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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
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General Affairs
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DG SANCO INTERNAL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT ON RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADMINISTRATORS IN RELATION TO DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

MARCH 2014

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1 Introduction

e-Domec is relevant to everyone in the Commission who receives or produces a document.
That, therefore, includes you!

The Commission must ensure that it is able, at any time, to provide information on the matters for which it is accountable.

The documents and files serve to the Commission to:

- **increase its efficiency** and ensure better business continuity;
- retain **proof of activities** performed (accountability);
- support **quick and easy access to information for the European citizens** (transparency) **and, when requested, for audit or legal reasons;** and
- keep a **record of its past activities** as a European institution and as a European public administration (Institution's memory).

Definitions

- **"Document" means:** any content drawn up or received by the Commission concerning a matter relating to the policies, activities and decisions falling within the institution's competence and in the framework of its official tasks, in whatever medium (written on paper or stored in electronic form or as a sound, visual or audio-visual recording).

- **"File" means:** a coherent group of documents which reflects the progress of a given case conducted by a Commission department from beginning to end. A file must gather all documents providing evidence of the way in which an official activity has been conducted.

- **"Life-cycle" means:** All the stages or periods in the life of a document from the time it is received or formally drawn up until it is transferred to the Commission's historical archives and/or opened to the public or until it is destroyed according to the rules:
    1. Registration
    2. Filing
    3. Preservation
    4. Appraisal and transfer

2 "Chef de File"

"Chef de file" is a unit (« lead unit »). Within this unit the matter concerned can be managed by the Head of Unit or by any other agent, who is called the "file manager" ("*gestionnaire de dossier*" in French).

"Chef de File"

- **is in charge of the case**

… even if another unit is involved in performing related tasks or providing assistance;

- **is not a person**

… but the unit responsible for dealing with the case. The ***file manager*** is the agent(s) within the unit appointed to deal with the matter in question (case). She/h decides which document requires registration and filing and in which of the Unit's files;

- **allocates every document to the appropriate file**

… whether paper or electronic and ensures the completeness of the file. If the file is hybrid (both paper format and electronic), makes the necessary arrangements to be able to reconstitute the file easily;

- **opens and closes the file**

The file is opened at the start of the case with the encoding of the metadata of the file. The file is closed when all the actions stemming from the case have been concluded and no further document should be added to the file. As *chef de file* each unit should have its own file list for which it is responsible.

3 The administrators as key players in e-Domec [1]

Each **staff member** has a contributory role in good document management by taking part in the registering and filing of documents, received or written, on the one hand, and the preservation and transfer of files, on the other.

The **administrators** as file managers have a specific role with regard to their administrative and technical responsibilities.

[1] Other key players in Annex 2.

Division of responsibilities:

Administrative responsibility	Technical responsibility
↓	↓
• Which documents need to be registered	• How to register documents
• Where to file documents	• How to file under ARES
• When to close files	• How to close files under ARES
• Checking file appraisal and transfer	• Preparing files for transfer
↓	↓
"Chef de file" = Head of Unit / File manager	**Secretariat / CAD / Document Management Correspondent (DMC) / Archives service / File manager**

3.1 Registration

Registration is the first of the four stages of the document life-cycle.

A document drawn up or received by a Commission department must be registered if it contains important information which is not short-lived and may involve action or follow-up by the Commission or one of its departments.

Mail (letters, e-mail, fax...) are usually registered in ARES.

Other documents may be registered in specific registration systems (e.g. CIS-Net, eGreffe, ABAC Invoices, ...).

The **file manager** has **an essential role**:

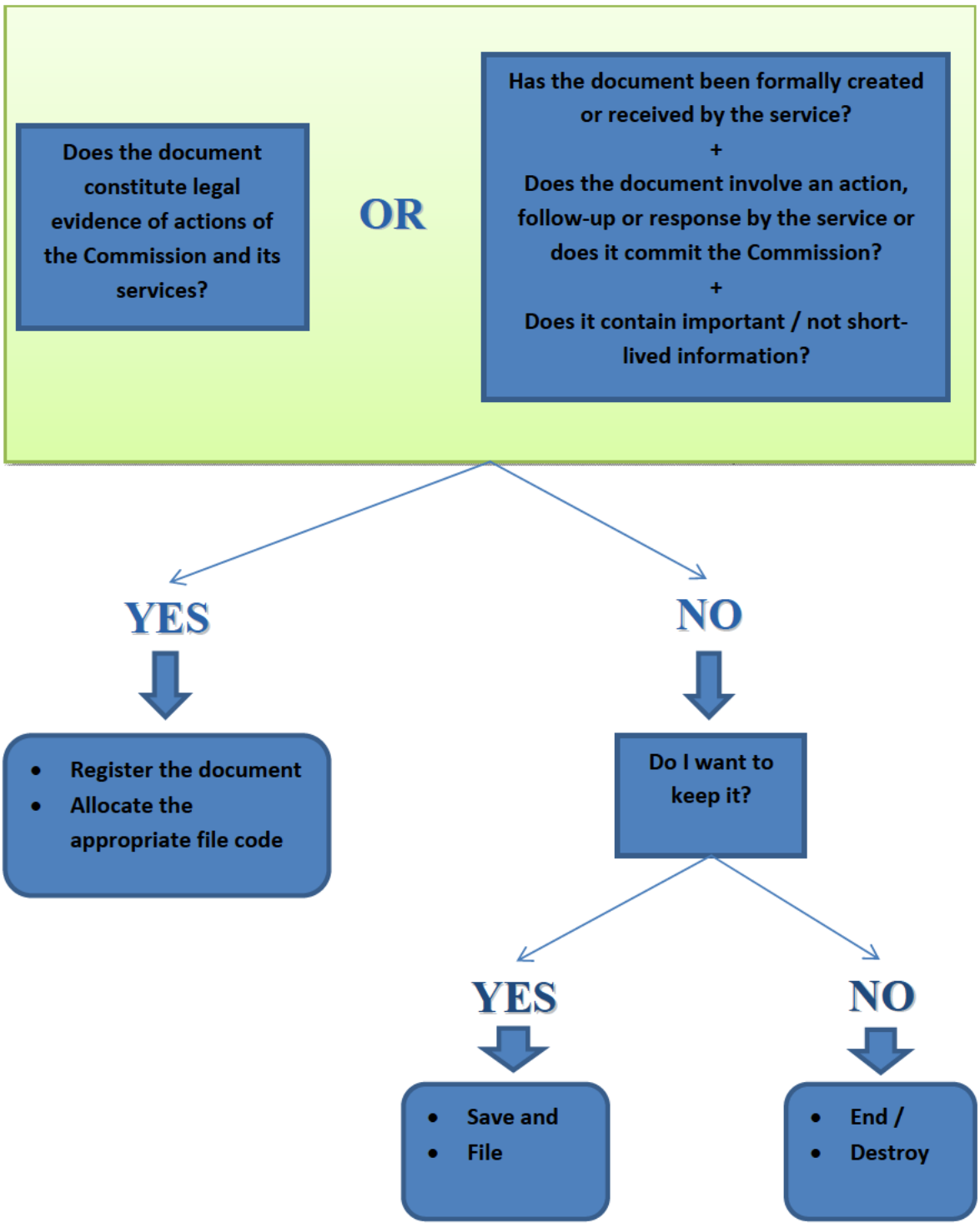
- To notify the service or relevant individual of all documents that require registration;
- To ensure that all important e-mails are registered; and
- To regularly check that the official file is complete.

