

Doing It Once! By QNET LLC



EU Machinery Directive 2006/42/EC translation requirements and trends

As of January 1, 2007, the European Union (EU) consists of 27 countries, close to 500 million consumers who communicate in 22 different languages. These 27 countries have adopted into National Law old Machinery Directive 98/37/EC which is about to be replaced by [new Machinery Directive 2006/42/EC](#).

The new Machinery Directive translation requirement stated in Annex I Section 1.7.4 Instructions has been expanded. It now reads:

All machinery must be accompanied by instructions in the Official Community language or languages of the Member State in which it is placed on the market and/or put into service.

The instructions accompanying the machinery must be either 'Original Instructions' or a 'Translation of the original instructions', in which case the translation must be accompanied by the original instructions.

By way of exception, the maintenance instructions intended for use by specialized personnel mandated by the manufacturer or his authorized representative may be supplied in only one Community language which the specialized personnel understand.

QNET EU CE engineers explain compliance with this requirement as follows:

The Machinery Directive concentrates on safety issues and does not impose translation requirements concerning the performance of a machine. The requirements of Section 1.7.4 do not therefore need to be invoked when considering the performance of a product provided there is no link with safety.

There are two types of instructions, original instructions and further translations of original instructions. Original instructions are definitive instructions for which a manufacturer accepts liability and must accompany each machine. A manufacturer must draw up original instructions in an official language of the European Union. Original instructions do not need to be written in the language of the manufacturer alone, they can be written in one or more official languages of the EU, which is often the case with international companies that have facilities in several EU States.

The party that places a machine on the EU market normally prepares translations. Usually this is the manufacturer, but may equally be an authorized representative, distributor or importer if they have undertaken to assist a manufacturer. If an EU user imports a machine and instructions have not been translated into the language of their EU State they may agree to translate instructions on behalf of the manufacturer, who must be satisfied that the translation is correct because they remain responsible for the validity of the instructions.

Manufacturers must therefore take care that original instructions are faithfully reproduced in the languages of other member states and are advised to settle the question of how translations of original instructions are prepared in agreements with distributors, importers or users if other such parties are involved.

Directive Annex 1, Sections 1.7.4.1 through 1.7.4.3 address additional requirements related to instructions and sales literature.

There is no trend towards elimination of translations. However, there is a trend towards simplification in order to minimize the cost of translation efforts including a strong recommendation to use the symbols published in harmonized standards instead of text.

For your immediate use, we submit a list of languages as adopted into National law by each EU State. This list is subject to change without notice.



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EU Countries in Blue EFTA Countries in Red	Language (s)
AUSTRIA	German
BELGIUM	Dutch + German + French
BULGARIA	Bulgarian
CROATIA (Pending EU State)	Croatian
CYPRUS	Greek or English
CZECH REPUBLIC	Czech
DENMARK	Danish
ESTONIA	Estonian
FINLAND	Finnish + Swedish
FRANCE	French
GERMANY	German
GREECE	Greek
HUNGARY	Hungarian
ICELAND	Icelandic
IRELAND	English
ITALY	Italian
LATVIA	Latvian
LIECHTENSTEIN	German
LITHUANIA	Lithuanian
LUXEMBOURG	French
MACEDONIA (Pending EU State)	
MALTA	Maltese or English
NETHERLANDS	Dutch
NORWAY	Norwegian
POLAND	Polish
PORTUGAL	Portuguese
ROMANIA	Romanian
SERBIA (Pending EU State)	Serbian
SLOVAKIA	Slovak Some Czech accepted, be sure to clarify first.
SLOVENIA	Slovenian
SPAIN	Spanish
SWEDEN	Swedish
SWITZERLAND	French, German, Italian
TURKEY (Pending EU State)	Turkish
UNITED KINGDOM	English

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