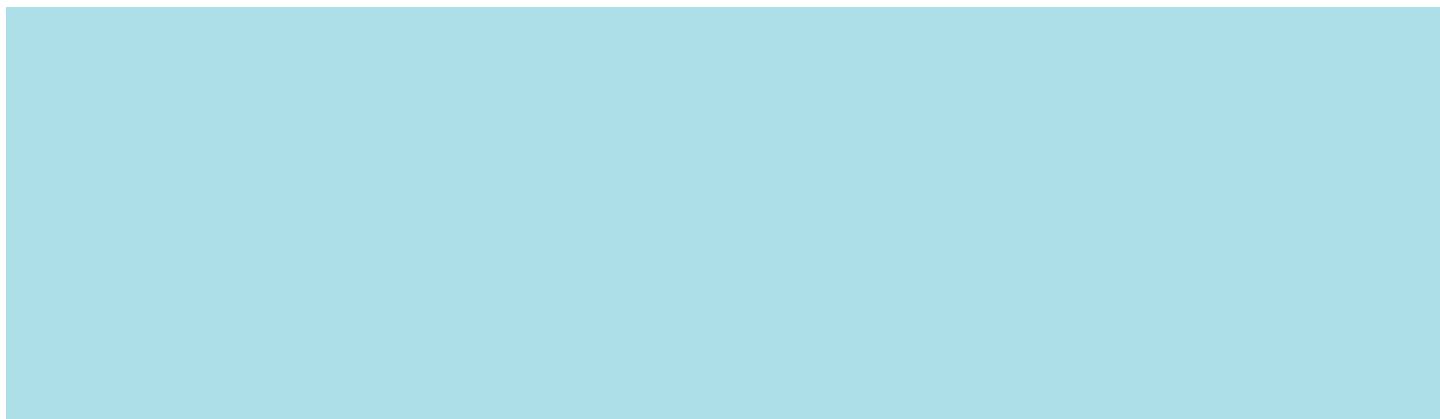


EEA writing manual

November 2017



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Checklist

Before submitting your assessment to COM, please check the following:

- Your key messages should be clear and should be presented as a one page list at the start of your report (see **Sections 1.2.5 and 1.2.7**).
- A list of abbreviations should appear at the end of your work (see **Sections 1.2.9 and 9.5**).
- Features such as figures, maps, images, tables and boxes should be numbered in sequence by chapter (see **Section 2.2**). Each feature should have a separate sequence. The report enables this automatically.
- All references, including URLs linking to reports published online, should be cited and included in the reference list. Footnotes should not be used to cite references (see **Section 3**).

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1 Introduction to the EEA writing manual

1.1 Effective communications are well planned

A key element of the production process, which includes all stages of editing, layout, web publishing and print, is planning. The EEA has limited resources and our audiences have clear needs. The better planned a product is, the more chance it has of being timely and targeted and of meeting these needs.

Each EEA product is designed for a specific purpose and audience. Each product type also has a specific template, either in Word or online, and a workflow. See Annex I of the Publishing Guide for information on templates and how to use them.

The *EEA Publishing Guide* ([link](#)), which complements this writing manual, provides clear guidelines to EEA staff, members of Eionet and external contractors and partners on how to produce effective and timely EEA products, including:

- Annex I, which provides an overview of EEA Product Types and their associated templates and workflows.
- Annex II, which provides workflows (with approximate timelines) to assist in the planning and production of key EEA products.

Reader-friendly EEA products

Writing an EEA report/assessment or briefing for decision makers is not the same as writing an article for an academic journal. They have different objectives and require different approaches. In a report or assessment, you should present your findings in language a non research-trained person would understand. A briefing, which according to our definition is an online product, should follow standard guidelines on writing for the web.

Feedback in relation to SOER 2015 is clear. Of 100 policy makers who responded, the majority said they preferred environmental information in products of 30 pages or less.

They also prefer plain English, which has been defined as the doing away with, gobbledygook, jargon and misleading public information' ([Plain English Campaign](#)). So do we.

We agree that everyone should have access to clear and concise information. This is not about dumbing down — it's about speaking up and being heard.

The European Commission has developed guidelines on how to write clearly — guidelines specifically for staff, which emphasise the following:

- Think before you write: clear writing starts with and depends on clear thinking;
- Focus on the reader: be direct and interesting;
- Kiss: keep it short and simple;
- Get your document into shape;
- Make sense: structure your sentences;
- Cut out excess nouns: verb forms are livelier;
- Be concrete, not abstract;
- Beware of false friends, jargon and abbreviations.

More information about the EU document on writing clearly is available [here](#).

1.2 Structuring your work

There are various ways to structure a report or assessment. The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation, for example, uses the [1:3:25 approach](#), i.e. one page of main messages, three pages of executive summary and 25 pages of main text. We like this and it fits with our audience's feedback. We have adapted this to the EEA's needs and much of this section of this Writing Manual is based on Canadian Health Services Research Guidance, although we prefer the 1:2:50 rule, i.e. one page of main messages, two pages of executive summary and 50 pages of main text.

The Word template for writing EEA reports has been set up to take on board this approach. This section of the writing manual takes readers through the various sections of an EEA report.

1.2.1 Title page

Input the title (and subtitle) of your document here. Other information such as the version number, date, activity code and author name should also be included here. In the final laid out version of the report, a serial number and the EEA logo will be included.

1.2.2 Table of contents

A table of contents should generally only include the first two levels of report hierarchy, i.e. Chapter 1, Section 1.1. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to include a third level, i.e. Section 1.1.1.

1.2.3 Foreword/preface



Forewords are mostly associated with published books and are normally written by a well-known or well-respected person who was not involved in the development of the book. Of EEA products, only flagship or joint reports written with other organisations should contain a foreword. The foreword should be kept to a maximum of one page.

A preface is written for one's own work and allows an author to address the intended audience directly. A preface often acknowledges contributions and assistance provided. EEA products do not generally contain prefaces.

1.2.4 Acknowledgements

The acknowledgements page should be laid out as follows:

- **Lead authors**

Just list names and organisations. For example:
John Smith (EEA), Maria Rossi (European Topic Centre for Air Pollution and Climate Change Mitigation)

- **Contributors**

Those heavily involved in the project. Outline involvement. For example:
Jens Jensen (Danish Ministry of the Environment), case study on Danish water management.

Jan Kowalski (Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection, Poland), input to chapter on environmental monitoring.

- **Acknowledgements**

Anyone else who provided input. Free text (suggested max. 100 words) outlining the individuals and/or organisations to be acknowledged for their work. For example (text for guidance only):

The authors would like to thank all those who contributed positively to this report with their critical and constructive comments and observations, in particular Marie Dupont and the members of the French General Commission on Sustainable Development, whose suggestions contributed to the final version of the report.

- **Eionet**

If the Eionet was involved in the development or review of the report, write:

The European Environment Observation and Information Network (Eionet) contributed to this report by...

Note: There is no need to acknowledge the production team (edit, layout, web publishing, printing etc.).

1.2.5 Key messages

This is the 1 in 1:2:50. It should be presented as a list of bullet points that reflect what you, the author, think the findings of your report mean for your audience. Please see Section 1.2.7 'Extracting, organising and confirming key messages'.

1.2.6 Executive summary

Your executive summary is the 2 in 1:2:50, i.e. it should be two pages at most. It presents your findings condensed to serve the needs of your audience who want to know quickly whether the report will be useful. Start your executive summary by outlining the issues you were looking at, using language and examples your audience will understand. Then sum up the answers you found to these issues. A good tactic is to begin paragraphs with a key message from your findings.

An executive summary is not an academic abstract; it's much more like a newspaper article: the most interesting stuff goes at the top, followed by the background and context and less important information further down. This is not the place for more than a line or two about your approach, methods and other technical details, which can be explained elsewhere — we recommend using Chapter 1 for this purpose. Concentrate on getting the essence of your research across succinctly but not cryptically.

1.2.7 Main body of the report/assessment

This is the 50 in 1:2:50, i.e. the main body of your report/assessment should be no longer than 50 pages.

Chapter 1 of your report/assessment should contain a short introduction that sets out the general scope and purpose as well as technical objectives and methodology. Any problems or limitations in the scope or methodology should be identified. Other relevant EEA products can also be mentioned here.

To make your report/assessment easy to read and understand, begin each subsequent chapter with two or three key messages from the chapter. Key messages are the lessons important decision-makers can take from your research.

Remember, key messages are not summaries or key facts. They go beyond these and tell your audience what you think the findings mean for them. The messages, per se, may not even appear in the text. They are what can be inferred from your report/assessment. This is your chance, based on your research, to tell decision-makers what implications your work has for theirs.

