

ANNEX T8

EUR-LEX WEB USABILITY ASSESSMENT

Excerpt from the final study

1 Section 1: Introduction

[...]

2 Section 2: Executive Summary

[...]

2.1 [...]

2.2 [...]

2.3 [...]

2.4 Key findings

In general, the users **strongly appreciate** the content of the EUR-Lex website.

They often refer to how hard it must be to keep all the content up-to-date in all different languages, and express their admiration for the Publications Office's efforts in this respect.

EUR-Lex is seen as a unique website in its kind and many users also 'need' the site because they can't find the information elsewhere.

Therefore, there is a lot of appreciation for what the site has to offer.

Most (very) experienced user, with a good or thorough knowledge of EU law, seem to find their way around the site, be it not always as they would like to, but in general, most of these users have developed strategies to find the information they are looking for.

However, there are also equally experienced users who are less happy with the system. They don't intuitively find what they need. In some case they don't even use the website's own search facilities, but an external search engine to search for EUR-Lex documents. Because they get lost within the search results or they don't find a way to comfortably browse certain types of categories within the site.

The novice (or first time) users on the other hand – from which we received most comments – are much less happy with EUR-Lex. They get very quickly confused or stuck, they don't feel that enough (or appropriate) help is offered on the site and they have serious problems with the 'Simple' Search (both with its functionalities as with the results that are generated). For them, the search options that are presented are generally too complicated and they can not find the information they are looking for.

Besides these specific issues, that in most cases are experience-related, there are also a number of other issues that are valid for everyone. These issues are related to the general structure/design of the website, which make them 'crucial' usability issues: for example, all users seem to have problems with the conceptual design and information architecture of the site, as well as with the general navigation features.

One concrete example: they all use very often the "back" button to browse the site instead of using the internal navigation facilities (as they are not convenient or not consistent), which is a very serious usability issue as it causes a lot of confusion.

This all means that the website "as such" is not perceived as a very usable one. And that should absolutely be addressed.

That is also the reason why we classified some findings as 'critical' (even if they don't prevent a user from completing a task). They are related to the 'heart' of the site and are not in line with general usability principles.

Many (detailed) examples can be found in the test results sections.

2.5 General overview of the findings

The Usability Assessment revealed a lot of issues that could (read: should) be improved in order to make the EUR-Lex website more user-friendly and easier to use. Both novice and expert users are not happy with the way the website currently works or is organized/structured.

This is clearly shown by the high number of different findings that were identified: **30**. These findings are divided as follows:

- Critical usability problems: 10 findings
- Serious usability problems: 10 findings
- Minor problems: 10 findings

All findings are numbered but the numbering within each category (critical, serious, minor) doesn't necessarily reflect a severity ranking within that category.

If it were only the novice users who had problems with the general set-up of the EUR-Lex website we would undoubtedly have had less critical issues, but also expert-users have their 'worries'.

And in most cases the usability experts participating at the project discovered the same issues, which confirms the analysis of the test results.

Besides 'problems' we also received positive comments and suggestions for additions or modifications. These issues appear respectively under the categories "positive elements" and "suggestions".

Findings 1 to 10: critical usability problems

Critical usability problems are problems that are imperative to fix as they seriously hamper the user's experience with a website or product, they should therefore be given "the highest priority".

Leaving critical problems in a system will prevent users from having a positive browsing experience and global appreciation for the system.

Moreover, in some cases these problems can cause serious confusion and frustration while the user executes regular and/or more experienced tasks within the system. And in exceptional cases, these problems can prevent users from completing a task (because they give up or leave the site for example..).

Based upon the observations gathered during the Usability Assessment, the following findings have been classified as "critical problems":

1. Be consistent
2. Improve information architecture
3. Improve Simple Search
4. Provide clear and consistent navigational options
5. Provide descriptive page titles
6. Eliminate horizontal scrolling
7. Remove Accessibility statement*
8. Improve window management
9. Use meaningful link labels and place them intuitively

10. Help first-time and novice users

** Finding n° 7, although out of the scope of the project, has been added to the results and classified as "critical" because Accessibility claims that don't (entirely) correspond to reality are – by default – considered as a "very serious issue"*

Findings 11 to 20: serious usability problems

Serious usability problems are major problems that are important to fix, they should therefore be given "high priority".

Fixing them will increase the website's usability significantly.

Based upon the observations gathered during the Usability Assessment, the following findings have been classified as "serious problems":

11. Avoid links to "empty", "outdated", "current" or non-existing pages
12. Designate used links
13. Improve breadcrumb navigation
14. Avoid mixture of different languages on the same page
15. Use accurate translations
16. Clearly identify (un)available language versions
17. Ensure that Help texts & FAQs are usable and findable
18. Break up long linear documents; add internal ToC
19. Provide contextual Help
20. Improve error handling

Findings 21 to 30: minor usability problems

In general, **minor usability problems** concern an enhancement of some very particular issues.

Fixing them can be given low priority, which doesn't mean that they can be ignored: the overall user experience will greatly benefit from these enhancements.

Based upon the observations gathered during the Usability Assessment, the following findings have been classified as "minor problems":

21. Splash screen: unintuitive language list
22. Use known icons for known features
23. User registration: inform users
24. Handling of 'Time Outs'
25. Simple search: provide representative examples
26. Design for common browsers and popular operating systems
27. Improve text readability
28. Use a sitemap that reflect the website's conceptual structure
29. Avoid or clarify jargon
30. Link to the homepage

Suggestions

1. Search by natural number: 'All legislation' radio button
2. Missing functionalities
3. Improve design
4. Documents: toggle between language versions impossible
5. Customization
6. Community / forum

Any classification is of course "subjective", and this classification is not different.

This means that there will be issues that could have easily been put elsewhere in the ranking. But a choice has to be made and the usability experts feel that this is a good basis for the improvement of the usability of the EUR-Lex website.

For example: "Link to the homepage" (now classified as "minor") is not really a 'minor' issue, because providing clear and consistent ways to easily go back to a website's homepage is very important.

But there are other issues that we consider as more important/urgent to fix, especially because many users gave comments on them or because they caused a lot of trouble/confusion when users were executing the tasks.

This classification should therefore not be considered as a "static" list: it is very well possible that, due to technical or policy issues, the Publications Office may have to address the findings differently.

This will mainly be because some findings concern the (technical) modification of the legal information system, and these issues may require more time to resolve.

We deliberately didn't indicate which findings require such a modification as we don't know the technical infrastructure well enough, and we didn't want to let this aspect play a (key) role in defining the severity ranking.

Any issue that will be addressed will already improve the website, one way or another.

2.6 Conclusions

Looking at the outcome of the Usability Assessment that has been conducted for the EUR-Lex website, we can draft the following conclusions.

- The current EUR-Lex website is clearly targeted to intermediate to experienced users with good or thorough knowledge of EU Law.
- The EUR-Lex legal information system is a very comprehensive system related to EU Law containing a wealth of information (legal documents ...) in many languages. It can therefore be considered as a 'unique' information system.
- The majority of the users highly appreciate the content of the system and admits they 'need' EUR-Lex. The content is of course not the only aspect that users like about the site; there are also a lot of other issues that are considered as positive or very positive.
- But, the EUR-Lex website as a whole, cannot be considered as a usable gateway to access the European Union law because there are some fundamental shortcomings related to the conceptual design, navigation design and information architecture.

- These shortcomings have been raised by both experienced and novice users of EUR-Lex which make them major issues as they concern 'all users' of the website.
- A lot of these shortcomings can be addressed by resolving the issues highlighted in the findings but some of them will require major modifications to the system (eg. regarding the Simple Search facility, the structure and display of the legal documents, etc.).

For this reason, solving them "quickly" or "easily" may be very difficult.

- While experienced users may find ways to find the information they are looking for, novice users have severe problems using the current version of the EUR-Lex website.

They have problems with many aspects of the site (in all categories: Clarity and Usability, Navigation Model, Terminology, Functionality and Work Flow, Learnability, Attractiveness and Likeability and User Documentation). For them, EUR-Lex is clearly not a site for inexperienced users.

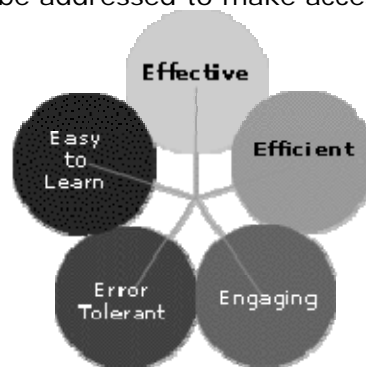
- The Usability Assessment was conducted in different countries, but 'generally speaking' we cannot say that there are very significant differences.
- Although not within the scope of this project, we strongly suggest to improve the website's accessibility level as the site is currently extremely difficult to use for people with disabilities.

General conclusion:

The initiative taken by the Publications Office to organize this comprehensive Usability Assessment has been a very positive and important one:

- First of all, because Usability is very often overlooked or ignored within the EU Institutions
- And secondly because it revealed some important issues with regard to the EUR-Lex website that should be addressed to make access to European Union Law:

- Effective
- Efficient
- Engaging
- Error Tolerant
- and Easy to Learn



In a first phase, the most critical (and technically implementable) issues should be resolved. This will already greatly increase the overall user experience.

But we think that on the longer term the Publications Office should seriously consider the option to create a completely new website for EUR-Lex that takes into account all basic usability principles as from the design phase.

This means the involvement of 'real users' and usability experts during all phases of the design and development of the site.

This will be the only way to achieve 'real usability', especially because of the complexity of the system.

3 [...]

4 [...]

5 [...]

6 Section 6: Findings and Recommendations

This section is the core part of the report.

It lists in detail the main **findings** and provides for each finding one or more usable and exploitable **recommendations**.

The findings listed in this section are assembled from the observations gathered during the live user tests, the heuristic evaluation, the cognitive walkthrough, the user observations, the online tests, the post-test questionnaires and the analysis of the server statistics. This allows the Publications Office to find all findings and related recommendations in one place.

All findings belong to one of the following **categories**:

1. Critical problems
2. Serious problems
3. Minor problems

These categories have been carefully chosen and reflect the severity ranking of the different issues encountered (within each category the numbering doesn't necessary reflect an 'internal' severity ranking). This categorization will help the Publication Office to set priorities when addressing the results of the assessment.

Each category highlights one or more **findings**.

Each finding is based upon one or more (related) **observations** gathered during the assessment. The table in section 5 shows which observations belong to which findings. Working with general findings grouping related observations together enhances the exploitability of the assessment results (as presenting one long list of observations, as in the previous version, clearly doesn't work). And it also avoids redundancy and contradictions.

It should also be noted that some observations are related to different findings. It is therefore inevitable that, in some cases, similar recommendations are given for different findings.

To illustrate the findings, one or more relevant **examples** (observations) have been added.

As not all observations have been used to illustrate the findings this synthetic presentation will allow the Publications Office to easily retrieve more examples (observations) for a better comprehension of the findings (as the table provides a detailed view on how the findings were composed).

For each finding a **critical assessment** has been done resulting in one or more usable **recommendations**.

We have tried to limit the number of findings to an acceptable and workable minimum (to enhance their exploitability).

Each finding starts on a new page to enhance the readability of the document.

Please note:

The list of examples provided to illustrate the findings is by no way exhaustive. It only concerns a 'selection' of representative issues (as listing them all would be impossible).

6.1 Critical problems

Critical usability problems are problems that are imperative to fix as they seriously hamper the user's experience with a website or product, they should therefore be given "the highest priority".

Leaving critical problems in a system will prevent users from having a positive browsing experience and global appreciation for the system.

Moreover, in some cases these problems can cause serious confusion and frustration while the user executes regular and/or more experienced tasks within the system. And in exceptional cases, these problems can prevent users from completing a task (because they give up or leave the site for example...).

Based upon the observations gathered during the Usability Assessment, the following findings have been classified as "critical problems":

- **Finding 1: Be consistent**
- **Finding 2: Improve information architecture**
- **Finding 3: Improve Simple Search**
- **Finding 4: Provide clear and consistent navigational options**
- **Finding 5: Provide descriptive page titles**
- **Finding 6: Eliminate horizontal scrolling**
- **Finding 7: Remove Accessibility statement***
- **Finding 8: Improve window management**
- **Finding 9: Use meaningful link labels and place them intuitively**
- **Finding 10: Help first-time and novice users**

** Finding n° 7, although out of the scope of the project, has been added to the results and classified as "critical" because Accessibility claims that don't (entirely) correspond to reality are – by default – considered as a "very serious issue"*

Finding 1: Be consistent

Rationale / critical assessment

Key to optimum usability is consistency. As we navigate any unknown territory, we want landmarks, familiar signs, and a sense of where “home base” can be found.

Consistency in look-and-feel gives website users a sense of security that they are in the right place, on the path to finding the right information. Conversely, if sections of a website do not share a theme common to the homepage, users quickly become nervous and apprehensive, wondering if they've left the main site, worried they have lost their way, frustrated with the unknown, and often turned off to the point of abandoning their journey through the site.

Consistency in design (including fonts, colors, layout, graphical elements) is critical, but it can't stop there.

According to Jakob Nielsen, the renowned usability expert:

“Consistency is one of the most powerful usability principles: when things always behave the same, users don't have to worry about what will happen. Instead, they know what will happen based on earlier experience.

The more users' expectations prove right, the more they will feel in control of the system and the more they will like it. And the more the system breaks users' expectations, the more they will feel insecure.”

The EUR-Lex website is not a coherent site as after a few clicks users are confronted with a completely different design and presentation, making it extremely difficult for them to navigate the site easily and intuitively.

Usability rule number one is to ensure that, whatever happens, the website's overall consistency is preserved. If not, the users may be completely disoriented.

This is also important to allow for easy learnability of the site's content and features.

The inconsistency within EUR-Lex is not limited to the ‘big picture’, it also concerns the ways links and titles are formatted, how navigational items are presented, etc.

One special example...

The reason that query words are highlighted in search results is to help searchers feel more confident that they are being delivered the most relevant search results.

