

# 03. Audiovisual

## Scope of the rules for audiovisual type of content

These rules and guidelines for audiovisual content apply to all **videos, audio recordings, photos and images** for external communication produced by, purchased by or licensed to the European Commission and its contractors. They do not apply to stock footage, stock images or stock music purchased from agencies with limited rights for the illustration of web pages or publications.

## Types of audiovisual content

### Clips:

Different types of users would much rather watch a video than read an article, and studies show clips are easier to remember. They can also help improve audience engagement figures for the website. However, they have to be professionally executed and short.

### Audio recordings:

Used to capture parts of a speech or make a podcast. Make sure you use adequate equipment for the recording and, when possible, a speaker familiar with public speaking. Recordings must be short and impactful, so cut off all unnecessary parts in order to keep the audience focused.

### Images:

Visuals support your message, engage the visitor and build trust.

- Check that they are:
  - **Communicative:** images should convey an important message and/or serve a clear purpose (not just decoration)
  - **Engaging:** images should be relevant and persuasive
  - **Meaningful:** images should enhance the content and help to tell the story (but not repeat it)
- choose images from the [Audiovisual Portal](#) over any other option when applicable
- research your images to make sure that they help illustrate your point/concept
- use images to introduce and explain a policy, service or feature
- use high-quality images with good colour contrast and focal point
- always ensure your images follow [file format rules](#)
- do not use decorative background images
- do not use embed text in visuals. It lowers the content's findability and can be particularly cumbersome if you need to have the visual translated into different languages
- do not resize the image in a way that compromises the quality
- avoid generic stock images that could be found on other sites whenever possible

If you have questions about creating audiovisual content for your website, requests and research for videos, audios and photos contact [comm-frontdesk@ec.europa.eu](mailto:comm-frontdesk@ec.europa.eu).

## Purpose

The purpose of these rules and guidelines is to ensure that audiovisual material is:

- compliant with legal requirements
- stored, distributed and made available to all interested parties via a central access point, [the Audiovisual Portal](#).

## Rules

All audiovisual content intended for external communication in the European Commission websites must be:

- published on the [Audiovisual Portal](#)
- played using the [Europa video player](#)
- free of copyright.

## Hosting

Audiovisual content **must** be uploaded to [the Audiovisual](#) portal, the mandatory Central Deposit for Audiovisual Productions and cannot be hosted locally on websites. Depositing audiovisual content in the Audiovisual Library is mandatory for all DGs by [decision of the Central Communication Steering Committee of 6 November 2018](#).

In return, the Audiovisual Library ensures the long-term preservation of the material and distribution/publishing via Europe by Satellite, the Audiovisual Portal, EU-Tube and Europeana.

If necessary to meet a communication need, the content can also be hosted on external services or social media. In this case, it must still be provided to the AV Library.

See also the [detailed guidelines for depositing audiovisual material](#) from the AV Library.

## Playback

### On Commission websites:

- all clips uploaded to the [Audiovisual Library](#) (EU login required) must be embedded in Commission websites using the [Europa video player](#)
- videos that are not (yet) available in the Audiovisual Library may only be embedded in Commission websites using the [cookie consent kit for videos](#) (for approved platforms only)
- avoid embedding videos owned and published by third parties, unless they are from /hosted on trusted sources e.g. EU institutions or the United Nations.

Note: Flash format is not allowed under any circumstances and pages hosting Flash animations are removed since 1 January 2020.

### On the official Youtube channel of the European Commission:

If relevant, videos can be made available on [EUTube](#) (once uploaded to the Audiovisual Library).

### On other platforms:

If required by communication need, videos can be made available on other services and social media platforms. In this case, it has nevertheless to be provided also to the AV Library.

## Copyright

In general, images in the [Audiovisual portal](#) are free to download and use, unless they are accompanied by a copyright notice mentioning another entity /individual as the copyright owner.

- As the AV Portal is a part of the ec.europa.eu website, the pictures are owned by the EU and do not require a copyright notice (the Legal Notice of the ec.europa.eu website applies).
- Copyrighted images neither owned nor licensed to the institutions must not be published, and if they are, should be removed immediately.
- All IP acquisitions (licences and copyright ownership) and the accompanying contracts should be registered in the [EU IP Catalogue and Management Platform \(EURECA\)](#)  
For the registration, contact DG COMM IPR Correspondent at [COMM-IPR@ec.europa.eu](mailto:COMM-IPR@ec.europa.eu)
- Keep the proof of acquisition of copyrighted third-party images on file or on paper. Include this requirement in contracts with external service providers
- Check whether model releases for pictures containing personal images have been signed (or that the contract mentions that all third-party rights have been cleared)
- Check whether the photos of buildings are subject to copyright. This depends on the country in which the buildings are located or on the organisation managing the building.

Site owners must guarantee that all copyright issues have been addressed for all images used on their site:

- **If the European Commission is the copyright owner** of the pictures distributed on the ec.europa.eu domain, there is no need to display copyright information. In this case the legal notice on the ec.europa.eu website applies: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/legal-notice\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/legal-notice_en)
- **If the European Commission acquired** the pictures on a basis of a license, the pictures are licensed to the EU and we must declare the copyright ownership under the terms of the license.
- If a DG produces work **using third party components**, the use of the following disclaimer is recommended:

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The Commission's reuse policy is implemented by Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39 – <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2011/833/oj>).

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The EU does not own the copyright in relation to the following elements:

- Cover page illustration, © Author name / [stock.adobe.com](https://stock.adobe.com)
- [page XX, element concerned], source: [e.g. [Fotolia.com](https://www.fotolia.com)] ...
- (...)

For more information on intellectual property issues regarding the use of images, visit the [legal notice and copyright](#) section of this web guide and see [Intellectual Property](#) and [Procedures](#). (EU Login required).

## Accessibility

Audio content, videos, images and graphics must comply with [accessibility standards](#).

Images and graphics:

- Always add appropriate alt text to images to make them accessible to people with disabilities. Use this [alt text decision tree](#) to help.
- For complex graphics (such as graphs, charts and infographics), you must provide a fulltext alternative.
- Avoid images of text. If an image contains text, make sure the information is available elsewhere on the page.
- The [W3C WAI Images Tutorial](#) provides more practical guidance on making images accessible.

Audio and video:

- For audio and video content, you may need to provide a transcript, captions or other accessibility features. Check this guide to [making audio and video media content accessible](#) to find out which accessibility aspects your content needs.

## Related links

[Audiovisual Library](#)

[Europa video player](#)

[Web streaming](#)

## Contact and support

Need further assistance on this topic? Please contact the team in charge of the [Europa Domain Management](#) (EU Login required).