

Part Four

Publications in English

10. House rules for the preparation of the text

11. Reference works

Part Four has been completely revised by the English interinstitutional group. See the summary at the end of this PDF for an overview of the revision.

The text in green shows all modifications that have been done since the latest printed version (2011 edition).

10. House rules for the preparation of the text

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10.1. Punctuation

10.1.1. Full stop

A full stop marks the end of a sentence. All footnotes end with a full stop, except those consisting solely of an internet or email address. Do not use a full stop at the end of a heading.

No further full stop is required if a sentence ends with an ellipsis (...), with an abbreviation that takes a point (e.g. 'etc.') or with a quotation complete in itself that ends in a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark before the closing quote:

Winston Churchill said: 'A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.'

'Truncations (in which the end of the word is deleted) are followed by a full stop (for example Co., Art., Chap.), but contractions (in which the middle of the word is removed) are not (for example Dr, Ms, Ltd). See also Section 10.8 and Annexes A3 and A4.

Run-in side heads, i.e. headings that are followed by more text on the same line, are followed by a full stop, not a colon.

Engaging citizens. The year 2013 was designated the European Year of Citizens.

(See also Section 10.1.10 on ellipses.)

10.1.2. Question mark

Every question which expects a separate answer should be followed by a question mark. The next word should begin with a capital letter. There should be no space between the question mark and the preceding word, letter or number.

A question mark is used at the end of a direct question:

How will this affect EU trade?

However, question marks are not used in indirect speech:

We should ask ourselves how this policy will affect EU trade.

Do not use a question mark after a request or instruction disguised as a question out of courtesy:

Would you please sign and return the attached form.

10.1.3. Exclamation mark

An exclamation mark is used after an exclamatory word, phrase or sentence such as ‘Look!’ or ‘How we laughed!’ Such exclamatory expressions are appropriate in texts that directly address the reader or audience, such as speeches or informal instructions, but are usually out of place in formal texts.

There should be no space between the exclamation mark and the preceding word, letter or number.

The imperative does not require an exclamation mark, but one may be used to add exclamatory force to a statement or a command.

In mathematical and statistical texts, the exclamation mark identifies a factorial. Here too, there should be no space between the exclamation mark and the preceding number:

$$6! = 6 \times 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1$$

10.1.4. Colon

A colon is most often used to indicate that an expansion, qualification, quotation or explanation is about to follow.

Do not use a colon at the end of a heading or to introduce a table or graph set in text matter (e.g. ‘as illustrated in the figure below:’). As a manuscript may not reflect the position of graphs or tables as they will appear in a proof, it is better to number them and refer to them in the text via their number.

The price per hour is shown in Figure 1.

Colons in running text should not be followed by a capital letter, except at the start of a quotation, as in the example below. There should be no space between the colon and the preceding word, letter or number:

To conclude, Mr Smith asked: ‘To what extent does this reflect reality?’

10.1.5. Semicolon

Use a semicolon rather than a comma to combine two sentences into one without a linking conjunction. There should be no space between the semicolon and the preceding word, letter or number:

The committee dealing with the question of commas agreed on a final text; the issue of semicolons was not considered.

When items in a series are long and complex or involve internal punctuation, they should be separated by semicolons for the sake of clarity:

The membership of the international commission was constituted as follows: France, 4, which had 3 members in 2001; Germany, 5, whose membership remained stable; and Italy, 3, whose membership increased from 1 in 2001.

See Section 5.7 for the use of semicolons in lists.

10.1.6. Comma

- (a) **Items in a series.** In a list of two items, these are separated by ‘and’ or ‘or’:

The committee identified two errors in the document: the date of implementation and the regulation number.

In a list of three or more items, a comma is used to separate them, except for the final two which are separated by ‘and’ or ‘or’:

Robin mowed the lawn, Sam did the cooking and Kim lazed around.

The committee considered sugar, beef and milk products.

An additional comma (known as the Oxford comma or serial comma) can be used before the final item to help clarify the sense:

... sugar, beef and other meats, and milk products.

A comma also comes before ‘etc.’ in a series:

... sugar, beef, milk products, etc.

but not if no series is involved:

They discussed milk products etc., then moved on to sugar.

Commas also divide adjectives in series:

moderate, stable prices

but not if the adjectives do not form a series:

stable agricultural prices

- (b) **Linked sentences.** Use a comma to separate two sentences linked by a conjunction such as ‘but’, ‘yet’, ‘while’ or ‘so’ to form a single sentence:

The committee dealing with the question of commas agreed on a final text, but the issue of semicolons was not considered.

Where there is no conjunction, use a semicolon (see Section 10.1.5):

The committee dealing with the question of commas agreed on a final text; the issue of semicolons was not considered.

Note that if the subject of the second sentence is omitted, or if the conjunction is ‘and’, ‘or’ or ‘but’, the comma is not obligatory:

The committee dealing with the question of commas agreed on a final text[,] but did not consider the issue of semicolons.

The committee dealing with the question of commas agreed on a final text[,] and the Council approved it.

- (c) **Parenthetic and introductory phrases.** Parenthetic phrases may be created by setting off part of the sentence with a comma (or commas) while retaining the normal word order. The following are possible:

The committee adopted the proposal despite the hesitation of some members.

The committee adopted the proposal, despite the hesitation of some members.

Without the comma, the phrase ‘despite the hesitation of some members’ forms part of the statement. With the comma, the phrase complements it, i.e. the sentence retains its sense if the phrase is omitted. The comma is therefore correctly left out in the following sentence:

Phrases must not be set off by commas if this changes the intended meaning of the sentence.