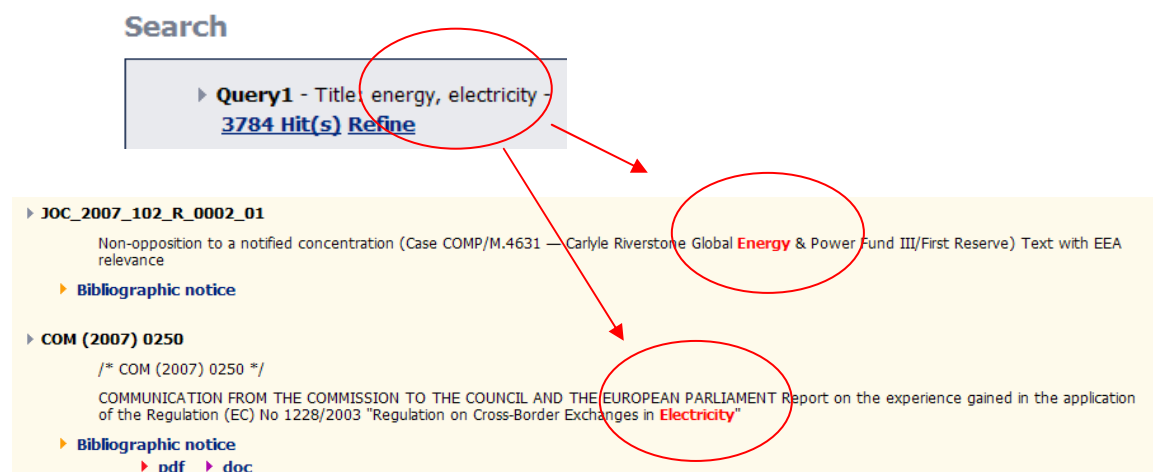
In other words, if a searcher types in the keyword phrase “help desk software” (without the quotes) into Google, he/she will feel more confident that they will find desired information through Google because they see the term being highlighted (in bold type) in various places.

Searchers feel more certain that the search engine is doing its job because they see the words “help desk software” in bold type.

This keyword emphasis in search results is commonly referred to as highlighting. Too much term highlighting often negates the search experience.

But on the flip side, too little term highlighting also negates the search experience because user confidence decreases.

On the EUR-Lex website the query words are often clearly highlighted, which is very positive:



But at several occasions this highlighting isn't present (f.ex. when refining a search result with a search criterion other than the keywords), and this decreases user confidence (as we have noticed during the live tests).

Therefore, make sure that query words are highlighted in all search results.

By doing so, the scannability of the search results is enhanced and time-to-task is decreased.

In brief:

There is little doubt that consistency is important for users. Consistency makes sites easier to use, because visitors don't have to learn new tricks as they move around. And people have a strong memory for location.

Sites should be internally consistent: standards and conventions should be established and applied throughout all the content.

Sites also need to be externally consistent, that is, consistent with general practice. Users will tend to apply rules they've learned elsewhere, even if those rules don't actually apply to the current site. They bring to your site their own experience and expectations. If you ignore that, you risk causing confusion.

In previous usability tests, we've seen users become totally lost by navigational elements that appear to be the same, but have actually changed -- the users simply don't register the change and can't find the content or features they want.

Therefore, it is more than worth the effort to be consistent in all possible ways.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

It would lead us too far if we had to list all corrections to be made to the EUR-Lex website to make it more consistent.

That's why we selected some important recommendations for improvement.

- Wherever the user may be on the EUR-Lex website, **make sure that the primary navigation is "always" visible** (exceptions can be made for windows displaying 'downloadable' documents).

Because this navigation menu is the most important one of the website, and not all users are familiar with the "breadcrumb trail".

- **Use a standardized way to give pages a title.**

Start with EUR-Lex, making sure the users know where the page comes from. Include the category or the name of the document. If relevant, also include the language of the document.

The title of a page is used when users make a bookmark or add the page to their favourites. By giving each page a clear and distinctive title users can more easily identify the pages when looking into their bookmarks or favourites.

- **Make the formatting for hyperlinks consistent.**

Use a specific font colour and underlined font style to make hyperlinks easily recognizable.

- **Provide one consistent way for displaying documents**, with their different types and languages.

The EUR-Lex website is a documentary database. Users come here to find information in the database's documents. By offering one standardized way of presenting the documents, users only have to learn one way of working. They will instantly recognize the structure on other pages and they will know what to do and which behaviour to expect.

When opening a document in another browser window, users lose the context, because in that case the Back button and the History function do not support the context.

Also inform the users about the future availability of a document: explain why a document is not available in all of the three possible ones (.doc, .pdf, .tiff), and let the user know if a format will be made available in a (short) deadline. This need has been expressed by users that contacted the helpdesk of the website.

- **Create new styles for the web site.**

Make sure the different styles are used consistently throughout the web site, giving it a uniform look & feel.

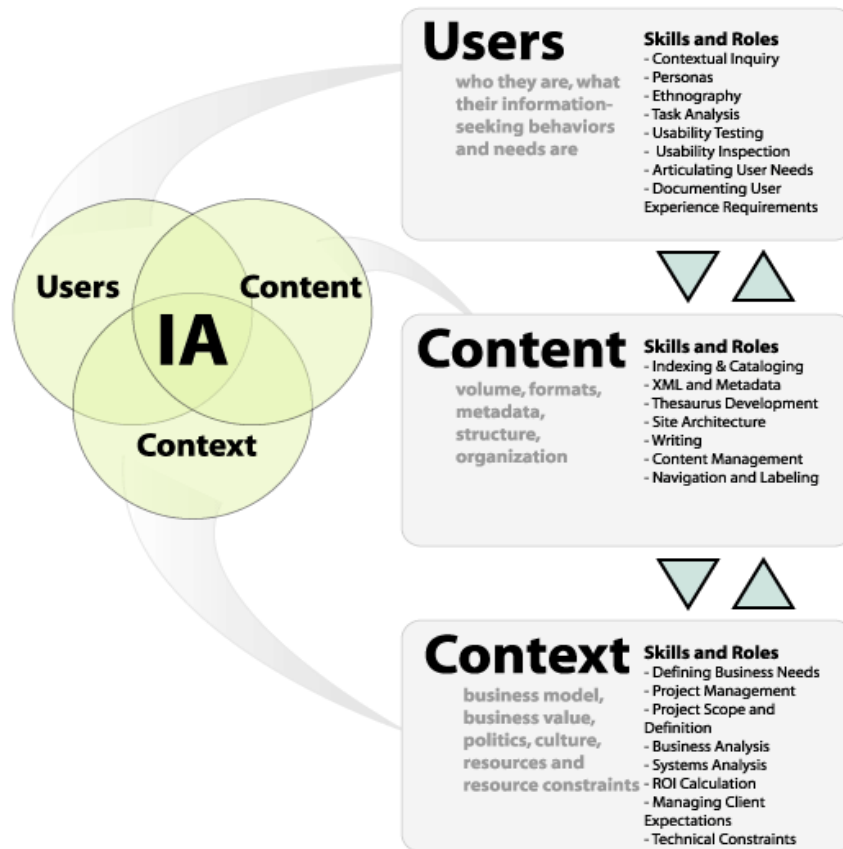
Addressing this finding will take a lot of time and effort as the whole website needs to be thoroughly checked, analysed and corrected. But it is extremely important that these efforts are done, because users need consistency.

Finding 2: Improve information architecture

Rationale / critical assessment

Information architecture is user-focused and is tied very closely with usability.

This is shown in "the infamous three circles of information architecture," as described by Lou Rosenfeld and Peter Morville in the second edition of their book, "Information Architecture for the World Wide Web":



However, there are usability issues that are not related to information architecture, and aspects of information architecture that do not pertain to usability.

Information architecture also relates to the question: How can I make my website's structure more navigable?

The following article, written by Michael L Bernard, Software Usability Research Laboratory and based upon several international studies, gives an insight on how website architecture relates to usability and what the biggest problems are for users when navigating a structure which hasn't been optimized:

- People often become lost within a website structure. In fact, 58% of users will make two or more navigational errors while searching for information and 66.8% of users have stated that one of the greatest problems about the Web is "not being able to find the information that I am looking for".

Generally there are **four major reasons** for this occurrence:

1. **First difficulty is disorientation** or "lost-in-hypertext problems, which arises from an unfamiliarity with the structure or conceptual organization of the site. Here, users have difficulty deciding which node (which is typically one web page) to view next because they are unable to visualize where the information they are looking for could be. The decision concerning which node to view next first involves understanding one's current location within the site, then selecting the proper route. However, users may not even know their current location within a site.

A proper way to reduce this problem is to organize the site according to the typical users' mental model of how a site should be organized. This can be done by having representative users sort cards into several categorical piles in which each card represents the information that would be placed on the actual website. Each pile should indicate the information that would be clustered within each category and subcategory. This would give the designer knowledge on how users mentally organize the structure of a particular site.

2. **The second difficulty is the embedded digression problem.** This occurs when users pursue digressive paths within websites and lose their place or forget to return to their original document. This can be lessened by reducing the number of links embedded in text by placing them instead at the end or on the side of the document. However, researchers also found out that users preferred and were more accurate in answering information using embedded links than an explicit grouping of links outside the text. Yet, they also stated that embedded links could be disruptive in that the user "may be inclined to examine a particular subject or subjects in detail without first getting an appreciation of the overall context".
3. **The third difficulty is the "art museum" problem.** This refers to the lack of memory for the navigational details of a significant part of the site because the viewer is overwhelmed by the sheer amount of information. For instance, as when a patron visiting a museum cannot hope to remember the details of all the art work because of their great number, a large number and variation of navigational information (such as the various nodes they have visited) may consequently overwhelm the user. This often can have the effect of reducing a person's recall of the pages they have visited.

This can be lessened by reducing the amount of information presented at one time and properly organizing the navigational structure of the site. For example, in a study comparing three types of structures: pure hierarchical (web pages at one level can only access by a web page directly above or below it), nonlinear (links could be connected to any number of other web pages on the site), and mixed design (hierarchical structure with cross referential links) researchers found that participants recalled more information with the mixed design. The pure hierarchical structure was found to be too restrictive, and the nonlinear design presented too much information at one time. Thus, sites should present only the amount of links that are necessary for navigation - superfluous links will increase the probability that the users will be confused and disoriented.

Other aids that are beneficial to navigation are the use of sitemaps. Sitemaps may, if done properly, present the structure of a site in a more cognitively manageable way by showing a site's main structure and the various links to that structure.

4. **The fourth difficulty may be the structure itself.** That is, it is generally found that people make fewer mistakes if the hierarchical structure of the site is broader rather than deeper. In fact, research has generally found that ideally all information should be placed within three hierarchical levels from the initial homepage of the site. Specifically, the more levels users have to take in order to get the information they want, the less chance they will find this information.

The user tests revealed that the EUR-Lex website's information architecture should be revised to accelerate user performance and to reduce the number of clicks to reach particular documents.

The general information structure of the website should therefore be reorganized, giving the web site a broader and shallower structure.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

Pages mainly consist of elements to display content and information. The elements for navigation and page design are very minimal.

The best advice we can give is to define and create a new page layout that supports the information structure, but still meets the goal of the web site.

This should also be reflected in an elaborated version of the sitemap.

This should be subject to a separate study conducted in collaboration with a representative sample of "real users" and usability experts.

Because good page layout and information architecture can help users recognize and identify the different page elements, making it easier to navigate through the information and use the web site.

Proposing here a solution for a new and enhanced information architecture for the EUR-Lex website would be out of the scope of the assessment, as it would involve completely different usability steps and the implication of users to define and test possible prototypes.

Finding 3: Improve Simple Search

Rationale / critical assessment

One of the key features of the EUR-Lex website is the **Simple Search facility**.

The majority of users use the Simple Search to quickly find what they need.

But if this Search engine causes confusion to the users and its functionalities and presentation are not intuitive, the whole search operation becomes a "critical" issue (due to its importance within the site).

Usability studies show that more than half of all users are search-dominant, about a fifth of the users are link-dominant, and the rest exhibits mixed behaviour:

- The search-dominant users will usually go straight for the search button when they enter a website: they are not interested in looking around the site; they are task-focused and want to find specific information as fast as possible.
- In contrast, the link-dominant users prefer to follow the links around a site: even when they want to find specific information, they will initially try to get to it by following promising links from the homepage. Only when they get hopelessly lost will link-dominant users admit defeat and use a search command.
- Mixed-behaviour users switch between search and link following, depending on what seems most promising to them at any given time but do not have an inherent preference.

And previous experience has shown that:

- 41% of the users attempt to refine their search after the first results page if initial search is unsuccessful.
- 88% of the users attempt to refine their search after the first three pages if initial search is unsuccessful.

Typical search users are also very poor at query reformulation: if they don't get good results on the first try, later search attempts rarely succeed. In fact, they often give up.

In other words, if users don't find the result with their first query, they are progressively less and less likely to succeed with additional searches.

Many users don't even bother: almost half the users whose first search failed give up immediately.

Most observations that came out of the Usability Assessment were in one way or another related to the search facility on the site.

The 'refine' functionality for example is very useful in case the first search operation generates too many results. But users who are not familiar with the EUR-Lex search pages clearly have trouble spotting the "refine" link quickly as they tend to concentrate on the search results area.

The refine link should therefore be put in a more visible area.

Other issues relate to unintuitive search options, unclear "complementary data", the limited way of browsing within search results, complexity of Boolean search options, the vague error messages, and so on.

These are just a few examples; many more have been listed in the Annex sections.

After a thorough analysis of the different problems that users and experts encountered (related to presentation, easy of use, functionalities, etc. of the Simple Search), the main conclusion was that the Search engine should be thoroughly re-examined.

Because addressing some of the issues separately will enhance the overall user experience a little bit, but this won't be a guarantee that people will find the search facility easier to use.

That's why, on the longer term, the Publications Office should consider implementing a fully redesigned simple search facility.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

It would lead us too far if we had to list all individual corrections to be made to the EUR-Lex Simple search in order to make it more usable.

That's why we selected some possible recommendations for improvement.

- Although the Simple Search can be considered as "simple" for most experienced users of EUR-Lex, we would advise to think about the possibility of including a simple search box on the homepage (to accommodate the novice users).

Such a simple search engine will generate a lot of results, it is therefore important to attach clear and comprehensive refinement options to the results pages.

Another way of helping novice users could be the inclusion of a wizard-type Search facility (as suggested by many of the test participants). The main advantage would be that during the wizard a "natural" refinement would take place and each screen could then include additional details on the available search options or jargon (as the lack of contextual help was also one of the issues raised by a lot of the test users).

The current simple search could then be proposed as the advanced search.

And the newly developed "Advanced search" could then be proposed as an "Expert Search", to clearly distinguish it from the Simple and Advanced modules.

These are just proposals of course, the best way to address the overall search issue would be to conduct a dedicated study on this matter to find out what solution would suit each type of user group. A good moment to conduct such a survey would be when the EUR-Lex website would be redesigned.

- The EUR-Lex usability assessment clearly showed that the Boolean searches were too difficult for most novice users.

We therefore would like to propose to only offer them in the Advanced Search.

- Explain to users that the EXCEPT option doesn't exclude CELEX-numbers (and eventually some other criteria).

This addition should be made to the "Guidelines for good results" section.

This will allow for the unambiguous and correct use of this search option.

- A possible solution for the refine function would be to place the "refine" link in the Search results area as this area receives the main focus.

A good option hereby would be to place it in the yellow box, above the "Complementary data" section.

And to use buttons instead of hyperlinks for the functions 'Refine' and 'New Search'. Because on websites, buttons are generally used for actions the users perform and hyperlinks are used to open another page with information.

