

POLICY FOR EMAIL USAGE AT THE EEA

In accordance with the “Code of good administrative behaviour” email messages can be regarded as equivalent to letters. However, emails are used both for informal exchange of information and formal communication requiring an answer.

It is the responsibility of the staff member sending or receiving a message to decide which category an e-mail belongs to. Official email that commit the EEA financially, legally or politically have to be registered in Hummingbird.

All email messages on the email system of the EEA are property of the EEA. The EEA email system is for business purposes. Limited personal use that does not interfere with the work performance is permitted. The email system of the EEA may not be used for illegal or irregular purposes, in a way that might disrupt the functioning of the service itself or in any manner contrary to the interests of the EEA. Email messages shall remain private; a staff member shall not read others' email unless delegated to do so by the mailbox owner. The Policy for Email Usage at the EEA follows the Data Protection Regulation (EC) 45/2001 and the European Data Protection Supervisor’s Comments on the Commission policy on the internal use of email of 1 February 2010.

Guidelines for e-mail

Formal emails should be handled as formal paper correspondence and shall be subject to the same deadlines (see the guidelines for document management on the Intranet under DM workflow).

Staff members shall respond to all emails requiring an answer within 15 working days (Code of Good Administrative Behaviour).

Sending e-mail to a large group of people such as Complete EEA or Staff should only be done if the message is time critical, otherwise the Intranet should be used.

Mail restriction

There is a need to enforce a number of constraints to ensure a reliable operation of the e-mail system including backups and restores of data.

Mail Box Size restriction:

A limit of 2 GB of email has been introduced and if a mailbox exceeds 1.5 GB a warning will be given and after it has exceeded 2 GB no e-mail can be sent. If the mailbox exceeds this limit messages can then be archived. This is something that is done with the help of the Helpdesk.

Mail Size restriction

A size limit for individual messages is set to 10 MB for outgoing messages and 10 MB for incoming messages. In short, if somebody sends an email larger than 10 MB to a user at the EEA, it will not be accepted.

The main reason for implementing this rule is that email was never designed for big files and many mail servers on the Internet impose limits to prevent overloading. It is very easy to saturate a system if a large attachment is sent to several recipients, causing difficulties for other users.

External EIONET Mailing lists

When email is sent to a mailing list with external recipients like the EIONET lists, it is even more important not to attach files that are too large. Large files will overload the servers involved and cause disruptions in services for both the EEA and the receivers. A better alternative to sending large email messages is to upload the documents to Circa and e-mail the URL as a reference.

External access

It is possible to read EEA email from any computer with a modern web browser via the address: <https://webmail.eea.europa.eu/>

It is also possible to use Laptops and Smart phones to synchronise your mailbox and calendar. Contact Helpdesk for advice.

Archiving

Individual mailboxes can be shrunk in size via an archiving operation performed by the Helpdesk. As an end-user you cannot do this yourself. Contact the Helpdesk if your mailbox exceeds the size limit. Access to the archived mails is limited to the mailbox owner.

Journaling

All messages passing in and out from the mail server is for recovery purposes copied to the archive. Access rights to the archive are limited to the mailbox owner. Emails in the archive have a retention time of 10 years.

Access to a personal mailbox

Access to a personal mailbox is restricted to the mailbox owner. Exceptions can be made in exceptional cases if the person is unavailable and the privacy of personal email remains intact. The precise procedure for this is to be defined. A mailbox owner can however delegate access to the mailbox to other staff or ask the Helpdesk to do so.

Below are two links to relevant Commission documents:

[Access to PCs and Mailboxes of Data Subjects from Commission's DPO](#)

[Commission's policy on Accessing a personal mailbox of an unavailable person](#)

We should adhere to the same principles.

Access to a personal Calendar

Personal calendars in Outlook are accessible to all staff to enable bookings of meetings. Individual appointments and meetings can be made private to prevent other to see them.

Good Practice

- Sending e-mail to a large group of people such as Complete EEA or Staff should only be done if the message is time critical, otherwise the Intranet should be used.
- Staff members can use the Out-of-office tool in MS Outlook to inform the sender if they are not available for a longer period of time, providing information from whom the sender can get information in the meantime.
- Make it easy for the recipients to assess and sort the incoming information through using a relevant and meaningful "Subject:" line.
- Use the importance level of the e-mail to indicate the right level of importance.
- Remember that confidentiality and authenticity is low with email, particularly if they have passed the public Internet.
- Be careful with mass-mailing. Talk to the Helpdesk if you need to send emails to a larger group of recipients.
- Delete emails and attached documents that are not needed, also check "Sent Items" for large attached files.
- For private email rather use a personal webmail service than the EEA mail system e.g. Hotmail or Google Mail