In DG SANCO, registration in ARES is mainly done by the CAD (document management team) but the Units decide what must be registered.

Make sure that all documents that might be referred to in an audit, dispute or official communication have been correctly registered.

The first step in deciding whether to register an incoming or outgoing document is an analysis of its content as outlined below.

Analysis of a received or drawn up document



How to save your document in ARES? See 4.1. Saving a document in ARES

3.2 *Filing in official files*

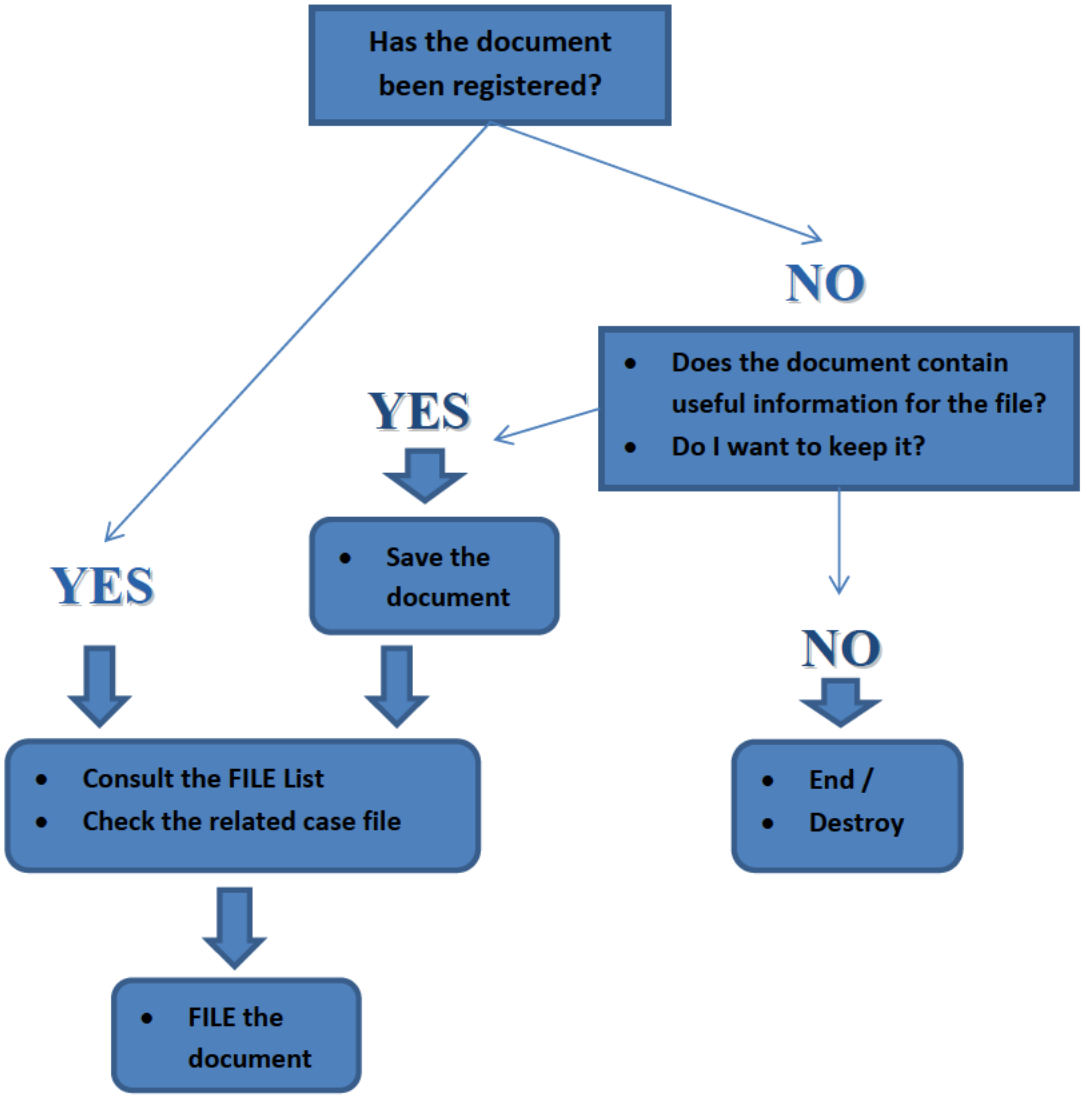
An official file must gather all documents providing evidence of the way in which an official activity has been conducted; it allows us to keep a record of all our activities for the other institutions and the citizens. A file is therefore an important tool to guarantee efficiency in our day-to-day work. It is managed by a "chef de file" (lead unit).

Not all documents have to be registered, but each registered document must be filed.

A registered document must be kept in an official file.