- Also use clear and descriptive labels on buttons. Use 'Sort' instead of 'Go' , for example, to activate the sorting.

- Clearly indicate what the Complementary data is used for. Use a short hint or hint balloon to indicate what the different elements mean. This is also valid for other elements in the simple search user interface. By providing hints and instructions in the user interface itself, the users don't have to consult the FAQ or online help every time they look for additional information.
- Make better use of the screen real estate: group and name fields and elements that belong together, thereby enhancing scannability of the user interface.
- Reuse the categories, provided in the general navigation, in the Simple Search function.
- The link on the number of hits should be removed
- Provide checkboxes to allow users to combine different search criteria within the same search operation (as in the current setup users have to refine multiple times to limit the number of search results).

These are only a few recommendations, but it is clear that there is much more to it.

The usability experts believe that resolving the search facility will require much more than just some small corrections or additions.

A full re-design of the Simple search (in collaboration with different user groups and usability experts) could be the only way to fully address the 'big picture'.

Finding 4: Provide clear and consistent navigational options

Rationale / critical assessment

*Clear content, simple navigation, and answers to customer questions have the biggest impact on business value. Advanced technology matters much less.
(Jakob Nielsen)*

Basically, if the **navigation** of the website is confusing, all other efforts aiming at improving the usability factor will fail. On the web, **navigation is the key to everything**.

Because websites that are hard to navigate are very quickly abandoned by their visitors.

Consistent navigational patterns make it easier for a user to get acquainted with them. Different patterns on different pages can create a feeling of "running in cycles". On the other hand, too often different sections of a large site require different navigational patterns, to reflect the specifics of every section. Usually, visitors expect a total 100% repeatability from the left-side and top navigation, but if you have additional navigational links in the right column of a site, certain diversity is acceptable.

The homepage should be easily accessible from every page of the site. The logo is traditionally linked to the homepage, but providing a homepage link in the main navigation enhances significantly the overall usability.

The page names should "speak" to the visitor. Ideally, it should be easy to tell what the page is about by simply looking at the URL of the page. A page name like '4867.html' is not very helpful in this regard.

Dynamically adding items to the navigation makes the navigation look instable and confuses the users. With a stable navigation users can easily remember the location of an item in the navigation. It is highly uncommon that links are dynamically added to or removed from the website's main navigation menu.

That's why they are often ignored by website visitors (as users don't expect links to appear/disappear in this part of the website).

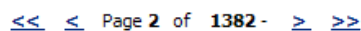
And even if these additional links (in case of the EUR-Lex website pointing to search options in subsections), are in the same colour as the subsection title itself, only few users notice them immediately.

It becomes even harder for users if the additional links is shown in a colour which is very close to the colour used for the other (default) navigation entries.

Also the "please try again" pages when a search doesn't generate any results is part of this finding: there is no navigation option available to go quickly back to the previous search screen (except for the browser's 'back' button).

Another concrete example concerns the search within results:

The only way users can browse the search result pages is by going one page forward or backwards or by going immediately to the first or the last page. The test users perceived this way of browsing as confusing and very limiting.



[<<](#) [<](#) Page 2 of 1382 - [>](#) [>>](#)

Moreover, due to the lack of "title" attributes, the arrows are very inaccessible for screen reader users.

A better and more intuitive option would be to display clickable page numbers, such as shown in the examples below:



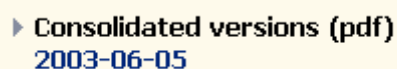
[< Prev](#) | [1](#) | [2](#) | [3](#) | [4](#) | [5](#) | [6](#) | [7](#) | [8](#) | [9](#) | [Next >](#)



Results: 11 to 20 of 388 Pages: [<](#) [Previous](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [8](#) [9](#) [10](#) [Next](#) [>](#)

A last example concerns the fact that some users got easily lost due to the numerous ways they could access the consolidated versions of a given document:

Possibility 1:



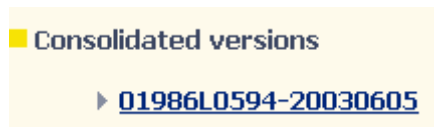
[▶ Consolidated versions \(pdf\)
2003-06-05](#)

Possibility 2:

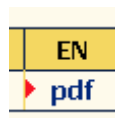


[▶ consolidation form:
01986L0594](#)

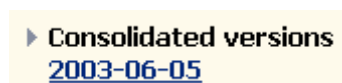
Possibility 3:



Possibility 4:



Possibility 5:



In brief, there are a lot of issues related to this topic.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

Some recommendations* include:

**some issues are also treated in other findings*

- Improve the overall navigation; make sure that users can go round quickly and intuitively.
- Link to the homepage from the main navigation
- Make sure links are provided to the website's main categories
- Make sure all navigational elements are clearly labelled
- Make sure users can always return to previous pages without being obliged to use the browser's back button
- Format links consistently and make them easily recognisable
- The links to the "Search in the [section name]" page should be made more visible to ensure that all users find them quickly and easily.

Because the addition of links in the left navigation pane has proven to be unintuitive; we therefore suggest that this link is added to the body part of the page.

This is easy to accomplish as the body text already suggests clicking on this link:



To search for parliamentary questions, follow the link 'Search in parliamentary questions' in the menu on the left of the screen.

It would therefore be more logic and intuitive if that phrase would be transformed into a link:

[Search in parliamentary questions](#)

Because asking users to look elsewhere on a page to click on a link is quite strange: why not put the link directly, so that users can immediately click it.

Finding 5: Provide descriptive page titles

Rationale / critical assessment

Web page titles are used in a number of ways.

They:

- appear in the title bar of a web browser window
- appear as the hyperlinked text in search results (from external search engines)
- are used to file pages saved in browser favourite or bookmarks lists
- are used to create the history list that show users their recently visited pages.

Page titles must be written so that they:

- are clear and accurate descriptions of the content of a page
- show important words first
- are unique to enable users to distinguish one page from another
- are between 40-60 characters or less; long titles get truncated in browser bookmarks and history lists
- are easy to scan; users frequently scan through search results, bookmarks and history lists
- are written in mixed case for ease of visual scanning
- omit unnecessary words (e.g. "Welcome to...")
- do not use "a", "an", "the"

- avoid the use of special characters, such as accented characters, unless creating multilingual content
- avoid institutional jargon
- do not use abbreviations or acronyms
- are spelled correctly.

The page title is the main tool to attract new visitors from search listings and to help existing users to locate the specific pages that they need.

On the EUR-Lex website there is a serious problem with the page titles.

Nearly none of them comply with the usability principles listed above.

The following different formats are used for the page titles within the site:

Page	Title
Home	Eurlex
Official Journal contents page	Year OJ series [EN].pubjo_number - [EN].pubjo_lg - Official Journal
Official Journal PDF	http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_269/l_26920060928en00010003.pdf
Simple Search	EUR-Lex – Simple Search
Simple Search – Commission decision	EUR-Lex - 32006D0637 - EN
Collections - Treaties	Treaties
Collections – International agreements - Directory	EUR-Lex - Simple search

This issue should therefore be addressed as it currently causes a lot of confusing (when users try to use the titles for bookmarking purposes for example).

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

The key solution is: "Write a Window Title with Good Visibility in Search Engines and Bookmark Lists."

We are aware that this will be very difficult to achieve as most titles may be automatically generated by the internal system.

But we cannot ignore it, due to its high importance.

The main recommendations would therefore be:

- Use a standardized way when giving pages a title.
Start with EUR-Lex, indicating where the page belongs to, and then include the category or the name of the document. If relevant, also include the language of the document.

By giving each page a clear and distinctive title users can more easily identify the pages when looking into their bookmarks or favourites.

Because at present, the following type of titles are presented to the user when they want to bookmark a page:

Year OJ series [EN].pubjo_number - [EN].pubjo_lg - Off

Moreover, screen reader users use page titles as “the” identification to know what a web page is about.

In case of the EUR-Lex website they first have to read the page before knowing what it is about.

Finding 6: Eliminate horizontal scrolling

Rationale / critical assessment

Use an appropriate page layout to eliminate the need for users to scroll horizontally.

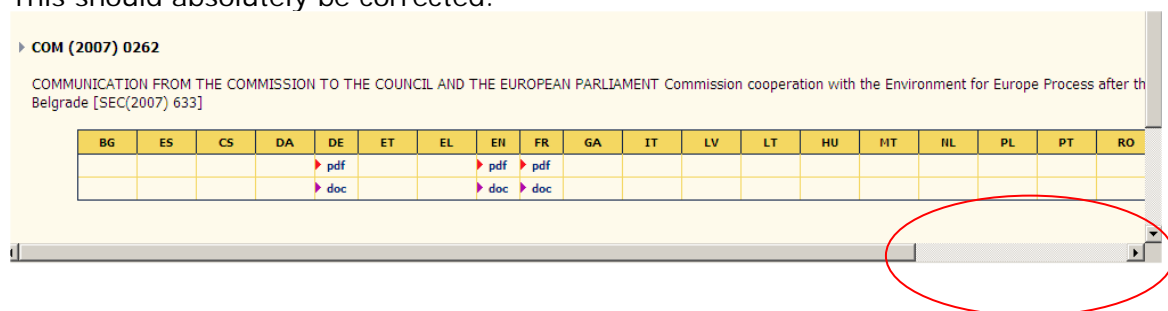
Horizontal scrolling is a serious website usability problem because horizontal scrolling is a slow and tedious way to view an entire screen.

Moreover, users hate scrolling left to right. Vertical scrolling seems to be okay, maybe because it's much more common.

Generally, redesigning a page to eliminate horizontal scrolling will improve the user experience.

The ‘COM Documents’ page for example has horizontal scrolling.

This should absolutely be corrected.



Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

Make sure the content of the ‘COM documents’ page doesn’t cause horizontal scrolling.

If the table is too wide, break it up in 2 pieces and put the second part under the first one.

This way, the information on the page will still be very readable and usable for the users.

Also, from an accessibility point of view, horizontal scroll bars are to be avoided: horizontal scrolling is annoying to people with perfect vision, but it is even more so for people who use screen magnifiers as they are forced to scroll even further to the left and right inside of the small enlarged space they are viewing.

Finding 7: Remove Accessibility statement

Rationale / critical assessment

The "About this site" page displays the following message with regard to the level of **Accessibility** of EUR-Lex:

Accessibility: the site complies with the guidelines and recommendations of the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) in order to facilitate access by all users.

If people with disabilities use the site and discover this statement, they will certainly react.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

As the website is 'not' accessible, please remove or adapt the statement.

Once the website has been optimised for Accessibility, it would be a good idea to put a separate "Accessibility Policy" page on the site, listing the different accessibility enhancements/features that the EUR-Lex website offers.

This is always 'good practice'.

Finding 8: Improve window management

Rationale / critical assessment

Jakob Nielsen states the following about "Opening new Browser windows":

Designers open new browser windows on the theory that it keeps users on their site. But even disregarding the user-hostile message implied in taking over the user's machine, the strategy is self-defeating since it disables the Back button which is the normal way users return to previous sites. Users often don't notice that a new window has opened, especially if they are using a small monitor where the windows are maximized to fill up the screen. So a user who tries to return to the origin will be confused by a grayed out Back button.

Links that don't behave as expected undermine users' understanding of their own system. A link should be a simple hypertext reference that replaces the current page with new content. Users hate unwarranted pop-up windows. When they want the destination to appear in a new page, they can use their browser's "open in new window" command -- assuming, of course, that the link is not a piece of code that interferes with the browser's standard behavior.

There have been numerous discussions on this issue and more and more consensus is being reached on standards for **opening new browser windows**:

- if links to external websites and/or documents in non-HTML format are opened in a new browser window, the users will – in general – not be very confused, on the condition that this event is properly announced.

Opening a new window without any previous warning is in any case unacceptable.

The EUR-Lex website has links that open new browser windows, but this is not announced and therefore it violates an important usability (and accessibility) principle.

But there is more to it: some HTML-documents displayed in a new window completely lose the standard "look & feel" of the EUR-Lex website. And that should – wherever possible – be avoided. Because the users think that they have left the EUR-Lex website.

The user tests have shown that users are not against the fact that new browser windows are used, but the fact of not being warned upfront and the loss of the Eur-Lex website's "look & feel" disrupts them.

The solution is therefore to clearly indicate, next to the link, that the link opens in a new browser window.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

- Open external webpages in a new browser window (clearly indicate this next to the link text)
- Offer users the choice to save non-web documents (.pdf, .doc, .tiff, .zip ...) on their hard disk or to open it in their native application (Adobe Reader for PDF, etc.). This can be achieved by adding an extra HTTP header. The header line to be added is "Content-disposition: Attachment". If possible, also add "; filename=somefile.pdf" at the end of this line, to give the browser an explicit filename if the user chooses to save the file.
- Give an indication when documents are downloaded instead of opened and display the file size.

Finding 9: Use meaningful link labels and place them intuitively

Rationale / critical assessment

(this finding is closely linked to other ones)

In general, all **link texts** should make sense when read out of context.

In essence, link texts should be:

- **Functional:** the link supports the primary navigation (divides the site into relevant blocks according to the chosen principle of arrangement) or leads the user to related subjects.
- **Recognizable:** because of a consistent and clear use of colours (preferably standard colours) the link can be recognized as such.
- **Predictable:** the user can form a good picture of the page to which the link will lead. Specific link types (to a second browser window, to a format other than HTML...) are clearly marked.

In case this rule hasn't been respected, users may find it hard to know where the links are and what to find at the other end of the link text.

We realize that for EUR-Lex it will be extremely difficult to respect this rule as many of the link texts are composed by official terms, document reference numbers, etc.

For these links, presumably automatically generated by the system itself, a full redesign of the technical system would be required: rebuilding it from the ground up.

That's why we will concentrate in this section on other link phrases, which don't depend on official terminology.

The links to the ".tiff" files for example are very unclear to the users.

First of all, because they have no idea what "tiff" means and secondly, the link opens a new window displaying a page entitled "EUR-Lex order from archive". This is the last thing they would expect.

Another example concerns the use of arrows, acting as a link.

These arrows are not intuitive; people expect the subject phrase to be the link text.

This becomes especially confusing when besides the arrows links to other language versions are displayed as well.

With regard to the "Links" page: there is no clear indication that the links point to external websites.

The same is valid for links to non-html files (such as MS Word or PDF files): users like to be informed about the type of target document when following a link. And this information is crucial for screen reader users as well.

If technically it is not possible to put this information next to the link itself, a general warning phrase could be put on top of each page containing links to PDF files, as has been done on the archive pages of the "Directory of Community legislation".

If we look at it from an accessibility perspective, this issue becomes even more critical.

In order to comply with basic accessibility rules on "clear and predictive" link texts, the EUR-Lex website will have to be fully rebuilt, as for blind users the current website is extremely hard to navigate and very disorienting (due to the fact the only few link texts on the site make sense when read out of context).

