



DRAFT

The use of EU official languages when communicating with the public

- A short guide for the EU administration -

This short guide offers practical tips for EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies when communicating with the public. The guidelines result from a public consultation carried out by the European Ombudsman on the use of EU official languages by the EU administration.

Each EU institution, body, office and agency should:

1. **Establish a clear policy on the use of EU official languages, setting out which languages are used in which situation (for example, in public consultations, administrative procedures or press relations).**
2. **Publish this policy on its website in all official languages.**
3. **See to it that the policy is complied with and applied consistently throughout the organisation, for example, by appointing a designated 'language officer' or by producing a regular report.**
4. **Ensure that any restrictions on the use of languages are objective, proportionate and transparent, and take into account the impact and relevance of the information for specific stakeholder groups and the public. Language restrictions should not be imposed *exclusively* based on cost or time constraints.**
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.**
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. **Use, or expand the use of, machine translations, at least as an aid to human translators.**