However, non-registered documents can be saved and filed in an official file if they are an aid to a better understanding of how an issue has been handled.

Once you have decided that the document needs to be filed, the time comes to decide where and in what file the document should go. The relevant file can be found after analysing the content of the document following the outline below:



The document is filed either in:

- an already existing file when a registered document can logically be allocated to an existing file or
- **a new official file that must be created**.

In DG SANCO the technical part of creating the file in ARES is done centrally by the DMO (Document Management Officer) team. The DMC (Document Management Correspondent) of the Unit together with the "file manager" fill in the request form available on IntraSanco (How to – Document Management – Filing)
http://s-sanco-intranet.sanco.cec.eu.int/intranet/how-to/document-management/filing
and send it to the mailbox: SANCO ARES SUPPORT

All files must be linked to the **Filing Plan** where they are categorised by activity under an appropriate heading – **we need to find them easily!**

The specific roles of the "file managers":

- The "file managers" are responsible for the day to day management of the files to ensure that all registered documents relating to a case they are responsible for are allocated to the correct file.
- The "file managers" request to create a new file when a new case starts.
- The "file managers" suggest a title and heading for the file and determine the category of the file.

The title gives a brief description of the case handled in that file. It has to be brief, but has to be as exact as possible; even indicating the end of the file or some information which could indicate when the case will be closed, as at a given moment, the action will be finished. The one who better knows the real scope of the file is the unit Chef de File and its desk officer.

Closing a file

When?

When the case is finished, the file must be closed. If no new document has been added in the last 6 months, the file is potentially closable.

Before closing…

Before a file is closed, it must be first checked to ensure that there are no missing documents and that any non-useful working documents have been removed. It now contains all the pertinent documents. **No changes can be made to a closed file!**

How to find the list of files of my Unit in ARES? See 4.2. List of files in ARES
How to select my favourites in ARES? See 4.3. Favourite files in ARES
How to file a document in ARES? See 4.4. Filing a document in ARES

3.3 Preservation of the files

Each DG and service must ensure the physical protection of the files in its sphere of responsibility, and guarantee their access in the short and medium term, until they are transferred to the Commission's Historical Archives Service or until they are eliminated.

The "*chef de file*" is responsible for a file throughout its life cycle. This includes preservation, in cooperation with the archives service of the DG.

Once documents are registered and filed, they also need to be preserved. For the proper preservation of paper documents, the most practical solution is to keep the files in binders and to store these in the office of the case manager, the unit secretariat or a central location shared by one or more services.

However, the Commission is moving to an e-Commission and thus documents are more and more preserved in electronic format, which allows for user friendly and rapid access. For certain types of documents the computer application itself has an archiving module. This is the case for documents in VISTA (COM, SEC, C documents) and for the mail and documents registered in ARES.

The preservation of closed files and archives functions is a bit like our memory; there is a need to be selective. In order to better remember the important things, it is often necessary to forget the irrelevant ones. It is also important to properly preserve these files, irrespective of their support (electronic and/or paper).

An important aspect of the preservation is that the title and specific code of your paper files have to correspond to those of your electronic files and be indicated in your list of official electronic files. The labels of the paper files must reflect the metadata of the electronic file.

To help you decide in practice for how long your closed files have to be kept and if your files have to be transferred to the historical archives or can be destroyed after a number of years, the Commission has created the Common retention list (CRL), which is, in fact, a table to manage file preservation.

All digitised documents are kept in their original medium for at least six months.
When the original is a paper copy for which signature is a substantial formality, this original is preserved according to the CRL.

See the Note "Preservation of DG SANCO's files – Adoption of the Archive Schedule", ARES(2012)1262372, 25/10/2012.

3.4 Appraisal and transfer of the files to the Historical Archives

It often happens that documents and files are no longer frequently consulted even though they are still of importance. They might in fact have become a burden to the service keeping them. In such cases the Institution can take over the responsibility for their physical storage. The Historical Archives Service (HAS) is responsible for this. Should you wish to consult transferred files, the HAS will put them at your disposal.

The transfer is done by means of a transmission form (BdT=*Bordereau de transmission)* and a basic file list (LiB=*Liste de base*) which are available on the Historical Archives website and on IntraSanco. These two documents are essential: they provide proof of the transfer itself and a record of what was transferred. It is in your own interest to provide a good basic file list as this will facilitate future consultation of the files.
http://s-sanco-intranet.sanco.cec.eu.int/intranet/how-to/document-management/archives-documents .

Even when files are transferred to the HAS, the **chef de file** continues to be **responsible** for their files, especially for access requests, both coming from other EU institutions or from the public.

The DMO is responsible for the review and transfer of files to the Historical Archives Service (HAS). It does not mean that the DMOs do this transfer themselves. Their role is:

- to establish transfer procedures (including archive schedule) tailored to their DG
- supervise the first review of files and transfer
- act as point of contact with the HAS

After transfer of files to the HAS, the DG continues to be responsible for the following:

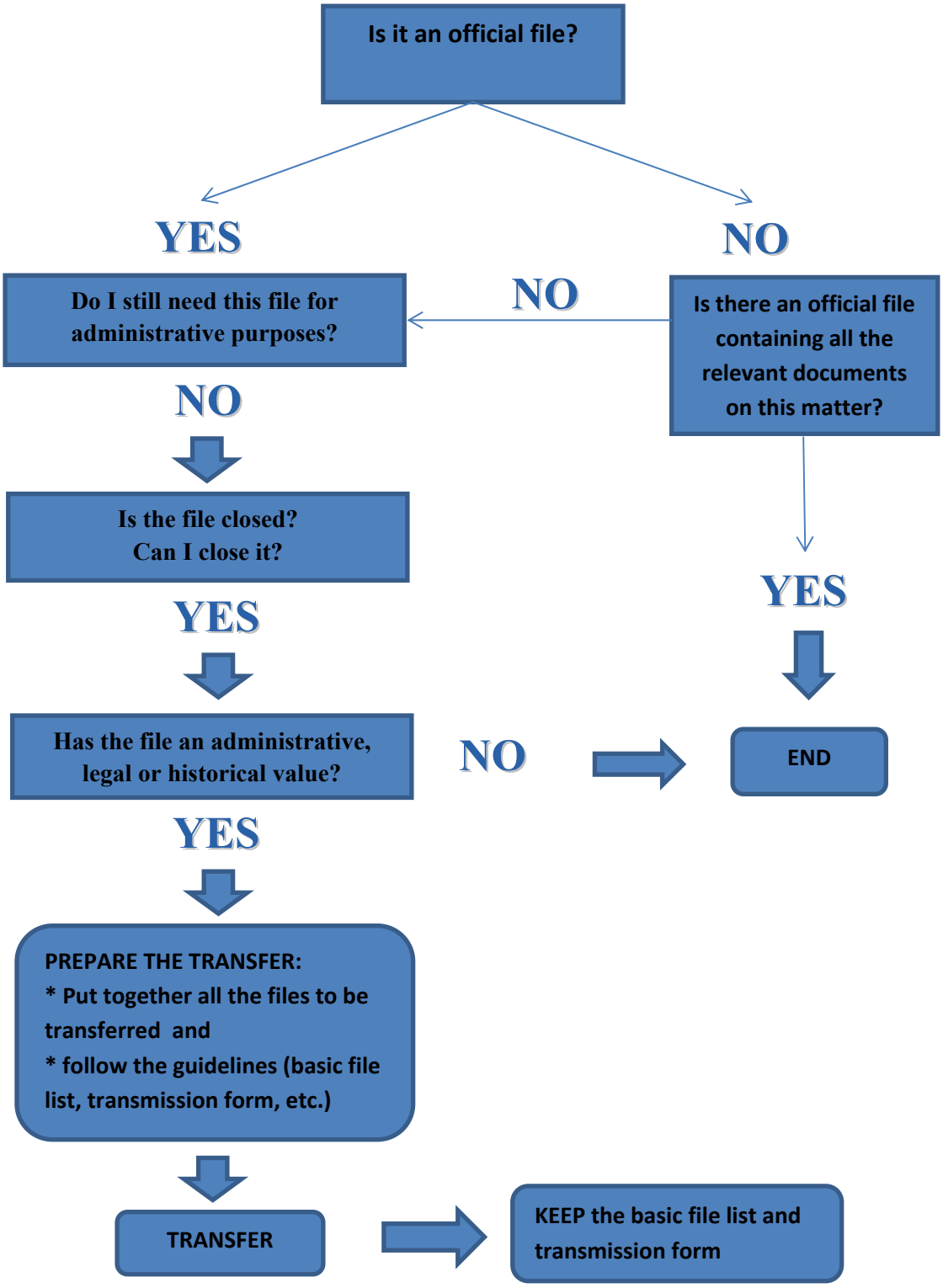
- to co-operate with the HAS in the second review of files
- to treat all requests for access to documents (until the documents are 30 years old)

30 Years Rule

Access to documents by the public after 30 years, on the other hand, is a duty of the HAS.

It should not be forgotten that after 30 years files that have historic value will be opened to the public. It is therefore in everyone's interest to organise transfers as best they can.

Analysis of non e-Domec files to be transferred to HAS



4 ARES users

ARES is used by all staff in the Commission: to approve the final version of a document (electronic signatory or e-signatory), register documents (or simply save them), file them in the correct file(s), send or receive attributions or tasks to perform with the documents (reply, register, file …), search for documents or files, etc.

ARES users receive in their ARES **"Received docs"** new documents sent to them. They also receive **"Tasks"** relating to a document as assignments or actions. These tasks are defined by **action codes.**

The assignment action codes have the following meaning:

CF - Chef de File -;
ASSOC - Associated Service - (followed by the name of the user who has to provide input but is not Chef de File for the document in question);
INFO - For Information -;
CLASS – Filing or "Classement" in French - (followed by the name of the user who is required to file the document in question)

The e-signatory action codes have the following meaning:

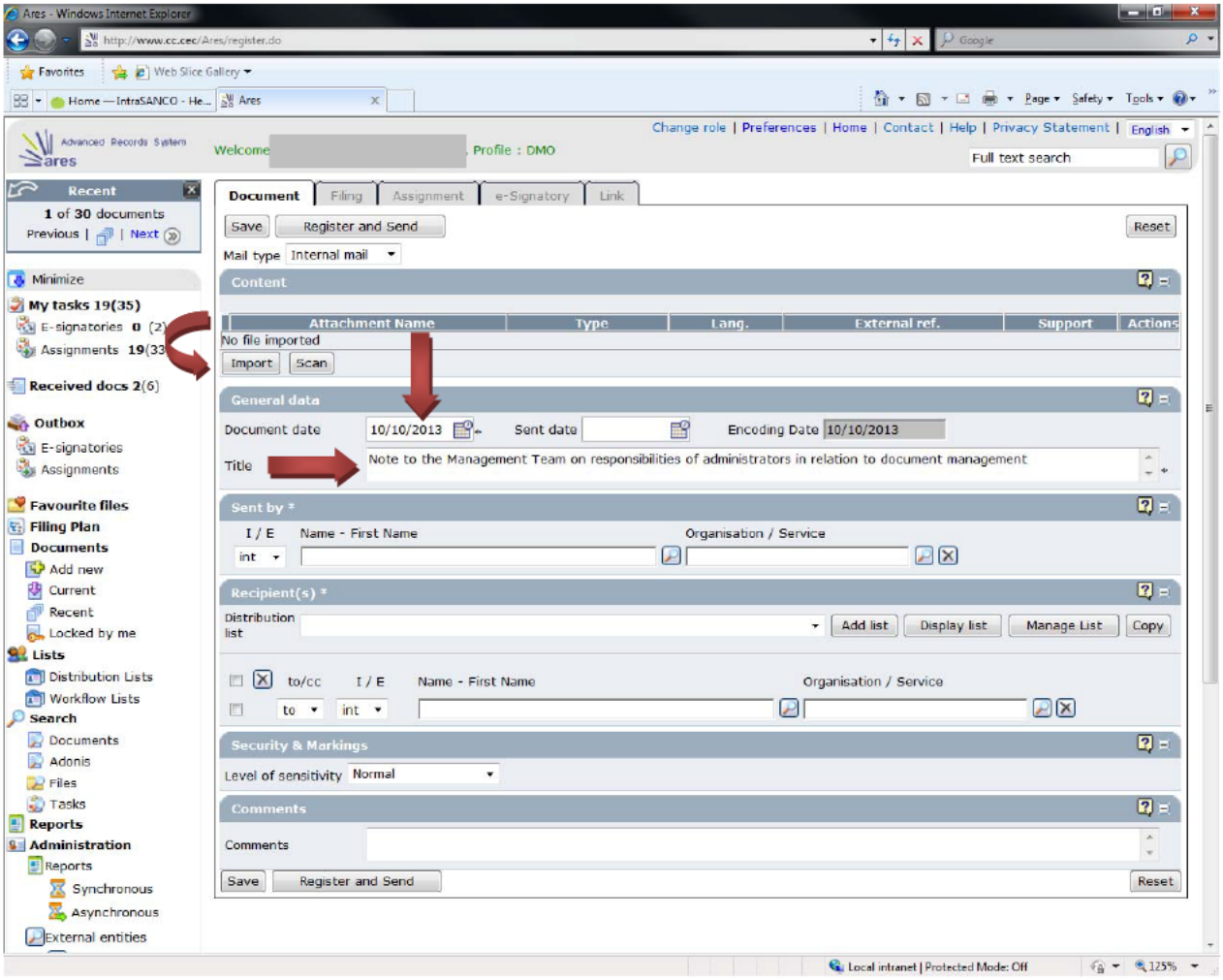
RED – Author or "Rédacteur" in French - (a user responsible for drafting a text);
CONTRIB - For contribution - (followed by the name of the user who may need to contribute to the text);
VISA – For approval - (followed by the name of the user who needs to give his/her visa or needs to initial the document);
SIGN – For signature - (followed by the name of the user who needs to approve and sign the final version of the document);
EXP – Sender or "Expéditeur" in French - (followed by the name of the user who is required to register, file and dispatch a finalised document)