However, a comma is required if the phrase has a separate emphasis simply by virtue of being moved out of position, for example to the beginning of the sentence:

If this changes the intended meaning of the sentence, phrases must not be set off by commas.

Note, though, that short introductory phrases (typically two to three words) need not have any separate emphasis of their own, i.e. they may be run into the rest of the sentence.

Both the following are possible:

In 2012, the committee took three decisions.

In 2012 the committee took three decisions.

Parenthetical phrases (but not introductory phrases) may sometimes be marked by round brackets (see Section 10.1.7(a)) or dashes (see Section 10.1.8(a)).

- (d) **Commas in relative clauses.** Commas are used to make an important distinction between two types of relative construction, often known as ‘defining’ and ‘non-defining’ relative clauses. Compare the following sentences:

The auditors were not able to identify the cows which were on the mountain pasture at the time of the audit.

The auditors were not able to identify the cows, which were on the mountain pasture at the time of the audit.

In the first case — without a comma — the relative clause (which were on the mountain ...) tells us which cows we are talking about. Probably, the auditors had been able to identify other cows (the ones at the farm); it was just the ones on the mountain that had escaped identification. This is called a defining relative clause.

In the second case — with a comma — the relative clause is non-defining. It adds extra information about the cows, but does not identify which ones are being talked about. In this case, the implication is that the auditors had not been able to identify any cows at all, because they were all on the mountain.

Where the presence or absence of a comma changes the meaning of the text, there is a risk that it will be misunderstood. Consider rewriting the text to remove all possible doubt:

The auditors were only able to identify the cows which were at the farm at the time of the audit; they were unable to identify those which were on the mountain pasture.

The auditors were not able to identify the cows, because they were on the mountain pasture at the time of the audit.

Non-defining relative clauses are also used parenthetically. Compare the following:

My uncle, who lives in America, is rich

My uncle who lives in America is rich

In the first case, I only have one uncle (he lives in America, by the way) and he is rich. In the second case, I have a number of uncles, but the one that lives in America is rich; we know which uncle is being referred to because he is defined by the relative clause.

Note that the relative pronoun ‘that’ can be used (instead of ‘which’ or ‘who’) in defining relative clauses, but not in non-defining relative clauses. Therefore we can have:

The auditors were not able to identify the cows **that** were on the mountain pasture at the time of the audit

but **not**:

The auditors were not able to identify the cows, **that** were on the mountain pasture at the time of the audit.

10.1.7. Brackets

- (a) **Round brackets.** These are used, much like commas (see Section 10.1.6(c)), to admit an insertion into the text which is not essential to its sense:

The committee approved the 2014 budget (which was finalised on 3 January 2013).

Never put a comma before the opening bracket. If a whole sentence is in brackets, the full stop must be placed before the closing bracket.

A second set of round brackets (not square brackets) can be used to set off text that itself contains text in brackets:

The conclusions of the analysis (in particular regarding fair trade, the environment and transport (including green cars)) highlighted the following:

However, to avoid confusion, it may be better to use dashes (see Section 10.1.8(a)):

The conclusions of the analysis — in particular regarding fair trade, the environment and transport (including green cars) — highlighted the following:

Where possible, consider breaking up long, complicated sentences into a series of short sentences.

When citing numbered paragraphs from legislation, use a pair of brackets closed up to the article number:

Article 3(1), Article 3(1)(a), Article 3a(1), etc.

- (b) **Square brackets.** These are used to make editorial insertions in quoted material:

‘They [the members of the committee] voted in favour of the proposal.’

They may also be used in administrative drafting to indicate optional passages or those still open to discussion.

In mathematical formulae (but not in text), square brackets are used to enclose round brackets:

$$7[4ab - (2nm \times 6bm) \times nm] + 7a = 1240$$

10.1.8. Dashes and hyphens

- (a) **Dashes.** Long (or ‘em’) dashes may be used to punctuate a sentence instead of commas or brackets (see Sections 10.1.6(c) and 10.1.7(a)). They increase the contrast or emphasis of the text thus set off. However, use sparingly; use no more than one in a sentence, or — if used with inserted phrases — one set of paired dashes. Avoid using dashes in legislation.

When citing titles of publications or documents, use a dash to separate the title from the subtitle.

The dash can also be used as a bullet point in lists (see Section 5.7).

(b) **Hyphens.**

(i) Hyphenate:

- nouns composed of a participle plus preposition:
They discussed the buying-in of sugar.
- compound adjectives preceding the noun that they qualify:
up-to-date statistics, long-term policies, foot-and-mouth disease

Exception: value added tax.

Do not hyphenate:

- compound adjectives that follow the noun that they qualify:
the statistics are up to date, policies in the long term
- adverb-adjective modifiers when the adverb ends in -ly:
newly industrialised developing countries

(ii) Prefixes also take a hyphen:

anti-American, non-cooperative, co-responsibility levy, co-funded, self-employed

unless the prefix has become part of the word by usage:

cooperation, coordination, subsection, reshuffle, email

- (iii) Hyphens are used to join coordinate or contrasting pairs (the Brussels-Paris route, a current-voltage graph, the height-depth ratio) and to replace the word ‘to’ in a range, e.g. 2010-2014.

10.1.9. Quotation marks

Use single quotation marks for quotations, but use double quotation marks for quotations within quotations. If there should be yet another quotation within the second quotation, revert to single quotation marks (see also Section 4.2.3.)

Punctuation must be placed according to the sense; if it belongs to the quotation, it is included inside the quotation marks, otherwise it is not.

The American government favours ‘a two-way street in arms procurement’.

However, if the quotation itself contains a concluding mark, no full stop is required after the quotation mark.