Extracting, organising and confirming key messages

- Develop key messages for each chapter of your draft report/assessment and place them at the top of each chapter. Focus on expressing clear conclusions based on what you've learned.

These are now your key messages for the chapter.

- Organise all of your key messages on one page so that they work as key messages for the full report/assessment and can assist in drafting the executive summary.
- Consider how your key messages relate to other EEA work, in particular those with cross-cutting messages. Consider your reader again:
 - Who are my readers?
 - What do they most need to know about what I have learned during the development of this report/assessment?
 - What does this really mean for my reader?
 - Develop messages that reflect the overall points of the report/assessment. Then spell them out — if you don't do this, you're leaving your work to be interpreted by someone else, who most likely won't have your insight.

This is not to say that you have to come up with definitive recommendations from research that just doesn't offer them. Be as concrete as you can and if you're really not ready to draw more conclusions don't just fall back on 'more research is needed'. Use your main messages to define the questions that still need to be asked.

Writing tip

Carry out these three steps to develop your key messages:

1. Write down the three main points you want to make in your chapter.
2. Draft your chapter based on these three points.
3. Revisit the three points on the basis of your completed chapter and amend them, if necessary, according to what you have learned while writing your chapter.

1.2.8 Conclusions

Include a short concluding chapter that provides a final word to the reader, summing up the findings of the report/assessment. It must be linked to the rest of the report/assessment and should not introduce any new material. The conclusions are different from the executive summary as they do not discuss context or background. If there are any proposals or recommendations, they should be included here. The conclusions should be no longer than two or three pages.

1.2.9 List of abbreviations

Include a list of all the abbreviations used in your work. This should include the abbreviation itself plus a full definition. These should all be defined on first use in the report/assessment as well.

1.2.10 References

A reference list should always appear at the end of the report/assessment. It should contain references to any work cited or quoted in the text. The references should be listed in alphabetical order by surname (or organisation if the surname is not available) and then by date. Where neither are available, the title should be used (Sections 3.4 and 3.5).

1.2.11 Annexes

Additional information is presented at the back of a report/assessment as 'Annexes' (Section 2.1).

2 Presentation of the report

2.1 Chapters, sections and annexes

A report is divided into chapters, which are themselves divided into sections. An initial capital is used to cross-reference other parts of a report (e.g. Chapter 3, Annex 1, Section 3.1, Section 3.1.1). It is important to always structure your report in this way.

The following fonts are used for the different elements of a report:

1 Chapter (heading 1, Calibri 22)

1.1 Heading 2, Calibri 16

1.1.1 Heading 3, Calibri 14, *italics*

Map, figure, Image and box titles appear in Calibri (body) 11, bold.

Body text is written in Calibri (body) 11.

You should be using the Word template to prepare your report. In the template, use the styles settings to assign the format for the different headings. It is also better to use the 'Body text' style for the main text in the document, rather than just the 'Normal' style.

Unnumbered headings

EEA reports do **not** use a fourth level of hierarchy (e.g. 1.1.1.1) but long sub-sections can be broken up using unnumbered headings. These can be inserted anywhere in the text and should use the body text style, and be bold and italicised as above.

Annexes

Additional information is presented at the back of a report as 'Annexes'. Annexes are numbered using Arabic numerals, i.e. Annex 1, Annex 2, etc.

2.2 Figures, maps, images, tables and boxes

Features such as figures, maps, images, tables and boxes must be numbered separately and sequentially by chapter. For example, the first occurrence of each feature in Chapter 3 would be Figure 3.1, Map 3.1, Image 3.1, Table 3.1 and Box 3.1. See Section 2.2.5 for figures and tables in boxes.

In annexes, features are numbered by annex, so, for example, the first table in Annex 3 would be Table A3.1.

Captions: Each feature should have a caption at the top (except images, where the caption appears below the feature), with no full point at the end. The caption consists of the feature number and a brief description, e.g. Figure 3.1 Effect of energy from renewable sources on consumption of fossil fuels.

Notes: These go under the feature and might include, for example, explanatory notes and definitions of abbreviations. General notes should come first, followed by abbreviations on a separate line, for example:

Notes: Data reported by all countries.
Mtoe, million tonnes of oil equivalent.

Source(s): These go under the notes and should be acknowledged as follows:

1. Material directly reproduced from another source, e.g. **Source:** Reproduced from IEA, 2015. You may have to obtain permission from the publisher to reproduce material.
2. Material from another source that you have adapted or added to, e.g. **Source:** Adapted from IEA, 2015.
3. Original material compiled from data in one or more sources, e.g. **Source:** Author's compilation based on data from IEA, 2015.

Notes and sources end with a full point.

2.2.1 Figures

Figures are diagrams (bar charts, line graphs, pie charts, etc.). They should always be cited in the text by number, e.g. 'Figure 3.1 shows that ...' or '... reduced the consumption of fossil fuels (Figure 3.1)'.

2.2.2 Maps

All maps — from a map showing the Member States of the EU to a map showing urban sprawl around a city centre — should be cited in the text by number.

2.2.3 Images

Images may be photographs, illustrations, cartoons, etc.

Images that appear at the start of a chapter to illustrate the topic do not need a caption or a number, but the artist, photographer or copyright holder should be acknowledged either below or overlaying the image, e.g. '© J. Smith' or '© International Energy Agency'. It is not sufficient to acknowledge the source as a reference (e.g. IEA, 2015), as the publisher of the reference may not hold the copyright to the image.

Images that are used to illustrate points in the text should be numbered and have a caption and an acknowledgement below. They should also be cited in the text ([link to form](#)).

Table 3.1 Consumption of fossil fuels in the EU-28

Fuel type	2009	2011	2013	2015
Solid	000 000	000 000	000 000	000 000
Gaseous	000 000	000 000	000 000	000 000
Other	000 000	000 000	000 000	000 000
Total	000 000	000 000	000 000	000 000

Notes: Figures are in million tonnes of oil equivalent.

Source: EEA, 2015.

2.2.4 Tables

Tables should be numbered and have a caption at the top, and notes and sources (if appropriate) below. They should be cited in the text.

2.2.5 Boxes

Boxes are usually numbered and have a caption above, and notes and sources (if appropriate) below. It is helpful to cite them in the text, but it is not necessary to do so if it is obvious that they are simply illustrating or summarising text, e.g. a 'key points' box at the end of a chapter. If the only box in a chapter is a 'key points' box, there is no need to number it.

Boxes may include other features, e.g. tables and figures. These should be numbered consecutively with other figures and tables in the text, as long as they are clearly referred to within the box.

Beware of overusing boxes. They can take the reader's attention away from the main text. Use them only to present important information, or to add information that is not in the main text.

3 Footnotes, references and bibliographies

3.1 References to footnotes

In the text, footnote markers are styled as a superscript digit in standard parentheses, preceded by a fixed space and followed by any punctuation, for example:

References to the Commission Regulation ⁽¹⁾ also appear in the Council communication ⁽²⁾ but not in the text of the Court of Justice ⁽³⁾.

The footnote marker should always be in roman text and never in bold or italics, even in a heading.

Features may also have footnotes specific to them, which should use lower case letters and be set immediately below the feature, not at the foot of the page:

Table 3.1 Consumption of fossil fuels in the EU-28

Fuel type	2009	2011	2013	2015
Solid	000 000	000 000	000 000	000 000
Gaseous	000 000	000 000	000 000	000 000
Other ^(a)	000 000	000 000	000 000	000 000
Total	000 000	000 000	000 000	000 000

Notes: Figures are in million tonnes of oil equivalent.
^(a) Includes petroleum products, petrol and diesel.

Source: EEA, 2015.

3.2 Footnotes

Footnotes appear at the foot of the page and continue in numerical order throughout the document. Add a tab between the footnote number and the text as below:

- ⁽²⁾ For the current marketing year, this price is increased by a special premium.

It is acceptable to repeat the same footnote with a different number, because it is helpful for the reader to have the explanation appear on the same page as the footnote marker. However, if identical footnotes appear on pages close together, refer back to the first footnote, e.g. see footnote ⁽²⁾.

Footnotes should **not** be used for references to source material, which should be cited in the text as usual and

included in the reference list. However, if the footnote links to a website homepage (e.g. a project page) for information purposes only, then it is acceptable to include the URL of the homepage in a footnote.

3.3 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as 'the practice of taking someone else's work and ideas and passing them off as one's own' (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 2016). It applies equally to words, images, data and figures.

Plagiarism is fraudulent because it essentially involves stealing even if it is done unintentionally.