4.1 *Saving a document in ARES*

How to save a document in ARES? ➔ First click "Documents" "Add new" (left menu) ➔ Fill in at least "Document date" and "Title" ➔ Import your real document: Click Import ➔ Fill in the window (Click "Browse", select your document from your PC, then click "Add"
Back to the ARES document ➔ Click "Save" ➔ Go to Assignment tab ➔ create EXP task for the Virtual Entity of the Unit

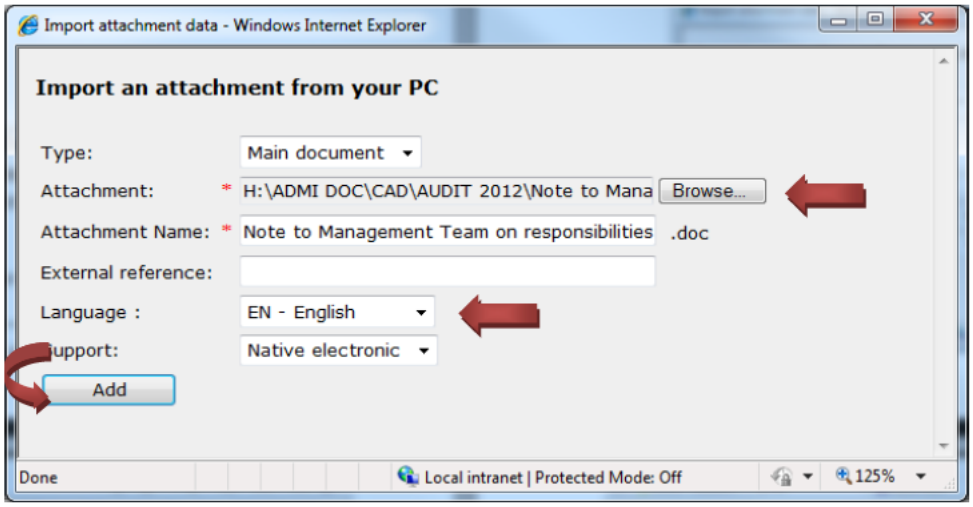
A Virtual Entity – VE – is a fictional entity that brings together users and/or groups under an identical name. Virtual entities are the equivalent of the Outlook functional mailboxes and Commission departments.

