EUROPEAN RESEARCH EXECUTIVE AGENCY (REA)

Use of languages by the European Research Executive Agency (REA)

1. INTRODUCTION & KEY PRINCIPLES

This document contains the principles and rules on language use that REA follows when communicating externally. As part of its commitment to providing a high-quality public service, REA makes its best efforts to ensure that its contact with citizens is effective and efficient.

For some purposes, the use of multiple languages is clearly a good way to improve communication. For example, the European Commission is communicating the results of certain research projects in seven languages, and the REA service that validates participants in grants and procurements is offered in multiple languages (see section 2.2 below).

Due to its area of work, most exchanges are with people working in the fields of research and innovation, where international communication mainly takes place in English. In this context, most actors who need information from REA in the context of ongoing application procedures are likely to prioritise the speed of the information over its language, given the time needed for translation.

Therefore some material that REA uses in research programme implementation only exists in English. This applies for example to the experts' part of the funding and tender opportunities portal, which is justified because experts need a single working language to evaluate proposals in multinational teams.

REA fully implements the rules established by the European Commission on language use, as described in the section below. In addition, REA complies with the linguistic requirements of the European Ombudsman and European Court of Justice if it is involved in cases treated by those institutions.

2. APPLICABLE RULES

2.1. Code of good administrative behaviour for staff of the European Commission in their relations with the public[1]

Section 4 of the Code states that:

"In accordance with Article 21 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, the Commission shall reply to letters in the language of the initial letter, providing that it was written in one of the official languages".

This provision also applies to other correspondence such as e-mails, not only letters. The official EU languages are listed here.

Please note that correspondence covered by the rules stated in sections 2.2 - 2.7 below follows the language provisions of those rules, which may differ from the provisions of the Code of good administrative behaviour.

2.2. EU funding & tenders - Rules on legal entity validation, legal entity appointed representative (LEAR) appointment, and financial capacity assessment[2]

Documents related to the legal validation process (including the LEAR appointment) and financial capacity assessment are accepted in all EU official languages. These processes offer full multilingualism: participants have the option to communicate with the REA Validation Services in any of the EU languages. Please consult the EU funding & tenders portal to obtain the latest version of the rules.

2.3. Language regime of the programmes that REA implements

2.3.1. Horizon Europe

Proposals may be submitted in any of the official EU languages, which are are listed here. The Model Grant Agreement for Horizon Europe beneficiaries will be available in 23 languages. It states that all reports (technical and financial reports, including financial statements) must be submitted in the language of the Agreement.

However, as explained in section 1 above, communication with experts and applicants only takes place in English and most documents are only available in English.

2.3.2. Research Programme of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel (RFCS)

Currently the RFCS website on *europa.eu* is available only in English. This is in line with the language policy of the European Commission website. The

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[1] OJ L 308/32, 8.12.2000, https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/service-standards-and-principles/ethics-and-good-administration/good-administration/code-good-administrative-behaviour-and-complaints_en

[2] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/rules-lev-lear-fca_en.pdf

RFCS Information Package, laying out the rules for participation to the annual call for proposals, is also made available in English.

Inside the RFCS Information Package, it is clearly specified that for the submission of proposals "The forms in Part B should be filled in preferably in English as this will be the working language during the evaluation. If these forms are written in a language other than English, please include an English version of the proposal's abstract in the Technical Annex (Form B2). Note that, in any case, the online submission forms for Part A and the templates for Part B are only available in English."

As for the RFCS Model Grant Agreement, it also states that all reports (technical and financial reports, including financial statements) must be submitted in the language of the Agreement. As the above reports have to be examined by Technical Groups of experts as per Council Decision 2008/376/EC, whose working language is English, the common practice is to establish RFCS Grant Agreements in English.

2.3.3. Promotion measures concerning agricultural products

Replies to questions sent to the call helpdesk are made in the language of the applicant. Calls for proposals and programme guide are published in 23 languages, while the model grant agreement is available in 23 languages only for "simple programmes" (grants managed in shared management by the Member States). For "multi programmes" for which the whole grant lifecycle is managed by REA, the model grant agreement is available only in English. Proposals may be submitted in any of the official EU languages. Communication with experts and applicants takes place in English.

2.4. Research Enquiry Service

The Research Enquiry Service – that is part of the EUROPE DIRECT Contact Centre ('EDCC') managed by DG COMM - provides answer to the questions related to EU Framework Programmes for research and innovation, such as Horizon Europe. The main target group is citizens who have or might apply for participation in EU supported research projects. The services operate in English that is considered the vehicular language in the research domain. Please consult the Tender Specification for the OPERATION OF THE EUROPE DIRECT CONTACT CENTRE (EDCC) COMM/2020/OP/0015 here.

2.5. REA content on the European Commission website

In accordance with the language policy of the European Commission website, basic information about REA is available in multiple languages. Dynamic or detailed content (news stories, annual activity report etc.) is written in English. It is foreseen that multilingual material about implementing the information provision and promotion measures for agricultural products will be progressively added to the REA website.

2.6. Selection and recruitment of REA staff

In accordance with the *Conditions of employment of other servants of the European Communities* (CEOS), it is an eligibility condition for recruitment

that candidates have certain linguistic competences[3]. If English is generally considered to be the *lingua franca* in the field of expertise sought, and/or is essential for any tasks to be performed, this is also stated in the call text. Language requirements such as these are assessed during the selection process. The European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) may assess linguistic competence as a part of some REA selections.

2.7. Procurement

Annex I (*Procurement*) of the Financial Regulation[4] specifies the documents relating to REA procurements that must be published in all language versions of the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

3. RELEVANT CONTACT POINTS

If you consider that REA has breached the European Commission *Code of good administrative behaviour* in dealing with the public, you can file a complaint. For further information please see this webpage, which also explains how you may complain to the European Ombudsman.

Please address any questions or requests on language use when applying to/participating in EU research programmes to the Research Enquiry Service.

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[3] Stated in Articles 12(2) and 82(3) of the CEOS, Regulation 31 (EEC) 11 (EAEC) of 14.6.1962

[4] Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union of 18.7.2018