It is simple to avoid plagiarism by citing sources and providing full bibliographic references for the source material in the references section of a report or assessment. This is an acknowledgement that some of the material or ideas used in the text have been borrowed, and it gives due credit to the original authors. It also allows readers to find the original source. See below for information on how to reference correctly.

The use of one's own work from previous publications or documents should also be fully referenced in order to avoid self-plagiarism.

The EEA is currently working on a policy on plagiarism, which is designed to help avoid accusations of plagiarism once our reports are published. The COM programme is aware that not all plagiarism is intentional, so it is of vital importance that authors cite anything that they think could have already been published elsewhere.

To help identify plagiarism, COM uses software called **iThenticate** to run a plagiarism check on EEA texts. iThenticate locates instances of possible plagiarism within the text by comparing it with already published material available online. Where there is a match, the offending text is highlighted and the author will be contacted to provide the necessary bibliographic information.

We believe that the forthcoming EEA plagiarism policy combined with the use of the iThenticate software will help raise awareness of plagiarism among EEA authors and result in fewer instances of plagiarised work being published.



3.4 Textual citations of source literature

A citation is a reference to someone else's work that appears in the main text of a publication. The citation must always be complemented with a complete reference in the bibliography at the end of the publication in which it appears. Some different types of citation are given below, together with examples of their use.

- All citations should include the **author's surname and the year of publication** in brackets.

'Researchers argue that we have recently entered a new geological epoch: the Anthropocene' (Crutzen, 2002).

- **Where an organisation is designated as the author** it is normally better to use an acronym or abbreviation to keep the reference short.

'Total demand for food, feed, and fibre is projected to grow by about 60 % between now and 2050' (FAO, 2012).

- **Where the author's name occurs naturally in the text**, it is only necessary to put the year of the publication in brackets.

'Smith (1991) sets out six different approaches for valuing ecosystem services.'

- **Where an author or organisation has two or more publications cited from the same year**, they should be listed as a, b, etc.

'The Rio+20 outcomes (UN, 2012a) call for a land degradation neutral world.'

'Efficient use of natural resources can boost economic growth, create jobs and contribute to social cohesion' (EC, 2014b).

- **Where a source has two authors** they should be cited in the reference. The individual references should be separated by 'and'. Where the authors are organisations, they should be separated by a semi-colon.

'Ecosystem-based management differs from traditional approaches that address single concerns

e.g. species, sectors or activities' (McLeod and Leslie, 2009).

- **Where a source has more than two authors**, the first author should be cited in the reference, followed by et al.

'Hazardous chemicals have been detected in human populations and linked to environmental and dietary exposures' (Smolders et al., 2015).

- **Where several references are cited concurrently**, they should appear in the same parentheses and be separated by semi-colons. Where the publications are by the same author, the name need not be repeated, but the publication years should be separated by commas.

'Forests are affected by storm patterns, pests, diseases, droughts and forest fires' (EEA, 2012a; IPCC, 2014a).

'The current proportion of people aged 65 years and over already exceeds 17.5 % and is projected to reach 29.5 % by 2060' (Eurostat, 2008, 2010, 2011).

Where an author cannot be identified, the reference publication should be cited by the title (in italics).

Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary (11th ed.) (2005)

- **Where a date cannot be identified**, write 'undated' in brackets.


'Smith (undated) wrote that...'

- **Where a report is forthcoming**, write 'forthcoming' in brackets.

'...the well-being effects of increased access to green spaces' (EEA, forthcoming).

- **When quoting a specific section of work**, page numbers should be included (see also Section 3.3 'Plagiarism').

'Many of today's environmental challenges are characterised by their complexity' (EEA, 2015, p. 33).



Web addresses should not be cited in the text or in footnotes, unless they are the URLs of a website homepage provided for information purposes only (e.g. a project website). Where the reference refers to a web page, the year of publication cited in the text reference should normally be the last access date.

'The main categories are provisioning services; regulating and maintenance services; and cultural services (CICES, 2013).'

- **Where a figure or other image is reproduced** or data from a source other than the EEA are used, a reference to the original work must be included (see also Section 3.3 'Plagiarism').

For direct quotations the following rules apply:

- **Quotations of up to four lines** should be placed in single quotation marks within the text.

Crutzen (2002) states that 'We have recently entered a new geological epoch: the Anthropocene.'

- **Longer quotations** should be introduced by a colon followed by an empty line and should appear without quotation marks. They should also be indented from the left margin by three tab spaces and include the appropriate reference at the end of the quotation:

What is clear, however, is that transforming key systems such as the transport, energy, housing and food systems lies at the heart of long-term remedies. We will need to find ways to make them fundamentally sustainable, by decarbonising them, making them much more resource efficient and making them compatible with ecosystem resilience. Also relevant is the redesign of the systems that have steered these provisioning systems and have created unsustainable lock-ins: finance, fiscal, health, legal and education (EEA, 2015, p. 7).

3.5 Bibliographic references

A bibliography or reference list should always appear at the end of a report/assessment. It should contain references to any work cited or quoted in the text. The references should be listed in alphabetical order by surname (or organisation if the surname is not available)

and then by date. Where neither are available, the title should be used.

References to a complete work should comprise (in this order):

- the author's surname followed by a comma;
- the author's initial(s), each followed by a full stop and separated by a space, with the final initial followed by a full stop and a comma;
- the year of publication, followed by a comma;
- the title of the work in italics and, where appropriate, the edition number, followed by a comma;
- the publisher and place of publication, followed by a full stop; or
- the relevant page number(s), followed by a full stop.

Note: Bibliographic references always form one long sentence broken up with commas. Full stops are only used after initials and in abbreviations such as ed.

- **References to a work with one author**

Ciriacy-Wantrup, S. V., 1952, *Resource conservation: economics and policies*, University of California Press, Berkeley, California, USA.

- **References to a work with multiple authors**

- **Two authors** should be referenced using their surnames and initial(s), separated by 'and'.

Lawrence, D. and Hisdal, H., 2011, *Hydrological projections for floods in Norway under a future climate*, Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate, Oslo, Norway.

- **More than two authors** should be referenced using the surnames and initials of the first author and the words 'et al.':

Rayment, M., et al., 2009, *The economic benefit of environmental policy*, final report to European Commission DG ENV, Brussels.

- **References to a work compiled by one or more editors**

- The designation '(ed.)' should appear in brackets after the editor's name

Stern, N. H. (ed), 2007, *The economics of climate change: the Stern review*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

- Where there is more than one editor, the designation '(eds)' should be used (NB there is no full stop in 'eds')

Willems, P., Olsson, J. et al. (eds), 2012, *Impacts of climate change on rainfall extremes and urban drainage systems*, IWA Publishing, London.

- **References to an unpublished paper**

- The title should appear in single quotation marks and not in italics

Smith, J. K., 1991, 'Valuing ecosystem services — A guidebook for policymakers', EEA European Topic Centre on Nature Protection and Biodiversity, Paris.

- **References to a forthcoming publication**

- The word 'forthcoming' should replace the date.

EEA, forthcoming, *Trends and projections in Europe 2017*, European Environment Agency.

- **References to a chapter in collections of essays or articles**

- After the author name(s), the chapter should be cited with single quotation marks, followed by a comma. The publication should be preceded by 'in:' and then be referenced as normal (although the date doesn't need repeating unless the essay was originally published elsewhere at an earlier date). If the essays are by a single author then it's not necessary to repeat the author's name.

Tiner, R. W., 2013, 'Wetlands', in: *Encyclopedia of Environmental Management*, Taylor & Francis.

- **References to an article in a journal**

- The article should be contained in single quotation marks (not italics), followed by a comma. The name of the journal should be in italics, followed by a comma and finally the volume/edition number and relevant pages (not italics).

Crutzen, P. J., 2002, 'Geology of mankind', *Nature* 415(6867), pp. 23-27.

- **References where the organisation is designated as the author**

- If an acronym has been used in the text reference then this should be repeated in the reference list. The full name of the authoring organisation should be spelt out after the title of the publication for clarity (if this differs from the publisher).

UNEP, 2012b, *The global chemicals outlook: towards sound management of chemicals*, United Nations Environment Programme, Geneva, Switzerland.

- **References to EEA publications**

- EEA reports and technical reports are assigned a publication number, which should be included in the reference. It's not necessary to cite the location of the publisher in this instance.

EEA, 2014a, *Air quality in Europe — 2014 report*, EEA Report No 5/2014, European Environment Agency.

- **References to EU regulations, directives and communications**

- Titles should be presented as set out in the Official Journal and should not be in italics. The Official Journal reference can be useful for the reader or a hyperlink can be added in an electronic version.

EU, 2009, Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7).

- For Commission Communications it can be useful to include the COM reference and date.

EC, 2008, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions '20 20 by 2020 — Europe's climate change opportunity' (COM(2008) 30 final of 23 January 2008).

Note that citations of European Commission communications ('COM'), staff working documents (SWD) and other unclassified ('SEC') documents should refer to the European Commission (EC) as author. Citations of European Union Regulations, Directives and Decisions should refer to the European Union (EU) as author.



- **References to print documents available online**

- Where a web URL is included in a reference to a print document, this should appear at the end of the reference and be indicated in parentheses. The full address should be cited (including 'http://'). After the link it is necessary to include the date that the web page was last accessed. The date should be preceded by the word 'accessed' and followed by a full stop. It's much better to link directly to the relevant PDF file, rather than to a page with lots of other reports.

EEA, 1991, *Valuing ecosystem services* — *A guidebook for policymakers*, EEA Technical report No 4/2001, European Environment Agency (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/valuing-ecosystem-service>) accessed 20 April 2010.

- **References to web pages**

- Where the reference is to a specific page, the title of the page should be presented in inverted commas, followed by the URL in brackets and the last access date.

EC, 2014g, 'European Green Capital', European Green Capital (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/index_en.htm) accessed 9 March 2017.

- In many cases, organisations or databases are referenced using their web page.

NEC, 2010, 'National emission ceilings (NEC) directive inventory' (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/data/national-emission-ceilings-nec-directive-inventory-12>) accessed 9 March 2017.

4 Spelling

4.1 Conventions

As a rule, use the first spelling in the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), with the exception of -is/-iz words. The EEA uses UK spelling and the -is spelling for words such as organise, organisation (unless part of a proper name, e.g. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations).

Set the language in your document to 'English (UK)' and the spellchecker will find misspellings.

In UK English, a final letter -l is doubled when -ing or -ed endings are added to verbs:

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

The exception is parallel, which becomes paralleling, paralleled.

When adding -able endings to verbs, drop the final silent -e at the end of the stem (conceivable, debatable), unless it would change the pronunciation of the preceding consonant (changeable, traceable). The only common exceptions are sizeable and saleable. Other consonants double only if the root verb is stressed or has a strong secondary stress, so:

admit, admitting, admitted
format, formatting, formatted
commit, committing, committed
refer, referring, referred

but:

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

The exceptions are some verbs ending in -p (e.g. handicapped, kidnapped, worshipped but not developed).

In data-processing usage, use 'input' and 'output', e.g. 'Over 70 000 items of data were input last month'. However, note that the verb 'to format' takes the forms above.

Note also: age, ageing.

4.2 Preferred spellings

Where there is an alternative, use the preferred spellings (non-exhaustive):

Preferred spelling	Comments
Exceedance	pl. exceedances
judgement (all contexts except legal)	judgment, other than in legal contexts, is the US spelling
judgment (legal contexts only)	
Oriented	alternative: orientated
Preventive	alternative: preventative
programme (all contexts except computing)	program, other than in computing contexts, is the US spelling
program (computing contexts only)	
tonne (= 1 000 kg)	ton may be misinterpreted as imperial ton (2 240 lb or 1 016.05 kg)

4.3 Confusables

There are a number of words in English that have similar spellings but different meanings and can be easily confused (non-exhaustive):

advise (v.)	advice (n.)
biannual (twice a year)	biennial (every 2 years)
dependent (adj.)	dependant (n.)
license (v.)	licence (n.)
maintain (v.)	maintenance (n.)
phosphorus (n.)	phosphorous (adj.)
practise (v.)	practice (n.)
premise (proposition or statement)	premises (building(s))
principal (adj., n., main or most important)	principle (n., a guiding belief or idea)

4.4 Tricky plurals

Some plurals of English words derived from Latin can cause problems, e.g. 'data' is actually the plural of datum, which is why it usually takes a plural verb. The EEA uses the plural. If in doubt, use the following non-exhaustive list.

Singular	Plural
addendum	addenda
appendix	appendices (books); appendixes (anatomy)
bacterium	bacteria
bureau	bureaux
consortium	consortia
corrigendum	corrigenda
criterion	criteria
curriculum	curricula
datum	data (in technical writing)
focus	foci (mathematics, science); focuses (other contexts)
formula	formulas (politics); formulae (science)
forum	forums or fora
genus	genera
index	indexes (books); indices (science, economics)
maximum	maxima (mathematics, science); maximums (other contexts)
medium	mediums (life sciences, art); media (press, communications, IT)
memorandum	memorandums or memoranda
moratorium	moratoriums or moratoria
phenomenon	phenomena
plus	pluses
premium	premiums
referendum	referendums or referenda
spectrum	spectrums (politics); spectra (science)

4.5 Latin

Latin words, phrases and abbreviations should be used as little as possible. When used, common phrases should be written in roman, (e.g. *et al.*, *ad hoc*, *inter alia*, *per capita*, *pro forma*, *status quo*, *versus*). Less commonly used examples should be written in italics (e.g. *ex ante*, *ex post*). Latin phrases are not hyphenated when used as adjectives (e.g. *ad hoc* meeting).

The common abbreviations are:

- c.f. compare
- e.g. for example
- et al. and others (an abbreviation of *et alia*) — note punctuation and only use in reference citations
- etc. and so forth (an abbreviation of *et cetera*)
- i.e. that is, or that is to say
- NB please note (an abbreviation of *nota bene*)

Do not confuse e.g. and i.e. Use e.g. to give an example of something just mentioned:

Local authorities have introduced congestion charging in several European cities, e.g. London.

Use i.e. to explain briefly what you just wrote or say the same thing in different words:

Local authorities have introduced congestion charging in only one European city, i.e. London.

Note that there is no comma after e.g. or i.e.

Use etc. sparingly. It is better to introduce a series of examples with 'such as' or 'e.g.', in which case there is no need for etc. For example:

The analysis will provide essential background information on aspects of integrated risk management (e.g. future scenarios, cost-benefit analysis, etc.).



becomes:

The analysis will provide essential background information on aspects of integrated risk management, such as future scenarios and cost-benefit analysis.

4.6 Commonly misused terms

Words that look and sound similar in English and another language but that have different meanings are known as

false friends and can lead to misunderstandings. These and other commonly misused terms are listed below.

Note that they depend entirely on context and meaning and not all are necessarily wrong.

Commonly misused term	Suggested alternative(s)
actor	use a more specific noun, e.g. participant, stakeholder
actual	current, present
adequate	appropriate, suitable, fitting
articulate	coordinate, connect, structure
assist	attend, participate
attend	wait for, expect
attribute to	allocate to, give to, assign to
axis	usually a transport axis, e.g. a road
in case (of)	for, if, when, where, in the case of, in the event of
coherent/coherency	consistent/consistency
concerning	with regard to, in terms of
control	audit, check, inspect
define	establish, set out
delay	deadline, time limit
elaborate	compile, draft, draw up, prepare
engaged	involved in
eventual	possible, potential
foresee	envisage, plan (for), provide (for), contemplate, expect, predict
in the frame of	in connection with, in the context of
harmonise, homogenise	standardise, make uniform
important	large, significant
incite	encourage
intervention	activity, contribution, explanation
modality	procedure, method, mode
perspective	outlook, prospects
planification	planning
request to	ask to, request that
respect	comply with, adhere to
semester	half-year, six months, six-month period
so-called	known as (or delete)
third country	non-Member State
trimester	quarter, three months, three-month period
valorise	put a value on, accentuate, enhance, upgrade

5 Singulars and plurals

- **Collective nouns take a singular verb** when the emphasis is on the whole.
 - The Commission is considering the matter.
- **Collective nouns take a plural verb** when the emphasis is on individual members.
 - A majority of farmers were in favour.
 - A number of people are already recycling.
- **Percentages and fractions** can be singular or plural. Countable nouns take a plural verb.
 - More than three-quarters of the sandbags were used.
 - More than 75 % of the sandbags were used.
- **Uncountable nouns** take a singular verb.
 - Over three-quarters of the grit was used.
 - Over 75 % of the grit was used.
- **Sums of money** can take a singular or plural verb.
 - EUR 2 million was [were] made available for flood defences.
- **Countries and organisations** with a plural name take the singular.
 - The United Nations is coordinating the response to the crisis.
 - The Netherlands is cooperating with its neighbours.
- **Words ending in -ics** are singular when referring to a scientific discipline or body of knowledge (economics, mathematics, statistics) but plural in other contexts.
 - For many, statistics is a difficult subject.
 - Statistics are available to support that assertion.
- In EEA reports, **data** are treated as plural.
 - Data are also available to support that assertion.
- When a **multiple subject** clearly forms a whole, use a singular verb.
 - Capturing, tagging and monitoring the birds is done by a team of trained volunteers.

