



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

The Secretary General

Brussels,

SEC(2019)900

**« COMMON COMMISSION-LEVEL RETENTION LIST FOR
EUROPEAN COMMISSION FILES
– SECOND REVISION »**

1. INTRODUCTION

The common Commission-level retention list for European Commission files (CRL) is a regulatory document in the form of a retention schedule that sets the retention periods for the different types of Commission files ⁽¹⁾.

The first version was adopted in July 2007 on the basis of article 6 of the provisions on document management ⁽²⁾ and its implementing rules ⁽³⁾. This second revision aims to update and complement the first revision of the list dating from 2012 ⁽⁴⁾.

2. STRUCTURE OF THE CRL RETENTION SCHEDULE

The CRL retention schedule (Annex 1) is set out in seven columns:

- **File types:** Files concerning the same type of activities, issues or procedures.
- **Description:** General content of files belonging to this type.
- **ARP (Administrative Retention Period):** Period (in years) during which the DG/department is required to keep a file depending on its usefulness for administrative purposes and the relevant statutory and legal obligations. The ARP begins to run from the time when the file is closed. The ARP concerns the file as a whole. It may be shorter for personal data contained in the file, as indicated in the personal data protection records and privacy statements related to the activities, issues or procedures.

This column contains the following references for certain types of files:

- « L_n » indicates (using the concordance table at the end of the retention schedule) the legal basis which lays down a specific retention period for that type of file and, where applicable, the opinions of the Legal Service and the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS), which recommend retention periods in order to comply with legal obligations for that type of file.
 - « T_n » indicates (using the concordance table at the end of the retention schedule) that an administrative procedure for eliminating documents applies to this type of file.
- **Post-ARP action or first review:** action to be taken by the Directorate-General at the end of the ARP. Three courses of action are possible:
 1. **THA (Transfer to the Historical Archives):** the files are transferred to the Commission's Historical archives.
 2. **SAM/SEL (Sampling ⁽⁵⁾ and/or Selection ⁽⁶⁾):** a group of files is chosen for preservation, the remainder is destroyed. The files identified for preservation are transferred to the Commission's Historical archives.

¹ According to chapter I.3 of the implementing rules (SEC(2009)1643), a file is a "core around which documents are organised in line with the institution's activities, for reasons of proof, justification or information and to guarantee efficiency in the work...".

² As annexed to the Rules of Procedure of the Commission by Decision 2002/47/EC, ECSC, Euratom of the Commission of 23 January 2002, published in OJ L 21 of 24.1.2002. p. 23.

³ SEC(2009)1643 of 30.11.2009.

⁴ SEC(2012)713 of 17.12.2012.

3. EL (Elimination): the files are physically destroyed.
- **Action following transfer to the Historical archives:** the types of files to be transferred to the Historical archives may be assigned (in their entirety or in the form of a sample or selection) for:
 1. PP : permanent preservation
 2. 2nd Review (second review): the Commission's Historical Archives Service assesses the historical value of the files to decide whether they should be permanently preserved or eliminated.
 - **Lead department:** the Directorates-General that have files of this type and are required to keep them according to what is indicated in the CRL retention schedule.
 - **Observations:** Information that Directorates-General must take into account when preserving these types of files.



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Annex 1: CRL retention schedule

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- ⁵ Sampling is a particular form of appraisal where the aim is to preserve a certain number of files on the basis of objective criteria, regarded as representative of a larger group of files that will not be preserved in its entirety.
- ⁶ Selection is a particular form of appraisal where the aim is to preserve a certain number of files according to subjective criteria (importance, media impact, etc.) that are part of a larger group of files that will not be preserved in its entirety.