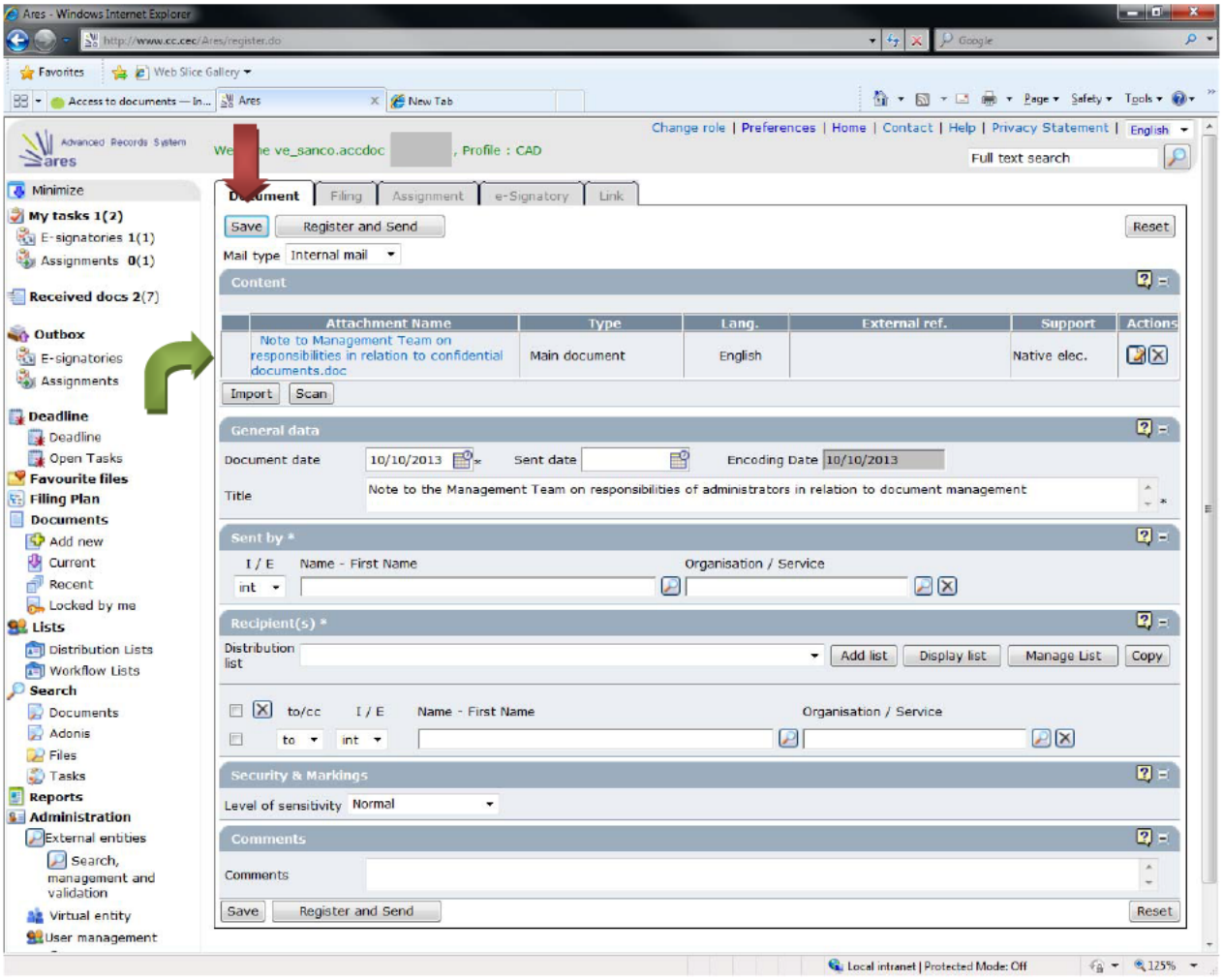
Virtual entity of the Unit; example: ve_sanco.04 for Unit 04.



Mail type is "Internal mail" or "Incoming mail" or "Outgoing mail"

Attachment type is “Cover note” or “Main document” or “Annex”

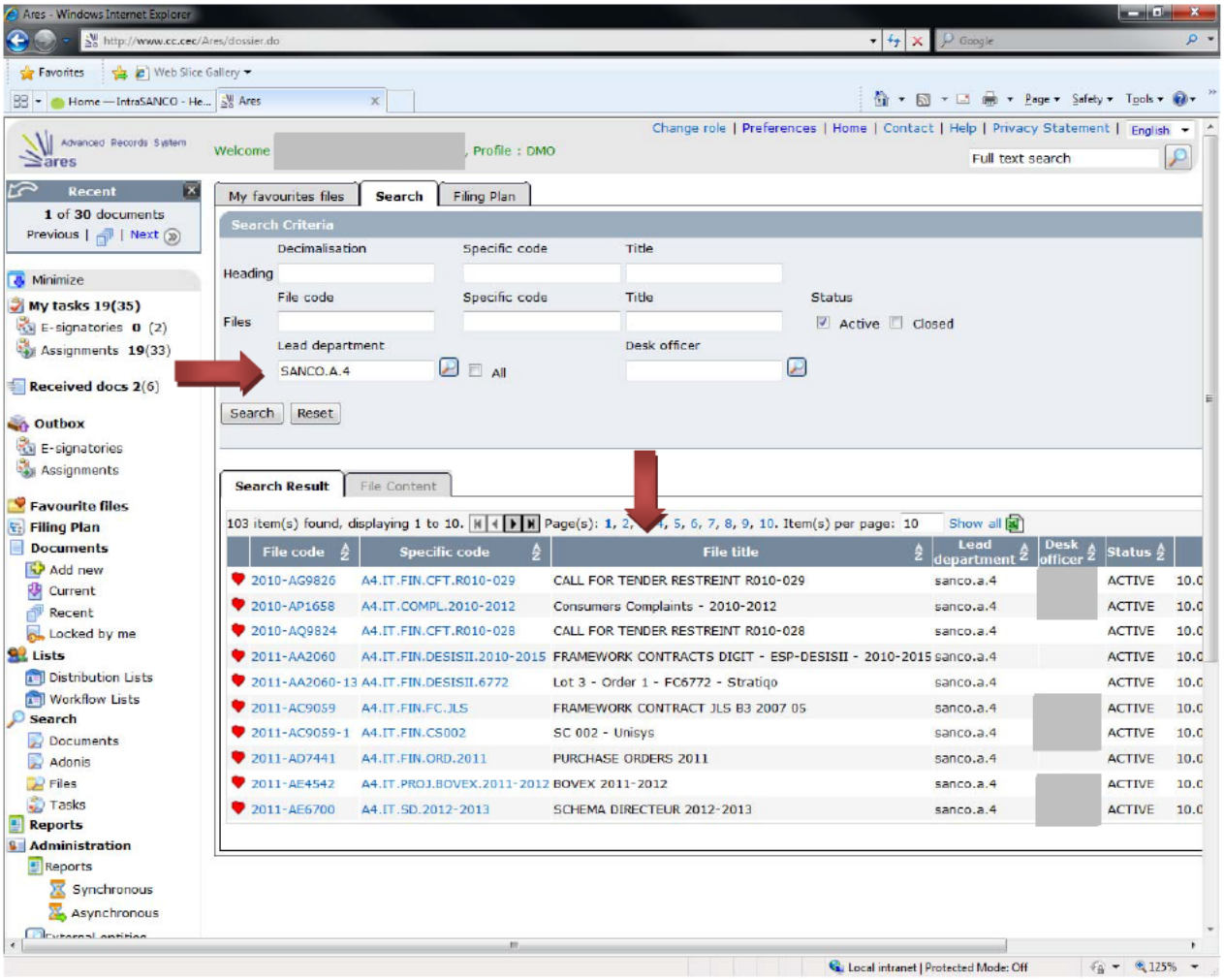




4.2 *List of files in ARES*

List of files of the Unit ➔ First click "Search" "Files" (left menu) ➔ Fill in at least "Lead Department" ➔ Click "Search"

