



Internal note

To: EEA staff

Date: 17 February 2021

From: Brendan Killeen/COM

Subject: **Brexit: how to refer to the UK and the EU in 2021 - update**

Urgent

Please comment

For your information

Purpose of this note

The EU has changed membership several times over the years. The latest change involves the withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK), which took place on 31 January 2020. This internal note provides an update to previous information (SMT note from January 2020). It intends to provide guidance to EEA colleagues on how to reference the UK and EU in EEA text and data products and suggests a glossary of terms to capture country or Member State groupings and an overview of general EEA 'disclaimers' for general use at the beginning of products and/or on websites.

While there are various sources of guidance on this topic (EU Publications Office, Commission services and other EU agencies), they are not always in agreement. This note is an EEA-specific interpretation of that advice. While it offers guidance, project managers and editors will often have to tailor any terms used to the specific context in which they are used.

These webpages may be useful:

- EEA: [About Eionet countries](#)
- Eurostat: [Glossary EU Enlargements](#)
- Publications Office (see EU-27 and EU-28): <https://publications.europa.eu/code/en/en-5000300.htm>

This note contains two parts:

- Part 1: Examples of how to apply this guidance in specific contexts and products
- Part 2: Glossary of terms to capture post-Brexit country or Member State groupings.



Part 1: Examples of how to apply this guidance in specific contexts and products

As the situation is quite complex, we would suggest a simple solution as follows (by product type):

Assessments (reports, briefings)

This general EEA disclaimer can be used where relevant:

EEA products, websites and services may refer to research carried out prior to the UK's withdrawal from the EU. Research and data relating to the UK will generally be explained by using terminology such as: 'EU-27 and the UK' or 'EEA-32 and the UK'. Exceptions to this approach will be clarified in the context of their use.

Where necessary, notes will be used to add context around analysis or data.

The above general disclaimer will be added to the EEA report template, so that it is present during consultations. Additional notes (under an exception to this rule or adding more context) should be added to drafts by project managers. All notes and disclaimers will be checked during the editing process.

In some cases, the UK still reports data to the EEA. In the case of post-2020 data, information and analysis, this situation can be acknowledged in a note, either at the beginning of an assessment or under the relevant analysis.

Web sites and web portals

Websites and web portals can use a version of the above disclaimer, if it is required.

Maps and charts

For charts and maps, the title of the chart or map can be used to clarify the context of the underlying data (by using, for example, 'EU-27 and the UK'). Additional information can be provided, if required, in a note under the map or chart.

Part 2: Glossary of terms to explain post-Brexit country or Member State groupings

Below is a list of terminology which should be seen as a guide. The terms are always used in a specific context, for example to explain a 'data-set' on which a specific table or chart within an assessment is based.

Terms:

EU-28*: The first 28 Member States of the EU (including the UK).

**Note: The EU-28 refers specifically to the Member States between 1 July 2013, when Croatia joined, and 31 January 2020, when the United Kingdom (UK) left. The term 'EU-28' is still used by Eurostat and the EU Publications Office (as defined below) but should only be used in very specific cases and with a note explaining the context.*

So, in general, we would suggest **avoiding** the terms:

- 'EU-28' and use 'EU-27 and the UK'
- 'EEA-33' and use 'EEA-32 and the UK'
- 'EEA-39' and use 'EEA-38 and the UK'

EU-27*: EU Member States after 1 February 2020.

**Note from Publications Office: Unless stated otherwise, the EU-27 now refers to the Member States of the EU from 1 February 2020, i.e., the EU-28 minus the UK. Any references to the old EU-27 (up to 30 June 2013, before Croatia joined) should be explained in the text or a footnote, or in a note under a table or figure.*

EU-27 and the UK: the EU and the UK from 1 February 2020.

EEA-33: EEA member countries up until 31 January 2020.

EEA-32: EEA member countries from 1 February 2020.

EEA-32 and the UK: EEA member countries and the UK from 1 February 2020.

EEA-38: EEA member and cooperating countries from 1 February 2020.

EEA-38 and the UK: EEA member countries, cooperating countries and the UK from 1 February 2020.