

Consolidation

Tracking the evolution of legal acts



■ Publications Office

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EU legal acts can change in time as a result of successive amendments and corrigenda. With many such layers, it may become difficult to find the provisions that are currently in force.

This is why the EU legal acts are consolidated — presented together, to make the evolution easier to follow. Consolidation means that the successive amendments and corrigenda are incorporated into the legal act. In other words, several legal texts published in different issues of the *Official Journal of the European Union* are combined as a 'consolidated family' in one easy-to-read document.



Consolidation is done in layers, showing the integration of new modifications into the text resulting from the previous stage. Each layer shows a 'snapshot' or a historical account of the EU law currently in force, until it is changed by the next amending act.

What is being consolidated?

- ★ founding treaties
- ★ international agreements
- ★ secondary legislation
- ★ complementary legislation.

What is not being consolidated?

- ★ acts that have never been published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*
- ★ minor corrigenda in one or a few languages.

Currently (2018) more than 4 400 consolidated versions of the legal acts in force are available, which combine more than 18 000 documents. They are published in all official languages of the EU. The effort required is substantial, with more than 2.3 million pages of consolidated texts added in 2017.

All consolidated legislation can be found on EUR-Lex — the latest consolidated version is directly available in the search result for the act that has been consolidated. All consolidated layers can be found in the tab 'Linked documents' in the notice of the act.

It is important to remember that consolidated texts have no legal effect. They are intended for use as documentation tools and the EU institutions do not assume any liability for their content. For legal purposes, only the texts published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* are valid and binding.

Consolidation and publication of the resulting documents is a responsibility of the Publications Office of the European Union and the overarching goal of this project is to ensure easier access to EU law, thereby increasing the transparency of EU lawmaking.

Summaries of EU legislation

A compass to EU law



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Are you looking for a place where EU law is explained and ‘translated’ into reader-friendly language, with answers to basic questions, such as ‘What does this regulation do?’ or ‘When did this regulation come into force?’. The answer is *Summaries of EU legislation*, which are available on EUR-Lex, the official gateway to EU law (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/browse/summaries.html>).



Summaries of EU legislation are addressed to a general, non-specialised audience, so the texts are drafted in concise and jargon-free language.

They are a very useful tool for citizens to get information on EU legal acts quickly and easily. Whether you are an entrepreneur who needs to know about applicable EU law for your business, or a student writing a dissertation on EU legal provisions in a particular field, the summaries always provide an excellent entry point to the topics and EU legal acts you are interested in.

The summaries are grouped into 32 topics, which correspond to the activity areas of the European Union. The topics include 'Environment and climate change', 'Food safety', 'Competition', 'Human rights', 'Budget' and many others.

The main *Summaries of EU legislation* page on EUR-Lex (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/browse/summaries.html>) provides an overview of the recently published summaries and allows a quick or advanced search based on keywords, topics, linked documents, etc. Another possibility is to search through a glossary of terms or browse the summaries by topics or their sub-levels. You can also look for the summaries on the EUR-Lex website right next to the legal acts: if a summary exists for the legal act you are interested in, the page will contain a special tab called *Summary of legislation*.

At present, over 2 200 summaries and glossary terms are available (plus around 2 460 archived ones) and each month, in the region of 40 summaries are added or revised. To stay up to date on the latest additions and changes, users can follow #EULawLite on four major social media platforms (Twitter @EURLex and the pages of the Publications Office of the European Union on Facebook, LinkedIn and Google+).

So, if you need a quick explanation of an EU legal act, look no further and check out the *Summaries of EU legislation* first.