6 Punctuation

6.1 Full stop (.)

A full stop marks the end of a sentence. Footnotes always end with a full stop.

Headings do not end in a full stop, except for run-in side headings, which are followed by text on the same line, for example:

Flood protection. A number of measures have been taken ...

An additional full stop is not needed in the following cases (unless the sentence ends with parentheses):

- a sentence that ends with an ellipsis ...;
- an abbreviation that takes a full stop, e.g. etc.;
- following a quotation that forms a full sentence and ends in a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark before the closing quote mark, for example:

The Minister for the Environment said, 'Measures are in place to ensure that this does not happen again.'

Abbreviations that are truncations are followed by a full stop (Art., Co.) but contractions (in which the middle of the word is removed) are not (Dr, Ms, Ltd). See also Section 9.1.

'No' as an abbreviation for number is a contraction of 'numero' and therefore does not take a full stop.

6.2 Comma (,)

6.2.1 Serial comma

The comma is used to separate items in a series, except for the final two items, which are separated by 'and' or 'or'. However, if including that comma helps to clarify the meaning, then it may be used:

The commodities under consideration are sugar, beef and milk products.

The commodities under consideration are sugar, beef and sheep meat, and milk products.

Add a comma before etc. in a series (beef, sheep meat, pig meat, etc.) but not if there is no series (milk products etc.). See Section 4.5 'Latin' on the use of etc.

Commas are also used to separate adjectives in a series (inflated, volatile oil prices) but not if the adjectives do not form a series (stable agricultural prices).

6.2.2 Other uses of commas

Linking independent clauses

A comma is used to separate two short sentences, or clauses, linked by a conjunction such as 'but', 'so', 'while' or 'yet' to form a single sentence:

Ministers agreed on flood protection measures, but planning regulations were not discussed.

If there is no conjunction, use a semicolon:

Ministers agreed on flood protection measures; planning regulations were not discussed.

If the subject of the second sentence is omitted or if the conjunction is 'and' or 'but', the comma is optional:

Ministers agreed on flood protection measures[,] but did not discuss planning regulations.

6.2.3 Introductory and parenthetical phrases

Parenthetical (bracketing) phrases are created by setting off part of the sentence with commas while retaining the normal word order. The text set off by commas is not essential to the meaning of the sentence but provides additional information:

Professor Hans Bruyninckx, Executive Director of the European Environment Agency, said that ...

Note that there must be a pair of commas if the parenthetical text comes in the middle of the sentence.

Following short introductory phrases at the beginning of a sentence, the comma is optional:

In 2015[,] several initiatives were set up ...

6.2.4 Relative clauses

Commas are used to distinguish between defining and non-defining relative clauses.

Defining: The auditors were unable to identify the sheep that were on the hill pasture.

Non-defining: The auditors were unable to identify the sheep, which were on the hill pasture.

The first sentence defines exactly which sheep we are talking about — the ones on the hill pasture. There are probably other sheep on the farm in low-lying fields. The second sentence gives additional information about the sheep but does not define them. We assume that all the sheep are out on the hill pasture.

6.3 Colon (:)

A colon indicates that an expansion, explanation, qualification or quotation will follow. It can also be used to introduce a list.

A colon should not be used at the end of a heading or to introduce a figure or other feature in running text. Figures and other features should be numbered and cited by number (see Section 2.2).

Colons in running text should not be followed by a capital letter and there should be no spaces between the preceding word or number and the colon.

6.4 Semicolon (;)

A semicolon is used to combine two short sentences or clauses into one without a linking conjunction, for example:

Ministers agreed on flood protection measures; planning regulations were not discussed.

For clarity, use semicolons to separate items in a list that are long and complex or involve internal punctuation:

The EU has agencies in a number of European cities, including Copenhagen, Denmark; Lisbon, Portugal; Parma, Italy; and London, United Kingdom.

Semicolons are also used at the end of items in displayed lists (see Section 10.2).

6.5 Brackets ([...])

6.5.1 Round brackets

Round brackets, or parentheses, are used to include information in the text that is not essential to its understanding:

The auditors were unable to identify the sheep (which were on the hill pasture).

There should never be a comma before the opening bracket. (It is seldom useful to enclose a whole sentence within brackets, but, if you do so, the full stop must come before the closing brackets, as here.)

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

The conclusions (particularly with reference to poultry (including free-range hens)) highlighted the following ...

However, for clarity, it would be better to use parenthetical dashes (see Section 6.7.1):

The conclusions — particularly with reference to poultry (including free-range hens) — highlighted the following ...

When citing numbered paragraphs from legislation, enclose the paragraph number in a pair of brackets, closed up to the article number: Article 3(1), Article 5(1)(a), Article 7a(1).

6.5.2 Square brackets

These are used to insert, for example, a clarification in a quote to make it clear that it is not part of the quote:

'We [heads of EU agencies] expect to meet soon to discuss ...'

In mathematical formulae, square brackets are used to enclose round brackets:

$$2[4ab - (2c \times 4d)] + 6e = 780$$

6.6 Quotation marks ('...')

Use single quotation marks for quotes and double quotation marks for a quote within a quote.

Punctuation depends on the sense — if the punctuation belongs to the quotation, it is included in the quotation mark, otherwise it is not:

The EU favours a 'carrot-and stick approach'.

The Minister for the Environment said, 'Measures are in place to ensure that this does not happen again.'

However, if the quotation itself contains a concluding mark (full stop, question mark or exclamation mark), there is no need for a full stop after the quotation mark (see Section 6.1).

Long quotations styled as block quotes do not need quotation marks at the beginning and end (see Section 3.4).

Do not put the titles of books, newspapers or foreign expressions in quotation marks because they are usually set in italics.

6.7 Dashes and hyphens (—, -)

6.7.1 *Em dashes*

Spaced long (or 'em') dashes can be used parenthetically to punctuate a sentence, increasing the contrast or emphasis of the text set off. However, use them sparingly. Use no more than one per sentence, or — if setting off inserted text — one set of paired em dashes:

The conclusions — particularly with reference to poultry (including free-range hens) — highlighted the following ...

An em dash is also used to separate the title from the subtitle of a publication.

Writing tip

Em dash: ctrl + alt + minus

6.7.2 *Hyphens*

Hyphenate the following:

- 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);
- points of the compass: north-east, south-west;
- prefixes that have not become part of the word through usage: anti-American, co-funded, e-commerce, self-employed.
- number ranges (e.g. 2014-2020);
- expressions including coordinating or contrasting pairs (e.g. cost-benefit analysis, Brussels-Paris route, north-south divide).

Do not hyphenate the following:

- compound adjectives following the noun that they qualify: 'The statistics are up to date';
- adverbs ending in -ly modifying the following adjective: '... newly industrialised developing countries';
- prefixes that have become part of the word through usage: antibiotic, cooperation, coordination, email.

Compound nouns used as adjectives before a noun need not be hyphenated if there is no risk of confusion: land use changes, public sector organisations.

For preferred usage, see the following non-exhaustive list.

One word	Hyphenated	Two words
bioenergy	cold-water (adj.)	base year
coordinate	decision-maker (n.)	clearing house
cooperate	Directorate-General	cold water (n.)
database	eco-efficiency	data set
ecosystem, ecotourism	follow-up (n.)	fact sheet
email	know-how (n.)	follow up (v.)
freshwater	long-term (adj.)	home page
groundwater	low-lying (adj.)	hot spot
hydropower	policy-maker	land cover
interrelationship	physico-chemical	land take
landfill	run-off (n.)	land use (n., adj.)
landmine	salt-water (adj.)	point source (emissions)
metadata	short-term (adj.)	policy measures
microbiology	side-effect (n.)	power plant
microorganism	socio-economic	public sector (n., adj.)
multiannual	time-frame (n.)	salt water (n.)
offset	web-based (adj.)	sea bottom
Imagechemical	sea-level (adj.)	sea coast
policymaker	well-known (adj.)	sea floor
seafood	well-being	sea ice
seawater		sea lane
seaweed		sea level
website		soil sealing
wellbeing		task force
widespread		waste paper
worldwide		waste water
		water meter
		wood waste

6.8 Ellipsis (...)

An ellipsis indicates an omission in the text, usually in quotes. If it falls at the end of a sentence, there is no need for a concluding full stop. However, if it is followed by another punctuation mark (e.g. a question mark, colon or quotation mark), that mark should be closed up to the ellipsis. The ellipsis should not be enclosed in square brackets:

The Treaty of Lisbon provides that, 'The Union shall develop a special relationship with neighbouring countries ... founded on the values of the Union ...'

