



CLEAR WRITING AT THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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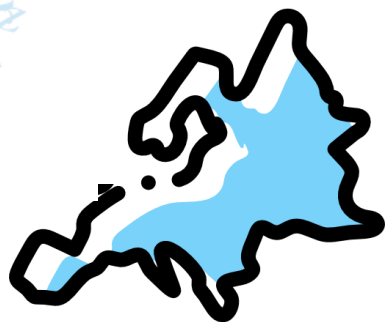
Clear Writing → Plain Language

There is a widely accepted definition of plain language:

- A communication is in [plain language](#) if its wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended audience can easily
 - find what they need,
 - understand what they find, and
 - use that information.

[International Plain Language Federation](#) –
definition published in 2014 and translated into 24 languages

European Commission in numbers



27
Member States



32,000
employees



24
languages

Clear writing – mission possible



The importance of clear writing

Practical



**Productivity
(wasted time)**



**Legislation
(rights and
obligations)**

Political



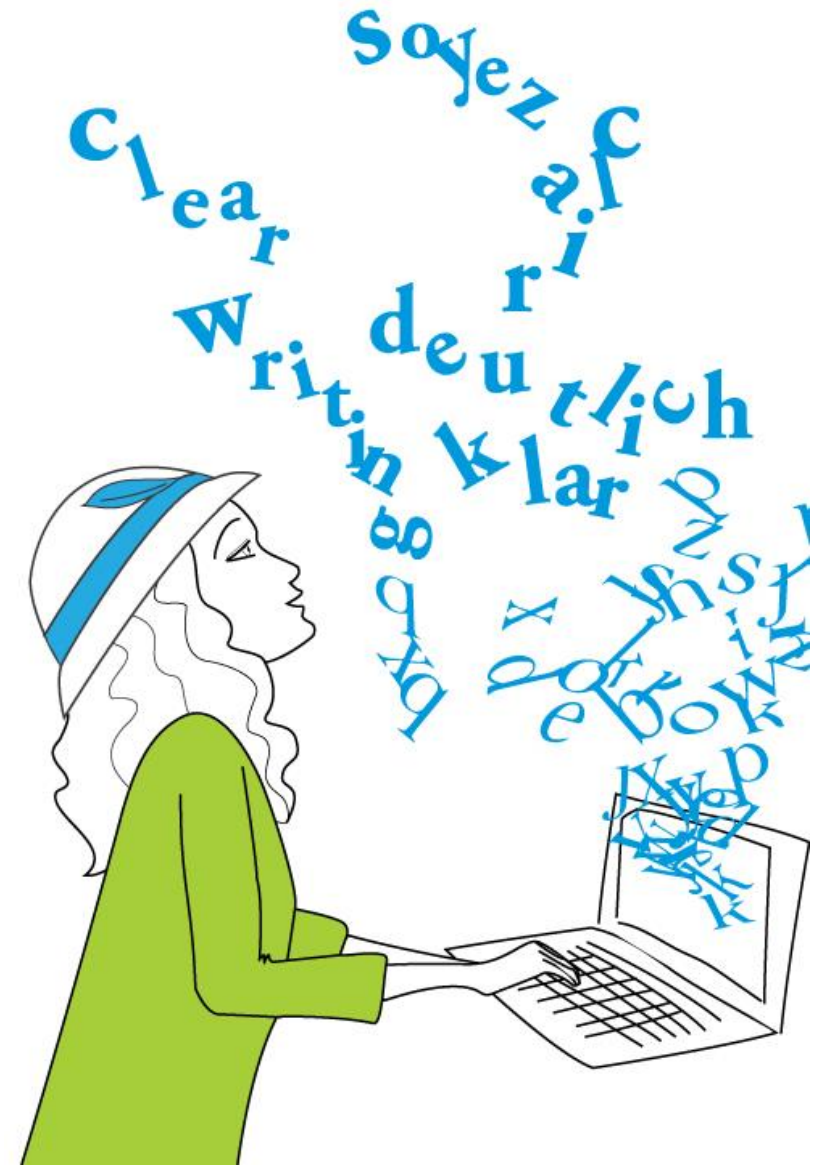
**Reputation
(unprofessional / uncaring)**



Euroscepticism

Clear writing makes sense

- ✓ ...for our organisation
- ✓ ...for our readers
- ✓ ...in practice



Starting out



Calls for clear and concise legislation,
better communication with public



Editing service



Raised awareness about clear writing
→ Commission takes action

How many full stops can you find?

