

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, confirm you have the necessary rights to do so. If the content is not fully owned by the European Union, please make sure you obtain an authorisation (licence) that allows its use and always include an appropriate notice, indicating the copyright owner.

References

- [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/1725](#)
- [The current EC policy on re-use of European Commission documents](#)
- [The decision adopting the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License as an open licence for the Commission's reuse policy](#) (Article 6 of Decision 2011/833/EU).

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 must be subject to a prior licence agreement (possibly 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.

The Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License (CC BY 4.0) was adopted as the Commission's open licence under this decision. For further information, please consult the document "[Reuse guidelines – Using Creative Commons licences for the distribution and reuse of Commission documents](#)" (EU login required).

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 licence agreement (this can be a publication /translation rights agreement as well) is needed to authorise the EU to use the material. 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. A concise caption, in line with the licence requirements, should be inserted (for instance, for photos for which a licence has been obtained from Adobe Stock, the following notice should be used "*© Agency Name/Author Name - stock.adobe.com*"). To clearly exclude the work from the scope of the Commission Reuse Decision, it is further recommended to expressly indicate next to the caption "all rights reserved".

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. Visit the web guide section about [linking](#) to learn about external links evaluation criteria.

Copyright notice

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.

The Commission reuse decision does not apply to works created by other EU Institutions or bodies. This difference is reflected in the following two 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](#)

Legal notice (disclaimer)

In the case of publications, the author must add a legal notice to the copyright notice, identifiers and publisher's information (when printed). Please refer to the Publications Office's [Interinstitutional style guide](#) for more information regarding the different types of disclaimers.

There is no need for a disclaimer for other types of work.

Contact and support

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