When it falls at the start of a sentence, the ellipsis is preceded by a fixed (hard) space. In the middle of a sentence, it is preceded by a fixed space and followed by a normal space. At the end of a sentence, it is preceded by a fixed space.

Writing tip

Fixed space: ctrl + shift + space bar

6.9 Forward slash (/)

The solidus or forward slash is used to mean 'per' (km/day) and in fractions (19/100).

Marketing years and financial years that do not coincide with calendar years but span them are denoted by a forward slash (e.g. 2014/2015), which signifies a 12-month period, rather than by a hyphen (e.g. 2014-2015), which signifies two years (see also Section 8.8).

6.10 Question mark (?)

Use a question mark at the end of a direct question:

How will this affect EU trade?

However, do not use a question mark in indirect speech:

We should ask ourselves how this will affect EU trade.

There is no need for a question mark after a request or instruction disguised as a question out of courtesy:

Would you please sign and return the attached form.

6.11 Apostrophe (')

6.11.1 Possessive

The apostrophe, followed by the letter -s is used in the possessive form of singular nouns and plural nouns not ending in the letter -s:

the author's views (singular)

women's rights (plural)

the MEP's expenses (singular)

After plural nouns ending in the letter -s, the letter -s following the apostrophe is omitted:

farmers' concerns

MEPs' expenses

There is no apostrophe in possessive pronouns: its, ours, theirs, yours.

Note the distinction between 'its' (possessive) and the contraction 'it's' (meaning 'it is').

6.11.2 Contractions

Apostrophes are also used to indicate contractions in which one or more letters have been omitted or two words have been joined (e.g. don't, it's, you're). Contractions are not used in formal writing, other than in direct speech.

6.12 Ampersand (&)

The symbol is a substitute for the word 'and'. Avoid using it, except where it is part of a proper name (e.g. Marks & Spencer plc) or in certain abbreviations (e.g. R&D, i.e. research and development).

7 Italics and bold

7.1 Italics

Use italics in the following cases:

- titles of electronic and print publications, white and green papers and journals, when written in full (e.g. *The European environment — state and outlook 2015*) but not short or abbreviated titles (e.g. SOER 2015);
- foreign words and phrases that have not been assimilated into English (e.g. *Länder*, *raison d'être*) but not those that have (e.g. alias, vis-à-vis), or proper names or quotations in a foreign language;
- species binomials — genus and species should be italic and spelt out in full at first mention (e.g. *Pinus sylvestris*), and thereafter abbreviated (*P. sylvestris*);
- formulae in mathematics.

7.2 Bold

Bold can be used sparingly in running text for emphasis or to highlight key words or changes of subject. Avoid overuse, as it can be visually distracting and detract from your message.

7.3 Capital letters

Proper nouns take a capital letter and common nouns do not. Use capitals sparingly, as overuse can be visually distracting. If in doubt, use lower case. The following table is a non-exhaustive guide to preferred capitalisation:

Carboniferous Period
common agricultural policy
Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
named directives: Birds Directive, Energy Efficiency Directive, Habitats Directive, Renewable Energy Directive, Water Framework Directive
named directorates-general: Directorate-General for Environment
Eionet
Europe 2020 strategy
Europe: central, eastern, western
North-East Atlantic
General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
Green Party
Ice Age

International Year of Soils
member country (of the EEA)
Member State (of the EU)
Natura 2000
seasons: spring, summer, autumn winter
Seventh Environment Action Programme
Third World

7.3.1 Proper nouns and titles

Use initial capitals: the honourable Member (of the European Parliament), Minister of the Environment.

7.3.2 Institutions, office bearers, etc.

Use initial capitals for the titles of organisations, directorates, units, sections, office bearers, committees and delegations when written in full (e.g. Vice-Chair of the Committee on International Relations) but not for the titles when used in general (e.g. the vice-chair, the committee).

Unnamed directorates-general, sections and units take lower case.

The Council presidency takes a lower case -p, as it is general, but named presidencies are capitalised (e.g. the Latvian Presidency).

7.3.4 Full names of international agreements, conferences and conventions

The full names take initial capitals (e.g. International Coffee Agreement, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe), but use lower case when referring back to the agreement or conference.

7.3.5 Periods and events

Use initial capitals for periods (e.g. Carboniferous Period, Ice Age, Second World War) and events (e.g. International Year of Soils, European Week for Safety and Health).

7.3.6 Party denominations

Use initial capitals for the names of parties (e.g. Green Party, Fianna Fáil Party) but not for ideologies (liberal, socialist).

7.3.7 Countries and states

Use initial capitals for EU Member States but not for EEA member countries.

7.3.8 Geographical names and political divisions

Use initial capitals for proper names (e.g. East Midlands, Lake Constance, North Rhine–Westphalia, North Pole, Third World, North-East Atlantic) but lower case when describing geographical areas (western, central and eastern Europe).

Note: River Thames but Thames river.

Points of the compass are lower case (north, north-west, etc.) unless they are part of a proper name: South Africa, Northern Ireland but southern Africa, south-west Ireland. Points of the compass and their derived forms (north-western, etc.) are not capitalised unless they form part of a proper name. The derived forms are hyphenated.

7.3.9 Trade names

Trade or proprietary names are capitalised (e.g. Land Rover, Nurofen, Samsung Galaxy), but not generic names (e.g. ibuprofen) or names that have become generic (e.g. aspirin, linoleum, nylon).

7.3.10 The internet

The internet and the web or worldwide web are lower case.

7.4 References to EU legislation

Capitalise Regulation, Decision, Directive, Annex and Article when referring to a specific document (e.g. the Habitats Directive, Directive 92/43/EC).

Use lower case for general references to regulations and directives and to proposed legislation (e.g. a draft regulation).

7.5 References to EU programmes

Generally, use lower case for programmes, policies, agendas, strategies and action plans: common agricultural policy, Europe 2020 strategy.

However, make sure that you capitalise correctly when names do not follow this rule. Also, pay attention to abbreviations, e.g. Natura 2000, Seventh Environment Action Programme (7th EAP).

7.6 Publications

Capitalise and italicise the names of journals, newspapers and periodicals: *European Journal of Forest Research*, *Sunday Herald*, *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*.

However, EU publications take a capital only on the first word and on proper nouns: *Interinstitutional style guide*, *Synopsis of the work of the Court of Justice of the European Communities*.

Note: Just because a noun is abbreviated it does not mean that it will take initial capitals: the common agricultural policy (CAP) is lower case, but the European Central Bank (ECB) takes initial capitals in full because it is a proper noun.

7.7 Cross-references

Use initial capitals for cross-references followed by a number (e.g. Figure 3.4, Chapter 2, Section 4.1) but not for references to footnotes or pages (e.g. see footnote 15, see page 96).

8 Numbers, dates and time

8.1 Words or digits

Write out one to nine in full, and use digits from 10 onwards. However, where numbers in a range fall above and below 10, use digits for both or all, i.e. 'between 9 and 11':

Two out of six countries had between 9 and 15 provinces affected by flooding.

Use a fixed space to indicate thousands: 10, 100, 1 000, 10 000, 100 000, 1 000 000.

Use a full stop to separate whole numbers from decimals: 1.5, 15.12

Round hundreds and thousands can be written in digits or words as long as a consistent rule is followed (e.g. three hundred or 300), but millions and billions are usually written with digits (e.g. 2.5 million, 5 billion).

Use a normal hyphen to indicate negative numbers (e.g. -5, -0.7). Note there is no space between the negative sign and the number.

Use digits with units, whether abbreviated or not: 5 °C, 5 %, 50 km, 500 metres.

Treat time as a unit and use digits: 6 seconds, 4 hours, 2 years.

Where two numbers are adjacent, spell out one: ten 2-kg weights.

Avoid starting a sentence with digits: either write the number out in full or turn the sentence around so that it starts with a word. However, it is acceptable to begin a sentence with a percentage in digits.

8.2 Ranges of numbers

For clarity, do not elide (omit or join together) number ranges: 113-117 (*not* 113-17).

Use a hyphen in number ranges, except in the following contexts:

from 10 to 20 (*not* from 10-20)

between 10 and 20 (*not* between 10-20)

8.3 Ordinal numbers

These follow the same rule as cardinal numbers: first, second, ... ninth, 10th, ... 101st.

The exceptions are centuries (e.g. 9th century) and editions of books (e.g. 3rd edition).

Ordinal numbers should be in roman and not superscript.

8.4 Million, billion and trillion

Billion is 1 000 million, and trillion is 1 million million. Define in parentheses at first use for clarity.

