



## Brief for translating subtitles

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR TRANSLATORS

**Important! If there is anything in the following instructions that is not clear to you, please contact the language unit concerned<sup>1</sup> as soon as possible.**

#### Text type: subtitles

This type of document is a media file and your task is to provide subtitles for it. The text must be concise, convey the intended meaning and flow naturally. Due to constraints of time and space, the text will not be an exact transcription of the spoken dialogue. Simplified wording and paraphrasing may be used to keep the text within the parameters set out below but the core message must still be conveyed. Translation errors and discrepancies in meaning may be damaging to the image of the Council or the EU.

#### Recommended best practices

- Condensing and paraphrasing are allowed and sometimes inevitable. Think about omitting repetitive or irrelevant dialogue, hesitations and self-corrections.
- Wherever possible, each subtitle should be syntactically self-contained. In any case, it is better to break up long sentences into shorter ones.
- You are welcome to rephrase but bear in mind that there must be a correlation between the spoken dialogue and the subtitles.
- You must adhere to the language register used in the spoken dialogue.
- Line breaks should respect semantic units (e.g. in EN you should not break up an article and a noun, a subject and a verb, compound verbs, two parts of a proper name, etc.).

#### Formatting parameters

##### Space

- maximum of 2 lines per subtitle
- maximum of 45 characters per line

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<sup>1</sup> See [Contacts](#).

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## Time

- if the subtitle is displayed for 3-6 seconds, two full lines can be used
- if the subtitle is displayed for 3 seconds or less, use one line only

Look at the timecodes to find out how long each subtitle is displayed. The third number from the left corresponds to seconds – compare the ‘in’ and the ‘out’ code to see the number of seconds for which a subtitle will be visible.

The translations should be checked against the video clip. Use a media player of your choice to play the video clip.

## Important quality aspects

Ease of reading and use of simplified and idiomatic wording while preserving the core message, enabling readers to focus on the images rather than the words.

## Revision

When revising the text, particular attention should be paid to whether it complies with space and time requirements, is easy to read and conveys the intended core message.

## Questions about the original

If you have any questions concerning the source text (possible drafting errors, potential for multiple interpretations, ambiguities, etc.), please send them to the language unit concerned as soon as possible so that we can check with the drafter and get back to you in good time. We would be grateful if you could also flag up any such issues with a comment in the CAT tool.

## Reference material

Terminology should be checked in [IATE](#). The titles of any legal acts and European Commission documents mentioned should always be checked in [EUR-Lex](#). Council documents can be found in the [public register](#) of Council documents. Instructions for translating EU texts into your language can be found in the [Interinstitutional Style Guide](#). Further language-specific guidance for translation purposes may be available from your information corner on LING’s [freelance translation platform](#).