



The use of official EU languages when communicating with the public - Practical recommendations for the EU administration

Correspondence - 02/07/2020

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These practical recommendations serve to guide the EU administration on the use of the 24 official EU languages when communicating with the public. They result from a public consultation carried out by the European Ombudsman and reflect comments received from EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies on a draft of the recommendations.

Each EU institution, body, office and agency should :

1. Establish a **clear policy on the use of official EU languages** , setting out which languages are used in which type of situation (for example, in public consultations, administrative procedures, press relations, or the use of social media).
2. **Publish this policy** on its website in all official languages in an easily accessible format.
3. See to it that the policy is complied with and **applied consistently** throughout the organisation, for example, by assigning this task to a unit or team, creating a designated 'language officer' or through a dedicated section in the annual report.
4. Ensure that **any restrictions** on the use of official languages are **objective, proportionate and transparent**. Language restrictions should not be imposed *exclusively* due to cost or time issues, but primarily following an assessment of the impact and relevance of the information for specific stakeholder groups and the public.
5. Publish **summaries of key issues in all or as many official languages as possible** , if language restrictions are applied.
6. Make available in all official languages those **parts of its websites that are of particular interest to the public** . This should include, at least, the homepage and pages giving information about its role and contact details.
7. Ensure that **citizens** , who write to the EU administration in the official language of their choice, **receive a reply in the same language** within a reasonable time frame.



8. Aim to make **public consultations available in all official languages** at the beginning of the consultation process. If it is not possible to publish all consultation documents in all official languages, make clear that contributions are accepted in all official languages.

9. Pool translation resources , where possible, to reduce costs and ensure that citizens receive more information in more languages.

10. Make **maximum use of all available translation tools** and technologies.