EU LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

The term European legal instruments refers to the instruments available to the European institutions to carry out their tasks. The instruments listed in Article 288 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) are:

- regulations: these are binding in their entirety and directly applicable in all EU countries;
- directives: these bind the EU countries as to the results to be achieved; they have to be transposed into the national legal framework and thus leave margin for manoeuvre as to the form and means of implementation;
- decisions: these are fully binding on those to whom they are addressed;
- recommendations and opinions: these are non-binding, declaratory instruments.

Furthermore, Article 290 of the TFEU introduces the possibility for the European legislator to delegate to the Commission the power to adopt non-legislative acts of general scope which supplement or amend non-essential elements of legislative acts.

In addition to the instruments listed in Article 288 of the TFEU, practice has led to the development of a whole series of unique documents: interinstitutional agreements, resolutions, conclusions, communications, green papers and white papers.

Under the Common Foreign and Security Policy, specific legal instruments are used, such as EU actions and positions.

SEE ALSO

- EU action (CFSP)
- European Union (EU) hierarchy of norms
- Green paper
- Simplification of legislation
- White paper
- Summary on European Union legal acts
- Summary on European Union Decisions
- Summary on European Union Regulations
- Summary on European Union Directives