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

As mentioned above, it will be extremely difficult for the present EUR-Lex website to respect this important (and even critical) rule.

That's why the EUR-Lex project team should concentrate, in the first place, on the improvement of link texts that are not automatically generated by the system.

These improvements include:

- Drop the arrows and make the main subject phrase the link text
- Make sure that explanations are provided with regard to links using less-known terms or links that open unintuitive content (such as the "tiff" link)
- Revise all link phrases and check their intuitiveness

In brief:

- Make it easy for visitors to understand what is a link and what is not a link.

And as mentioned elsewhere in this report:

- Don't rely exclusively on mouseovers to identify links, as this can be confusing and reduces usability. The easiest solution is to underline link phrases and to give them the same colour everywhere on the site.

Finding 10: Help first-time and novice users

Rationale / critical assessment

When using the EUR-Lex legal information system **for the first time** (or as a novice user), it is important that you can easily and quickly find information on how to use the system as a "First-time" or "novice" user.

The usability tests revealed that numerous novice users couldn't find the "First-time user" page without hints from the test monitor.

This indicates that the "First-time user" page is not adequately placed and it therefore turns this issue into a critical factor because this target audience relies on this type of information. If they don't know how to use the site they cannot complete tasks easily or efficiently or they will get quickly lost and/or confused.

Nearly all novice users indicated that they would not (spontaneously) look for this kind of information under the Help Section, but in the FAQ section or on the homepage itself.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

Include a link to the "first-time users" page in the primary navigation and move the page to the FAQ section.

Make sure the "First-time users" page shows all information that could be relevant to novice users (in order to avoid that they have to consult multiple documents before getting started).

An alternative solution is to introduce a new (and very visible) link to the site: "First visit?" for example.... This link can then point to a page displaying everything a new (or novice) user needs to know about the EUR-Lex website and its functionalities.

6.2 Serious problems

Serious usability problems are major problems that are important to fix, they should therefore be given “high priority”.

Fixing them will increase the website’s usability significantly.

Based upon the observations gathered during the Usability Assessment, the following findings have been classified as “serious problems”:

- **Finding 11: Avoid links to “empty”, "outdated", "current" or non-existing pages**
- **Finding 12: Designate used links**
- **Finding 13: Improve breadcrumb navigation**
- **Finding 14: Avoid mixture of different languages on the same page**
- **Finding 15: Use accurate translations**
- **Finding 16: Clearly identify (un)available language versions**
- **Finding 17: Ensure that Help texts & FAQs are usable and findable**
- **Finding 18: Break up long linear documents; add internal ToC**
- **Finding 19: Provide contextual Help**
- **Finding 20: Improve error handling**

Finding 11: Avoid links to "empty", "outdated", "current" or non-existing pages

Rationale / critical assessment

It is crucial for a website to have **information** displayed on each webpage.

When clicking a link on a website, users expect to see a page with information on it.

In case they are confronted with an "empty" page, and there are no details regarding the reason why the information is absent, they are very confused and may think they have committed an error.

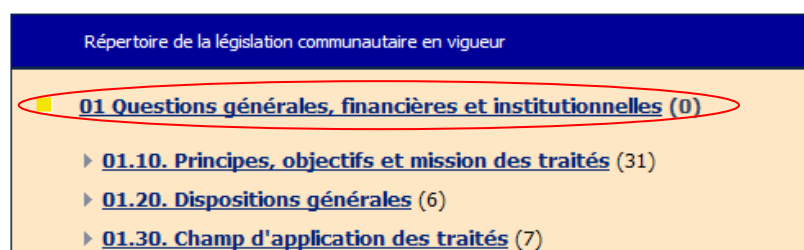
If the system has "empty" pages, all references (links) to these pages should be disabled.

Other related issues (see screen shot below):

Although the number "0" is displayed next to the phrase "01 Questions générales, financières et institutionnelles", this phrase is a link and should therefore lead to another page offering information.

In case this phrase serves as a title or heading for the page, it should be displayed differently (using regular heading formatting) and the link should be removed.

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This is not the case because it now leads to an "empty" page:



Deeper down the same page, we encounter the same type of problem: a link to an "empty" page.

- ▶ [01.50. Administration et statut](#) (63)
- ▶ [01.60. Dispositions financières et budgétaires](#) (12)
 - ▶ [01.60.10. Unité de compte](#) (1)
 - ▶ [01.60.20. Budget](#) (13)
 - ▶ [01.60.30. Ressources propres](#) (23)
 - ▶ [01.60.40. Communauté européenne du charbon et de l'acier \(CECA\)](#) (5)
 - ▶ [01.60.50. Autres recettes](#) (0)
 - ▶ [01.60.60. Contrôle financier](#) (3)

There may be no texts available for this entry (indicated by the number "0"), but the fact that the entry itself is a link is very misleading to the user (as we cannot assume that all users are familiar with these numbers without any further explanations).

The most obvious solution is to remove the link (and just keep the sentence as non-clickable).

Solution:

[01.60.40. Communauté européenne du charbon et de l'acier \(CECA\)](#) (5 **textes disponibles**)

01.60.50. Autres recettes (**pas de textes disponibles**)

Although this doesn't concern "empty pages", there is also a problem with the "forgotten password" link in the "My Profile" area on the homepage.

This link doesn't work, which can be annoying for people who forgot their password.

This functionality should be restored as soon as possible.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "My profile". It contains two input fields: "User ID:" and "Password:". Below these fields is a button labeled "Connection". At the bottom of the form, there are two blue underlined links: "Free registration" and "Forgotten password".

It is also important to properly inform users on the unavailability of information and/or services in case this absence is due to a redesign exercise.

Users expect to be informed what is going on, why this information/service is not available, and how long it will take before everything is "back to normal".

If we compare it to the real world: nothing is more frustrating than not knowing when road works will end...

Although this issue was discovered outside the period the website was examined, we wanted to include it in this report, due to its relevance.

The "LexAlert" page is temporarily unavailable. The only way this is visible is through a "road works" sign on the LexAlert page.



But... there is no information available on:

- The reason for the unavailability of LexAlert
- The date when LexAlert will be available again
- The eventual improvements that are being implemented
- Etc.

The user is left without any relevant details and he/she will just have to click the LexAlert link regularly in order to find out when the service will be ‘up-and-running’ again.

Unless the user consults the FAQ section to find out what is happening (but only very few users will...).

And last but not least:

Avoid links that point to the same (current) page.

This is very confusing to the visitor, as he/she expects different content when clicking a link: the link on the number of search results for example is a typical example.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

- Make sure more details are provided on the LexAlert page, so that users know what is going on and when the service will be available (again).
This type of information should also be included on the website's homepage as it concerns an important section which is currently not available.
- Make sure that there are no links to “current” or “out-dated” pages
- Remove links from sentences with no content behind
- Use a specialised tool to check the whole website for broken links as this is good maintenance practice. There are many commercial tools available that can do this job.

Finding 12: Designate Used Links

Rationale / critical assessment

The oldest usability guideline for any type of navigational design is to help users understand where they've **been**, where they **are**, and where they can **go** (past, present, and future).

A good grasp of past navigation helps you understand your current location, since it's the culmination of your journey.

Knowing your past and present locations in turn makes it easier to decide where to go next.

And visited links are a key factor in this navigation process:

- Users can exclude links that proved fruitless in their earlier visits.
- Conversely, they might revisit links they found helpful in the past.

These benefits only accrue under one important assumption: that users can tell the difference between visited and unvisited links because the site shows them in different colors.

When visited links don't change color, users exhibit more navigational disorientation in usability testing and unintentionally revisit the same pages repeatedly.

On only very few pages on the EUR-Lex website visited links change colour...

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

Make sure that all visited links appear in a different color.

People get lost and move in circles when websites use the same link color for visited and new destinations.

To reduce navigational confusion, select different colors for the two types of links.

- The color for unvisited links should be more vivid, bright, and saturated than the color for visited links, which should look "used" (dull and washed out).
- The two colors should be variants or shades of the same color, so that they're clearly related. Using drastically different colors (say, orange and green) makes it hard for users to understand the relationship between the two types of links and to identify which color is the "used" version of the other.

- Shades of blue provide the strongest signal for links, but other colors work almost as well.
- As always, when using color to signal information, you should provide redundant cues for color-blind users. Making unvisited links brighter and more luminous than visited links will usually accomplish this goal.

Finding 13: Improve breadcrumb navigation

Rationale / critical assessment

Breadcrumbs use a single line of text to show a page's location in the site hierarchy. While secondary, this navigation technique is increasingly beneficial to users.

Breadcrumbs show people their **current location** relative to higher-level concepts, helping them understand where they are in relation to the rest of the site.

Breadcrumbs afford **one-click access to higher site levels** and thus rescue users who parachute into very specific but inappropriate destinations through search or deep links.

Breadcrumbs **never cause problems in user testing**: people might overlook this small design element, but they never misinterpret breadcrumb trails or have trouble operating them (under the explicit condition that they accurately reflect the website's structure).

Breadcrumbs **take up very little space** on the page.

Breadcrumbs are **almost always implemented the same way**, with a horizontal line that

- progresses from the highest level to the lowest, one step at a time;
- starts with the homepage and ends with the current page;
- has a simple text link for each level (except for the current page, because you should never have a link that does nothing); and
- has a simple, one-character separator between the levels (usually ">").

Some observations from the test participants on the breadcrumb trail on EUR-Lex:

The breadcrumb trail starts with a link to the EUROPA portal site. When the users click this link, they leave the EUR-Lex website and enter the EUROPA portal.

This led to a lot of errors during the tests when these users tried to go back quickly to the EUR-Lex homepage. For them, the presence of a link to a completely different website in the beginning of the breadcrumb trail clearly decreased their learnability experience.

The breadcrumb trail should also display the correct page headings.

On some pages this rule hasn't been respected:



When users select Simple Search on the homepage, the Simple search entry page appears. The breadcrumb trail indicates:

[EUROPA](#) > [EUR-Lex](#) > [Simple search](#) > [New search](#)

This breadcrumb trail suggests that the user is '4 levels' deep, while in fact he/she just clicked once. Semantically, this breadcrumb trail is therefore not correct.

There are also breadcrumbs that display a mixture of languages:

[EUROPA](#) > [EUR-Lex](#) > [Internationale aftaler](#) > [Directory of international agreements](#)

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

Make sure the breadcrumb trail represents the exact path the user followed.

As for many users the EUR-Lex website (holding its own URL) is not "de facto" part of the EUROPA server, it would be a good idea to take off the link to EUROPA from the breadcrumb trail and to put it elsewhere (in the primary navigation for example). This will decrease the number of errors committed by the users.

At this moment only the breadcrumb trail provides access to the EUR-Lex homepage.

(As already mentioned in other findings) This should be extended by including:

- A link to the website's homepage on the EUR-Lex logo (as most users are familiar with having a link to the homepage at this particular location and many users already click on the banner image).



- A link to the homepage in the primary navigation

Also make sure the breadcrumb trail is consistent with the page headers and that there are no mixtures of different languages within the same breadcrumb trail.

Finding 14: Avoid mixture of different languages on the same page

Rationale / critical assessment

At several occasions the EUR-Lex website **mixes different languages** within the same webpage, or doesn't presents (key) information in the user's native language.

Web designers should ensure that all key (content) elements of a webpage (navigation, headings, content) are presented in the page's primary language. Exceptions can be made for certain terms, labels and/or titles that cannot be translated (or for which appropriate translations don't exist).

In case pages are not available in the user's native language, this should be clearly and consistently indicated.

Mixing different languages on the same page decreases the overall usability and clarity of the page as users do not understand why certain parts are not translated.

It also confuses users when they don't find information in their own language, especially in cases where this hasn't been explicitly mentioned.

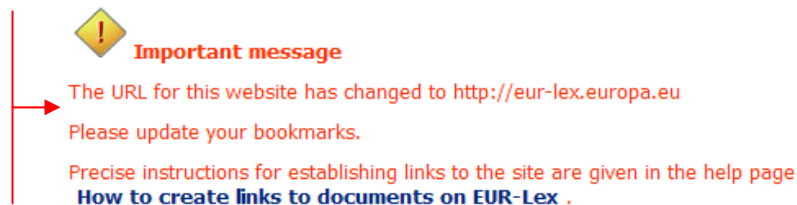
Some examples...

Homepage (Bulgarian version)

The information regarding the modified URL of the EUR-Lex website can be considered as key information (as users need to update their bookmarks).

The importance of this information has also been indicated by the warning symbol and a "red" colour.

For the Bulgarian users, this information is only available in English, leaving Bulgarian users that don't understand English in the cold.



Добре дошли

EUR-Lex осигурява пряк безплатен достъп до правото на Европейския съюз. Чрез системата могат да се правят справки с Официален вестник на ЕС. Освен това, в нея са включени договорите, законодателството, съдебната практика и предложенията за нови нормативни актове. Тя предоставя значителни възможности за търсене на информация. [»](#)

Dutch version – breadcrumb trail

Another example concerns the breadcrumb trail on the Dutch version of the site.

As shown in the screen shot, one of the breadcrumb links is displayed in French.

EUROPA > EUR-Lex > Recherche simple > EUROVOC

Zoeken aan de hand van trefwoorden (EUROVOC)

10. EUROPESE GEMEENSCHAPPEN

"First-time user"-page (German version)

Except for the title all content is in English.

Due to the importance of this page (= part of the main Help collection) and the fact that German is one of the key languages within the EU, none of the German users could find a justified reason for not having all information available in German:

Erstmalige Benutzung

EUR-Lex offers several methods to access documents on EU law, via predefined lists (**Collections**) or using search criteria.

To access the Official Journal

If you require an Official Journal issue dating from 1998 and after, you can access PDF versions by following the **Official Journal** hyperlink on the homepage.
If you know the number, year and series, select these in the drop-down menus to search directly for your document. Otherwise, you can browse through any list and click on the year, the month and number.

Individual acts published in the OJ are included in the database since the beginning and can be accessed by the Simple search facility.

Moreover, when looking at the entry page of the Help section (German version), there is no clear indication that this page is not available in German, as the German title is displayed.

For the "Expert search quick start guide" f.ex., the absence of a German version has been clearly and explicitly mentioned, which is very positive.

Hilfe

- ▶ [Erstmalige Benutzung](#)
- ▶ [Verweise \(Links\) auf Dokumente in EUR-Lex anlegen](#) (Letzte Aktualisierung: 10/05/2006)
- ▶ [Zu dieser Site](#)
- ▶ [Häufig gestellte Fragen](#) (Letzte Aktualisierung: 20/04/2007) **NEW**
- ▶ [„Einfache Suche“ - Kurzleitfaden](#) (Letzte Aktualisierung: 14/09/2006)
Der Kurzleitfaden „Einfache Suche“ ist auf Deutsch, Englisch und Französisch verfügbar.
- ▶ [Expert search quick start guide](#) (Letzte Aktualisierung: 20/11/2006)

This file exists in English only

Related issue for this page:

One could wonder why EUR-Lex explicitly mentions that the "Simple search quick start guide" is only available in German, English and French (on the German, English and French versions of this page). This type of information is more useful for users browsing the other language versions of the site.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

Make sure that all content is available in the page's primary language.

