

02. EU branded harmonised websites

Background

EU branded harmonised websites:

- cover policies, activities or campaigns which are either institution neutral or common to the different EU institutions and bodies
- have a wide target audience, which does not need specific knowledge of the EU Institutions to navigate the site (in all EU official languages).

The EU branded harmonised websites align strongly with the inter-institutional website's look and feel.

Rules

URLs

According to Europa domain rules, EU branded websites are hosted on the 3rd or 4th level of the europa.eu domain, in keeping in line with the Commission's rules on [URL structure](#).

Ownership

As far as the Commission is concerned, all the content on EU branded harmonised websites is under the responsibility of one or more Commission Departments.

All requests for a new URL name is subject to approval. The DG's web team or communication unit must initiate [the revamps and new websites procedure](#) and send a Web Request Form to [Comm Europa Management](#).

Moreover, website owners must:

- take editorial responsibility for the content of their site(s)
- ensure compliance with all Europa Web Guide rules as specified in the Web Request Approval they receive when they launch the website.

Architecture

EU branded websites are independent from the inter-institutional website and have their own architecture. However, it is strongly recommend aligning with its breadcrumbs structure:

- The first element of the breadcrumb must always be labelled 'Home' and must link to the homepage of the actual site where the current user page is located. The home page is followed by its child pages, e.g. Home > 1stlevel of the website > 2nd level > page title.

Usability testing has proven that it is better to put the label 'Home' rather than the name of the site because it is:

- shorter
- more easily recognisable

Design

To be identified as a member of the Europa family, the EU branded sites must align with [the EU branded harmonised website design](#), follow [general rules on logos and icons](#) and comply with [accessibility rules](#).

Content

The content must follow the [writing guidelines](#) and be translated according to the [language policy](#).

Development

We recommend building EU branded harmonised websites using [the Europa Web Publishing Platform](#), the corporate web development platform that ensures IT security to all websites and provides components that are already compliant with the rules from the Europa Web Guide.

Legal aspects

EU branded harmonised websites must comply with [Privacy, security and legal notices](#).

Contact and support

If you require further assistance, please contact: [Comm Europa Management](#).