Walther Rathenau once said: ‘We stand or fall on our economic performance.’

Do not enclose titles of books, newspapers or foreign expressions in quotation marks as they are usually displayed in *italics*. It is not necessary to use quotation marks as well as bold or *italics*. (See Section 5.5.4 for use of *italics* and quotation marks in bibliographies.)

Generally, use quotation marks as sparingly as possible. Some languages make frequent use of quotation marks for nouns in apposition (often programme or committee names etc.), as in *le Conseil «Agriculture»* or *Komitee „Menschliche Faktoren“*. It is usually preferable to omit the quotation marks and reverse the order:

the Agriculture Council, the Human Factors Committee, etc.

Quotation marks should not be used in combination with ‘so-called’ to highlight the description that follows (e.g. ‘The resolution was passed by the so-called “European legislator”’). First, the use of quotation marks makes the expression ‘so-called’ redundant, and second, the combination of both devices strongly implies that the authors wish to distance themselves from the term used or cast doubt on its accuracy or correctness.

10.1.10. Ellipsis

An ellipsis is three points indicating an omission in the text. If an ellipsis falls at the end of a sentence there is no final full stop. However, if followed by another punctuation mark (e.g. question mark, colon, semicolon or quotation mark), the punctuation mark should be closed up to the ellipsis.

- When placed at the beginning of the text, it is followed by a normal space.
- When replacing one or more words in the middle of a sentence, it is preceded by a hard space and followed by a normal space.
- When replacing one or more words at the end of a sentence, it is preceded by a hard space.

The points are not enclosed in brackets:

‘The objectives of the Union shall be achieved ... while respecting the principle of subsidiarity.’

However, see Section 5.10 on the use of the ellipsis in a quotation to replace a line or paragraph of the text.

Do not use an ellipsis to replace or reinforce the word ‘etc’.

10.1.11. Forward slash

The forward slash may be used to mean ‘per’ (km/h) and in fractions (19/100).

Marketing years, financial years, etc. that do not coincide with calendar years are denoted by a forward slash, e.g. 1991/1992, which is 12 months, rather than by a hyphen, e.g. 2013-2014, which means 2 years.

10.1.12. Apostrophe

- (a) **The possessive form of any singular noun and of plural nouns not ending in the letter ‘s’** is marked by an apostrophe followed by the letter ‘s’:

an actress’s role
the owner’s car
women’s rights
the MEP’s expenses

After a **plural ending in the letter ‘s’**, however, the possessive ‘s’ is omitted:

footballers’ earnings
the MEPs’ expenses

There is no apostrophe in possessive pronouns:

its (as distinct from it’s, i.e. ‘it is’), ours, theirs, yours

Some place names containing a possessive omit the apostrophe (Earls Court, Kings Cross), while others retain it (St John’s Wood, King’s Lynn). See the *New Oxford dictionary for writers and editors* for individual cases.

- (b) **Contractions.** Apostrophes are also used to indicate contractions, i.e. where one or more letters have been omitted from a word or where two words have been joined together. Contractions are common in informal texts, but should not be used in formal texts.

Examples:

don’t = do not
it’s = it is (*as distinct from the possessive pronoun ‘its’*)
who’s = who is (*as distinct from the possessive pronoun ‘whose’*)
you’re = you are (*as distinct from the possessive pronoun ‘your’*)

- (c) **The plurals of single lower-case letters** take an apostrophe to avoid misunderstanding:

Dot your i’s.
Mind your p’s and q’s.

10.2. Verbs

10.2.1. Singular or plural agreement?

- (a) **Collective nouns** take the singular when the emphasis is on the whole entity:

The government is considering the matter.

The Commission was not informed.

Use the plural when the emphasis is on individual members:

The police have failed to trace the goods.

A majority of the committee were in favour.

- (b) **Sums of money** can take a singular or plural verb:

EUR 2 million were/was made available.

- (c) **Percentages and fractions** of countable nouns take a plural verb:

Three quarters of the flowers were used.

75 % of the flowers were used.

but uncountable nouns take a singular verb:

Three quarters of the flour was used.

75 % of the flour was used.

- (d) **Countries and organisations** with a plural name take the singular:

The Netherlands is reconsidering its position.

The United Nations was unable to reach agreement.

- (e) **Words ending in -ics** are singular when used to denote a scientific discipline or body of knowledge (mathematics, statistics, economics) but plural in all other contexts.

Economics is commonly regarded as a soft science.

The economics of the new process were studied in depth.

- (f) **Data** can be used as a plural or a singular noun.

- (g) **Multiple subject.** Use a singular verb when a multiple subject clearly forms a whole:

Checking and stamping the forms is the job of the customs authorities.

10.2.2. Tenses of minutes and summary records

Unlike some other languages, these are written as reported speech following the sequence of tenses, with the past tense replacing the present and the other tenses shifting accordingly. For example:

Dutch spokesman: 'We are concerned by the number of exceptions which have been included.'

In reported speech, this becomes:

The Dutch delegation was concerned by the number of exceptions that had been included.

10.3. Spelling

10.3.1. Conventions

- (a) **English spelling.** Follow the standard usage of Britain and Ireland.

As a general rule, the first spelling given in the *Concise Oxford English dictionary* should be followed. An exception to this rule is the spelling of ‘-iz-’ words (see below).

- (b) **-is-/iz- spelling.** Use the -is- spelling. Both spellings are correct, but this rule is to be followed for the sake of consistency in EU texts.
- (c) **The -yse form** is the only correct spelling for words such as paralyse and analyse.
- (d) When **adding -able**, drop a final silent -e at the end of the stem (debate — debatable, conceive — conceivable) unless it would change the pronunciation of the preceding consonant (changeable, traceable); the only common exceptions are sizeable and saleable (sizeable and salable are US spellings).
- (e) **Double consonants.** Follow the convention of doubling a final -l after a short vowel on adding -ing or -ed to verbs (sole exception: parallel, paralleled) and adding -er to make nouns from verbs:

level, levelling, levelled, leveller
travel, travelling, travelled, traveller

Other consonants double only if the last syllable of the root verb is stressed or carries a strong secondary stress:

admit, admitting, admitted
format, formatting, formatted
refer, referring, referred

but

benefit, benefiting, benefited
combat, combating, combated
focus, focusing, focused
target, targeting, targeted

Exception: a few verbs ending in -p (e.g. handicapped, kidnapped, worshipped, but not developed).

- (f) **Judg[e]ment.** Judgment is used in legal contexts, judgement in all other contexts.
- (g) **Data-processing usage.** Avoid the forms ‘input(t)ed’ and ‘output(t)ed’. Instead, use ‘input’ and ‘output’: e.g. ‘70 000 items of data were input last month’. However, note the verb ‘to format’ which takes the forms ‘formatted’ and ‘formatting’.

10.3.2. Tricky plurals

Follow the list below:

Singular	Plural
addendum	addenda
appendix	appendices (<i>books</i>) appendixes (<i>anatomy</i>)
bacterium	bacteria
bureau	bureaux

consortium	consortia
corrigendum	corrigenda
criterion	criteria
curriculum	curricula
embargo	embargoes
focus	foci (<i>mathematics, science</i>) focuses (<i>other contexts</i>)
formula	formulae (<i>science</i>) formulas (<i>politics</i>)
forum	forums <i>or</i> fora
genus	genera
index	indexes (<i>books</i>) indices (<i>science, economics</i>)
maximum	maxima (<i>mathematics, science</i>) maximums (<i>other contexts</i>)
medium	media (<i>press, communications, IT</i>) mediums (<i>life sciences, art</i>)
memorandum	memorandums <i>or</i> memoranda
moratorium	moratoriums <i>or</i> moratoria
papyrus	papyri <i>or</i> papyruses
phenomenon	phenomena
plus	pluses
premium	premiums
referendum	referendums <i>or</i> referenda
spectrum	spectra (<i>science</i>) spectrums (<i>politics</i>)
symposium	symposiums <i>or</i> symposia
vortex	vortices

10.3.3. Interference effects and in-house words, expressions and constructions

Especially in texts intended for the general public, care should be taken to avoid interference effects and the use of in-house words, expressions, constructions and meanings that are not generally recognised outside the EU institutions. Many of these are the result of confusion between English words and those from other languages (particularly French).

Frequently misused term	Alternative
according to	in accordance with
adequate	appropriate
(legal) base	(legal) basis
coherent	consistent
debriefed	briefed or informed
define	establish or lay down
detached	seconded

different	various
disincentivise	discourage
dispose of	have
ensure	provide for
foresee	envisage or provide for
guarantee	ensure
in case	if
in case of	in the case/event of
incentivise	encourage
incite	encourage
modalities	detailed arrangements
modify	amend
modulation	reduction
nominate	appoint
planification	planning
precise	specify
retain	select

Please also see sections 2.14 and 2.15 of the *English style guide, How to write clearly* and *Claire's clear writing tips* (for links, see Section 11, Reference works).

10.4. Upper and lower case

- (a) **General.** The basic rule is that proper nouns have an initial capital but common nouns do not. Initial capitals are often employed to excess in commercial and administrative circles, but they can be visually distracting and are often unnecessary, so should be used sparingly. When in doubt use lower case.

- (b) **Proper names and titles.** Use initial capitals for proper nouns:

Mr Goldsmith is a baker but Mr Baker is a goldsmith.

Sir Francis Drake

the Archbishop of Canterbury

Dame Judi Dench

honourable Member (of the European Parliament)

- (c) **Programmes, policies, agendas, strategies, action plans, etc.** These are in lower case:

the programme on research and development in advanced communications technologies in Europe

common agricultural policy

EU action plan on urban mobility

Europe 2020 strategy

energy union

- (d) **Acronyms/initialisms.** The existence of an acronym or initialism does not mean that initial capitals must be used when the corresponding expression is written out in full:

common agricultural policy (CAP)

non-governmental organisation (NGO)

but

European Central Bank (ECB) (*as this is the official name of the institution*)

- (e) **Titles of organisations, institutions, directorates, units, sections, office holders, committees, delegations, etc.** Use initial capitals on all nouns and adjectives when referring to the name in full.

Publications and Dissemination Directorate

Business Development and Support Unit

Editorial Partnerships Section

Future Policies Working Group

President of the Council

Director-General for Agriculture

Council of Europe

European Development Fund

Commission

Markets in Crop Products Directorate

President of the French Republic

Vice-Chair of the Committee on International Relations (*but refer back to the chair, the vice-chair of the committee*)

Use lower case when referring generally to unnamed directorates-general, sections or units, or to ‘the EU institutions’ collectively.

Permanent bodies require initial capitals (e.g. the Delegation of the European Union to the United States), while ad hoc groups (e.g. the Polish delegation to a meeting) do not.

Use a lower case ‘p’ for the Council presidency (being general), but an initial capital for individual presidencies, e.g. ‘the Latvian Presidency’.