This should absolutely be the case for the website's main support pages (such as the Help pages).

Users who are unable to consult the main Help pages in their own language will not be able to use the (complex) EUR-Lex legal information system as intended. One of the basic usability principles is to provide sufficient and understandable support to all users.

In case translations are not (yet) available, the users should be clearly informed.

Finding 15: Use accurate translations

Rationale / critical assessment

One of the pillars of usability is to provide information that can be **understood by everyone**. Especially where it concerns main navigation entries, error handling messages and/or other key phrases.

If a user doesn't clearly understand a particular "term", he/she will not be able to browse the website intuitively: in such case the user will lose a lot of valuable time figuring out where certain links lead to or what certain messages mean.

We are well aware that due to the complex nature of the subject of the EUR-Lex website and the fact that some translations are based upon official terms that cannot be easily modified, it will be very difficult to solve this problem easily.

It will therefore be up to the Publications Office to decide in which cases modifications can/should be made.

Some examples include...

German version

Some terms were not clearly understood by the German test users.

One of the examples is "Legislation in force", currently translated as 'Geltendes Gemeinschaftsrecht' (= community law in force).



Also:

- 'truncate' is currently translated in German as "trunkieren"
- 'e-mail' is currently translated in German as "elektronische Anschrift" (proposal for alternative translation: "E-mail")
- 'site map' is currently translated in German as "Wegweiser" (proposal for alternative translation: "Sitemap")

French version

In France, users didn't intuitively understand what "numéro naturel" meant.

"Numéro de référence du document" was much clearer to them. The same type of translation is used for the Dutch version: "Referentienummer document"

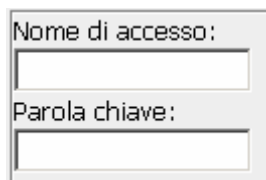
Another example pointed out by the French-speaking test participants:

► **Notice bibliographique + Texte (double visualisation)**

The term “double visualisation” was misunderstood by some users, they thought it referred to the display of both the Bibliographic Notice and the Text as they didn't think about a “bilingual display”.

Italian version

The term “Password” has been translated into Italian as “Keyword”. This confused some users.



Nome di accesso:

Parola chiave:

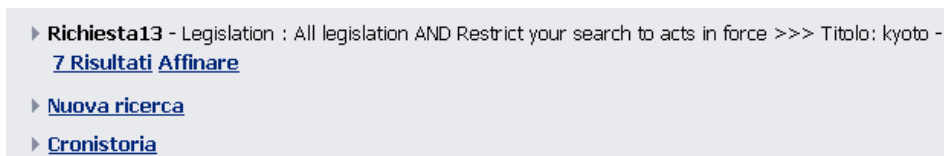
“Parola chiave” should be changed into “Password”.

Some Italian users didn't find the term “Repertorio” very intuitive.



Suggestions: change “Repertorio” into “Categoria tematica” or “Tema”.

Some Italian users misunderstood the term ‘Cronistoria’ (translation for ‘Search history’).



They thought this term referred to the ‘history of the documents themselves’ (their amendments, preparatory acts, etc).

Suggestion: the Italian users who misunderstood the term ‘Cronistoria’ suggested to use the following translation: Storia della mia ricerca

Dutch version

The term “Overzicht van de zoekstappen” doesn't have the same meaning as “Search history” and is therefore not clear for Dutch speaking users.

The most important part of the original term (“History”) isn't present in the Dutch translation.

It now says something like “Overview of search steps” (which doesn't implicitly indicate that it is about previous (or past) searches).



Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

For this issue it is extremely difficult to offer detailed solutions as translations will always be perceived in a different way by different users.

The general rule is to use (or to match as closely as possible) common or known terms that visitors may be familiar with (ex.: "Sitemap", "E-mail").

In case of official or specialized terminology, there may be terms that cannot be translated differently; in that case a "glossary" with explanations in "layman's terms" may solve the problem.

The same type of glossary can also be used to explain terms that are hard to understand by novice users. One concrete example is "Consolidated text", which was not understood by some of the test participants.

A general revision of the different translations (especially with regard to main category labels) is a key recommendation.

Finding 16: Clearly identify (un)available language versions

Rationale / critical assessment

In some cases the EUR-Lex website explicitly mentions that information is available in a limited number of languages and in other cases there is no mentioning at all.

This lack of coherence (and clear indication of (un)available language versions) could be very confusing for the EUR-Lex users.

In case web pages or documents are not available in the user's native language, this should be clearly indicated so that users can decide themselves whether or not they want to read a document in a different language.

Some examples include...

Page "How to create links to documents on EUR-Lex" (Spanish version)

In this example the contents of the "How to create links to documents on EUR-Lex" page is not available in Spanish.

Putting the title of the document in English (as has been done on this page) doesn't implicitly mean for users that this page is not available in Spanish. Spanish users "do" click on the link to look for the Spanish version.

A clear warning would have helped in this case.

Ayuda

-
- ▶ [Primera visita](#)
 - ▶ [How to create links to documents on EUR-Lex](#) (Última modificación: 10/05/2006)
 - ▶ [About this site](#)
 - ▶ [Preguntas más frecuentes](#) (Última modificación: 20/04/2007) **NEW**
 - ▶ [Guía breve sobre Búsqueda Simple](#) (Última modificación: 14/09/2006)
La Guía breve sobre Búsqueda Simple está disponible en alemán, inglés y francés.
 - ▶ [Expert search quick start guide](#) (Última modificación: 20/11/2006)
This file exists in English only
-

Another example concerns the Dutch version of the homepage: the user is presented with a Dutch link phrase ("25 jaar Europese wetgeving online") but this link leads to an English text:

- ▶ [Newsletter 11/01/2007](#) [de](#) [en](#) [fr](#)
Enlargement 2007: Special Edition of the Official Journal >>
[25 jaar Europese wetgeving online >>](#)

1981-2006: 25 years of European law online

25 years from the opening of community legal databases to the public: an anniversary, which like all commemorations leads to taking stock and reflecting on the way the databases have developed since their introduction.

On 23 November 2006, the Publications Office celebrated the 25th anniversary of the availability of European law online.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

EUR-Lex should provide information regarding the presence/absence of language versions in a consistent way.

Being consistent and clear is one of the fundamentals of usability design.

The document titles should in any case be displayed in the user's native language so that users understand what the document is about.

For documents not existing in the user's native language, alongside the document title the available language version should be clearly mentioned, preferably as clickable links, while removing the link from the document title itself.

This will make it clear to the user that they will have to select one of the available language versions.

Finding 17: Ensure that Help texts & FAQs are usable and findable

Rationale / critical assessment

Even though it is better if a system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide **help and documentation**.

Any such information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.

A lot of first-time users didn't quickly find the Help pages: putting a more visible link to a separate first-time users section would certainly help.

Other users asked for a less complicated language for the **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)** section as these pages are meant to support users when they are experiencing difficulties with the website.

Example (excerpt from the FAQ – German version):

1.8. Ich suche ein kürzlich veröffentlichtes Dokument, finde es aber nicht in EUR-Lex. Wie häufig wird die Datenbank aktualisiert?

EUR-Lex wird täglich aktualisiert.

Das Amtsblatt wird jeden Morgen, nach der Veröffentlichung der gedruckten Fassung, im PDF-Format zur Verfügung gestellt.

Die im Amtsblatt veröffentlichten Dokumente werden einer detaillierten dokumentarischen Analyse hinsichtlich ihrer Aufnahme in die Datenbank unterzogen. Auch wenn sie am Tag ihrer Veröffentlichung mit einem Minimum an analytischen Daten (darunter der Titel und der Verweis auf die Veröffentlichung) im Amtsblatt online verfügbar sein können, werden die kompletten analytischen Daten innerhalb von drei Tagen hochgeladen. Deshalb ist für einen kurzen Zeitraum nach der Veröffentlichung des Akts keine gründliche Recherche möglich.

Die Häufigkeit, mit der andere Dokumente in die Datenbank eingestellt werden, schwankt ebenfalls abhängig von ihrer Quelle.

[Zurück zu den Fragen](#)

The reason for classifying this issue as a finding (and not a suggestion) is due to the number of participants that raised this issue.

This shows that the online Help system (Help texts, FAQs ...) should be revised.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

The most important recommendation is making sure that access to the available Help texts is much more visible, as users don't intuitively spot the "Help" link in the secondary navigation.

Also the Help and FAQ pages themselves should be reviewed to make sure they are logically structured and understandable by novice users (which is currently not the case).

It would lead us out of the scope of the assessment to rewrite the Help texts.

But it is clear that they should be thoroughly revised in order to improve them as there are some sentences that are not very clear (especially for novice users).

Writing useful error handling and Help texts requires considering the following issues:

- Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors
 - Are error messages comprehensible and useful?
 - Do error messages provide suggestions for further action?
 - Does the system support learnability (tutorial, examples, scenarios, user-oriented presentation of decisions and search steps)?
- Help and documentation
 - Are help texts easy to find?
 - Are help texts short and precise or long and confusing?
 - Do help texts use examples rather than long explanations?

- Is the user motivated to use help texts?
- Are help texts context-sensitive?
- Is it possible to search within help texts?

The following web page may also provide additional tips:

<http://www.usabilitynews.com/news/article3724.asp>

(article written by usability consultant Caroline Jarrett on 'writing FAQs')

Finding 18: Break up long linear documents; add internal ToC

Rationale / critical assessment

Some pages are very long and offer very important information towards the bottom part of the screen. This makes it difficult for people to quickly spot these (at first sight "hidden") sections.

Providing an **internal navigation** on top of these pages will allow users to jump directly to the different sections. And it will also seriously help screen readers users.

But: an internal navigation should only be included on pages that are not too long (max. 5 - 6 screens).

Very long pages should be split up into a series of shorter ones.

There are many examples, but one particular page we received lots of comments on is the "Bibliographic notice".

This page would seriously benefit from an internal navigation, making it easy to find important information quickly and easily (as people now have to go all the way down to discover the section on "Relationship between documents" f.ex.).

Some users even wondered why this section was placed as the last section on the page, taking into account its importance.

The available languages, placed in the "title and reference" section is for most users much less important, they suggest this information moves further down on the page.

The documents which are very long and automatically generated by the system will be the most difficult ones to improve as there may be no way to (automatically) split them.

For this reason, the Publications Office should – in a first phase – concentrate on the other pages.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

It would be advisable to review the important Bibliographic Notice page.

One necessary improvement would be the inclusion of an internal navigation on top of the page, with links to the different sections of the page.

The Publication Office should also reconsider the order in which the different sections are presented on this page as we strongly feel that many users don't find the current presentation intuitive.

More in general:

- Long pages should receive an internal navigation, with 'back-to-top' links at regular intervals
- Very long pages should be split up into several shorter ones, with a clear and intuitive navigation connecting them.

Finding 19: Provide contextual Help

Rationale / critical assessment

The general Help issue is also treated in finding 17, this one focuses on the addition of **contextual Help** (outside the standard Help of FAQ pages).

Users need to be able to quickly find replies to questions they may have when using interfaces.

The “Guidelines for good results” texts on the different search screens are one way to provide contextual support, but in that case they need to be understood by both experienced and novice users.

For example, some users misunderstood the explanation provided for the “Search using keywords (EUROVOC)” page: they thought they could only introduce one single word in the search field:

■ Guidelines for good results

- ▶ Enter a EUROVOC descriptor directly or follow the links by field to identify a descriptor.

Other users (and there were many of them) had problems with different search criteria within the Simple Search. Contextual Help would have been an asset.

Other examples include...

The “**Complementary data**” section on the Bibliographic Notice page (and more in particular the “Text (bilingual display)” option):

Complementary data : <input type="checkbox"/> Languages and formats available <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text (bilingual display) <input type="button" value="GO"/>

When users tick the box and click the GO button, nothing happens on screen. They have to manually scroll down to discover that something is different.

This behaviour is against the most basic usability principles: users expect to “see” a result after they perform an operation. And this is clearly not the case here.

The result of this is that many users think that this functionality doesn’t work, which is extremely frustrating, as many of them find it a very useful feature (once they discover it is present). More explanations on this feature are therefore needed.

If there is no bilingual display possible ([link to example](#)), in that case this should be clearly indicated (because without any further explanations, users will click the GO-button several times, hoping for some indications to appear).

In order to make it more clear what the “bilingual display” does, instead of displaying all available language versions as clickable links...

Bilingual display : [DA](#) [DE](#) [EL](#) [EN](#) [ES](#) [ET](#) [FI](#) [FR](#) [HU](#) [IT](#) [LV](#) [NL](#) [PL](#) [PT](#) [SK](#) [SL](#) [SV](#)

... the English version could for example display this phrase as follows:

Bilingual display : **EN** + [DA](#) [DE](#) [EL](#) [ES](#) [ET](#) [FI](#) [FR](#) [HU](#) [IT](#) [LV](#) [NL](#) [PL](#) [PT](#) [SK](#) [SL](#) [SV](#)

This would make it very clear to the user that he only needs to select the “second” language (as some users thought they had to (or could) select 2 different languages from the list, as there was no language indicated by default).

Many other examples can be found in the sections covering the results of the different tests: many users have difficulties understanding the EUR-Lex terminology...

Providing contextual help is crucial.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

Include more contextual help through a clickable question mark icon (linking to related explanations available on the Help or FAQ pages) or with the use of tooltips.

This would be very useful for the different Search options within the Simple Search and for the “Complementary data” section, so that users can have context-based explanations on how these options work.

For the “Text (bilingual display)” option, it would be good to include a link to the Bilingual display section on top of the Bibliographic Notice page (in case the “Text (bilingual display)” box has been ticked and the GO button clicked).

This will clearly show the users that the operation generated a “result”: a new link appears on top of the page, just below the “Complementary data” section. The users will then be able to jump directly (through this internal anchor) to the related section.

As soon as they clear the box (and press GO) this additional link disappears.

In case there is no bilingual display possible, instead of a link a special phrase could appear, clearly indicating this.

Adding an explanatory glossary to the website would also be an asset.

Finding 20: Improve error handling

For every offline or online system, issues related to **error handling** are by default “serious”.

Users who encounter errors (or unexpected results) should “at all times” be properly informed about the nature of the cause.

When users perform a search operation on a website and the search doesn't generate any results (or not the expected results) it is important to inform users, in their own language, about what went wrong or what can be done to achieve a minimum of relevant results.

For this reason error messages (and/or help instructions) should be written in a clear and understandable way, and in the user's own language.

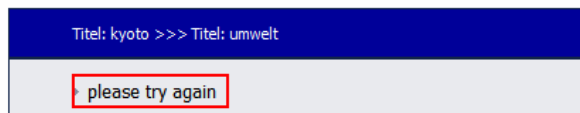
Some examples of cases where error-handling needs special attention:

The search facility of the EUR-Lex website doesn't respect this rule as the error messages are in English.

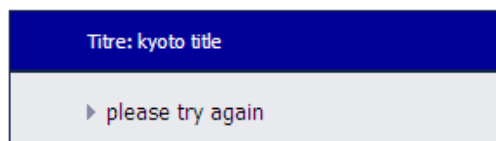
For example, when a user selects the Search Terms option in the Simple Search section and introduces keywords that don't generate any search results, the following phrase is generated: "please try again".

The exact same (English) phrase is shown in each language version.

Kein Dokument entspricht den Suchkriterien.

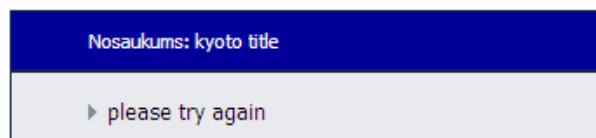


Aucun document sélectionné.



In case of the Latvian version, f. ex. there is also an additional problem: the main error handling phrase ("No documents matching criteria") is also in English (instead of Latvian).

No documents matching criteria.



Moreover:

- The sentence "please try again" doesn't provide any help to the user regarding the (likely) cause of the problem.
- This page doesn't offer the possibility to easily/quickly go back to the previous screen by means of a link phrase (only the back-button lets the user return to the previous page).

Another example with regard to clarity of error handling concerns the following error message (in German) after the user typed in some search terms:

Fehler bei der Anfrage. Bitte versuchen Sie es noch einmal. (TITRE: ("banca popolare cremona*"))

Yet another example concerns the "Search by Date" facility.

When users incorrectly enter a date (not respecting the required number of digits), the following error message may occur:

The end-of-period date must be later than the start-of-period date. 200691 > 20061130

In this case, the system should autocorrect the incorrect digits (transforming "9" into "09" and "1" into "01" for this example), or have a field validation script (running server-side) warning the user about the incorrect use of digits.

For this particular case the "Guidelines for good results" section on the search page does explain how to introduce the digits correctly, but as we have noticed during the user test, this Help text is not being read 'first' by the users.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

As mentioned earlier on, throughout the EUR-Lex website web pages are presented in a mixture of languages which is an important usability (and accessibility) issue that should be addressed.

The overall usability and user-friendliness of the EUR-Lex website would greatly improve if EUR-Lex would/could respect this language consistency.

Especially in cases where users are confronted with unexpected outcome (no search results after the introduction a “valid” search term f.ex.) it is critical that the user is addressed in his/her native language and that information is provided on the (likely) cause of the unexpected outcome and/or error.

Users tend to get extremely frustrated when they use a meaningful search term and the website repeatedly generates zero results. At that point, the system should help the user getting him/her back on track.

The solution to this problem therefore consists in displaying all error handling messages in the primary language of the webpage and to inform the user on possible solutions.

In case the “Try again” text is maintained, it should link back to the previous search screen.

As it is difficult to list here all different errors that may occur (during search operations for example), we suggest that all examples provided in the related observations are being dealt with ‘as a start’.

Solving these issues will already significantly improve the user-friendliness of the error-handling within the EUR-Lex website.

6.3 Minor problems

In general, **minor usability problems** concern an enhancement of some very particular issues.

Fixing them can be given low priority, which doesn’t mean that they can be ignored: the overall user experience will greatly benefit from these enhancements.

Based upon the observations gathered during the Usability Assessment, the following findings have been classified as “minor problems”:

- **Finding 21: Splash screen: unintuitive language list**
- **Finding 22: Use known icons for known features**
- **Finding 23: User registration: inform users**
- **Finding 24: Handling of ‘Time Outs’**
- **Finding 25: Simple search: provide representative examples**
- **Finding 26: Design for common browsers and popular operating systems**
- **Finding 27: Improve text readability**

- **Finding 28: Use a sitemap that reflect the website's conceptual structure**
- **Finding 29: Avoid or clarify jargon**
- **Finding 30: Link to the homepage**

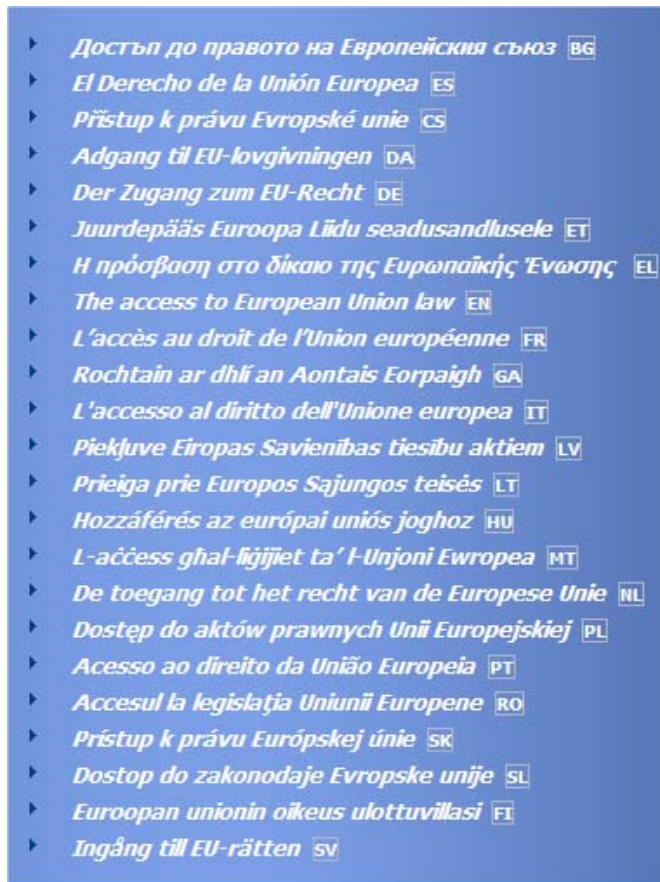
Finding 21: Splash screen: unintuitive language list

Rationale / critical assessment

Quite some users had trouble finding quickly their native language on the **EUR-Lex splash screen**.

This is due to the fact that the different language icons are very small and appear after the texts, therefore they don't stand out. And many users prefer to use these type of icons instead of reading the full sentences.

Moreover, people that often use EUROPA websites are used to them and thus easily recognize them.



Additionally, using italics for the textual entries reduces the readability of the different sentences.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

The EUROPA portal also offers a combination of full text and language icons on its splash screen to mark the entries to the different language version of the site (<http://europa.eu/>).

On the EUROPA splash screen the icons are very visible as they are relatively big, appear in front of the text and they are also easily recognizable.

And the textual entries are not in italics, but in a clear and readable font type.

The EUROPA splash screen should be taken as an example when resolving this issue.



Finding 22: Use known icons for known features

Rationale / critical assessment

Good icon design takes into account both the design of individual icons as well as the design of multiple icons as a set. Icons must each be clear in meaning, easily recognizable, and accessible. Furthermore, they must be distinguishable from the other icons in their set, while also being linked visually to their set. This is a difficult balance to strike, one which often requires the expertise of a visual designer who specializes in icons.

When designing a website, one must understand when icons can enhance a user experience and when they can be detrimental to usability. Taking into account established icon paradigms, what makes a good icon set, and when it is appropriate to use icons is essential to designing a website. There are countless examples of icons on the web and in nearly every desktop and mobile application. When it comes to website usability, paying close attention to the world of icons that surrounds you is the best way to begin understanding what helps and what makes things harder to use.

This finding has been drafted to address the issue of the **arrow-icons** which are extensively used on the EUR-Lex site (to mark list items): many users interpret them wrongly.

Icons can enhance usability but they can also cause confusion, as in the case of the arrow-icons on the EUR-Lex site.

Arrows on websites are typically used for:

- Navigation purposes (next page, previous page, ...)
- Sorting columns (ascending, descending)
- Menu's (collapse, expand)

The collapsible/expandable arrow icon is the one that users think about most when they look at the EUR-Lex-site: they get the feeling that there are 'hidden' menu items.

- 
- The screenshot shows a list of menu items on the EUR-Lex website. Each item is preceded by a right-pointing arrow icon. The items are: 04. POLITICS, 08. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, 10. EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, 12. LAW, 01. General, financial and institutional matters, 02. Customs Union and free movement of goods, 03. Agriculture, 07.10. Transport infrastructure (8), 07.10.10. Coordination and investment (0), 07.10.20. Financial support (0), and 07.10.30. User tariffs (0). The items 07.10.10, 07.10.20, and 07.10.30 are highlighted with a yellow background.
- ▶ [04. POLITICS](#)
 - ▶ [08. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS](#)
 - ▶ [10. EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES](#)
 - ▶ [12. LAW](#)

 - ▶ [01. General, financial and institutional matters](#)
 - ▶ [02. Customs Union and free movement of goods](#)
 - ▶ [03. Agriculture](#)

 - ▶ [07.10. Transport infrastructure](#) (8)
 - ▶ [07.10.10. Coordination and investment](#) (0)
 - ▶ [07.10.20. Financial support](#) (0)
 - ▶ [07.10.30. User tariffs](#) (0)

This became very clear during the user tests, a lot of users tried to click on the arrows, but nothing happened. And this caused confusion.

It would therefore be advisable to replace the arrow icon with another one, more suitable for marking list items.

On the other hand, the EUR-Lex website would benefit from the use of 'more' icons: downloadable or printable documents could be identified using icons, links to contextual help files could be marked by icons, etc.

It would be worth the effort to analyze this more in detail.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

We can draft 2 recommendations for the icon issue:

- Replace the arrow icon by a "bullet-style" icon (more suitable for marking static list items)
- Analyze the possibility to include more icons on the site

Finding 23: User registration: inform users

Rationale / critical assessment

This finding highlights issues related to the **user registration facility**.

There were many issues encountered, so we have to limit ourselves to a few important examples...

One of the basics of usability is "to inform users adequately about what is happening within a system" so they know what is going on.

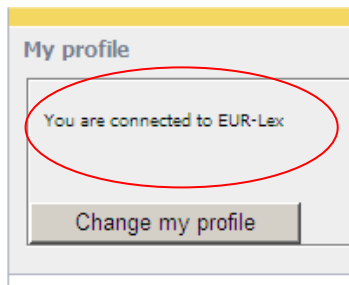
With regard to the user registration feature the following issues should be resolved in this respect:

When someone fills in the registration form, and he/she clicks the save button, this person is redirected to the EUR-Lex homepage.

At that moment the person is not aware if the registration procedure was completed successfully, as no message appears confirming this.

And although the registration procedure asks for an e-mail address no confirmation mail (with further instructions and/or additional details about the registration) is sent to the user.

The second issue concerns the immediate redirection to the homepage after the registration procedure has been completed: in very small characters, nearly invisible, the following message appears (in the "My Profile" area on the homepage):



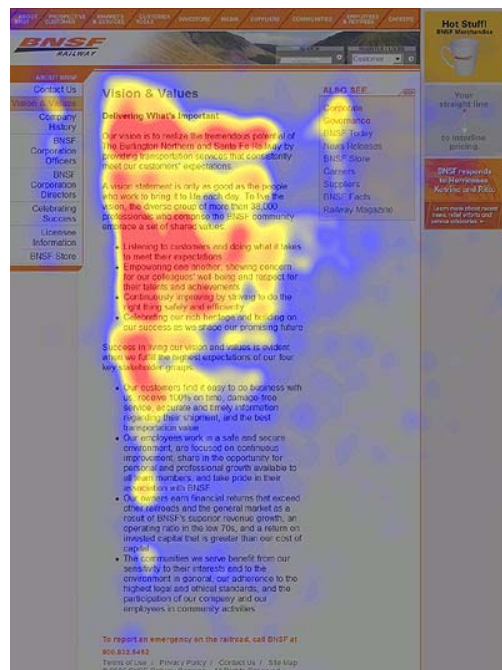
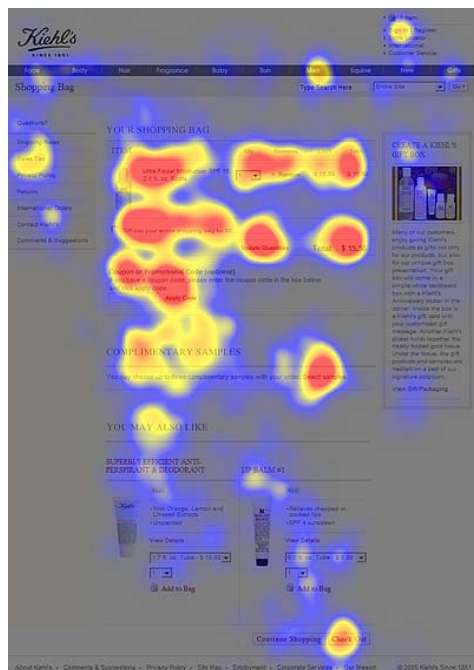
If the user doesn't explicitly look at this area after registration, there is no indication whether or not the user is already connected to the system.

This is quite confusing.

To back up our statement we included the eye-tracking 'heatmaps' of 2 different web pages. These 'heatmaps' show how users look at the different parts of a Web page.

Areas where users look the most are colored red; the yellow areas indicate fewer fixations, followed by the least-viewed blue areas. Gray areas hardly attract any fixations.

The 'heatmaps' show that the area in which the "My Profile" area is located receives fewer attention.



Please note that these examples were taken from studies conducted on websites other than EUR-Lex, a EUR-Lex 'heatmap' could therefore slightly differ from these examples, but the images are quite representative for regular websites with a 3-column structure.

Important notice:

There is no problem with the location of the 'My Profile' area on the EUR-Lex homepage. Both the experts and the users are happy with it.

This issue only relates to special (and important) messages that suddenly appear in an area where they are not very visible, as is the case for the user registration.

Moreover, the sentence “You are connected to EUR-Lex” is displayed in a very small font size (and doesn’t have a different color), which makes it even more difficult to notice it intuitively.

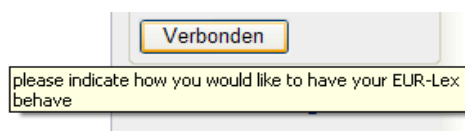
Another problem, already raised before, concerns the accuracy of the translations.

In the Dutch version the ‘Connect’ button has been translated as ‘Verbonden’ (which means: “Connected”).

It should be: “Verbinden”.



On the same page (Dutch version), an English message pops up when the user hovers with his mouse over the Connect-button and the following message appears:



This sentence should be translated into Dutch.

And the “Forgotten Password’ functionality doesn’t seem to work as nothing happens when the link is clicked.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

The issues raised above only cover a part of the issues discovered during the assessment. More examples can be found in the test results sections.

Most of these issues can be easily corrected.

With regard to the user registration itself we would like to suggest the following solution:

After successful completion of the registration procedure, the user should see a page confirming the registration and providing further instructions and/or additional details about the registration service.

On this page the user should also be offered the option to receive a confirmation message by e-mail (as many people like to archive paper copies of their registrations).

An additional link can then point to the EUR-Lex homepage.

With regard to the issue related to the “You are connected to EUR-Lex” message:

Make sure the “You are connected to EUR-Lex” message is much more visible on screen. This can be done by placing the message in the top part of the page (next to the banner area), and in a different color that really stands out.

A link to “disconnect” from the system should also be provided (in the same area).

Finding 24: Handling of ‘Time Outs’

Rationale / critical assessment

Bottom line: “Don’t block the user when a session expires”

When a **session expires**, the page announcing that the session has expired asks to click on “[Reconnect to EUR-Lex]”, but this link is not present in the page. The only available link points to ‘EUROPA’.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

Add a link to EUR-Lex in the path of the page about session expiration.

Finding 25: Simple search: provide representative examples

Rationale / critical assessment

When providing examples in Help texts, these examples should be **representative** for the Help feature(s) they illustrate.

In case of the example illustrating a search using wildcards, the example should be reviewed and modified, as for some languages it isn't representative.

Example:

The Help texts states that "?" replaces one character.

The strength of "?" is that it can replace 'any' character, but the sample word provided only allows for the replacement of 1 particular character.

In the English version the word `t?ansport*` has been used (with this word the "?" can only be replaced by an "r"... a user could wonder why in such as case a wildcard would be useful)

To truncate a term or a date use the symbols ? or *. ? replaces one character, * replaces 0 to n characters. These two symbols can only be used in the middle or at the end of the chain, never in the beginning.

Example: `t?ansport*` will find transportation, transporting, etc.

Same for German:

The word `V?RKEHR*` has been used (with this word the "?" can only be replaced by an "E")

Benutzen Sie die Symbole ? oder *, um einen Begriff oder ein Datum zu trunkieren. ? ersetzt ein Zeichen, * ersetzt 0 bis n Zeichen. Diese beiden Symbole können ausschließlich in der Mitte oder am Ende einer Zeichenfolge benutzt werden, niemals am Anfang.

Beispiel: `V?RKEHR*` für Verkehr, Verkehrs, Verkehrssicherheit.

Same for Dutch:

The word `v?rvoer*` has been used (with this word the "?" can only be replaced by an "e")

And so on...

Use examples that better illustrate the possibilities of wildcard searches:

Rationale / critical assessment

A better English example would be: `ex?mpl*` as this will find 'example', 'exemplary', 'exemplified', etc.

A better German example would be: `gef?hr*` as this will find 'Gefahr', 'Gefahrensymbol', 'gefährlich', 'gefahrvoll', etc.

Finding 26: Design for common browsers and popular operating systems

Rationale / critical assessment

More and more people use **browsers other than Internet Explorer** such as Firefox (and various other minority browsers, like Opera and Safari):

2006	IE7	IE6	IE5	Fx	Moz	N7/8	O
December	10.7%	45.3%	3.4%	30.3%	2.6%	0.2%	1.5%
November	7.1%	49.9%	3.6%	29.9%	2.5%	0.2%	1.5%
October	3.1%	54.5%	3.8%	28.8%	2.4%	0.3%	1.4%
September	2.5%	55.6%	4.0%	27.3%	2.3%	0.4%	1.6%
August	2.0%	56.2%	4.1%	27.1%	2.3%	0.3%	1.6%
July	1.9%	56.3%	4.2%	25.5%	2.3%	0.4%	1.4%
June	1.6%	58.2%	4.3%	24.9%	2.2%	0.3%	1.4%
May	1.1%	57.4%	4.5%	25.7%	2.3%	0.3%	1.5%
April	0.7%	58.0%	5.0%	25.2%	2.5%	0.4%	1.5%
March	0.6%	58.8%	5.3%	24.5%	2.4%	0.5%	1.5%
February	0.5%	59.5%	5.7%	25.1%	2.9%	0.4%	1.5%
January	0.2%	60.3%	5.5%	25.0%	3.1%	0.5%	1.6%

Browser use in 2006 - statistics from www.w3schools.com

The EUR-Lex website, viewed with FireFox, has display problems:



Make sure that the EUR-Lex website performs well in all major browsers (Internet Explorer, FireFox, Mozilla, Netscape, Opera, Safari) and on all platforms (Windows, Mac, Linux).

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

There is only one recommendation possible for this issue:

The EUR-Lex website should be tested with different browsers and on different platforms to identify display errors.

Finding 27: Improve text readability

Rationale / critical assessment

Some general guidelines related to text readability:

- Avoid using all uppercase for large text areas.
- Avoid using italics for large text areas.
- Avoid using bolded text for large text areas.
- Be careful when using colored text. Use dark text on light backgrounds to provide the most contrast.
- Mixed-case, black and unbolded is easier to read for large text areas. Use color and bold only to call attention to important items.

Research has shown that people can read faster if words are written using mixed case rather than all upper case. Blocks of bold and italics text are more difficult to read. Black is easier to read than colored fonts.

With regard to the EUR-Lex website:

All CAPS

Don't use all caps for bodytype - or even capitalize all words in headings.

The uniformity of size and shape of capitals make them harder to read than lower case letters.

Readability is increased if only the first letter in a heading is in capitals; each capital - being less recognizable - acts as an interruption to the eye as it scans across the text.

And use capitalization, according to the rules of the different languages.

Illegible italic text

One user explicitly stated that she does not like text in *italics* because it is hard to read:

Titel und Fundstelle

2004/485/EG: Beschluss des Rates vom 26. April 2004 zur Änderung des Beschlusses über das Änderungsprotokoll zu dem Internationalen Übereinkommen über die Vereinfachung

Abi. L 162 vom 30.4.2004, S. 113–113 (ES, DA, DE, EL, EN, FR, IT, NL, PT, FI, SV)
CS.ES Kapitel 02 Band 16 S. 101
ET.ES Kapitel 02 Band 16 S. 101
HU.ES Kapitel 02 Band 16 S. 101
LT.ES Kapitel 02 Band 16 S. 101
LV.ES Kapitel 02 Band 16 S. 101
MT.ES Kapitel 02 Band 16 S. 101
PL.ES Kapitel 02 Band 16 S. 101
SK.ES Kapitel 02 Band 16 S. 101
SL.ES Kapitel 02 Band 16 S. 101

DA DE EL EN ES FI FR IT NL PT SV

Text

Italicized text attracts the eye because it contrasts in shape from body text. Use italics for convention — when listing book or periodical titles, for example — or within text for stressed or foreign words or phrases. Avoid setting large blocks of text in italics because the readability of italicized text, particularly at screen resolutions, is much lower than in comparably sized roman text.

If you must use italics, avoid using them for large blocks of text.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

Everyone benefits from clear, readable text content. People with visual impairments benefit particularly.

There are some standard rules on creating “readable” Web text.

Don't use too many font sizes

Font sizes are a great differentiator. They work as signs that say "Here is something important" or "Here is a new section - This big bit tells you what the section is about, the small stuff below is the actual content". Just like any other means of visually differentiating elements, there needs to be a sufficient level of visual difference for text size to work.

For this reason, it is not recommended to use more than 3 different main font sizes to render your main content (i.e. main header, sub-header, body). This only applies to the main body content. Other screen elements may use alternative sizes (such as superscript/subscript, labels, advertisements, separate navigation links, footer navigation etc.)

Use sans-serif face for all body copy

Different classes of typefaces (fonts) have different innate levels of readability.

Serif vs. Sans-serif fonts

- **Serif**

Serif fonts have worked well for hundreds of years. They tend to look more old-fashioned and 'establishment'. The serifs - the flowing marks at the points of letters - work by leading the eye on to the next letter, making for a smoother and easier read. However, this only works at high resolutions (e.g. print). At low-res, the extra complexity decreases clarity, and the reduced whitespace between letters makes recognition slower. I find that serifs become more acceptable at higher sizes.

- **Sans**

Sans-serifs are literally fonts that don't have serifs. They look more modern and open. Sans-serif fonts are more readable than serifs on pixel-based displays, because they are simpler, which translates well to low-resolutions.

Many sans fonts have been developed specifically for electronic media. The most readable sans-serif fonts are broad, providing ample space between letters, which facilitates recognition. In the opinion of most designers, Verdana is the most effective font for body text.

Verdana is specifically good for body text, because it's a broad a spacious font, which leaves an ample square space for each letter. This makes it easier to distinguish each different letter at low resolutions.

Don't use too many typefaces

Different fonts project their own personalities, which can be helpful for branding.

In general it is recommended to use Verdana (1st preference), Helvetica or other sans-serif fonts.

Titles and other page features (logos / navigation / ads) may use a huge variety of other typefaces to create different feels. However, it is generally acknowledged that too many different typefaces is counter-productive.

As a rule of thumb, don't use more than 3 different typefaces throughout a single web page design.

Emphasis

Create emphasis through using underlines, bold and italics, but use them sparingly. To draw attention to a whole line, consider using a coloured background, or emboldening, which are less detrimental to readability than underlines or italics.

Emboldening increases contrast, and contrast only works when it has something to contrast against. Lots of bold text doesn't draw attention, it competes for attention, creates extra noise and decreases readability.

Italics are quite handy for emphasizing words or short phrases. They tend to have a softer emphasis than emboldening. Italics should not be used for blocks of text, because they can have a similar effect to serif fonts at small resolutions, reducing readability. Sans-serif fonts that work well on screen can have poor readability in italic form.

Similarly, underlining text can serve to emphasize certain words or short phrases, when used in moderation. Be careful that underlining for emphasis is not mistakable for hyperlinks (perhaps by having hyperlinks in blue without underlines in normal state, exhibiting the underline on hover).

Alignment

Left-aligned text is easier to read than right-aligned text.

Full justification (where words are stretched so that they meet both the left and right margin, as in this paragraph) is only effective with pretty long lines of text (40chars+). However, on-screen text is easier to read in narrower columns, which makes it hard to justify full justification! In our opinion, a web page is the wrong place for fully-justified copy, because it doesn't have the resolution to implement it smoothly.

Contrast in text

It's very important to have sufficient contrast between text and its background. Use white background with black body text where possible. If not, black on the lightest background colour you can manage. An alternative is white or brightly-coloured text on a black or very dark background colour, but this seems slightly more tiring.

Case / Capitalisation

DON'T USE CAPS FOR BODY TEXT, BECAUSE IT DECREASES THE CONTRAST BETWEEN LETTERS WHEN THEY ALL TAKE UP THE SAME SIZED BOX.

Capital letters are useful because they announce the start of a piece of text (sentence) or an important piece of information such as a name. They lose their effectiveness when over-used. Full capitalisation is more tiring and slower to read, because it reduces recognition by making all letters a similar size.

Spacing text

Clearly, whitespace is vital for text to be readable. Whitespace around elements is known in design-speak as guttering, or margin when applied to blocks of text. It's useful because it helps the eye to identify a block of text as a group, and also helps you quickly find the beginning of each line.

Use proximity to associate headers and titles with content. Proximity also requires whitespace, so use space around all paragraphs and headers, but make sure a header is nearer to its child content than previous paragraphs. This softly suggests further levels of association, and helps scanning.

The spacing between letters is known as letterspacing, track kerning or tracking.

The spacing between lines is called leading (derived from the thin strips of hammered-out lead used by typesetters).

CSS allows designers to change letterspacing (through the letter-spacing property) and leading (using line-height), but should be only considered with very good reason. Do not be tempted to reduce letterspacing or leading below the default value, as this will reduce readability.

Text block size

Blocks of text should not be too long or too wide.

When paragraphs get long, they're harder to read because there's less whitespace. Whitespace gives paragraphs shape, which acts like visual bearings, making it easier to find your place, and to find the start of the next line. Using more, smaller paragraphs suits web content particularly, because it lets you subtly highlight more useful phrases, by putting them in their own paragraph, or starting a new paragraph.

For similar reasons, long lines (wide paragraphs) are slower and harder to read than narrower ones. Lines of around 100 characters present neat bite-size chunks of text that can easily be decoded, and also make it really easy to scan round to the start of the next line. That's why newspapers and magazines use several columns on a page, and why books use the same common format.

Finding 28: Use a sitemap that reflect the web site's conceptual structure

Rationale / critical assessment

Most site maps fail to convey multiple levels of the site's information architecture. In usability tests, users often overlook site maps or can't find them. Complexity is also a problem: a map should be a map, not a navigational challenge of its own.

Users go to site maps if they are lost, frustrated, or looking for specific details on a crowded site.

A site map's main benefit is to give users an overview of the site's areas in a single glance by dedicating an entire page to a visualization of the information architecture.

If designed well, this overview can include several levels of hierarchy, and yet not get so big that users lose their ability to grasp the map as a whole.

Some test participants accessed the EUR-Lex sitemap when they did not find what they were looking for.

The site map only displays one level of the web site.

It doesn't give additional information to the users about the structure and organization of the EUR-Lex web site. It offers more or less the same hyperlinks as on the homepage.

Therefore, for most users the sitemap represented only an 'elaborated' version of the primary navigation menu.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

The sitemap should be revised and, in collaboration with real users, redesigned so that it accurately reflects the website's information architecture.

Good sitemap design requires a study on its own.

One particular recommendation would be to include more levels on the current sitemap. That would already increase its usefulness.

Finding 29: Avoid or clarify jargon

Rationale / critical assessment

One of the most important things on a website is the content that is presented. The more clear and relevant the content is to the user, the more usable it is.

Terminology plays a large role in the user's ability to find and understand information.

Many terms are familiar to designers and content writers, but not to users.

Slightly changing texts can substantially improve a user's understanding.

To improve understanding among users who are accustomed to using the jargon term, it may also be helpful to put that term in parentheses.

A dictionary or glossary may be helpful to users who are new to a topic, but should not be considered a license to frequently use terms typical users do not understand.

Due to its specific area (legal information) the EUR-Lex website makes extensive use of jargon. This is inevitable.

That's why it is important to put measures in place to make this jargon also accessible to users who are not (or less) familiar with the legal system.

For the contents of the legal texts this won't be possible, but the terminology used throughout the site should be "explained" to novice users (who are not familiar with EU law or with the typical EUR-Lex terminology).

The novice users who participated at the tests (and who were interested in the subject) had serious problems understanding 'jargon'-terms.

One 'typical' example:

Many users didn't understand the difference between "Classification headings" and "Subject matter":

The current page offers access to the agreements concluded by the European Communities by

▶ [classification headings](#)

▶ [subject matter](#)

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

To support new and first-time users who are unfamiliar with the EU Law domain, avoid jargon and abbreviations which may confuse them.

Do not use words that typical users may not understand.

In case jargon has to be used make sure that a glossary is available.

Or provide contextual help: explanations/clarifications through the use of tooltips for example.

