

President:

GERHARD STICKEL
Institut für Deutsche Sprache
R5, 6-13
D-68161 Mannheim
Tel.: +49-(0)621-1581403
E-mail: stickel@ids-mannheim.de

EFNIL Secretariat:

MTA NYELVTUDOMÁNYI INTÉZET
1394 Budapest, Pf.360
Hungary
Tel.: +36-1-351-04 13
Fax: +36-1-322-92 97
E-mail: efnil@nytud.hu

ELIPS: an EFNIL project on the quality of language use within government, legislation and public administration

QUESTIONNAIRE**Introduction**

EFNIL has launched a new project called **ELIPS**, an acronym which refers to (the use) of **E**uropean **L**anguages and their **I**ntelligibility in the **P**ublic **S**pace, i.e. the use of European languages as instruments of communication for government, legislation and public administration.

Aspects within the scope of the project include:

- the use of straightforward, reader-oriented and understandable language by public authorities and administration;
- the acceptance, use, description, availability of good (multilingual) terminology for legislation and the public space;
- other types of language-related measures for the public space, e.g. the use of gender-neutral and/or diverse communication and language, reflecting the actual composition of society in terms of class, profession, gender, cultural background, etc.

The first bullet point in this list comprises both plain language and easy-to-read communication, which are different, though related, realities.

By *plain language* we understand any communication that uses wording, language, grammatical structure and information design aimed at making meaning as clear and therefore as effective as possible, in order to offer its audience the best possible chance (a) of understanding it immediately, and (b) of readily finding in it what it needs or expects, (c) of using the information it contains, and/or (d) performing the actions that are required. It is clear that plain language is not the same as simplified language or baby talk.

The use of language and communication which is *easy to read and understand*, on the other hand, implies a specific use of simplified language and communication in order to make information accessible to people with intellectual disabilities and/or people with restricted reading and writing skills and/or poor competence in the official language of a country.

Both plain language and easy-to-read language are not only matters of language in the strict sense of the word, but involve extralinguistic realities as well, for instance the way information is structured, graphics and lay-out, use of non-verbal instruments such as drawings or photographic and film material.

This questionnaire is intended to form the basis for the collection of information on the situation within the various countries and language areas that are represented within EFNIL. The information collected will serve as a reference base for further activities within the project, e.g. for proposals, conferences, partnerships and the like. The results will be made available through the web pages of the project at www.efnil.org. In this way, each member institution of EFNIL will be able to compare its own national situation with the other language areas and member states represented within EFNIL, which in its turn can serve as a basis for further development, e.g. for the formulation of policies and strategies or for the search of partner organisations for projects of common interest.

How to proceed? Guidelines for data collection and compilation of the online questionnaire

- The questionnaire mainly concerns the official languages of your country.
- In order to get acquainted with the questionnaire as a whole (its various parts, the order of the questions and the interdependency of questions) please read this offline document before starting your work.
- We strongly advise you to use the same offline document while you are gathering the information, and then copy/paste the information into the online version of the questionnaire.
- The questionnaire is divided into the following seven parts:
 - Part A - Plain language policies and / or actions;
 - Part B - Policies and / or actions concerning easy-to-read language;
 - Part C - Policies and / or actions concerning terminology;
 - Part D - Other aspects;
 - Part E - Training;
 - Part F - Collaboration between member states and the EU;
 - Part G - Role of EFNIL

We are aware that this is a substantial questionnaire. We kindly request you to complete all parts. This is of utmost importance for the purpose of the project, i.e. to have comparable data on the situation in all European countries.

- A link to the online questionnaire will be sent to you in a separate email message.
- We advise that you start to complete the online questionnaire when you have finished the data collection as a whole or - as an alternative - after having finished the data collection of a complete main part. You can also use this offline version in order to instruct third parties you need to involve in your data collection effort.
- You will be able to stop your work with the online questionnaire at any time. When you reactivate the link, you will automatically be taken to where you previously stopped.
- The questions are numbered throughout the whole questionnaire. Not all questions need to appear to you, because the number and order of questions depend on answers to previous questions. Therefore: do not think you have made an error if the question numbers don't follow each other.
- The online questionnaire will help you to compile the data in the desired way. Questions will be omitted if they are not relevant because of an answer to the previous question. If the answer to a question needs extra information you will not be able to move to the following part without having completed the question with this additional information.
- Please pay special attention to the boxes where you can supply free text:
 - There are two types of boxes with free text:
 - for *additional* comment; and
 - for *more detail* relating to a general answer to a previous question.The first category is optional while the second is obligatory.
 - Every primary question contains an optional comment box in which you can enter free text. You can leave these boxes open if you like or you can supply any information that you need or want to add, to give a more precise formulation to your answers, e.g.:
 - if the suggested answers do not reflect exactly the situation in your country or if your answer needs more nuance than possible in the answer;
 - if you doubt whether your interpretation is the intended reading of the question;
 - to express a personal opinion on general information.
 - In many cases the obligatory boxes for more detail ask for contact and URL information of