However, for long names that read more like a description than a real title use an initial capital for the head word and lower case for the rest:

Committee for the adaptation to technical progress of the directive on the introduction of recording equipment in road transport (tachograph)

Joint FAO/EC working party on forest and forest product statistics

- (f) **References to EU legislation:** write Regulation, Decision, Directive, Annex and Article (followed by a number) with capitals if they refer to specific acts; use lower case for references to regulations, directives, etc. in a generalised sense and when referring to proposed legislation (i.e. draft regulation, a possible new directive on ...).
- (g) **Full names of international agreements, conferences, conventions, etc.** Nouns and adjectives have an initial capital when using the full name:

International Coffee Agreement

Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

but use lower case when referring back to the agreement, the conference, etc.

- (h) **Publications.** Journals, newspapers and periodicals normally take a capital on each main word: *Daily Mail*, *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, *European Economy*. However, most EU publications take a capital only on the first word and on any proper nouns (and often on adjectives formed from proper nouns): *Interinstitutional style guide*, *Synopsis of the work of the Court of Justice of the European Communities*.
- (i) **Periods, events, festivals, seasons.** Use initial capitals for periods such as:

Second World War

Dark Ages

and events such as:

International Year of the Child

European Job Day

Second UN Development Decade

Edinburgh Festival

Use capitals for days of the week, months and feast days:

Tuesday, August, Ascension Day, pre-Christmas business

Do not use capitals, however, for the 2003/2004 marketing year, the 2004 budget year, and so on.

Do not use capitals for spring, summer, autumn or winter.

- (j) **Graphics, tables and cross references.** Figure (Fig.), Number (No), Volume (Vol.), Part, Chapter (Chap.), Section (Sect.), Article (Art.) should always have an initial capital when followed by a numeral; conversely, paragraph, point and line should not be capitalised. The abbreviations shown here should be spelt out in running text:

see page 250

as shown in Figure 5

refer to footnote 6

see also the following chapter/section

- (k) **Party denominations and organisations.** Use capitals for their names:

Socialist Group, Fianna Fáil Party

but liberal, socialist, etc. otherwise.

For political groups in the European Parliament, see

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/007f2537e0/Political-groups.html>.

(l) State or state? Use lower case:

state-owned
reasons of state
nation states
the Arab states

except in the following instances:

Member States (*when referring to EU Member States*)
State aid
Heads of State or Government (*when referring to the heads of state or government of all of the Member States as a group*)

(m) Geographical names and political divisions. Use initial capitals for proper nouns:

North Pole
River Plate
Trafalgar Square
Third World
North Rhine-Westphalia
East Midlands
the North-West Frontier

but lower case when describing a geographical area:

northern England
western, central and eastern Europe
central European countries

NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) region names do not follow these rules as they refer to the name of the authority for each region — see Annex A10.

The **South East** is an administrative region of England, but do not use capitals in the general expression ‘Rain is forecast for London and the south-east’.

Points of the compass (north, north-west, etc.) and their derived forms (north-western, etc.) are not capitalised unless they form part of a proper name (e.g. an administrative or political unit or a distinct regional entity). Hence **South Africa**, **Northern Ireland** but southern Africa, **northern France**. Compass bearings are abbreviated without a point (54° E).

Compound compass points are hyphenated (the North-West Passage); always abbreviate as capitals without points (NW France).

(n) Proprietary names and generic terms. Proprietary names (or trade names) are normally capitalised, for example:

Airbus
Land Rover
Disprin
Polaroid

unless they have become generic terms, such as

aspirin
gramophone
linoleum
nylon
celluloid

Note:

internet
the web

(o) Botanical works

The name of the genus appears with initial capitals, in italics (e.g. *Rosa*, *Felis*).

(p) Adjectives derived from proper nouns. Not all adjectives derived from proper nouns take a capital:

arabic (numerals)

french (chalk, polish, windows)

morocco (leather)

roman (type)

10.5. Numbers, dates and time

- (a) **Figures or words?** Spell out the numbers one to nine, use digits thereafter; *however*, where numbers in a range fall above and below this limit use figures for both: ‘9 to 11’, not ‘nine to 11’.

Note that you should always use figures for statistics (3 new officials were appointed in 2002, 6 in 2003 and ...), for votes (12 delegations were in favour, 7 against and 6 abstained), for ranges denoted by a hyphen and for serial numbers unless you are quoting a source that does otherwise (Part One of the EEC Treaty).

Always use figures with units of measurement that are denoted by symbols or abbreviations:

EUR 50, 250 kW, 205 µg, 5 °C

The converse does not hold. If the units of measurement are spelled out, the numbers do not also have to be spelled out but may be written with figures:

250 kilowatts, 500 metres

With ‘hundred’ and ‘thousand’ there is a choice of using figures or words:

300 or three hundred *but not* 3 hundred

EUR 3 000 or three thousand euros *but not* EUR 3 thousand

Million and billion, *however*, may be combined with figures:

2.5 million, 3 million, 31 billion

Figures must be used in a series of stated quantities: 6 kg, 11 metres, 28 000 tonnes.

Note that the numbers 1 to 9 are not spelt out in the following cases: seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, but two decades, three centuries.

When two numbers are adjacent, spell out one of them:

90 fifty-gram weights, seventy 25-cent stamps

A sentence starting with a figure will often look out of place. Consider writing it out in full or inverting the word order: ‘During 1992 ...’, ‘Altogether 92 cases were found ...’, ‘Of the total, EUR 55 million was spent on ...’. *However*, a sentence beginning with a percentage may start with a figure: ‘32 % of the funds ...’.

- (b) **Ordinal numbers.** First, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth (one to nine inclusive written in full)

but

10th, 11th, ... 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, etc.

However, in some legal documents, dates and reference to dates are written out in full:

This Directive shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

The thirty-first day of December, nineteen hundred and eighty-one.

The ‘first to ninth’ rule does not always apply to ordinal numbers:

9th century, 2nd edition

but

third annual conference

- (c) **Groupings of thousands.** See Section 6.5.

- (d) **Billion.** ‘Billion’ is used to designate a thousand million (and not a million million) and ‘trillion’ a million million. Note that the words ‘million’, ‘billion’ and ‘trillion’ can be combined with figures: 3 000 million.

- (e) **Abbreviating ‘million’ and ‘billion’.** Do not use abbreviations like *mio*, *bio*, *k*, *mill*. The letters ‘m’ and ‘bn’ can be used for sums of money to avoid frequent repetitions of million, billion; this applies particularly in tables where space is limited. The abbreviation is preceded by a hard space:

€230 000 m, \$370 000 bn, £490 bn

- (f) **Fractions.** Insert hyphens when used as an adverb or adjective (two-thirds complete, a two-thirds increase), but not when used as a noun (an increase of two thirds).

Avoid combining figures and words:

two-thirds completed (*not* 2/3 completed)

When using figures for a fraction, use the fraction symbol where possible and close it up to any previous figure, e.g. 1½ years.

- (g) **Decimal separator.** See Section 6.5.

- (h) **Percentages.** 15 % (the symbol is preceded by a hard space). In words write ‘per cent’ (two words, no point).

- In statistics each decimal place, even if zero, adds to accuracy: 3.5 % is not the same as 3.50 % or 3½ %. The fraction is more approximate.
- Make the distinction between ‘%’ and the arithmetic difference between two percentages, i.e. the ‘percentage point(s)’.

- (i) **Units of measurement.** See Annex A3.

- (j) **Pagination.** p. 250, pp. 250-255, Figure 5, footnote 6.

- (k) **Dates**

- (i) **Decades.** The 1990s (no apostrophe; never use ‘the nineties’, etc.).

- (ii) **Dates** in the text should always be given in their full form (6 June 2012; day in figures followed by a hard space, month spelled out, year in figures), except for references to the OJ, which should always be abbreviated. In footnotes, be consistent. When abbreviating, do not use leading zeros and write out the year in full, i.e. 6.6.2012, not 06.06.12.

Wednesday 15 May 2013 (no comma after the day of the week).

Avoid redundancy. If the year in question is absolutely clear from the context, the year number may be left out: ‘on 23 July 2001, the committee adopted ... but subsequently on 2 August, it decided ...’

- (iii) **Time spans.** Use a closed-up hyphen (see Sections 10.1.8 and 10.1.11) for year ranges:

1939-1945, 1990-2001, 2010-2012 (*but in legislative texts, use ‘to’ rather than a hyphen: 2010 to 2012*)

1991/1992 = one year: marketing year, financial year, academic year (see Section 10.1.11).

Note:

‘from 1990 to 1995’ (*not* ‘from 1990-1995’)

‘between 1990 and 1995’ (*not* ‘between 1990-1995’)

‘1990 to 1995 inclusive’ (*not* ‘1990-1995 inclusive’)

‘At its meeting from 23 to 25 July ...’ (*not* ‘... 23-25 July ...’)

At its meeting on 23 and 24 July ...’ (*not* ‘... 23/24 July ...’)

(iv) **Dates as qualifiers.** Dates and time spans precede the expression they qualify:

‘The 2007-2013 work programme ...’ (*not* ‘The work programme 2007-2013 ...’)

‘The 2012/2013 financial year ...’ (*not* ‘The financial year 2012/2013 ...’)

‘The 2014 action plan ...’ (*not* ‘The action plan 2014 ...’)

‘The 2012 annual report ...’ (*not* ‘The annual report 2012 ...’)

(l) **Time.** Use the 24-hour system (or 12-hour system with a.m. and p.m.):

- 17.30 without h or hrs (or 5.30 p.m.) (always use a point);
- avoid leading zeros (e.g. 9.00, not 09.00);
- the full hour is written with zero minutes: 12.00 (midday), 14.00, 24.00 (midnight).
When using the 12-hour system, write 2 p.m., 2 o’clock or 2.30 p.m., but not 2.00 p.m.

10.6. Gender-neutral language

Much existing EU legislation is not gender neutral and the masculine pronouns ‘he’ etc. are used generically to include women. However, gender-neutral language is nowadays preferred wherever possible.

In practice, gender-neutral drafting means two things:

- avoiding nouns that appear to assume that a man rather than a woman will perform a particular role: ‘chairman’ is the most obvious example;
- avoiding gender-specific pronouns for people who may be either male or female.

Noun forms. Gender-neutral noun forms (‘chair’, ‘spokesperson’, etc.) are preferred.

For certain occupations, a substitute for a gender-specific term is now commonly used to refer to persons working in those occupations, e.g. we now write ‘firefighters’ instead of ‘firemen’ and ‘police officer’ instead of ‘policeman’ or ‘policewoman’. Note that the terms ‘tradesperson’ and ‘craftsperson’ are commonly used instead of ‘tradesman’ and ‘craftsman’ by local government authorities advertising jobs to both men and women.

Pronouns. If the text clearly refers to a specific individual on a particular occasion, and you know the gender of the person concerned, use a gender-specific pronoun:

The High Representative (Baroness Ashton) voiced her objections.

The President of the Commission (Mr Delors) said that he welcomed the common position reached at the Council.

Otherwise, depending on the circumstances, consider the following alternatives.

- Where possible draft in the plural; this is very common in English to render general concepts:

Researchers must be objective about their findings.

This does not apply when passengers miss connecting flights for which they have reservations.