Million and billion can be abbreviated to 'm' and 'bn' to save space in tables or to avoid a lot of repetition in lists of numbers. Insert a fixed space between the digit and the abbreviation: EUR 100 000 m, GBP 500 bn.

8.5 Fractions and decimals

Fractions are hyphenated when used as an adverb or adjective (e.g. a two-thirds increase) but not when used as a noun (e.g. an increase of two thirds).

In publications in English, a full stop is used to separate whole numbers from decimals (*not* a comma).

8.6 Percentages

Insert a fixed space between the digit and the % symbol.

In statistics, each decimal place, even if zero, adds to accuracy, so 3.5 % is not the same as 3.50 %. Do not add or remove zeros to make numbers look consistent.

When comparing percentages, make clear the distinction between absolute percentages and percentage points. For example, 'In 2015, transport accounted for 25 % of EU greenhouse gas emissions, which is a decrease of three percentage points compared with emissions in 2005.' (i.e. transport accounted for 28 % of greenhouse gas emissions in 2005). This is not the same as 'In 2015, transport accounted for 25 % of EU greenhouse gas emissions, which is a decrease of 3 % compared with emissions in 2005.'

When writing ranges of percentages, include the % sign only after the upper limit of the range, i.e. 10-20 %.

8.7 Units of measurement

Units should be defined in full at first usage, unless it is a commonly used unit. For example, 'million tonnes of oil equivalent (Mtoe)' would be defined, whereas 'cm' would not.

A	ampere
°C	degree Celsius
cd	candela
cm	centimetre (use cm ³ , <i>not</i> cc)
CO ₂ e	carbon dioxide equivalent
dB	decibel
g	gram
h	hour
ha	hectare
hl	hectolitre
Hz	hertz
J	joule
kg	kilogram
kJ	kilojoule
km	kilometre
kW	kilowatt
kWh	kilowatt-hour
l	litre
m	metre
mg	milligram
min	minute
ml	millilitre
mm	millimetre
N	newton
s	second
t	tonne
tkm	tonne-kilometre
toe	tonne of oil equivalent
V	volt
W	watt

There should be a fixed space between digits and abbreviated units, % symbols and degree symbols: 5 °C, 5 %, 50 km, 5.5 ha (see Section 6.8).

Hyphenate adjectival units: 50-m rows, 2-kg weights.

Use a solidus (forward slash) in compound units: km/h, not km h⁻¹), see also Section 6.9. For clarity, use no more than one solidus in a compound unit: m/s per day, not m/s/day.

8.8 Dates

In text, dates should be given in full (e.g. 24 March 2016 — no commas), whereas in references to the Official Journal, they should be abbreviated (e.g. 24.3.2016). In footnotes, they can be either in full or abbreviated, as long as a consistent style is followed.

When including the day of the week, there is no need for a comma: Thursday 24 March 2016.

Use the 1990s — not 'the nineties' or 'the 90's'. Avoid beginning a sentence with a year: instead write 'The year 2016 ...' or turn the sentence around.

In time spans, the years should both be written in full, and a single hyphen with no spaces should separate the two years: 2014-2020, not 2014-20.

Note that 2013-2014 is two years, whereas 2013/2014 is one academic, financial or marketing year.

Dates and time spans precede the expression that they qualify: 'the 2014-2020 work programme' (not 'the work programme 2014-2020') or the 2013-2017 time period.

8.9 Time

Either the 24-hour or the 12-hour system (with a.m. and p.m.) is acceptable, but be consistent.

The 24-hour system: 09.30 (no 'h' or 'hrs'). The full hour is written with zero minutes: 12.00 (midday), 14.00, 00.00 (midnight).

The 12-hour system: 9.30 a.m. (no leading zero). The full hour is written without any minutes: 9.30 a.m., 12 noon, 2 p.m., midnight.

8.10 Currencies

Currencies can be expressed using the currency's name, the ISO code or the symbol in less formal contexts. See Section 11.1 for the ISO codes for EU currencies.

Use the currency's name when it is referred to generally: 'a sum in euros'. Note: one euro, two euros.

Use the ISO code for sums of money: 'EUR 12 500', 'EUR 10 million', USD 800. Note the fixed space between the ISO code and the digit. In a range, there is no need to repeat the ISO code: 'EUR 1 000-1 500'.

The ISO code is also used in table headings, along with any multiplier: '(EUR)', '(million EUR)'.

9 Abbreviations and acronyms

9.1 Conventions



Avoid overusing abbreviations and acronyms, as too many can make the text difficult to read. Please include a list of abbreviations and acronyms at the end of your report.

Spell out any abbreviations in full at first mention in the executive summary and again in the main text followed by the abbreviation in parentheses.

If an abbreviation is first used in a text feature (e.g. table, figure, box), define it again at first mention in the text. If an abbreviation is only ever used in text features and never in running text, define at first mention and include in the list of abbreviations.

There are three different types of abbreviation:

- In a true abbreviation, the end of the word is cut off (truncated) and replaced with a full stop (e.g. vol., ed.).
- In a contraction, the interior of the word is removed, but the first and last letters remain, so there is no full stop (e.g. Dr, Ltd, No).
- An acronym is formed from the initial letters of the word, and a true acronym can be pronounced (e.g. NATO, Unesco, Eionet). (See Section 9.2 for information on capitalisation of acronyms). An initialism is an acronym that is pronounced as the individual letters (e.g. the BBC, the EEA).

Upper case abbreviations do not take full points but lower case abbreviations usually do (e.g. a.m., p.m.).

Note that, 'No' (for number) is a contraction of 'Numero' and so it does not take a full point. The plural is 'Nos'.

9.2 Capitalisation

An initialism (cannot be pronounced) is all in upper case regardless of the number of letters.

An acronym that can be pronounced is in upper case up to and including five letters (e.g. UNEP), thereafter it is in title case (e.g. Corine, Esprit, Eionet).

9.3 Plurals, possessives and the definite and indefinite articles

Acronyms and abbreviations are treated as normal nouns and so take the plural (e.g. SMEs) and the possessive (e.g. the BBC's environment correspondent).

As a general rule, use the definite article (the) with initialisms (e.g. 'She works for the EEA') but not with acronyms (e.g. 'He works for NATO'). However, note that there are some exceptions in the names of companies (e.g. IBM, not the IBM) and universities and research institutions (e.g. UEA — not the UEA).

Assume that abbreviations will be read as such rather than as the term in full (e.g. 'an HP', not 'a HP').


9.4 Units and compass points

Commonly used units (e.g. cm, km, ha) need not be defined at first mention, though it can be helpful to define uncommon units. Less commonly used units should be defined at first mention (e.g. megatonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂e)).

Units do not take a full stop and do not have plurals. Use a fixed space between the digit and the abbreviated unit (e.g. 5 ha, 55 dB(A)).

Points of the compass and bearings are always upper case without full points (e.g. NW, 54 °E). Note the fixed space between the digit and degree symbol.

9.5 Commonly used abbreviations and acronyms



7th EAP	Seventh Environment Action Programme
CAP	common agricultural policy
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CHP	combined heat and power
CICES	Common International Classification of Ecosystem Services
CLC	Corine Land Cover
CO ₂ e	Carbon dioxide equivalent
Cordis	Community Research and Development Information Service
Corine	Coordination of Information on the Environment
DG	Directorate-General
EEA	European Environment Agency For clarity: do not abbreviate European Economic Area
EEA-33	The 28 EU Member States plus Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey
EEA-39	The EEA-33 countries plus six collaborating countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo (under UN Security Council Resolution 1244/99))
EED	Energy Efficiency Directive
EFTA	European Free Trade Area
EIA	environmental impact assessment
Eionet	European Environmental Information and Observation Network
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ETC/ACM	European Topic Centre on Air Pollution and Climate Change Mitigation
ETC/BD	European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity
ETC/CCA	European Topic Centre on Climate Change Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation
ETC/ICM	European Topic Centre on Inland, Coastal and Marine waters
ETC/SIA	European Topic Centre on Spatial Information and Analysis
ETC/ULS	European Topic Centre on Urban, Land and Soil Systems
ETC/WMGE	European Topic Centre on Waste and Materials in a Green Economy
EU	European Union
EU-28	the 28 EU Member States as of 1 July 2013
EUNIS	European Nature Information System
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FRMP	flood risk management plan
GDP	gross domestic product
GHG	greenhouse gas
GIS	geographic information system

GPS	global positioning system
ICT	information and communication technologies
IEA	International Energy Agency
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JRC	Joint Research Centre (of the European Commission)
ktoe	kilotonne of oil equivalent
LPG	liquefied petroleum gas
Mtoe	million tonnes of oil equivalent
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NO _x	nitrogen oxides
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
NVZ	nitrate vulnerable zone
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PM	particulate matter
PM _{2.5}	particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 µm or less
PM ₁₀	particulate matter with a diameter of 10 µm or less
PoM	programme of measures
R&D	research and development
RBMP	river basin management plan
RDP	rural development programme
RED	Renewable Energy Directive
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	strategic environmental assessment
SOER	State of the Environment Report
SPA	Special Protection Area
TEN-E	Trans-European Energy Network
TEN-T	Trans-European Transport Network
TERM	Transport and Environment Reporting Mechanism
toe	tonne of oil equivalent
UN	United Nations
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UN Environment	United Nations Environment Programme
Unesco	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WHO	World Health Organization
WISE	Water Information System for Europe
WTO	World Trade Organization

Note: For expressions that are not commonly used by non-research trained readers, such as 'combined heat and power', 'environmental impact assessment', 'flood risk management plan', etc. write out in full unless the phrase occurs many times in quick succession.