- external organisations or external sources, resources and tools.
- The system will help you with the compilation. If an obligatory box is left empty, it will not be possible to move to a following part of the questionnaire.
 - If exact data or figures are not available, please give estimates but ensure that you mention the sources you use or indicate that the estimates are based on a personal or general estimation.
 - If you experience problems with the compilation or for any other problem, please contact Johan Van Hoorde at +31 614 356 035 or +31 70 311 71 55 or jvanhoorde@taalunie.org.

Questionnaire

General part: questions concerning your person, organisation and country

- The name of your country:
- The name of the (associate) member institution(s) of EFNIL representing the country mentioned above:

- Your organisation:
- Your name:
- Your email address:
- Phone number:

Part A. Plain language policies and/or actions

Plain language: any communication that is as clear as possible in order to offer its audience the best possible chance of understanding it immediately. See introduction for more detail.

1. Is the use of plain language by government and public administration a subject of public interest in your country?

- YES [direct to question 2]
- NO [direct to question 26]
- I don't know [direct to question 26]

Additional comment (optional)

2. Is there an institution or body in your country that is responsible for plain-language policies for public authorities and/or provides plain-language services for public authorities and/or co-ordinates the actions of other bodies?

- Yes, - my own institution [direct to question 7]
- Yes, - another institution [direct to question 3]
- NO [direct to question 7]
- I don't know (direct to to question 7)

Additional comment (optional)

3. You answered that another organisation than your own institution is responsible. Please add the name of this organisation and the contact information in the text box below.

Give more detail (compulsory)

4. How is your institution involved in these policies?

- We collaborate with the co-ordinating body named in question 3 [direct to question 5]
- We are involved in some other way [direct to question 6]
- NOT involved [direct to question 7]

Additional comment (optional)

5. Please describe briefly the nature of the collaboration of your institution with the co-ordinating body named in question 3 [direct to question 7]

Give more detail (compulsory)

6. Please describe briefly how your institution is involved in these policies.

Give more detail (compulsory)

7. Are there explicit policies or policy measures or instructions addressing the use of plain language within public administration?

(more than one of the yes-alternatives are possible)

- Yes, there are recommendations by the central government for government agencies and public administration in general [direct to question 8]
- Yes, there is legislation by the central government for government agencies and public administration in general [direct to question 9]
- Yes, there are legal provisions or regulations which rule that citizens have the right to comprehensible communication by public authorities [direct to question 10]
- Yes, there are legal provisions or regulations which not only rule that citizens have the right to comprehensible communication by public authorities but also give them the right to refuse unclear information [direct to question 11]
- Yes, there are recommendations made by separate public administration bodies for their own use [direct to question 12]
- No, there is nothing of the kind [direct to question 13]
- I don't know [direct to question 13]

Additional comment (optional)

8. Please describe briefly the recommendations by the central government for government agencies and public administration in general. Don't forget to add relevant contact and URL information. [direct to question 13, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

9. Please describe briefly the legislation by the central government for government agencies and public administration in general. Don't forget to add relevant contact and URL information. If possible, please add the legislation itself with a translation or summary in English. [direct to question 13, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

10. Please describe briefly the legal provisions or regulations which rule that citizens have the right to comprehensible communication by public authorities. Don't forget to add relevant contact and URL information. If possible, please add the legal provisions themselves with a translation or summary in English [direct to question 13, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

11. Please describe briefly the legal provisions or regulations which not only rule that citizens have the right to comprehensible communication by public authorities but also give them the right to refuse unclear information. Don't forget to add relevant contact and URL information. If possible, please add the legal provisions themselves with a translation or summary in English. [direct to question 13, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

12. Please describe briefly the recommendations made by separate public administration bodies for their own use. Don't forget to add relevant contact and URL information of all bodies you know that have recommendations for internal use.