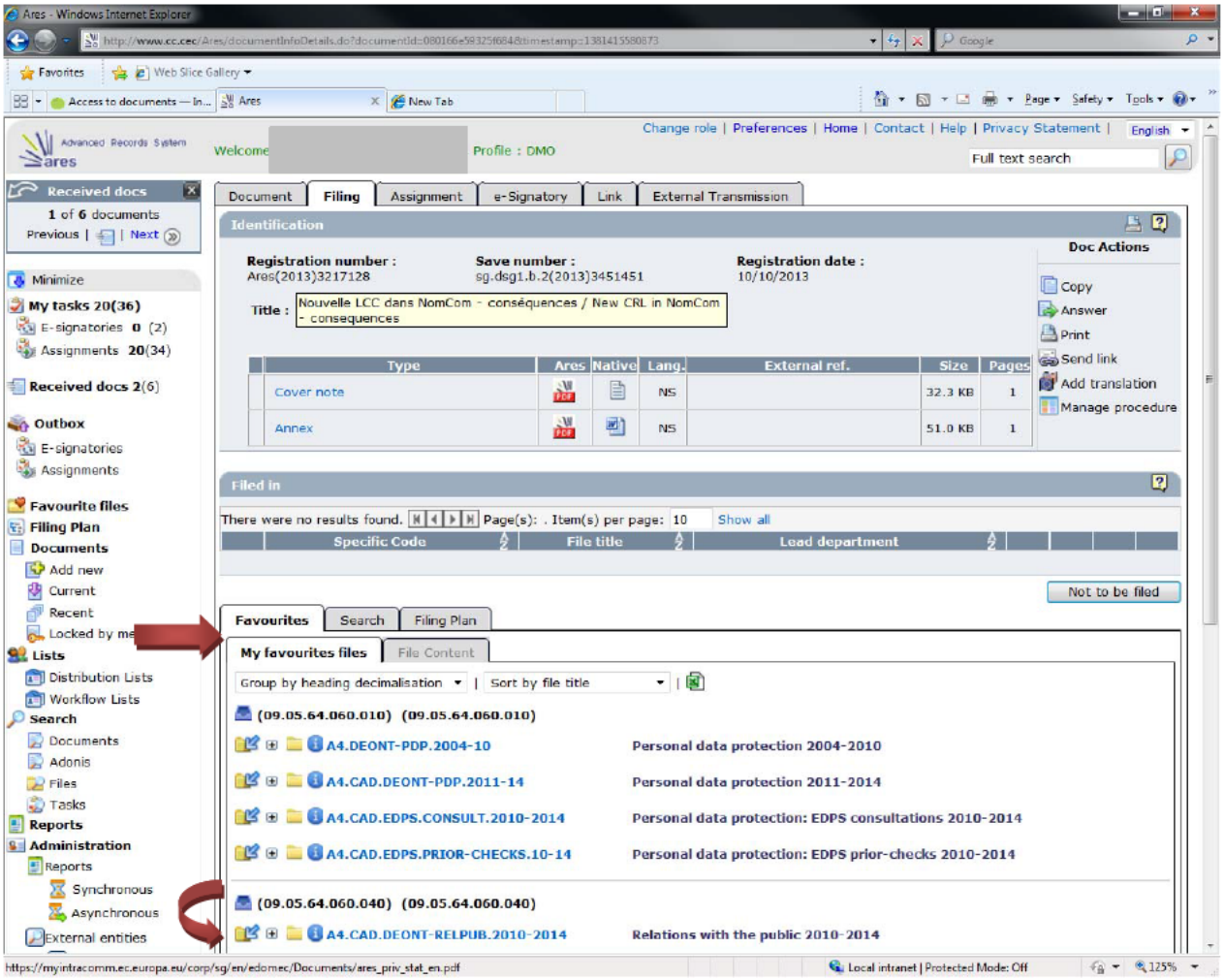
"Lead department" is SANCO.A.4 for Unit A4, SANCO.ddg1.D.4 for Unit D4, SANCO.ddg2.E.4 for Unit E4, etc.



4.3 *Favourite files in ARES*

From the previous list of files of the Unit ➔ Click on the "Heart" icon to select the files which will be your favourite files.

Your favourite files will be available any time you select the "Filing" tab to file a document.

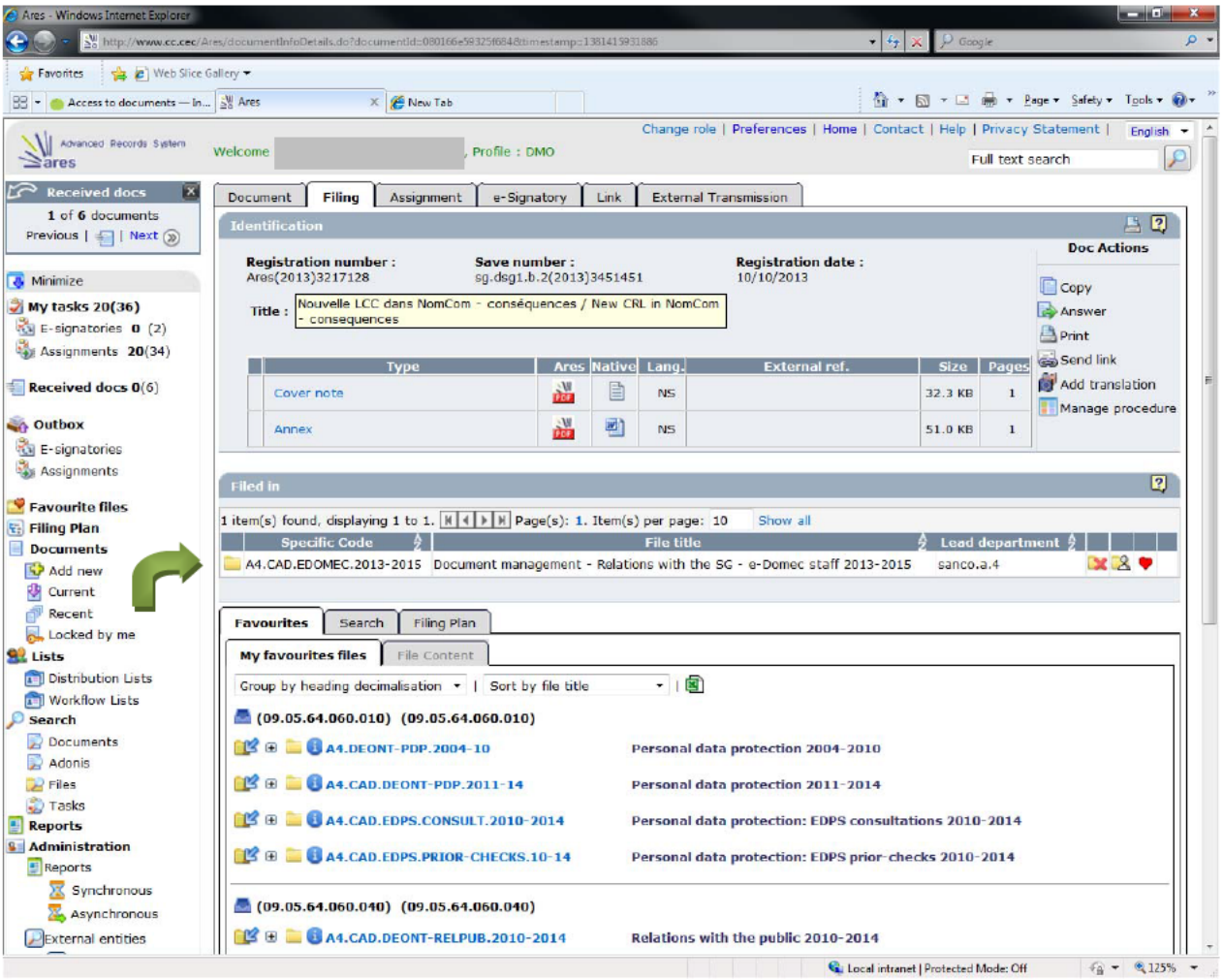


All documents must be filed; therefore if the document does not belong to one of DG SANCO files, you will file it nevertheless by clicking on "**Not to be filed**" (option available only for documents registered in another DG/service).

4.4 *Filing a document in ARES*

Select the Filing tab for your document ➔ Choose the appropriate file among your favourite files and click on the blue arrow icon to file the document.

Once the document is filed, you can see it under the metadata of your document.



5 Training and support

DIGIT and the SG provide information, training and the necessary support to help you apply document management rules correctly with the help of a number of IT tools.

Whatever your profile or role is there is training to suit your needs.

Please speak with your DMO, determine your profile/role and discuss which trainings you should follow.

Training on document management (e-Domec):

- CDF : Chef de File (for heads of unit and case managers) http://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/corp/sg/en/edomec/training/Pages/chantinfotrain.aspx#cdf
- SECR: Document and file management in the unit for secretaries (at this stage, the course exists only in FR) http://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/corp/sg/en/edomec/training/Pages/chantinfotrain.aspx#secr

SANCO ARES SUPPORT is the functional mailbox to use in DG SANCO for any problem with ARES. A member of the SANCO ARES SUPPORT team will help you.

6 ARES Checklist for administrators

- I know how to access ARES
- I know the action codes for assignment
- I know the action codes for e-signatory
- I have selected my preferences … and my delegations
- I know how to create a new document
- I know how to import a document (from my pc)
- I know how to save a document
- I know how to create assignment tasks
- I know the way of searching for my unit's files
- I have made a list of my favourite files
- I know whom to ask for help

Annex 1 – Basic rules on document management

The following documents should serve as the reference documents for all basic rules related document management:

- Commission Decision 2002/47 on **document management** which aims:
    - to put in place effective document management systems to enable any document connected with the Commission's official functions to be managed, kept and found securely at all times, whatever form it is in (paper or electronic) or whatever management system is governing it;
    - to introduce, at Commission's level, a system of management and electronic archiving based on a body of common rules and procedures applicable to all departments.

- Commission Decision 2004/563 on **electronic and digitised documents**, which:
    - determines the conditions of validity of electronic and digitised documents for the Commission's purposes;
    - ensures the authenticity, integrity and legibility over time of these documents and of the relevant metadata.

- Document SEC(2009)1643 on the **Implementing rules for the above two decisions** which aim to cover the entire lifecycle of a document, whatever its form (electronic or paper).
- **Common Retention List** (CRL) for European Commission files - SEC(2012)713 - Cover note

Annex 2 – The key players in e-Domec

At DG level:

The **DMOs (Document Management Officers), responsible for the administration of documents** appointed by their Director General or Head of Department, ensure the application and respect for e-Domec rules in their DG or service. In DG SANCO, the DMO is , assisted with a deputy, , Unit A4.

They are assisted in their work by the **CAD** (*Centre d'Administration des Documents*) and their **network of correspondents** (in DG SANCO one Document Management Correspondent (DMC) per Unit/Directorate with a back-up).

Each **Head of Unit** is responsible for correct document management within his/her service.

Each **staff member** has a contributory role in good document management by taking part in the registering and filing of documents, received or written, on the one hand, and the preservation and transfer of files, on the other.

At corporate level:

The **Secretariat General (SG)** is responsible for adopting and coordinating document management policy, monitoring how the rules and common standards are applied in practice in all DGs and associated services and developing, together with DIGIT, IT tools that ensure electronic document management covering the whole life-cycle of documents. The SG also organises centrally with the help of DG HR and DIGIT, training sessions on document management whose content is adapted for the different players.

The **Directorate General for Informatics (DIGIT)** develops, in close cooperation with the SG and the DMOs (Document Management Officers), the IT tools that are necessary for efficient electronic document management throughout the Commission.

The **Historical Archives Service (HAS)** receives and manages all the archives transferred by the DGs after a first review and in accordance with the document management rules. The archives, identified by the HAS, for permanent preservation (definitive or historical archives), will be opened to the public, wherever possible, following the 30 years rule.