

07. Dates, numbers and symbols

Dates

- write the day as a number and the month in letters - e.g. 12 May
- use all 4 digits for the year - e.g. 2020 (not '20)
- don't use commas - e.g. 14 July 1999 (not 14 July, 1999)
- don't use 'the' before the date. Don't use letters (1~~st~~, 2~~nd~~, 3~~rd~~, 4~~th~~)
- **example:** *on 9 October 2019* (not "*on the 9th of October 2019*")

Date ranges

Separate dates with either prepositions or dashes but don't mix them.

- *from 1990 to 1995*, **not** *from 1990-95*
- *between 1990 and 1995*, **not** *between 1990-95*
- *the 2007-08 report is available online*

For date ranges where you indicate the year only, use a short dash with no spaces.

- *1996-2006*

If the years are in the same century, don't repeat the century.

- *1939-45*

For date ranges where you indicate more than just the year, use a short dash with a space on either side of the dash.

- *2 - 5 March 2014*
- *25 December 2011 - 30 January 2012*

Time

- use the 24 hour clock
- include the time zone (only once per date range)
- separate hours and minutes with a decimal point (not colon)
- *09.00 (CET)*
- *23.59 (EST)*
- *17 March 2019, 9.00 - 18 March 2019, 18.00 (CET)*

Numbers

In most cases don't write numbers out, use numerals (1, 2, 3) which are easier to read onscreen.

However, avoid 2 numerals next to each other: *8 oneday sessions*, not *8 1-day sessions*.

Decimals

Use points, not commas, to indicate a decimal point

- *9.7 billion people*
- *2.3 million light years*

Thousands

Use commas, not points or spaces, to separate groups of thousands

- *DG X employs 2,350 officials. DG Y spent € 1,234,567 on IT infrastructure last year*

Exception: In tables, separate groups of thousands by a hard space

No. of officials employed by DG X	2 350
IT expenditures, DG Y	1 234 567

Fractions

Avoid using fractions. Decimals are easier to read and understand onscreen.

- Duration of visit: 2.5 hours (NOT 2½ hours)

Numbers greater than 1 million

For readability, use the words million, billion and trillion rather than a series of 000's

- The Commission has committed €2.5 billion to the initiative
- The world economy has grown 470.1 trillion % since 2001

Billion means a thousand million (not a million million) Trillion means a million million.

In general do not abbreviate million and billion. However to avoid excessive repetition (for example in tables) they can be abbreviated to 'm' and 'bn' respectively. Use a space after the digits.

Country	Deficit (€)
Country A	10 m
Country B	15 bn

Recommendations for rounding large numbers

• if we don't need the highest level of accuracy, we can use rounding e.g. *€60 million dedicated to language training for migrants*, not *€60,250,005 dedicated...*

• use only the number of digits that are necessary and make sense for clear communication

• a disclaimer should be added, when applicable, at the beginning or end of the publication describing the rounding policy and the reasons for possible inconsistencies - e.g. Figures have been rounded to one decimal place for the sake of brevity

Telephone numbers

Write the full number including the international code. Use + instead of 00. Separate the regional prefix from the main number.

If the number does not send the caller to a specific department within the Commission, add *Commission switchboard* in brackets.

Example:

+32 2 299 11 11 (Commission switchboard)

Symbols

Do not use spaces between symbols and figures.

Avoid using the ampersand (&) - use 'and' instead.

Use the following symbols

- currency symbols: €150 (EUR, GBP can also be used but the symbol is better)
- percentage: 5%
- temperature: 37°C

Do not use a space between the numbers and the symbol.

Contact and support

If you require further assistance, please contact:

[Comm Europa Management](#)

European Commission
DG Communication
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