Give more detail (compulsory)

13. Which of the following specific materials, instructions, services and tools are available in your country in order to help public administration comply with the principles of plain language? Please indicate one or more of the categories below)

(more than one yes-alternative is possible)

- Web service(s) [direct to question 14]
- Guidelines (online, pdf or printed) [direct to question 15]
- Models or templates [direct to question 16]
- Tools (e.g. jargon or style checkers, complexity of text predictors) [direct to question 17]
- I don't know [direct to question 18]
- None [direct to question 18]

Additional comment (optional)

14. Please describe briefly the web service(s) available. Don't forget to add relevant URL information. [direct to question 18, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

15. Please describe briefly the guidelines (online, pdf or printed) available. Don't forget to add relevant URL information. [direct to question 18, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

16. Please describe briefly the models and templates available. Don't forget to add relevant URL information. [direct to question 18, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

17. Please describe briefly the tools (e.g. jargon or style checkers, complexity of text predictors) available. Don't forget to add relevant URL information.

Give more detail (compulsory)

18. Do you know of projects or other endeavours in your country or language area to measure the effect of plain-language communication by public administration, both in terms of material effects (e.g. cost reduction) and in terms of immaterial ones (e.g. increased trust of citizens in their institutions)?

- Yes, I know of some projects [direct to question 19]
- No, there are none [direct to question 20]
- I don't know [direct to question 20]

Additional comment (optional)

19. Please report briefly on what you know about these projects. Don't forget to add relevant contact and URL information.

Give more detail (compulsory)

20. Are there specific incentives in your country or language area for the promotion of clear writing by public authorities and/or for the creation of awareness? Examples of these incentives could be: a prize or prizes for the best-written text by a public body, hallmarks or quality marks '*understandable text*', '*easy-to-comply form*', a charter that public authorities can adhere to and the like?

- Yes, there are such instruments [direct to question 21]
- NO [direct to question 22]
- I don't know [direct to question 22]

Additional comment (optional)

21. Please describe these instruments, including as much detail as you can. Don't forget to add relevant contact information such as address, email, telephone or URL.

Give more detail (compulsory)

22. Is your institution involved in international co-operation concerning plain language?

(more than one yes-alternative is possible)

- Yes, my institution is a member of the Plain Language Association International [direct to question 26]
- Yes, my institution is a member of Clarity, international association promoting plain legal language [direct to question 26]
- Yes, my institution participates in other international organisations or networks [direct to question 23]
- Yes, my institution participates in international conferences and symposia dealing with the subject [direct to question 24]
- Yes, other [direct to question 25]
- NO [direct to question 26]
- I don't know [direct to question 26]

Additional comment (optional)

23. Please describe briefly the international organisations or networks your institution participates in. Don't forget to add relevant URL information. [direct to question 26, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

24. Please describe briefly the international conferences and symposia dealing with the subject that your institution participates in. Don't forget to add relevant URL information. [direct to question 26, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

25. You answered 'yes, other' to the previous question. Please describe briefly, and don't forget to add relevant URL information. [direct to question 26]

Give more detail (compulsory)

Part B. Policies and/or actions concerning easy-to-read language

Easy-to-read language: specific use of simplified language in order to make information accessible to people with limited reading abilities or language-processing capacities. See introduction for more detail.

26. Are there explicit policies or policy measures or instructions addressing the use of easy-to-read language in some cases or for some target groups?

(both yes-alternatives are possible at the same time)

- Yes, there is legislation and/or recommendations by the central government for government agencies and public administration in general [direct to question 27]
- Yes, there are recommendations made by separate public administration bodies for their own use [direct to question 28]
- No, there is nothing of the kind [direct to question 34]
- I don't know [direct to question 34]

Additional comment (optional)

27. Please describe briefly the legislation and/or recommendations by the central government. Don't forget to add relevant URL information [direct to question 29, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

28. Please describe briefly the recommendations by separate public administration bodies. Don't forget to add relevant URL information of all the bodies you know that have recommendations for internal use.

Give more detail (compulsory)

29. Is there an institution or body that is responsible for the use of easy-to-read language by public authorities and/or provides easy-to-read language services for public authorities and/or co-ordinates the actions of other bodies?