10 Lists

10.1 Lists in running text

These work only for short lists of items. Introduce the list with a colon, if appropriate, number items in parentheses and separate with commas or semicolons, as appropriate, for example:

This is a systematic process consisting of (1) mapping of ecosystems, (2) assessment of ecosystem condition, and (3) assessment of ecosystem service delivery.

This is a systematic three-step process: (1) mapping of ecosystems; (2) assessment of ecosystem condition; and (3) assessment of ecosystem service delivery.

For longer lists of longer items, use a displayed list.

10.2 Displayed lists

These may be numbered or bulleted. There is rarely a need for any other type of list (e.g. alphabetised).

Use bulleted lists as a rule and reserve numbered lists for items that are prioritised or where the number is stated in the introductory sentence. The introductory sentence should describe the list:

Ecosystem monitoring and assessment is a systematic three-step process:

1. mapping of ecosystems;
2. assessment of ecosystem condition;
3. assessment of ecosystem service delivery.

For list items that are not full sentences, even if quite long, introduce the list with a colon and begin each item with a lower case letter and end with a semicolon, except for the last item, which takes a full point.

The aims of ecosystem monitoring and assessment are to:

- create an inventory of ecosystem condition across Europe;
- understand the causes of ecosystem degradation;
- devise measures to prevent further degradation and restore condition;
- ensure the delivery of ecosystem services.

For list items that are full sentences, even if quite short, introduce the list with a colon or full stop and begin each item with a capital letter and end with a full point.

The key impacts of climate change on European ecosystems and biodiversity are listed below:

- The timing of seasonal events in plants and animals is changing, for example the breeding seasons of insects.
- Many plant and animal species are shifting their distribution to higher latitudes and altitudes.
- Almost 20 % of species and 12 % of habitats are potentially under threat.

For lists that come directly below a heading, regardless of whether or not the items are full sentences, begin each with a capital letter and end with a full point.

Avoid sublists as far as possible. Where their use is unavoidable, use lower case roman numerals for numbered sublists (i, ii, iii, etc.) and open circles for bulleted sublists.

11 Countries

11.1 Correct names for countries and states

The names of countries can be subject to dispute, so it is important to use the correct name. In EEA publications, the short form is used throughout (e.g. Austria and not AT). The EU Interinstitutional style guide has a [full list of countries](#) (in order of the short form), country codes, capitals, nationalities, currencies and currency codes.

Below is a list of the EU Member States and candidate countries, their country codes, currencies and currency codes. Note that, at the time of writing, the EU has 28 Member States, although there are more than 28 countries (e.g. the United Kingdom comprises England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales).

Short name	Country code	Currency	Currency code
<i>Member States</i>			
Austria	AT	euro	EUR
Belgium	BE	euro	EUR
Bulgaria	BG	lev (pl. leva)	BGN
Croatia	HR	kuna (no pl.)	HRK
Cyprus	CY	euro	EUR
Czech Republic	CZ	Czech koruna (pl. koruny)	CZK
Denmark	DK	Danish krone (pl. kroner)	DKK
Estonia	EE	euro	EUR
Finland	FI	euro	EUR
France	FR	euro	EUR
Germany	DE	euro	EUR
Greece	EL	euro	EUR
Hungary	HU	forint (no pl.)	HUF
Ireland	IE	euro	EUR
Italy	IT	euro	EUR
Latvia	LV	euro	EUR
Lithuania	LT	euro	EUR
Luxembourg	LU	euro	EUR
Malta	MT	euro	EUR
Netherlands	NL	euro	EUR
Poland	PL	zloty (pl. zlotys)	PLN
Portugal	PT	euro	EUR
Romania	RO	Romanian leu (pl. lei)	RON
Slovakia	SK	euro	EUR
Slovenia	SI	euro	EUR
Spain	ES	euro	EUR
Sweden	SE	Swedish krona (pl. kronor)	SEK
United Kingdom	UK	pound sterling (pl. pounds sterling)	GBP
<i>Candidate countries</i>			
Albania	AL	lek (no pl.)	ALL
former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the	MK	denar (pl. denars)	MKD
Montenegro	ME	euro	EUR
Serbia	RS	Serbian dinar	RSD
Turkey	TR	Turkish lira (no pl.)	TRY

While it is appropriate to use the definite article in the names of some countries in running text (i.e. the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom), it need not be included in tables or in addresses.

Use Ireland, *not* Republic of Ireland, Irish Republic, Southern Ireland or Éire.

Use the Netherlands, *not* Holland, which is only part of the Netherlands. Note that there is no need for a capital T on 'the'.

Use Slovakia, *not* the Slovak Republic.

Use United Kingdom for the Member State, *not* Great Britain, which does not include Northern Ireland. The purely geographical term 'British Isles' includes Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, which are not part of the United Kingdom.

Use United States for the noun, *not* US or USA. US may be used as the adjective, e.g. US dollar.



Use 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia', **not** 'Macedonia' or 'FYROM'. In alphabetised lists, list under 'F'.

Do not use the term 'Republic of Kosovo'. The first time Kosovo is mentioned, it should be footnoted with the qualifier 'under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/99'. Avoid using 'country' or 'state' in references to Kosovo: use 'partner' or 'beneficiary', as appropriate, instead.



When using the abbreviation 'EU-28', define it at first mention: '... in the 28 EU Member States (EU-28)'.

11.2 Ordering of countries in lists

Unless there is a good reason for not doing so, countries should be listed in alphabetical order in English, regardless of whether they are EU Member States or not.

However, this does not apply where there is a good reason for ranking countries differently, for example:

Emissions were highest in Austria, followed by the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

11.3 EEA member countries

The EEA currently has 33 member countries: the 28 EU Member States plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

When using the abbreviation 'EEA-33', define it at first mention: '... in the 33 EEA member countries (EEA-33)'.

The six Western Balkan cooperating countries are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244/99.

When using the abbreviation 'EEA-39', define it at first mention: '... in the 33 EEA member countries and six cooperating countries (EEA-39)'.

11.4 Names of cities and regions

Use the anglicised forms of well-known city and region names (e.g. Prague, not Praha). If there is no anglicised form, use the name in the original language with correct accents (e.g. Malmö).

12 Writing for the web

(adapted from the EU Information Providers Guide: [The EU Internet Handbook](#))

Users

- Who is the target audience and what do you want them to do with the information once they have read it?
- Imagine the questions your audience will want answered (who, why, what, how, when etc.) and structure your text around them.
- Offer readers a next step to help them on their way i.e. find out more, contact us, frequently asked questions etc.
- You should only write essential content, i.e. what the reader really needs to know, using short, functional prose and simple, accessible language. This is especially relevant for readers viewing content on mobile devices. It also makes for quicker and easier translation.
- Background information existing elsewhere on your site or on the web should not be repeated, but should be linked.
- Use plenty of meaningful subheadings to break up the text, but show how different sections link to each other.

Writing for the public

- Your web text should be written and presented differently to print text. It is generally more informal and conversational.
- You should use words the general public understand. This means steering clear of EU terminology and jargon, where possible. This approach works equally well when writing for an expert audience, especially as many experts will be reading in a language that is not their own.
- Keep paragraphs short. Three or four lines is a good length. Your paragraphs should each contain one well-formed idea.
- You should use bullet lists or tables when listing three or more items.

Search engine optimisation

Content

- Make sure the page has just one main subject and make it clear what that subject is.
- Place key information at the top of the page.
- Your page will be much more easily found if short, meaningful keywords are included, preferably at the beginning:
 - Title
 - Meta description tag
 - Links (i.e. links over keywords, not just URLs)
 - Headings

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