

Disclaimer

Publications

Rules

An appropriate disclaimer must be included by the author in publications in one of the following ways

- © European Union, [year]

Responsibility for the information and views set out in this [report/study/article/publication...] lies entirely with the author(s).

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

- © European Union, [year]

The content of this [report/study/article/publication...] does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed in the [...] / [therein] lies entirely with the author(s).

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

- © European Union, [year]

The information and views set out in this [report/study/article/publication...] are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Before displaying the wording 'Reproduction is authorised ...', either of the following conditions must be set

No third-party textual or artistic material is included in the publication without the copyright holder's prior consent to further dissemination by other third parties

An additional clearly positioned notice specifies that the reproduction of the third-party textual or artistic material included is prohibited

Contact and support

If you require further assistance, please contact:

[Comm Europa Management](#)

European Commission
DG Communication
Unit B.3
Europa Web Communication