- Yes, my own institution [direct to question 34]
- Yes, another institution [direct to question 30]
- NO [direct to question 34]
- I don't know [direct to to question 34]

Additional comment (optional)

30. Please enter the name and contact information of the other institution (e.g. address, telephone number, email address and web site)

Give more detail (compulsory)

31. How is your institution involved in these policies?

- We collaborate with the co-ordinating body in question 30 [direct to question 32]
- We are involved in some other way [direct to question 33]
- NOT involved [direct to question 34]

Additional comment (optional)

32. Please describe briefly the nature of your collaboration [direct to question 34]

Give more detail (compulsory)

33. Please describe briefly the nature of your involvement [direct to question 34]

Give more detail (compulsory)

Part C. Policies and/or actions concerning terminology

34. Is (the use of) terminology within government and public administration a subject of public interest in your country?

- YES [direct to question 35]
- NO [direct to question 48]
- I don't know [direct to to question 48]

Additional comment (optional)

35. Is there an institution or body that is responsible for terminology policies for public authorities and/or provides terminology services for public authorities and/or co-ordinates the terminological actions of other bodies?

- Yes, my own institution [direct to question 40]
- Yes, another institution [direct to question 36]
- NO [direct to question 40]
- I don't know [direct to to question 40]

Additional comment (optional)

36. Please enter the name and contact information of the other institution (e.g. address, telephone number, email address and web site)

Give more detail (compulsory)

37. How is your institution involved in these policies?

- We collaborate with the co-ordinating body named in question 36 [direct to question 38]
- We are involved in some other way [direct to question 39]
- NOT involved [direct to question 40]

Additional comment (optional)

38. Please describe briefly the nature of your collaboration [direct to question 40]

Give more detail (compulsory)

39. Please describe briefly the nature of your involvement

Give more detail (compulsory)

40. Which of the following specific materials, instructions, services and tools are available in your country in order to help public administration with the acceptance, use and description of terminology? (Please indicate one or more of the categories below)

(more than one yes-alternative is possible)

- Web service(s) [direct to question 41]
- Official guidelines, legal acts or regulations (online, pdf or printed) [direct to question 42]
- Tools (e.g. terminological databases, termbase software, extraction tools) [direct to question 43]
- None [direct to question 44]
- I don't know [direct to question 44]

Additional comment (optional)

41. Please describe briefly the web service(s) available. Don't forget to add relevant URL information. [direct to question 44, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

42. Please describe briefly the guidelines, legal acts or regulations (online, pdf or printed) available. Don't forget to add relevant URL information. [direct to question 44, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

43. Please describe briefly the tools (e.g. terminological databases, termbase software, extraction tools) available. Don't forget to add relevant URL information.

Give more detail (compulsory)

44. Is your institution involved in international co-operation concerning terminology?

(more than one yes-alternative is possible)

- Yes, my institution is a member of the *European Association for Terminology (EAFT-AET)* [direct to question 48]
- Yes, my institution is a member of *TermNet* [direct to question 48]
- Yes, my institution is a member of the *Conference of Translation Services of European States* [direct to question 48]
- Yes, my institution participates in other international organisations or networks [direct to question 45]
- Yes, my institution participates in international conferences and symposia dealing with terminology [direct to question 46]
- Yes, other [direct to question 47]
- NO [direct to question 48]
- I don't know [direct to question 48]

Additional comment (optional)

45. Please describe briefly the international organisations or networks your institution participates in. Don't forget to add relevant URL information. [direct to question 48, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

46. Please describe briefly the international conferences and symposia your institution participates in. Don't forget to add relevant URL information [direct to question 48, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

47. You answered 'yes, other' to the previous question. Please describe briefly, and don't forget to add relevant URL information. [direct to question 48]

Give more detail (compulsory)

Part D. Other aspects

48. Are there other language specific instructions or guidelines for communication by public authorities in your country?

(more than one yes-alternative is possible)

- Yes, on the use of other languages than or alongside the official language of the country (minority languages, foreign languages, sign language) in certain cases and for certain target groups [direct to question 49]
- Yes, on the use of gender-neutral language and other gender aspects such as the masculine and feminine forms for names of functions and titles [direct to question 50]
- Yes, on cultural diversity and/or sexual preferences [direct to question 51]
- Yes, on other issues [direct to question 52]
- NO [direct to question 55]
- I don't know [direct to question 55]

Additional comment

49. Please describe briefly the language-specific instructions or guidelines for the use of other languages than or alongside the official language. Don't forget to add relevant URL information. [direct to question 53, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

50. Please describe briefly the language specific instructions or guidelines for the use of gender-neutral language and other gender aspects. Don't forget to add relevant URL information. [direct to question 55, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

51. Please describe briefly the language specific instructions or guidelines on cultural diversity and/or sexual preferences. Don't forget to add relevant URL information. [direct to question 55, if no more yes-alternatives were marked]

Give more detail (compulsory)

52. You answered 'yes, on other issues' to the previous question. Please describe briefly and don't forget to add relevant URL information. [direct to question 55]

Give more detail (compulsory)

53. If other languages than or alongside the official language of the country can be used in specific cases, are they also subject to the application of principles concerning plain language, much in the same way as is the case for the official language of the country?

