



How To

2 - How to find a Directive

1. What a Directive is

A Directive is a specific type of secondary legislation adopted by the EU institutions under the powers of the founding Treaties.

According to [Article 249](#) of the EC Treaty:

'A Directive shall be binding, as to the result to be achieved, upon each Member State to which it is addressed, but shall leave to the national authorities the choice of form and methods.'

When looking for a Directive, it is important to know whether it is the original EU-level text which is required, or whether it is a national version implemented by a Member State.

In the United Kingdom, Directives are implemented by an Act or, more often, a Statutory Instrument. A time limit for the introduction of national implementing measures, usually two to three years, is specified in the text of each Directive.

2. Where a Directive is published

Directives are published in the L (Legislation) series of the [Official Journal of the European Union](#), which is available as a printed publication, but is now usually consulted online via the EUR-Lex database (see *How To 1 - How to use the Official Journal*).

3. How to cite a Directive

Directive 2006/44/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 September 2006 on the quality of fresh waters needing protection or improvement in order to support fish life OJ L 264, 25.9.2006, p20-31

This citation includes the following elements:

1. Form (Directive)
2. Year enacted

3. Directive number
4. Institutional treaty basis (eg EC, Euratom)
5. The name of the institution(s) responsible for adopting the Directive (eg Commission, Council, European Parliament and Council)
6. Date of adoption
7. Issue, date and page of publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*

Note especially the order of the year and the act number. For legislative acts other than Regulations the year of enactment precedes the number of the act.

Prior to 1992, acts had a unique number. Now it is possible for a Decision, for example, to have the same number as a Directive so check the full details carefully.

For example:

[Commission Directive 2000/23/EC](#) of 27 April 2000 amending Directive 92/76/EEC recognising protected zones exposed to particular plant health risks in the Community

and

[2000/23/EC: Council Decision](#) of 6 December 1999 on the improvement of information on the Council's legislative activities and the public register of Council documents

Before 1999 the date was expressed as a two digit number, but it is now given as four.

4. How to find a Directive

EUR-Lex

The easiest way to trace a Directive is via [EUR-Lex](#). Select [Legislation in force](#) and then proceed by either browsing or searching: