# Guideline for EPIS Think Tank

Your Think Tank on Foreign Affairs & Security Policy



## Introduction

Dear EPIS Fellows,



With this guideline, we pursue two objectives:

- To give you a better introduction to EPIS, and
- To assist you in creating a publication.

**About EPIS**: The organization is hierarchical and group-based. The foundation of the think tank is you, the EPIS Fellows. You can get involved in the **EPIS Resorts (Working Groups, Report Groups & Formats)** which are led by the respective Resort Leaders. The Board oversees the overall direction of the association and is guided by the Principles and Advisors.

**About publications**: At EPIS, you can publish your texts and ideas already as students. We aim to organize this process as **flexibly** as possible while maintaining **high standards**. In the **"How to"** section and within the **Resorts**, you will find specific requirements regarding content and form.

We look forward to your contributions and send you our best wishes!

Theodor Himmel (Chairman EPIS Thinktank)

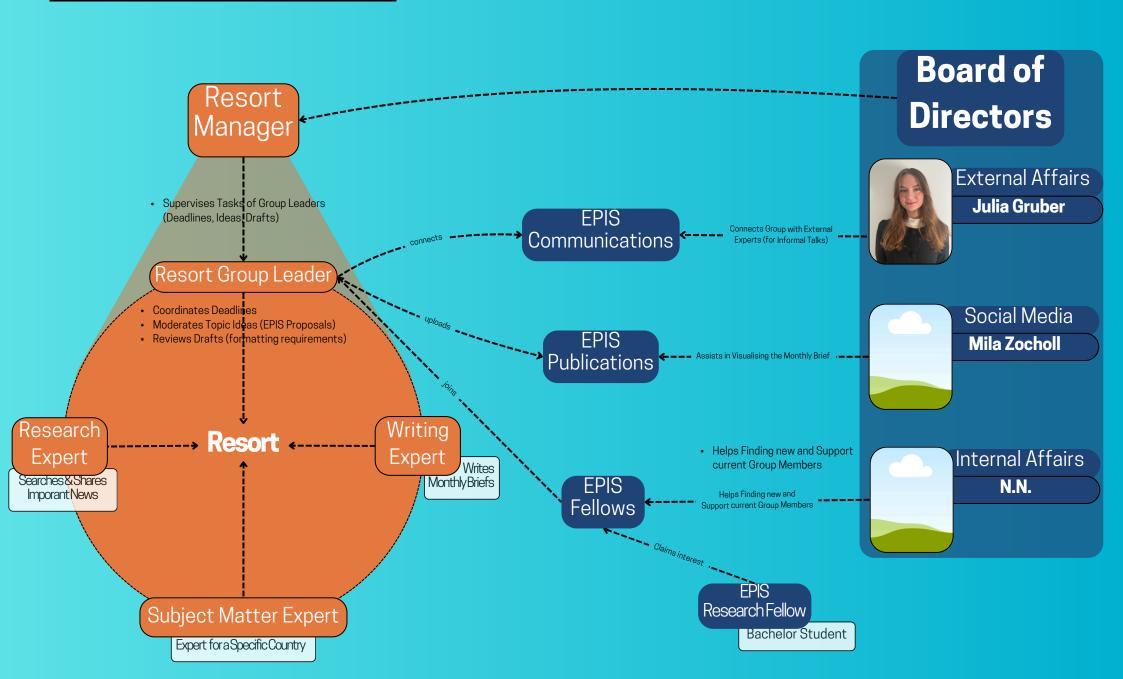
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# **Our Organisation**



# **Our Board of Directors**

## First Deputy



Johannes Hollunder

Administration & Social Media +49 1764 5626864 johannes.hollunder@epis-thinktank.de

#### Chairman



**Theodor Himmel** 

General Management +49 1522 4065351 theodor.himmel@epis-thinktank.de

## Second Deputy



Karla Kohlhaas

Internal Affairs +49 1703 674957 karla.kohlhaas@epis-thinktank.de

Social Media



Mila Zocholl

Delegations



**Clement Stratman** 

External Affairs



Julia Gruber

Data Protection & Auditing

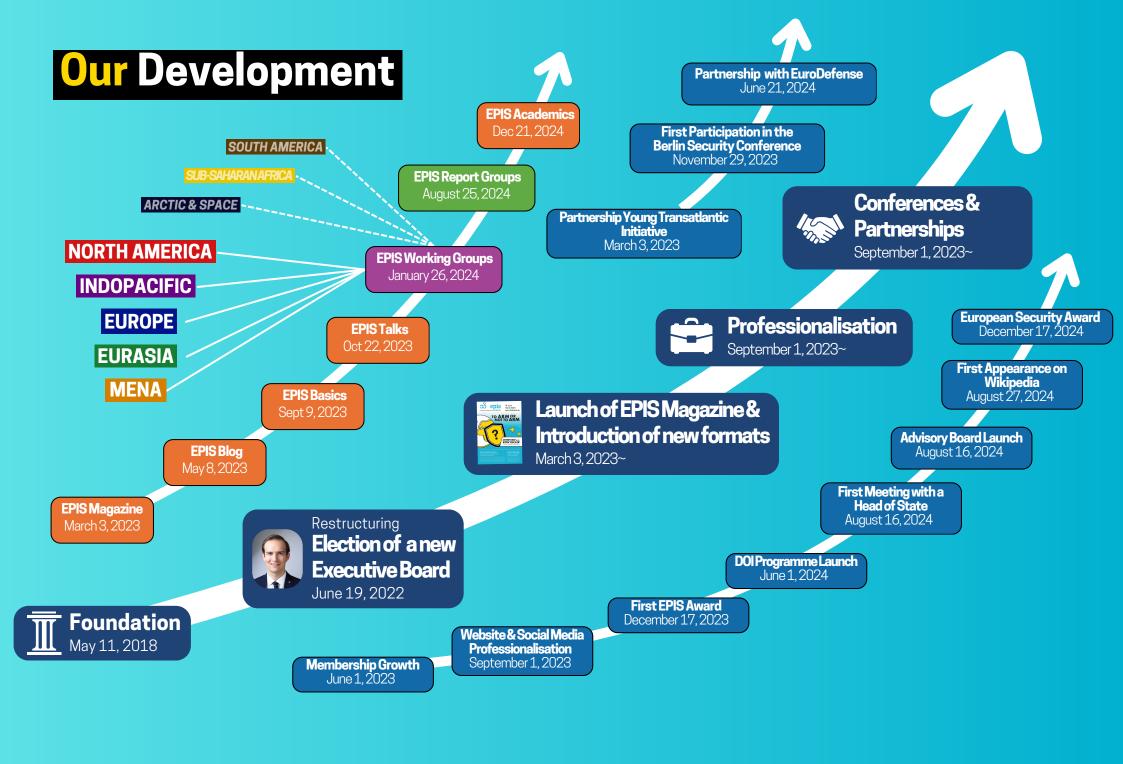


**Daniel Gerjets** 

Website



**Leonard Strohwald** 



# **Our Advisory Board**



**Ron Keller** 

#### At the Moment

International Advisor on Geopolitics, Global Economics and Finance

#### Prior Experience

- Dutch Ambassador to Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and China
- Advisor at the EU, EBRD, IMF and World Bank
- Senior Director at the Dutch Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs

#### Learn More Here





# **Our Principles**



## **Neutrality**

EPIS does not take institutional positions on public policy issues. The views presented in our formats are those of the authors and do not represent the views of EPIS Think Tank.

## **Factuality**

Views presented in our formats are based on facts and not on feelings.

#### Collegiality

As a network of students, we support each other through constructive debate and productive exchange

# Frequently Asked Questions

#### About **EPIS**

- 1. What does EPIS stand for? EPIS (short for the ancient Greek ἐπιστήμη epistémē) stands for "insight, knowledge, ability, science."
- 2. What does the EPIS Thinktank do? As a thinktank, we are active in four areas: 1. Publishing texts by our EPIS Fellows, 2. Networking with experts, 3. Sending EPIS Fellows to conferences, 4. Collaborating with stakeholders.
- 3. Can I make a suggestion? Of course -EPIS encourages initiative! Do you want to interview someone? Have an idea for a new format? Want to take on responsibility? Contact Karla Kohlhaas.



## About Organisation

- 1. What is an EPIS Resort? The EPIS Thinktank is divided into various EPIS Resorts: EPIS Formats, EPIS Working Groups, and EPIS Report Groups. Each Resort consists of multiple subgroups. You can join them by contacting Karla.
- 2. How can I publish texts? If you join of an Group in an EPIS Resort, you can publish a text. The respective EPIS Resort Leader will reach out to you and guide you though the process.
- 3. Where can I get involved? As an EPIS Fellow, you can contribute to any EPIS Resort.
- 4. Are there regular meetings I have to attend? No, there are no recurring endless online meetings. Our processes are structured and communication is directly person-to-person.

## About Membership

- 1. **How can I join?** Visit us on epis-thinktank.de/become-member, and fill out the application form. Our Internal Affairs Manager Karla Kohlhaas will contact you.
- 2. What is the membership fee? 15 EUR per year.
- 3. What are the benefits of being an EPIS Fellow? As an EPIS Fellow, you may: 1. Publish your texts, 2. Participate in delegations, 3. Network with experts, 4. Expand your expertise.
- 4. Are there any duties for EPIS Fellows? No, EPIS operates on a voluntary basis. You can be active, but you don't have to. There are EPIS Fellows who publish once, others who are regularly active, and some who contribute occasionally.



Message Karla on WhatsApp.
She will assist you:)
Internal Affairs Manager
+49 1703 674957
karla.kohlhaas@epis-thinktank.de



# How to: Pick a Topic

Every topic has to deal with either foreign affairs or security policy.

Before writing, it is essential to narrow down the subject of your publication.

To define the subject of your publication, use these 3 criteria:

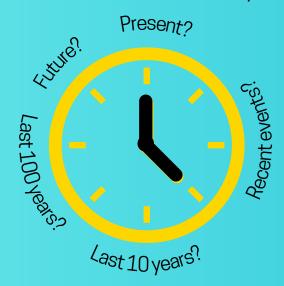


Location

What area does your topic address? Global? International? National?

Time

What time period does your topic cover?



## Security Policy & Defence

- Arms Control & Disarmament
- Non-Proliferation of WMDs
- Crisis Management
- Military Alliances
- Cyber Defense-Protection & Cooperation

## Human Rights & Humanitarian Aid

- Refugee Assistance
- Humanitarian Interventions
- Migration Policy
- Human Rights Promotion

What do topic you address?

**Topics** 

# Peacekeeping & Conflict Prevention

- International
- Cooperation
- Peace Missions
- Terrorism Prevention & Response
- Conflict Prevention

## Climate Policy & Environment

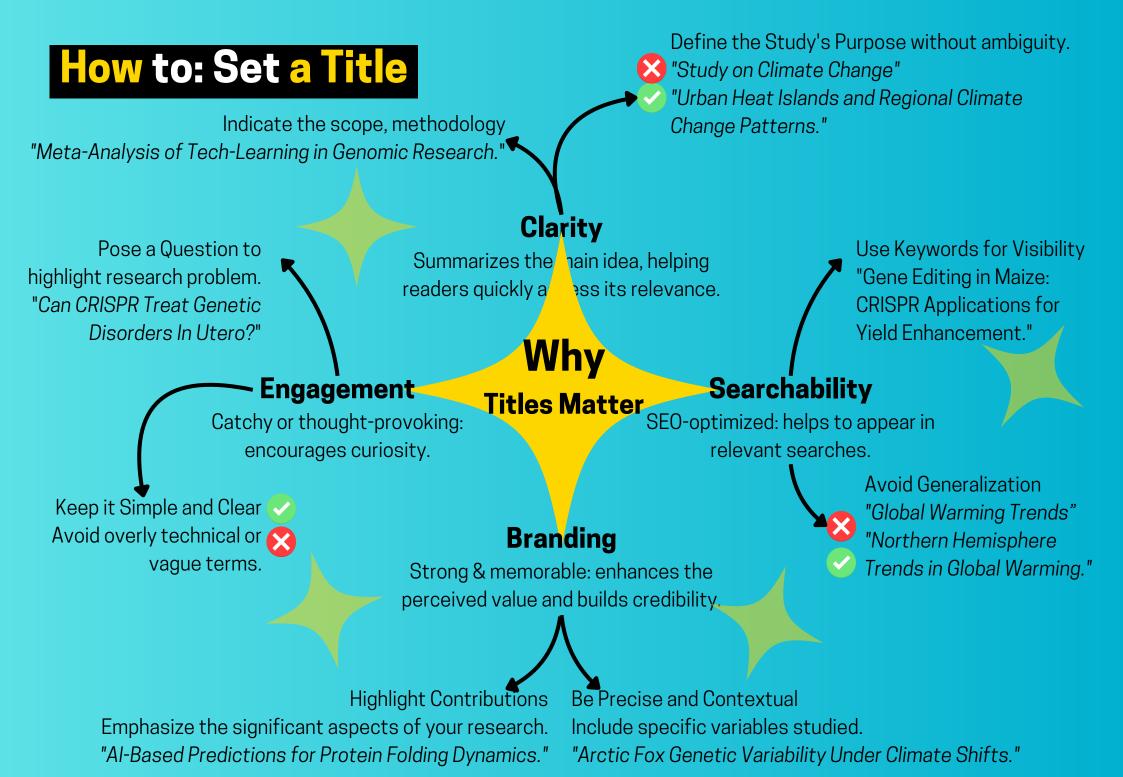
- Climate Protection
- Environmental Security

# International Economic Relations

- Sanctions Policy
- Resource Conflicts
- Energy Policy
- Trade Policy

## International Relations & Diplomacy

- Bilateralism & Multilateralism
- Mulitlateralism
- Alliance Building
- International Agreements
- Conflict Resolution



## **How to: Write an Introduction**

#### Guideline

- General introduction to the issue.
  - Is there a special occasion/reason?
- Clarification of the Research question
  - What does your research question cover?
  - What did you exclude from this coverage and why?
- Discussion of it's **theoretical and practical interests** Why should a reader take the time reading your article?
  - Practical interests: Why is it important to practical societal issues? Who benefits from reading/knowing your article?
  - Scientific interests: What is the current state of research? How, what and who has already published about this topic? What is your article going to add?
- Answer the research question
  - Provide a one-liner answer
- Description of the methodology
  - How did you approach the research question (i.e. via Literature review/empicial studies)?
- Explanation of the main subdivisions
  - How did you structure your article? Why and in how many parts did you split it? What is your thought behind it?

#### **Example**

- The war in Ukraine fired up the conflict between Russia and NATO
- **Is NATO prepared** for a military conflict against Russia?
  - This article covers new military technologies.
  - This excludes organisation, since less important in emergency.
- This answer is of interest both for society and science
  - The practical relevance is of how the society is included in preparation of war.
  - Research argues NATO is prepared. However, this is till invasion of Ukraine 2014. This article updates the current stand.
- NATO is not prepared till they level up their air systems.
- The article approaches the question **empirically** by collecting public information, weighing them and reaffirming them with rough estimates in expert literature.
- This article is divided in **three parts. First,** it explains the numbers of NATO. **Second**, the numbers are compared with Russian numbers. Third, it draws the conclusion.

## How to: Write a Paragraph

To write a convincing, well-structured paragraph, follow these principles:

- 1 paragraph = 1 single, cohesive claim (don't stuff paragraphs with several thoughts)
- Each sentence contributes (only!) to this claim
- Each paragraph contains min. 4 sentences
- To better organise your sentences use the:

**SNAKE** Shape

#### 1. Claim

Introduces the main purpose of the paragraph Serves as an introduction to a new claim

#### 2. Definition

Explains the context or terms/theories used

Serves to prepare the claim

#### 3. Argumentation

Apply research/evidence/argument to definition Serves to argue your claim

#### 3. Conclusion

Summarizes the argumentation to a solution Serves to validate that your claim is proven

another snake, another paragraph ...
... eventually growing into a fulltext



#### + Example

The Russian attacks on Ukraine clearly qualify as a war. War is defined as a sustained conflict between nations or organized groups involving significant armed violence. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, marked by large-scale military operations, territorial occupations, and the loss of thousands of lives. Furthermore, the use of artillery, air strikes, and ground troops reflects the organized and deliberate nature of the conflict. In conclusion, the scale, intensity, and duration of the Russian attacks on Ukraine unequivocally categorize the conflict as a war.

## **How to: Write a Text**

#### Formalities & Structure

- You have an **engaging** title and use paragraphs & subtitles
- Logical, organised sections, with smooth transitions and clear headings
- Each paragraph deals with one single topic
- Terms are defined and used consistently

#### Language

- Your choice of language is ...
  - Clear and concise
  - Formal, unemotional and objective
- You avoid ...
  - Repetitions
  - Subjective or ambiguous language
  - Grammatical errors and awkward sentence structures
- Further Advice:
  - Vary your sentences in length and style for improved readability
  - Avoid overly complex sentence structures
  - Follow our 5 Do's of Good Writing

#### Content

- Your ideas flow naturally. Your text follows a guiding thread.
- Your claims are supported by robust evidence
- Necessary concepts are well-explained with the necessary level of detail and are used consistently throughout the text
- Data Analysis & Results
  - You describe data source and analysis methods
  - Your results are effectively visualised
- Discussion:
  - You interpret your results with regard to your findings
  - Your interpretation sticks to the facts, regardless of what your claim is. If your results differ from your claim, this is mentioned and explained in your text
  - Describe how your results fit into the overall literature on your topic of analysis
  - Acknowledge limitations
- Conclusion:
  - Summarise findings and implications, and suggest avenues for future research

## **How to: Format a Text**

### **Text Body**

Line Spacing: 1,5 Font Type: Calibri

Alignment: Justified

Font Size: 12 (Headlines: 14

Ordered as follows:

Font Weight: normal (Headlines: Bold)

#### Use of A

Check out these Tools!

2.1.

2.2.

2.2.1.

2.2.2.

- You are free to use Al for support (research, correction, improvements).
- If it becomes apparent, however, that your text was written by an AI tool, it cannot be published

#### **Chat**GPT

Can help you structure

your argumentation

Grammarly

Grammatical Correction

#### **DeepL Write**

Stylistic Improvements

#### Wording

#### Capitalisation:

- Proper Nouns / Names / Brands / Organisations / States etc. (NOT concepts or theories
- Example: "President Lincoln was the president of the United States"
- **Numbers**: one through twelve = spelt out (one, two, ..., twelve, 13, 14, ...)
- Dates: Day Number Month Name Year Number (Example: 03. January 2023)
- Wording: British English Special attention to Differences with American English
   ()== analyse == analyze)

#### **References & Formalities**

- Line **indentation** at the beginning of a new paragraph
- Justified text and Hyphenation
- **APA 7** guidelines: In-text citations + Reference list entry Find a guideline and examples here
- Plagiarized content will not be uploaded! We will check.

## **How to: Create Visualisations**

Choices

Visualization are a **core component** of a publication. They assist the reader in understand why you want to tell with you article.

Also, it looks more apealing than a wall of words.

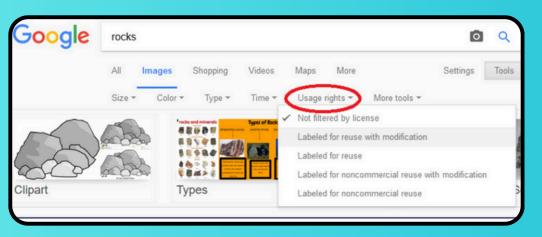
Be creative: Don't just submit a BORING scale - be creative!

Want to create **your own** visualisation? Follow these steps:

- 1. Talk to the Resort Leader they assist you
- 2. Draw a sketch/find comparable ideas
- 3. Gather the essential data which is later presented in the visualisations.
- 4. Our layouter digitalises your sketch!

Want to use **someone else's** visualisation? Follow these steps:

- 1. Check if you may use the visualization.
  - As an author, you are liable for copyright infringements.
  - Creative Commons licence are mostly usable.
     HOWEVER, some require naming the creator or forbid amendments. Be aware!
- 2. You can filter for a Creative Commons license like this:





# How to: 5 Do's of Good Writing

## Formulate Actively

- Write indicatively and avoid conjunctive formulations. It is wrong when inferring unavoidable conclusion.
- "If tomorrow were a new day the sun will rise"
- "If tomorrow were a new day, the **would** rise"
- Active phrases are more appealing than passive ones
- "as the Council of Europe **communicated**"
- "as was **communicated by** the Council of Europe"

## Write Vividly

- Cynical asides, surprising metaphors, the use of images and the like help readers identify with the text. This keeps them more attentive and allows you to better deliver your message.
- You can omit some content if this allows for a better delivery of your key message.
  - "After all China: once a **Dragon**, turned into **Winnie Poe**... or was lead by him
  - "After all China: lost it's might... or competence"

## Formulate **Explicitly**

- Oftentimes, authors try to hide their uncertainty or lack of expressiveness behind complicated sentences. This prevents them from writing what they think and the reader from understanding what they mean
- "He died in February"
- "The second month of the year was when he didn't live anylonger"

#### **Use Technical Terms**

- The use of technical terms can facilitate discourse by summarising the meaning of an otherwise too-long explanation. It is important, however, to remember that the readership is not a committee of experts. Texts overflowing with technical terms are unreadable (even for the insiders!).
- Unfamiliar terms require **explanation** when used.
- No abbreviations, also do not don't abbreviations





#### **Short & Precise Sentences**

- The reader's attention span forces precise formulation
- Delete **filler words** "clearly", "very" just as many adjectives are tautological "exact facts", "danger potential"

## Social Media: Workflows

#### Guidance

We have created countless social media posts in Canva. When creating new ones, copy and paste recurrent elements (logo etc.) to retain their positions. For everything else:

**Be Creative!** 

- Commission
- Editing
- Submission of Articles (+Visualisation Sketches -Working Group)



Document --> FPIS Publications

 Drive + Link to Google Sheet Document --> WIX

- EPIS Talks Audio = WIX Music Library
- EPIS Talks Video/EPIS Basics Video = link to CMS

Uploading

only Working

**Groups Brief** 

- EPIS Blog = Blog
- other PDF = CMS

#### Cover Image

- --> EPIS Publications (Drive
- + Link to Google Sheet)
- --> WIX (CMS)



#### **Posting**

on Instagram/LinkedIn/YouTube

according to EPIS Calendar

- Groups/Formats(+Insta-Story) YouTube: EPIS Talks, EPIS Basics

Posting the Story incl. Link

Scheduling

via Meta + LinkedIn + YouTube

on Publication Day Scheduling the Posting

Transfer Article and Visualisation into the PostingTemplate |

LinkedIn + Instagram: Working-/Report

- Replace Picture
- Calibri 12, 6 pt between paragraphs, no blank line between paragraphs

Confirmation of the Visualisation

Creation of the Cover Image/Visualisation/ other tiles



Layouting

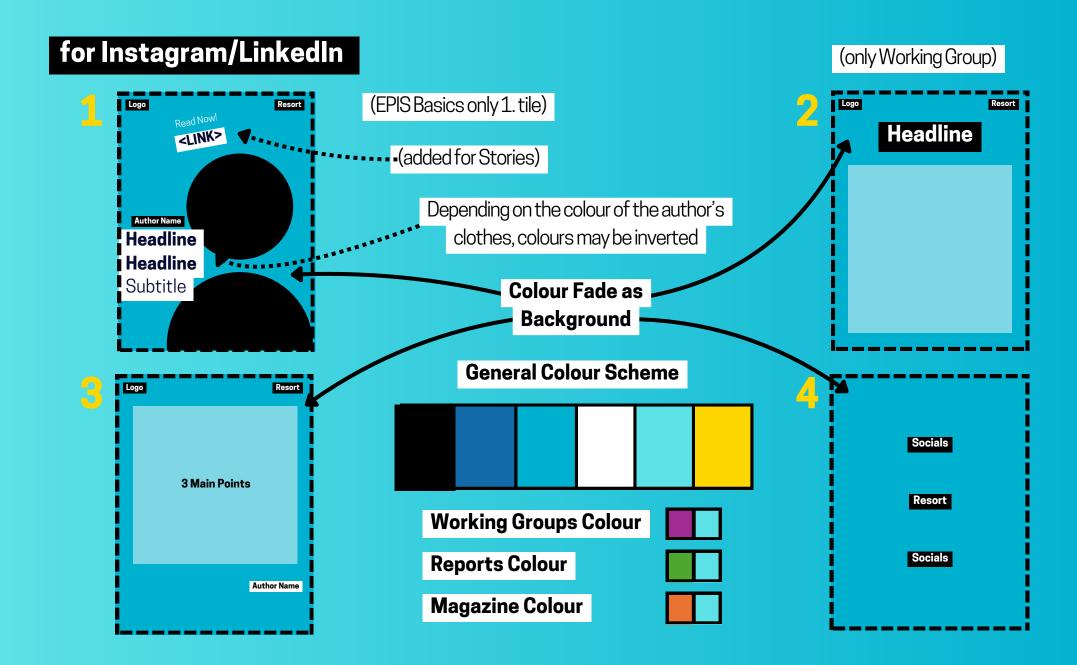
**Editing** 28th of previous month

> Format Leader Social Media Team Working-/Report Groups Manager

## **Uploading Schedule**

Мо	Di	Mi	Do	Fr	Sa	So
Blog	Working Group Brief	Basics	Working Group Brief	Report Group Articles	Magazine Articles	

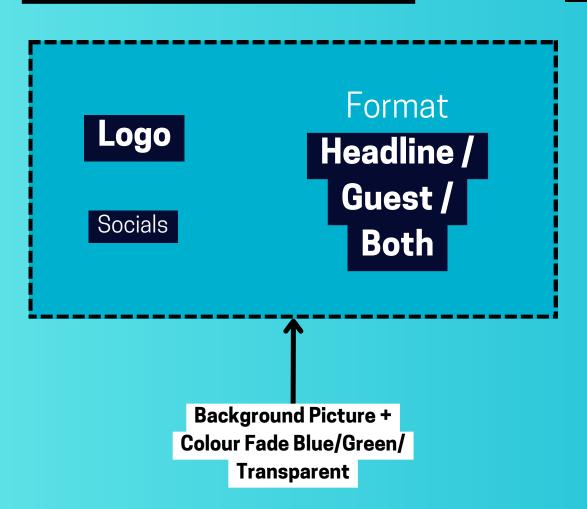
# Social Media: Working-/Report Group/Formats



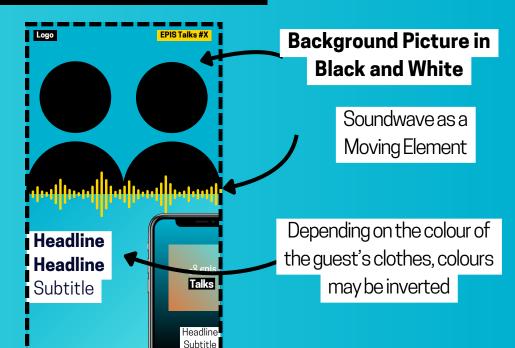
## Social Media: Talks - Reel

Guest Name

# Social Media: YouTube Thumbnail



## for Instagram/LinkedIn



# **EPIS Report Groups**





Karla Lamesic



Climate Policy & