



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Directorate-General for Translation

Directorate S - Translation strategy and Multilingualism

**S.2 - External Translation**

# **Guide for external translators**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed for the external translators (the "contractors") working for the Directorate General for Translation (DGT) of the European Commission. Its main aim is to provide the contractors with practical information to help them with the translation work assigned by DGT and to facilitate the communication between the contractors and the Commission (DGT's Language departments and External Translation Unit), by laying down certain rules for standardisation (word-processing software, layout) and for the use of information technology.

## 2. TRANSMISSION OF TRANSLATION ASSIGNMENTS: ORDERS AND DOCUMENTS

The External Translation Unit of the DGT grants access to the eXtra Portal to the contractors working for the DGT. The eXtra Portal is a website to which the contractors connect to check newly announced jobs, download and upload documents and perform many other actions related to their contracts with the DGT.

eXtra portal URL: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/dgt/freelance/index/home.cfm>

For technical support, please contact:

Portal Manager: [dgt-fl-portal-manager@ec.europa.eu](mailto:dgt-fl-portal-manager@ec.europa.eu)

Telephone: +32-2-295 57 01

### 2.1. eXtra Portal

The documents to be translated and/or revised, reviewed or amended shall be in electronic format and shall be made available to the contractors via the eXtra portal together with accompanying reference material. It shall be the responsibility of the Contractors to ensure, prior to accepting the assignment, that they are able to supply the translation(s) in the electronic file format specified on the information sheet and according to the specific terms stipulated for each particular assignment.

Translated documents shall be uploaded by the contractors onto the eXtra portal of the DGT.

When a problem arises with the transmission of the translation via the eXtra Portal, the contractors are expected to email the document, within the specified deadline, to one of the External translation unit's mailboxes : [dgt-s-2-freelance-bru@ec.europa.eu](mailto:dgt-s-2-freelance-bru@ec.europa.eu) for Brussels and [dgt-s-2-freelance-lux@ec.europa.eu](mailto:dgt-s-2-freelance-lux@ec.europa.eu) for Luxembourg.

Further instructions on the use of the eXtra Portal can be found at: [eXtra Portal Manual](#).

### 2.2. Order form

The order form is the document issued by the External translation unit for each specific assignment. It specifies the nature of the service to be provided, the volume of the work to be carried out, the deadline by which it is to be completed, the purpose/destination of the text to be translated and the remuneration due. The order form is also accompanied by an information sheet containing all the relevant information (see § 2.3.1 below).

On the order form, the document numbering structure follows the model : Dossier number + Version + Part: **DG/2008/12345-01-02**, where DG = acronym of the directorate-general; 2008 = year; 12345 = document number; 01 = version of document; 02 = part of document.

The parts indicated on the order form must not be altered :

- each individual document (or document part) is contained in a single file;
- the contractors must not create new files or document parts themselves;
- one file may not contain several documents.

### **2.3. Information sheet and contacts**

Any questions or requests for clarification or further information in respect of a specific translation assignment must be addressed to the department or individual specified in the Information Sheet. On no account, shall the contractor make contact with any other department or individual within or outside the DGT.

#### *2.3.1. Information sheet*

Each order form is accompanied by an information sheet containing all the relevant information and specific instructions on formatting, delivery and/or use of translation memory software :

- identification of the order number;
- identification of the document (DG-2008-00000-00-00), title, destination, deadline; volume and format required;
- Specific instructions from the requesting translation unit concerning the whole order;
- specific instructions concerning one or several document to be translated, if necessary;
- contact for linguistic matters;
- contact for all other matters regarding the performance of the work.

#### *2.3.2. Contact for linguistic matters*

Any questions relating to linguistic matters, reference documents, terminology, clarification of content, etc. must be addressed to the specific language department. The name of the responsible person and his/her email address is indicated on the information sheet.

#### *2.3.3. Contact for administrative matters*

Any questions regarding the performance of the work such as deadlines, page count, invoicing, etc. must be addressed to the External Translation Unit. The responsible team (Brussels or Luxembourg) and their email address are indicated on the information sheet

### **3. TEXT PRODUCTION**

#### **3.1. Quality requirement**

Each assignment shall be carried out in full, in accordance with the instructions given on the Information sheet, order form and in the tender specifications (if applicable). The work delivered must have been thoroughly revised and reviewed by the contractor, so as to be usable as it stands, without further amendment by the Commission. The contractor shall pay particular attention to ensuring, inter alia, that:

- all specific instructions from the requesting department are followed (Information sheet);
- the delivered target text is complete (no omissions nor additions are permitted);
- the target text is a faithful, accurate and consistent translation of the source text;
- references to documents already published have been checked and quoted correctly;
- the terminology and lexis used are consistent throughout the text and with any relevant reference material;
- sufficient attention has been paid to the clarity and register of the target text;
- the target text contains no syntactical, spelling, punctuation, typographical or other grammatical errors;
- the formatting of the original has been maintained (Legiswrite, including codes and tags if applicable); and
- the agreed deadline is met.

The contractor may be asked to provide a final version of an assignment incorporating corrections requested by the Commission.

We strongly advise the contractors to take note of any terminology or stylistic preferences communicated by the DGT, with a view to adjusting future translation assignments to the Commission's requirements.

As from the 16 June 2008, a new quality mark (Acceptable) has been added in our system. The quality values are now as follows :

- Very Good
- Good
- Acceptable (new)
- Below Standard
- Unacceptable

However the "acceptable" mark should be understood as "just sufficient". In other words, it may refer to translations that are not ready to be sent as such to the requesting service and will possibly require significant revision or upgrading by DGT services or the contractor. It is worth pointing out that this new quality mark will undoubtedly have an impact on the position of the contractor in the ranking system and may lead in the long term to a re-assessment of his / her quality provided in the lot in question.

#### **3.2. Reference documents**

The contractors are required to consult all background or reference documents or glossaries supplied or recommended by the Commission and to make every effort to

consult any other information sources recommended by Commission's Language departments.

### 3.3. Word-processing and spreadsheet programs

The main exchange format currently used by the Commission for word-processing is Microsoft Office Word 2003 , while Microsoft Office Excel 2003 may be used for tables (cf. original). In certain cases, translation of *html*, *xml* or *ppt* files could also be required. Original files can also be sent out in PDF or TIF format. In this case, translations should be produced in Word format.

Unless otherwise indicated in the information sheet, all assignments must be delivered in the same format as the original (source text).

### 3.4. Eurolook

"Eurolook" is a software program incorporated into Word which contains a set of styles to standardise the layout of Commission Word documents. When the original document is presented in Eurolook mode, the translated text must also use Eurolook, a format which does not rigorously follow the original pagination. Certain precautions must be taken:

- make a copy of the original document;
- ensure that end-of-paragraph marks (¶), are visible on screen (*Tools/Options/View/Paragraph marks*);
- proceed paragraph by paragraph: to type over the text, put the cursor at the beginning or end of the paragraph so as to stay within the style, then delete the original text, taking care not to delete the character ¶;
- do not hesitate to use the 'undo typing' function (Ctrl+Z), which enables you to reverse the most recent operations;
- save the text at regular intervals.

In Word, to make sure that the document is in Eurolook, check the Menu *File/Properties/Summary/*, Keywords must be **EL4** (Eurolook 4.1 XL).

### 3.5. Legiswrite

"LegisWrite" is a tool ensuring that documents distributed by the European Commission to the other Institutions are well presented and consistent. It is also incorporated into Word and is used for drafting (and translating) Commission's official legislative and non legislative texts. As it has been tailor-made to facilitate the drafting and typing of texts, it produces properly structured documents with a uniform presentation, making subsequent amendments or conversions easier. LegisWrite can also display different language versions side by side, aligned.

When a contractor is requested to translate a document in Legiswrite format, it is important that he/she carefully follows the instructions.

- (1) The contractor should check whether the document is a Legiswrite document:
  - Go to Tools-Templates and Add-Ins. The document template should be *C:\Documents And Settings\All Users\Templates\com.dot* (most common template)

– Go to File – Properties – Summary. Template should be *Com.dot*

- (2) The contractor should use the original document and translate using Typeover. This is necessary to keep the original formatting and styles (styles are an important feature of Legiswrite documents). This means that He/she should never create a new document for his/her translation when he/she is requested to translate a Legiswrite document.
- (3) The contractor should not adapt the styles (this might prevent the document from passing the quality check).

All information to install and use Legiswrite is available on the Home Page of the eXtra Portal.

### **3.6. Successive versions of a document**

If a new version ("version 01") of a document is required, the contractor who translated the previous version "00" might be contacted to carry out the new translation. If he/she accepts the job, the contractor shall receive a compared document ("CMP" file) between both versions ("01"/"00") with track changes.

If not otherwise stated on the information sheet of the particular job, the contractor may proceed as follows:

#### *3.6.1. New version of an already translated document ( first version already delivered)*

If the contractor has already finished and delivered version 00, he/she shall be asked to provide a consolidated version 01 within the deadline set in the new order.

#### *3.6.2. New version of a not yet returned translation – same deadline as the first order*

If the contractor is still working on version 00 and receives a new order for version 01. He/she may decide either to finish first version 00 and then carry out version 01, or stop translating version 00 and proceed to translate directly version 01. In the first case, the contractor may deliver both versions respectively. In the second case, he/she may upload the same document (version 01) twice.

#### *3.6.3. New version of a document not yet returned – new deadline*

If the contractor is still working on version 00 and receives a new order for version 01. He/she may decide either to finish first version 00 and then carry out version 01, or stop translating version 00 and proceed to translate directly version 01. In the first case, the contractor may deliver both versions respectively. In the second case, he/she may upload the same final document (version 01) twice. In any case, since deadlines differ, the contractor may deliver the part that has been translated for version 00 (with a remark if incomplete) within the first deadline and then deliver the final complete document for version 01 within the new deadline.

### 3.7. Handling of multilingual documents

Some jobs may contain an original split into two different source languages. The system is based on language combinations, therefore on the eXtra portal the contractor will find twice the same reference number for the multilingual job (\*-ML-ORI-\*), one for each source language into the same target language.

Unless otherwise specified, the contractor is expected to produce **one single document** in the required target language containing the complete translation of the text in both source languages. Under no circumstances, shall the contractor deliver two separate translations one per source language as this would result in the second upload replacing the first one in the system and the delivered translation being incomplete.

### 3.8. Viruses

Every possible precaution should be taken to ensure that files which are sent back to us are free of viruses. Please let us know as soon as possible should you find out that one of our files is *infected*.

### 3.9. Compression of files

You may receive compressed (zip) files containing a series of *html*, *xml*, *tmx* files or reference documents. However, the extra portal does not currently allow to upload zipped files. If you fail to upload a file because it is too big, we advise you to email it to the management team of the responsible External Translation Unit: [dgt-s-2-freelance-bru@ec.europa.eu](mailto:dgt-s-2-freelance-bru@ec.europa.eu) for Brussels and [dgt-s-2-freelance-lux@ec.europa.eu](mailto:dgt-s-2-freelance-lux@ec.europa.eu) for Luxembourg.

### 3.10. Commission header

The header used for most Commission documents bears the European flag and various items of information which allow the origin of the documents to be identified, namely:

- European Commission,
- name of directorate-general,
- directorate,
- unit.

The header should never be translated as the various language versions for it can be found on Europa at <http://europa.eu/whoiswho/whoiswho.html>. If, for whatever reason, the language version sought is not available, or if it is impossible to access this site, the header should be left in the original language.

### 3.11. Keying in text

Layout should be kept as simple as possible.

Generally speaking, the software's automatic functions should be used rather than the equivalent manual operations, particularly for the following functions:

- indents or tabs to align the text vertically (do not use the space bar);
- footnotes;
- hyphenation, hard spaces, non-breaking hyphens and justification;
- tables;

- numbering;
- page breaks (do not insert a hard page break in the middle of a paragraph or a sentence).

The ‘Columns’ function in Word creates newspaper-style columns. This style of column should not be used to align text blocs vertically. Instead, the ‘Table’ function, with the lines hidden, should be used to set out text in columns (see example below).

A. This text bloc, A, must appear alongside text bloc B.☼	B. Text bloc B.☼
C. Text bloc C.☼	D. This text bloc, D, must appear alongside text bloc C, whatever the length of the two blocs.☼

#### 4. THE EUROPEAN UNION ON THE WEB

The IATE, Eur-Lex, Europa Glossary and Eurovoc databases and the Interinstitutional Style Guide are available on the Internet via the Commission’s Web server, as is a great deal of other useful information :



[http://europa.eu/index\\_fr.htm](http://europa.eu/index_fr.htm)

##### 4.1. Directorate-General for Translation on *Europa*

On *Europa*, the home page of the Directorate General for Translation is a good starting point for an interesting exploration of multilingual issues :



[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/index_en.htm)

##### 4.2. IATE (Inter Active Terminology for Europe)



IATE is the EU inter-institutional terminology database. It has been used in the EU institutions and agencies since summer 2004 for the collection, dissemination and shared management of EU-specific terminology.

The objective is to provide a web-based infrastructure for all EU terminology resources, enhancing the availability and standardisation of the

information.

IATE incorporates all of the existing terminology databases of the EU's translation services into a single new, highly interactive and accessible interinstitutional database. The following legacy databases have been imported into IATE, which now contains approximately 1.4 million multilingual entries:

- Eurodicautom (Commission),
- TIS (Council),
- Euterpe (EP),
- Euroterms (Translation Centre),
- CDCTERM (Court of Auditors),

**IATE-Public** (<http://iate.europa.eu>) is s free of charge.

**IATE-Database** (<https://iate.cdt.europa.eu/iatenew/>) is accessible using a login and a password. It is dedicated to internal translators.

More information can be found in the IATE Brochure :  
<http://iate.europa.eu/iatediff/brochure/index.html>.

Any question or feedback concerning IATE should be sent to [iate@cdt.europa.eu](mailto:iate@cdt.europa.eu) .  
Any technical problem should be sent to [DGT-IATE-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu](mailto:DGT-IATE-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu).