Finding 30: Link to homepage

Rationale / critical assessment

As mentioned in other findings, the user tests showed that users did not know how to navigate or return to the EUR-Lex homepage.

They all clicked the back button of the browser until they were back on the homepage.

In general, they did not use the breadcrumbs for navigation; they all relied on the back button of the browser.

And many users were disturbed by the fact that the EUR-Lex logo didn't link to the site's homepage.

Recommendations / solution(s) for improvement

To address this issue we recommend the following improvements:

- Put a link to the site's homepage on the EUR-Lex logo (banner area)
- Include a link to the homepage in the primary navigation.

This will ensure that all users will be able to quickly return to the homepage of the site.

6.4 Suggestions

During the Usability Assessment, many users proposed **suggestions** to improve the user-friendliness of the EUR-Lex website.

Some of them were retained by the usability experts.

The selection was based upon the following criteria:

- Two or more participants came up with the suggestion
- The suggestion enhances the usability of the website or is considered as a useful enhancement
- The implementation of the suggestion may be realistic

The following suggestions are highlighted in this chapter:

- 1. Search by natural number: 'All legislation' radio button**
- 2. Missing functionalities**
- 3. Improve design**
- 4. Documents: toggle between language versions impossible**
- 5. Customization**
- 6. Community / forum**

Suggestion 1: Search by natural number: 'All legislation' radio button

Rationale / critical assessment

When users were asked to find the following document (COM final 0179 of 2005)...

► 52005DC0179

Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - A European Programme for Action to Confront HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis through External Action (2007-2011)

/* COM/2005/0179 final */

... they were not able to find it by selecting the following search options:

Select one of the following document types

All legislation
 Regulation
 Directive
 Decision
 COM final
 European Court case

Enter the year (4 characters)

Enter the number (maximum 4 characters)

They needed to explicitly select the 'COM final' option:

Select one of the following document types

All legislation
 Regulation
 Directive
 Decision
 COM final
 European Court case

Enter the year (4 characters)

Enter the number (maximum 4 characters)

For many users this was very surprising as they intuitively thought that the first option would cover all other options.

Suggestion

Make it clear to the users that the option containing "All legislation" doesn't necessarily covering all other options...

Suggestion 2: Missing functionalities

Rationale / critical assessment

There were also many suggestions related to “missing functionalities” (functionalities users would like to see implemented).

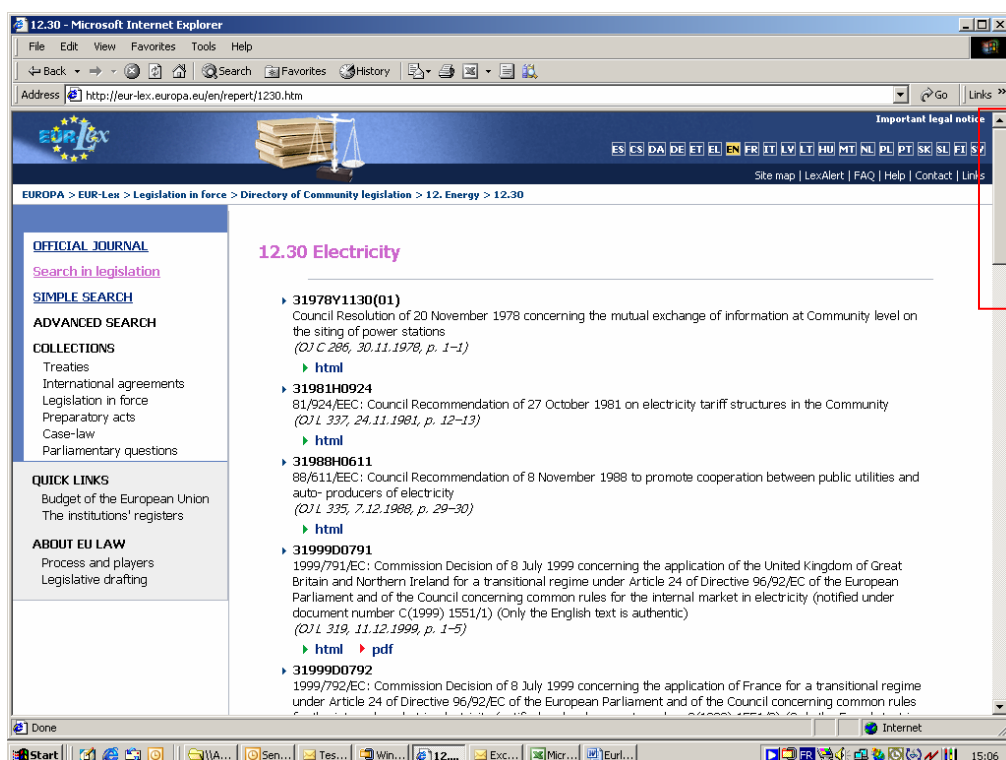
Local search facility

The CTRL+F shortcut pops up a local search function but some users don't know (or use) it.

For them, a local search facility would help to search inside the content of a document (the majority of the test participants looked for ways to start a search within the contents of the Official Journals for example).

Directory of Community legislation: sorting not possible

In Italy users asked for a sorting function in case many documents are displayed.

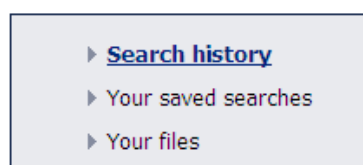


Saving search results

Many users regretted the fact that there was no possibility to save Search results.

We presume that this option will be implemented as there is already a link phrase that hasn't been activated yet on the Simple Search main entry page (label: “Your saved searches”)

Previous searches



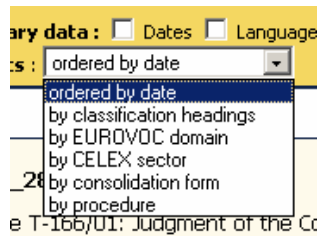
As visitors have no idea when the “save searches” function will be enabled it would be advisable to include more information on this functionality on the website: when it will be available, what it will offer, etc.

Visitors like to be informed when new services become available.

Display results

The “display results” dropdown box offers different options to sort documents.

Many test participants suggested to add the following option to the list: “order by document type”.



Suggestion

Analysis of proposals and – where possible - implementation.

Suggestion 3: Improve design

Rationale / critical assessment

Quite a number of users made remarks on the general design of the EUR-Lex website.

They like its “neutral” look but also think that the website should use more colour and icons to enhance the look of specific areas (such as the news items section).

Other users don't like the present “look and feel” at all, stating that it was OK back in the year 2000 but not in 2006...

Suggestion

We think that the overall design would already greatly improve if the website would respect the rules on consistency and if the template is present on all pages of the site.

That would certainly be a solid basis for improvement.

In a second step the addition of icons and other graphical enhancements may increase the likeability a bit further...

Suggestion 4: Documents: toggle between language versions impossible

Rationale / critical assessment

In some cases users would like to be able to quickly switch between different language versions of the same document.

In the present EUR-Lex system this feature isn't very intuitive as many users tend to select the desired language version in the language list on top of the screen (on the search results page f.ex), hereby modifying the main language of the interface (which is very often not wanted).

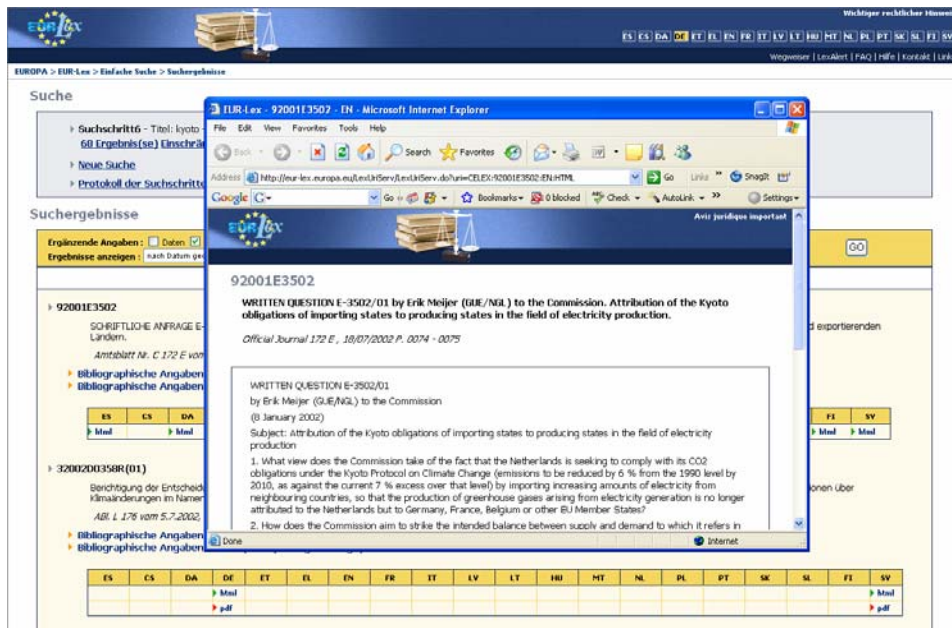
People do not easily find the procedure to render just the document and not the entire interface in another language:

Search results (German)

Tick the checkbox "Verfügbare Sprachen und Formate" and click "Go"

ES	CS	DA	DE	ET	EL	EN	FR	IT	LV	LT	HU	MT	NL	PL	PT	SK	SL	FI	SV
Mail	Mail	Mail	Mail	Mail	Mail	Mail	Mail	Mail					Mail	Mail				Mail	Mail

The available languages and formats are displayed



The document can be viewed in English, but the interface is still in the user's native language (in this example: German)

Suggestion

There are 2 possible options to resolve this issue:

- Make sure that the "Languages and formats available" option is more visible and intuitive to the user
- Provide language buttons (pointing to the available language versions) in the same screen as in which the original document is displayed (this solution, considered as the most usable one, may be difficult to implement as it will require technical modifications):

Suggestion 5: Personalisation

Rationale / critical assessment

This suggestion was raised a couple of times throughout the assessment process, both by users and experts.

Currently, users do not have the possibility to customize or personalize EUR-Lex, e.g. 'document push' by EUR-Lex after users have indicated their domains of interest, a 'My EUR-Lex' portal site, RSS feeds, etc.

This would also allow users to indicate their language preference(s).

Suggestion

There are certainly some interesting features included in this suggestion.

It is therefore certainly worth investigating it further.

Suggestion 6: Community

Rationale / critical assessment

This suggestion was raised a couple of times throughout the assessment process, especially by the expert users.

Within EUR-Lex an expert community or expert network could be provided as an extra service.

Users asking questions about a certain domain of interest could use the community or network to contact other experts with similar interest domains and gather information through this service.

Suggestion

We think it concerns a very interesting extra service, worth looking at.

6.5 Positive elements

This 'positive elements' category highlights elements that were identified as being positive for the current EUR-Lex website.

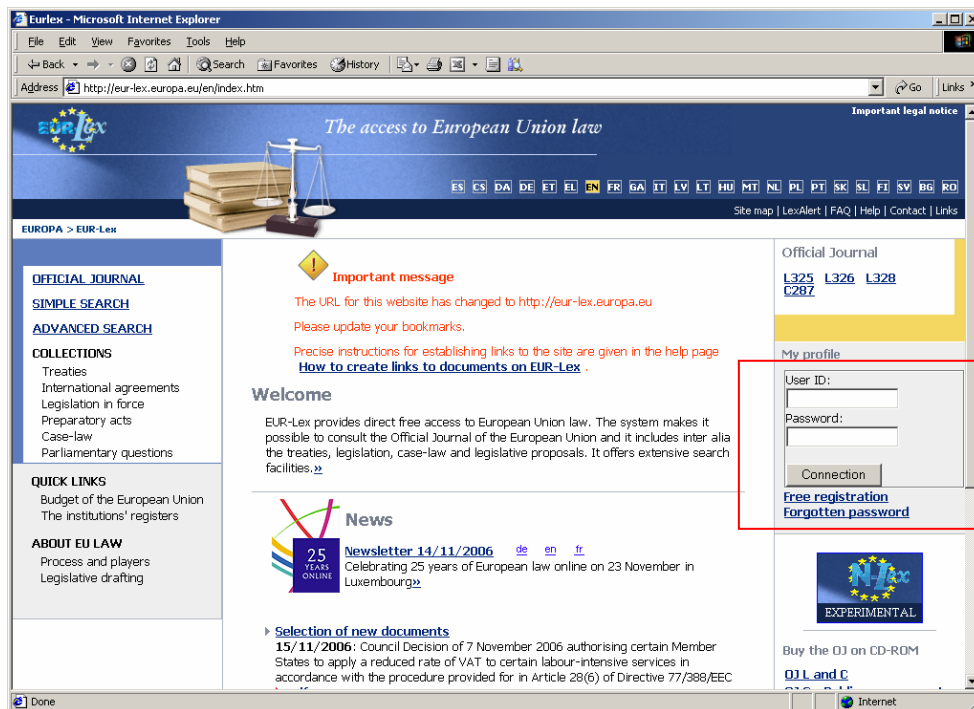
It is by no means an exhaustive list, as in most cases the test users only commented on negative aspects and much less on the positive issues.

These elements don't need any further modifications as they work well on the current site.

It is recommended that these positive elements are kept in case of a redesign of the EUR-Lex website.

Registration form: good screen organization

All users liked the position of the Registering form.



Useful search term emphasis

The fact that the searched terms are emphasized in red highly helps the user.

► **52006PC0598**

Proposal for a Council Regulation on the import of certain **steel** products originating in Ukraine

/* COM/2006/0598 final - ACC 2006/0191 */

- **Bibliographic notice**
- **Bibliographic notice + Text (bilingual display)**
- **html** ► **pdf** ► **doc**

Red emphasis in results display

Good window management

The French users consider the browser window management to be logical.

It helps to organize the navigation session, because it opens new windows for external sites and final documents.

Most users appreciate the fact that final documents open in new windows.

Case-law: table of contents

Some users like the small table of contents introducing the Case-law, with quick access to *Parties*, *Grounds*, *Operative part* and would have liked this to appear also in the html display (not only in the *Bibliographic notice + Text* one).

Text

Bilingual display : [CS](#) [DA](#) [DE](#) [EL](#) [EN](#) [ES](#) [ET](#) [FI](#) [FR](#) [HU](#) [IT](#) [LT](#) [LV](#) [MT](#) [NL](#) [PL](#) [PT](#) [SK](#) [SL](#) [SV](#)

[Parties](#)
[Grounds](#)
[Operative part](#)

■ Parties

Case-law Table of Contents

Neutral layout

Almost all users liked the neutral layout of the site (which doesn't mean that the likeability wouldn't increase in case of an optimization of the general design or layout with small enhancement features).

Official Journal: serious aspect

One user finds the Official Journal presentation serious, although he would have liked some information emphasis for titles.

PDF format

The French users perceive the PDF format of the Quick start guide as an asset. It makes it easy to view and print the instructions.

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