- Omit the pronoun altogether:

The chair expressed ~~his/her/its~~ dissent.

The spokesperson voiced ~~his/her~~ opposition to the amendment.

- Substitute ‘the’ or ‘that’ for the possessive pronoun:

A member of the Court of Auditors may be deprived of the right to a pension. (*instead of ‘his’ right*)

- Use ‘he or she’:

This does not apply when a passenger misses a connecting flight for which he or she has a reservation.

This becomes clumsy if repeated too frequently and should be used with caution. If its use is really necessary, prefer ‘he or she’ to ‘he/she’, ‘(s)he’ or ‘s/he’, which should be avoided.

- Repeat the noun:

This does not apply when a passenger misses a connecting flight for which that passenger has a reservation.

This can be cumbersome and look excessively formal, but may be a useful technique in a longer sentence.

— In instructions, use the second person or the imperative:

You should first turn on your computer.

or

First turn on your computer.

instead of

The user should first turn on his/her computer.

In current usage, third person plural pronouns (they/them/their/theirs) are often used to refer back to singular nouns:

This does not apply when a passenger misses a connecting flight for which they have a reservation.

Identify the person responsible and take their advice.

However, in order to avoid confusion and possible translation problems, this device should be used only when the reference is absolutely clear. It should also be borne in mind that it is still perceived as grammatically incorrect by many speakers, making the other constructions mentioned above preferable wherever possible.

10.7. Italics

Use quotation marks to cite quotations from books and periodicals rather than italics. The simultaneous use of italics and quotation marks must be avoided.

The use of italics is restricted to the following cases.

- (i) Titles of electronic or printed publications, white and green papers, films and plays (see Section 10.4(h)) if written in full.

Official Journal of the European Union

NB: Short and abbreviated titles are in roman:

the Official Journal

- (ii) Words and short phrases from foreign languages with their appropriate accents:

acquis, carte blanche, Länder, raison d'être

but not proper names, names of persons, institutions, places, etc. and not usually foreign quotations.

Not all foreign words are italicised, however; a number have been assimilated into current English and are written in roman:

alias, démarche, detour, ad hoc, per capita, per se, vis-à-vis, etc.

- (iii) Names of ships.

- (v) Formulae in mathematical works.

NB: Authors should take particular care to distinguish between l (the lower case letter), 1 (the figure one) and I (the roman numeral or capital letter) and between O (the capital letter) and 0 (zero).

- (vi) The names of flora and fauna; genus and species must be in italics, and other taxonomic ranks are also often italicised:

ORDER:	<i>Rosales</i>	<i>Carnivora</i>
FAMILY:	<i>Rosaceae</i>	<i>Felidae</i>
GENUS:	<i>Rosa</i>	<i>Felis</i>
SPECIES:	<i>Rosa moschata</i>	<i>Felis catus</i>

The genus name should be spelt out in full on first occurrence and subsequently abbreviated: *Escherichia coli*, abbreviated *E. coli*.

- (vii) The parties' names in cases before the Court of Justice, but not the 'v':

Case C-287/87 *Commission v Greece* [1990] ECR I-125

Latin abbreviations and phrases

Latin should be used sparingly as even the common phrases are often misused or misunderstood.

- (i) Write all Latin abbreviations in roman.

e.g., et al., et seq., ibid., i.e., NB, op. cit.

- (ii) Latin words should usually be printed in italics (e.g. *ex ante*), but certain common Latin phrases take roman (refer to the *New Oxford dictionary for writers and editors* for italic or roman style).

Examples of roman:

ad hoc, ad infinitum, per capita, pro forma, status quo

Latin phrases are not hyphenated when used adjectivally, e.g. ad hoc meeting.

10.8. Abbreviations and symbols

Excessive use of abbreviations can seriously detract from the readability of documents and can create unnecessary problems for translation. Therefore, with the exception of commonly known ones, like ‘the EU’ and ‘NATO’, they should be avoided wherever possible, bearing in mind that the unspecialised reader is unlikely to be able to memorise more than a handful.

Acronyms are words formed from the first (or first few) letters of a series of words, and are pronounced as words (Benelux, NATO, etc.). They never take full stops. Some of these are formed from French titles (e.g. Cedefop).

Initialisms are formed from the initial letters of a series of words and each separate letter is pronounced (BBC, MEP, USA, etc.).

As a general principle, acronyms and initialisms do not have a full stop between the capitals. Furthermore, they are treated as normal nouns and therefore take a plural (s) and the possessive form (’s).

Except for well-known acronyms and initialisms, write out the full term followed by the abbreviation in brackets on its first mention in a document (or, where necessary, in long reports, on its first mention in each section):

The emissions trading scheme (ETS) should enable the EU to meet its Kyoto target.

Generally speaking, acronyms do not take a definite article (NATO, REACH, etc.), but initialisms do (the UK, the BBC, the EU, etc.). However, established usage may be different, particularly for the names of companies (ICI, IBM, etc.) and universities (UEA, UCL, etc.).

Acronyms and initialisms, including the names of EU programmes, of up to five letters are printed in capitals (e.g. COST, CIP); those with six letters or more and which can be pronounced are printed with the first letter in capitals and the rest in lower case (e.g. Esprit, Coreper).

Note the difference between a **truncation**, in which the end of the word is deleted (for example vol., co. or inc.), and a **contraction**, in which the interior of the word is removed (for example Mr, Dr, contd or Ltd). Truncations take a full stop, but contractions do not.

‘No’ as in ‘No 1’ is a contraction of ‘numero’. It is never followed by a full stop, and its plural is Nos (no point).

Do not abbreviate Article to ‘Art.’ in running text. Avoid using the § sign, which means ‘section’ in English but ‘paragraph’ in other languages, unless the section referred to is itself marked by such a symbol. For example, ‘1’article 3 §1’ should read ‘Article 3(1)’ in English.

Plurals of acronyms, initialisms and figures do not take an apostrophe unless they are in the possessive:

MEPs, OCTs, SMEs, 1920s, 747s

but

MEPs’ salaries

Units of measurement and scientific symbols such as ‘ha’, ‘km’, ‘mg’, etc. do not need a final full stop. They are not closed up to figures and do not have plurals:

4 ha, 9 m, 20 psi, 55 dB(A), 2 000 kc/s

See Annexes A3 and A4.

10.9. Referring to the European Union and its Member States

The European Union is referred to systematically as ‘the Union’ in the Treaties and in legislation. This practice should be avoided in other texts: use either the full form (European Union) or the abbreviation ‘EU’. Do not refer to the European Union as ‘Europe’.

The European Communities have now been absorbed by the European Union, so references to ‘Community policy/institutions/legislation’ should now read ‘European Union/EU policy/institutions/legislation’. Retain ‘the (European) Community/ies’ only for historical references. The European Atomic Energy Community continues to exist, and is always abbreviated as ‘Euratom’.

Note that the EU has 28 Member States, but these comprise more than 28 countries (notably, the United Kingdom is one Member State but consists of four countries).

11. Reference works

Consistency in spelling and the presentation of the text is essential, and great efforts should be made to ensure that the basic rules for composition of a text, as laid down in *New Hart's rules — the handbook of style for writers and editors*, are followed.

Spelling should follow the first entry in the *Concise Oxford dictionary* (see Section 10.3).

Owing to the interinstitutional nature of the Publications Office's role it is desirable to formulate a standard style of presentation for EU works. With this in view, the Office refers to the latest editions of the following publications when treating English-language texts:

- *Butcher's copy-editing — The Cambridge handbook for editors, copy-editors and proofreaders* (Cambridge University Press);
- *Claire's clear writing tips* ⁽¹⁾ (European Commission Directorate-General for Translation);
- *Concise Oxford dictionary* (Oxford University Press);
- *English style guide* (European Commission Directorate-General for Translation);
- *European Communities glossary — Phrases and terminology* (Council of the European Union);
- *Fowler's modern English usage* (Oxford University Press);
- *How to write clearly* (European Commission Directorate-General for Translation);
- *Multilingual glossary of abbreviations* (Council of the European Union);
- *New Hart's rules — The handbook of style for writers and editors* (Oxford University Press);
- *New Oxford dictionary for writers and editors — The essential A-Z guide to the written word* (Oxford University Press);
- *New Oxford spelling dictionary — The writers' and editors' guide to spelling and word division* (Oxford University Press);
- *United Nations terminology database* (names of countries and adjectives of nationality).

⁽¹⁾ Internal link/working document for staff of the European institutions.

Part IV of the *Interinstitutional style guide* — General update

10.1. Punctuation: This section has been reorganised and expanded, and now includes a specific section on commas

10.2. Verbs: This section has been reorganised and expanded

10.3. Spelling: This section has been completely rewritten and includes a table of frequently misused terms with links to further material

10.4. Upper and lower case: This section has been reorganised and expanded.

10.5. Numbers, dates and time: This section has been reorganised and expanded

10.6 Gender-neutral language: This new section reflects current practices in the usage of gender-neutral language.

10.8. Abbreviations and symbols: This section has been reorganised and expanded to include initialisms and truncations.

10.9 Referring to the European Union and its Member States: New section.

Summary of main changes to Part Four		
<i>Actual changes are marked in yellow (left column = old version; right column = new version)</i>		
10.1.1.	The full stop is normally deleted from headings.	Do not use a full stop at the end of a heading.
	Footnotes always end with a full stop.	All footnotes end with a full stop, except those consisting solely of an internet or email address.
10.1.7.	Parentheses (round brackets)	(Round) brackets
10.1.8.	The dash can replace commas or parentheses in running text as well as being an additional device to clarify involved sentences.	Long (or 'em') dashes may be used to punctuate a sentence instead of commas or brackets.
	E-mail	the prefix has become part of the word by usage: email
10.1.10.	When replacing one or more words in the middle of a sentence, it is preceded and followed by a normal space .	When replacing one or more words in the middle of a sentence, it is preceded by a hard space and followed by a normal space .
10.1.11.	Solidus	Forward slash
10.2.1.	Percentages can be treated as either singular or plural .	Percentages and fractions of countable nouns take a plural verb but uncountable nouns take a singular verb.
	Sums of money take a singular verb.	Sums of money can take a singular or plural verb.
	Data (takes plural verb) Note: taken from former section 10.3.1.	Data can be used as a plural or a singular noun.
10.3.2.	forums (avoid fora) memoranda referendums symposia	forums or fora memorandums or memoranda referendums or referenda symposiums or symposia
10.4.	Internet	Proprietary names and generic terms: internet
10.5.	Always use a full point on the line as a decimal point .	Decimal separator. See section 6.5.
	Percentages: 15 % (preferably use the symbol, preceded by a thin space ...	Percentages. 15 % (the symbol is preceded by a hard space).
	Dates in the text should always be given in their full form ... whereas in footnotes they should always be abbreviated ...	Dates in the text should always be given in their full form ... except for references to the OJ, which should always be abbreviated. In footnotes, be consistent.
	Time spans: use 1991-93 , not 1991-1993	Time spans: use ... 1939-1945 ... 2010-2012