In order to supplement and amend certain non-essential elements of this Regulation, the power to adopt acts in accordance with Article 290 TFEU should be delegated to the Commission in respect of a European code of conduct on partnership, supplements and amendments of Sections 4 and 7 of the CSF, criteria for determining the level of financial correction to be applied, specific rules on the purchase of land and combination of technical support with

financial instruments, the role, liabilities management and control of financial in consequent adjustments in respect of a

annual instalments for financial costs and fees on the basis of capitalised management costs for net revenue generating

or subsectors within the financial or subsectors, the method of operations, additional rules included in PPP agreements

expenditure, the definition of the natural corresponding rates applicable in Union

major project, the criteria for determining conditions and procedures to be applied by the responsibilities of Member States,

systems established by managing authorities, the minimum requirements for audit trails, the scope and content of audits and the methodology for sampling, the use of data collected during audits, and the criteria for determining serious deficiencies in the effective functioning of management and control systems, for establishing the level of financial correction to be applied and for applying flat rates or extrapolated financial corrections.

**One
word**



financial instruments, the financial instruments and the of a system of capitalisation of

determining management the reimbursement of adjustment of the flat rate

at rate for certain sectors efficiency and adding sectors value-generating

minimum requirements to be being eligibility of on existing methods and

carrying out the quality review of a e data to be provided and the recoverable shall be reimbursed

computerised form within monitoring

8

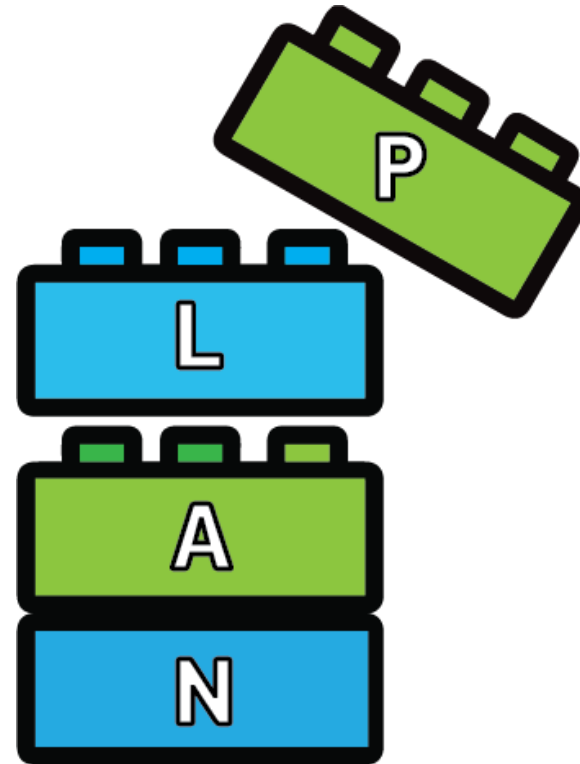
First clear writing survey - 2009

- Encouraging shorter and clearer texts
- Offering training and guidance
- Rewarding good drafting skills
- Making commitment to clear writing

Encouraging shorter and clearer texts



**Demonstrate
added value**




Encouraging shorter and clearer texts



How can we change our writing culture to make clarity the norm?


Can we create good drafting habits from the start?