- Yes, they are [direct to question 54]
- NO [direct to question 55]
- I don't know [direct to question 55]

Additional comment

54. You answered 'yes' to the previous question. Please describe more in detail and don't forget to add relevant URL information. [direct to question 55]

Give more detail (compulsory)

Part E. Training

55. Do civil servants receive specific training regarding aspects of language use, effective writing and communication?

- Yes [direct to question 56]
- NO [direct to question 59]
- I don't know [direct to question 59]

Additional comment (optional)

56. You answered 'yes' to the previous question. Please describe briefly and don't forget to add relevant contact information

Give more detail (compulsory)

57. What aspects are addressed:

(more than one yes-alternative is possible)

- correct usage, including spelling and grammar [direct to question 59]
- stylistic aspects, information structure, perspective [direct to question 59]
- text types, e.g. forms, bad-news letters, instructions, reports [direct to question 59]
- plain language, comprehensibility [direct to question 59]
- formation and use of acronyms and abbreviations [direct to question 59]
- terminology [direct to question 59]
- issues regarding gender equality, cultural diversity, avoidance of stereotypes [direct to question 59]
- tone of voice, level of politeness [direct to question 59]
- other [direct to question 58]
- I don't know [direct to question 59]

Additional comment (optional)

58. You answered 'other' to the previous question. Please give as much detail as you can about the training programmes and the aspects they address and don't forget to add relevant contact and/or URL information. [direct to question 59]

Give more detail (compulsory)

Part F. Collaboration between member states and EU

59. Is there a platform or are there platforms for collaboration and co-ordination between the language services of the EU (translation – interpretation) and the national language board or planning institutions regarding your national language(s)?

- Yes [direct to question 60]
- NO [direct to question 64]
- I don't know [direct to question 64]

Additional comment (optional)

60. You answered 'yes' to the previous question. Please give name and contact information such as address, email, telephone number and URL. [direct to question 61]

Give more detail (compulsory)

61. What aspects do they address:

- translation tools (dictionaries, corpora, translation memories etc.) [direct to question 62 if no other sections of this question have to be marked]
- terminology bases and tools, e.g. for terminology extraction [direct to question 62 if no other sections of this question have to be marked]
- plain language and comprehensibility [direct to question 62 if no other sections of this question have to be marked]
- gender equality and cultural diversity [direct to question 62 if no other sections of this question have to be marked]
- style guides, templates, models [direct to question 62 if no other sections of this question have to be marked]
- organisation of meetings, conferences and training sessions [direct to question 62]

Please give as much detail as you can about the activities of the collaborative bodies (compulsory)

Additional comment (optional)

62. Is your institution involved in the collaboration platform?

- Yes [direct to question 63]
- NO [direct to question 64]
- I don't know [direct to question 64]

Additional comment (optional)

63. You answered 'yes' to the previous question. Please describe briefly the exact nature of your collaboration, both in terms of participation in assemblies, boards, work groups as well as in terms of the tasks performed. [direct to question 64]

Give more detail (compulsory)

Part G. Role of EFNIL

64. Should EFNIL or the EFNIL project group ELIPS play a specific role in this field?

(more than one yes-alternative is possible)

- Yes, in the collection and dissemination of useful information concerning all aspects of language use in the context of government, legislation and public administration [direct to finish page]
- Yes, to stimulate partnerships between member institutions in order to address issues of common interest [direct to finish page]
- Yes, to help member institutions with the formulation and implementation of specific policies regarding language use in institutional contexts [direct to finish page]
- Yes, to influence policy actors, esp. national authorities of member states and the institutions of the European Union [direct fo finish page]
- Yes, to stimulate relevant scientific research on a cross-national, European or international scale [direct to finish page]
- Other suggestions [direct to question 65]
- I don't know [direct to finish page]
- NO [direct to finish page]

Additional comment (optional)

65. Please describe your suggestions briefly.

Give more detail (compulsory)