

Clear writing makes sense in the European Commission

Rosie ter Beek

Head of Editing and clear writing team

Organised in partnership with:

European Commission, European Parliament, General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, Joint Services of the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions & Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union.

Clear writing
for **Europe**
2021



From foggy to clear



The importance of clear writing

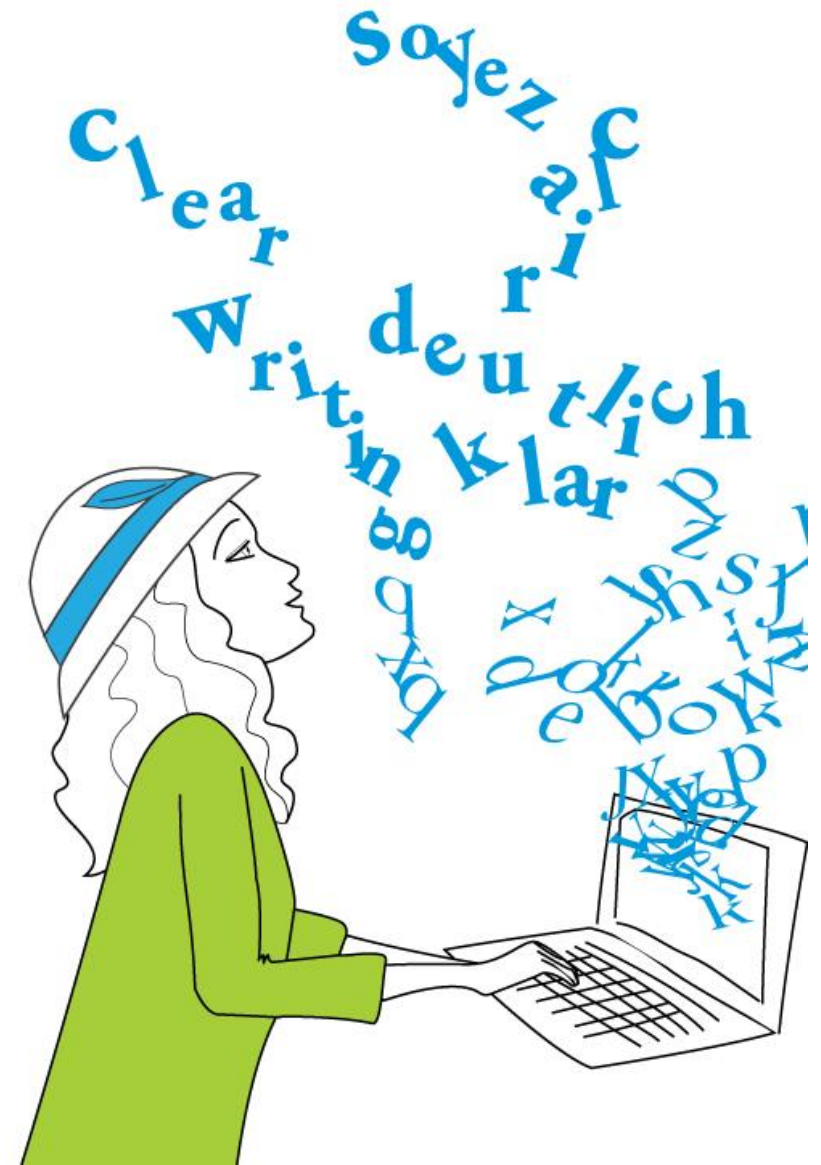
*The communication activities of the Commission should be organised to provide **clear, consistent and transparent information to citizens**, explaining the Commission's priorities, policies and initiatives. [...] to engage citizens on the ground, in their communities and regions and **in a language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

— Commission President von der Leyen



Clear writing makes sense

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



Making sense in our organisation




Why can't our politicians speak in plain English?

Updated / Monday, 15 Feb 2023

POLITICO Brussels chokes on dangerous jargon emissions

EU tackles climate change with a little help from alliteration.



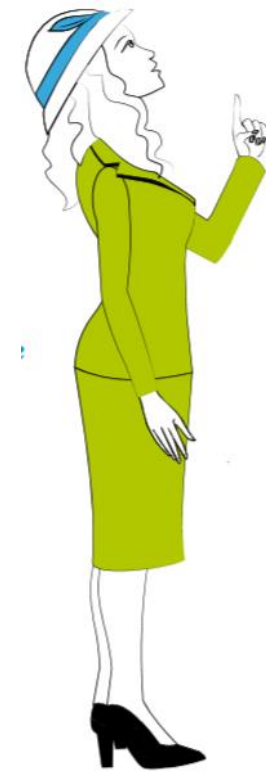
"The waffle and jargon used by the Minister for Health during this interview (and on many other occasions) leads to an air of suspicion around the trustworthiness of what is being said."

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Making sense for our readers

Reading is voluntary, so people must

- Want to read
- Be able to read
- Trust what they read



Making sense for our readers



Most old-fashioned economists are very theoretical, but these days, a large fraction of economics is really very nuts-and-bolts, looking at subjects like education or health, or at the effects of immigration or the effects of wage policies. These are really very, very simple things. *So, my big contribution was to oversimplify the field.*

— Nobel Prize winner David Card



Clear writing for Better Regulation



Accessible web & digital content for people with disabilities – review of EU rules

135

Have your say >



Protecting the marine environment – review of EU rules

69

Have your say >



EBCG 2.0.



EU border control — a stronger European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex).



Amendment to Impl. Reg. (EU) No 844/2012 to adapt the renewal procedure in view of the new criteria for ED properties.



Pesticide approval — new criteria for endocrine-disrupting active substances.

Making sense in practice



Resources for drafters



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



Clear Writing Awards 2021

Is your writing a ray of sunshine?
Send your entries to **DGT-CLEAR-WRITING** by 15 October.

Clear writing makes sense!

DGT-CLEAR-WRITING@ec.europa.eu