Encouraging clearer and shorter texts



Clear writing checklist

		
Title short, clear and pertinent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Main message clear	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No needless repetition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Simple phrasing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plenty of white space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acronyms explained and kept to a minimum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No jargon or Latin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Active verbs , no noun phrases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Average paragraph length < 3 sentences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Average sentence length ± 20 words	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Passive sentences < 25%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Mostly sunny?
Your document is clear

Mostly cloudy?
Your document needs revising. Use the Claire's Clear Writing Tips to help you or send it to **DGT-EDIT** for editing

Translation



Encouraging shorter and clearer texts

In order that

so

Resources

[Download the 'How to write clearly' booklet available in all 24 official EU languages](#)

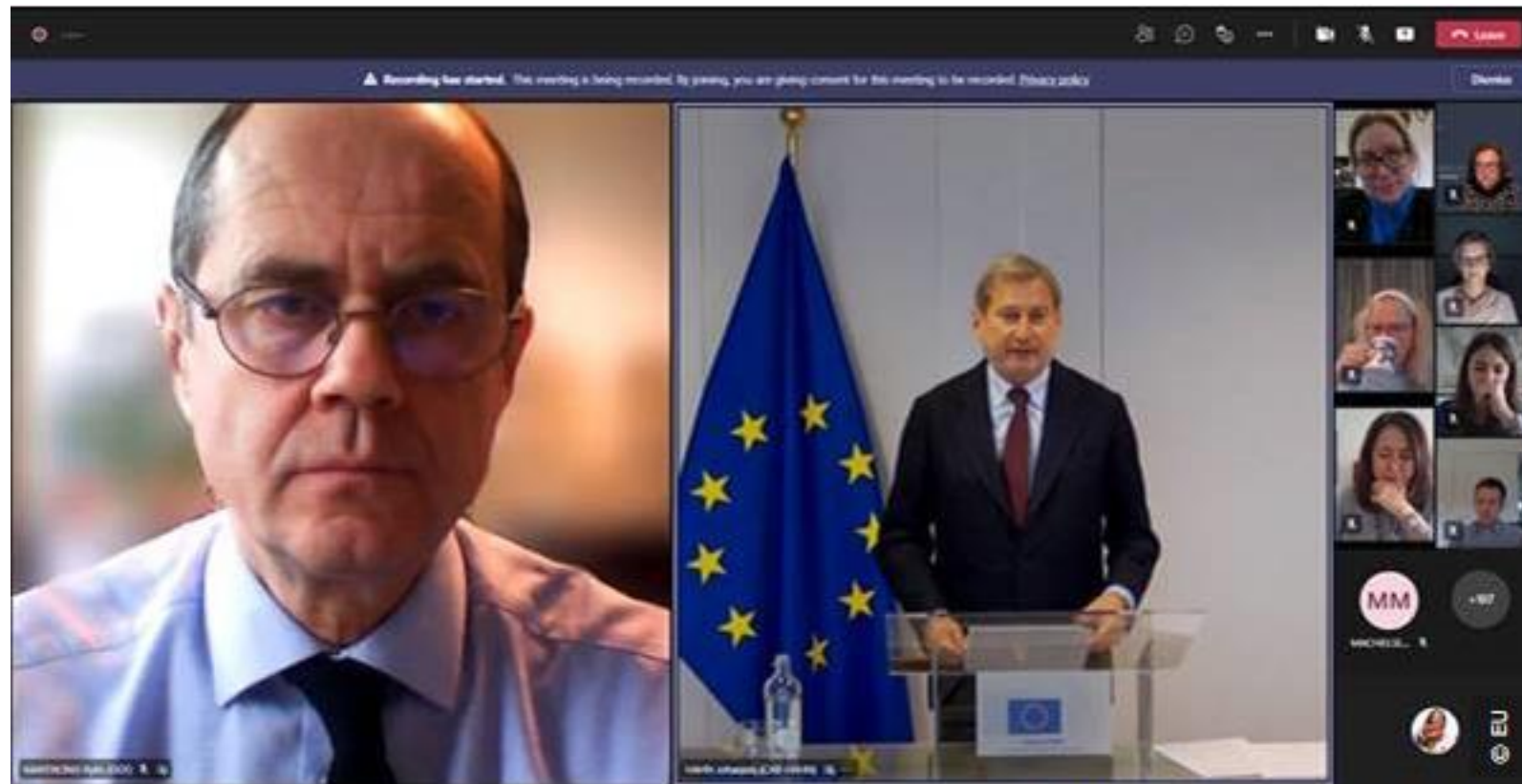


Encouraging shorter and clearer texts

CLAIRE



Rewarding good drafting skills



► Commissioner Hahn and, DGT Director-General Rytis Martikonis at the 2021 Clear Writing Awards ceremony

Clear Writing Award categories

- Policy papers and legal documents
- Internal communication materials
- External communication materials
- Web content

2 new categories introduced in 2021:

- Special Award for outstanding achievement in clear writing
- Clear briefings

Support from the top

*The communication activities of the Commission should be organised to provide **clear, consistent and transparent information to citizens**, explaining the Commission's priorities, policies and initiatives. [...] to engage citizens on the ground, in their communities and regions and **in a language that they understand**.*

— Commission President von der Leyen



Making a commitment to clear writing

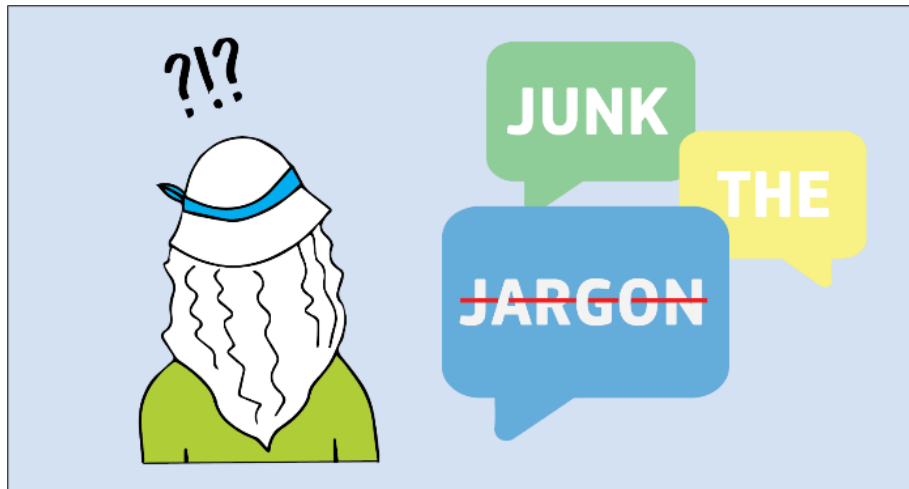
Colleagues

- Editing comments
- Training
- Daily work = easier
- Linguistic skills
- Involving colleagues

Managers

- Cut volume
- More effective
- Reputation
- Faster policy making process – no misunderstandings

Making a commitment to clear writing



Making a commitment to clear writing



Making a commitment to clear writing

Clear Writing
Survey 2021



Measuring our impact

- Collect feedback from training sessions
- No. of sessions/participants
- No. of subscribers to tips
- No. of nominations for awards

New ISO Standard on Plain Language

- Instigated in 2019 by the [International Plain Language Federation](#) (IPLF), which comprises [PLAIN](#), [Clarity](#) and the [Center for Plain Language](#)
- Standard is to be published mid-2022
- Read all about it: [PLAIN Journal3 No-2-2021.pdf \(plainlanguagenetwork.org\)](#)

ISO 24495-1 Plain Language (part 1 of a multi-part standard)

- work in **all languages and cultures**
- provide a set of **principles** that govern plain language documents
- give **guidelines** that detail how the principles should be applied
- include an example of a **checklist** for creating plain language documents.



THANK YOU!

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https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/translation/clear-writing-for-europe_en