#### 4.3. EUR-Lex



EUR-Lex provides direct free access to European Union law. The system makes it possible to consult the Official Journal of the European Union and it includes inter alia the treaties, legislation, case-law and legislative proposals.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/>

This site is disseminated in all the official languages of the European Union and offers easy access to :

- the daily issues of the *Official Journal of the European Union* ,
- the special editions with the secondary legislation in force on 1 May 2004 (in Czech, Estonian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Hungarian, Maltese, Polish, Slovakian, Slovenian) and 1 January 2007 (Bulgarian, Romanian),
- the treaties,
- the case law (Court of Justice, Court of First Instance, Civil Service Tribunal),
- the texts of legislation in force,
- and the latest proposals and communications of the European Commission

#### 4.4. Europa Glossary ([http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/index_en.htm))

The **Europa glossary** contains 233 terms relating to European integration and the institutions and activities of the EU. It is updated regularly and includes all the changes brought about by the Treaty of Nice as well as the latest draft reforms for the Treaties.

The definitions explain how the individual terms have evolved and provide references to the Treaties, if necessary. Historical background, how the institutions work, what the

procedures are, what areas are covered by a Community policy - the answers to these questions and many others can be found on these pages.

The definitions are available in the eleven languages which were the official languages of the European Union before 1 May 2004 (Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish). The official languages of the new Member States (Bulgarian, Czech, Estonian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Romanian, Slovenian and Slovak) will be added as and when resources allow.



#### 4.5. Eurovoc (<http://europa.eu/eurovoc/>)

**Eurovoc** is a multilingual thesaurus covering the fields in which the European Communities are active; it provides a means of indexing the documents in the documentation systems of the European institutions and of their users. The European Parliament, the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, the national and regional parliaments in Europe, some national government departments and European organisations are currently using this controlled vocabulary.



#### 4.6. Interinstitutional Style Guide

The Interinstitutional Style Guide contains uniform stylistic rules and conventions which must be used by all the institutions, bodies and agencies of the European Union.



<http://publications.europa.eu/code/en/en-5000400.htm>

### 5. COMPUTER ASSISTED TRANSLATION

#### 5.1. European Commission Machine translation System (ECMT)

ECMT is the multilingual machine translation system used in the European Commission. The principle of machine translation (MT) is well known: a raw translation of a document, from a source language into a target language, is made on the basis of a system of dictionaries and linguistic programs.

The Commission has been using MT since 1976. The service offers 18 operational language pairs and can produce 2 000 pages of raw translation per hour. It is available to all Commission officials via the Web and the internal electronic mail system. The service

is also used by staff in other EU institutions and by public administrations in the Member States (in particular in Germany and Spain). Translations are usually returned to the requester within minutes.

The operational language pairs are the following:

<p>From English into</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dutch</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> French</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> German</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Greek</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Italian</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Spanish</li> </ul> <p>From Spanish into</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> English</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> French</li> </ul> <p>From Greek into</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> French</li> </ul>	<p>From French into</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dutch</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> English</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> German</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Italian</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Spanish</li> </ul> <p>From German into</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> English</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> French</li> </ul>
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## 5.2. Pre-processed files - Translator's Workbench (TWB)

Use of the TWB software in the DGT is on the increase, with the translation memories growing all the time. Thus, contractors will sometimes be provided with pre-processed documents containing sentences that have been translated previously. Pre-processed documents are provided as "translation support". It is up to the contractor to verify whether the pre-processed text units can be used as such or have to be modified.

Not only will this help them to become more familiar with our in-house terminology, it will also ensure a certain degree of consistency in the work they do for the Commission. Where a significant proportion of the document has already been translated, our administrators will take account of this in calculating the number of pages and in drawing up the order form.

Further instructions on pre-processed files can be found on the eXtra Portal : Note on pre-processing.

## 6. FIELD OFFICES FOR MULTILINGUALISM

The Commission's representations in each EU country play a key role in communicating EU policies to the public. Their duties are to officially represent the Commission and distribute information.

In 2007, the Commission's translation service (DGT) opened "field offices for multilingualism" in the representations, to which it has seconded language officers.

Their duties are mainly twofold:

- promoting multilingualism in Europe, i.e. the importance of languages and language learning as major components of European integration;

- helping the Commission **communicate** even more effectively with the public under its *Plan D for democracy, dialogue and debate*, by
  - listening to people locally and taking their concerns into account
  - explaining how EU policies affect their everyday lives
  - connecting with people on the ground by **localising** the message.

Promoting Europe's rich diversity of languages and their importance to our identity and culture helps to forge ever closer ties between people.

The addresses and other details of the contact people in these offices are available on Europa at the following address :

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/external\\_relations/field\\_offices/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/external_relations/field_offices/index_en.htm)

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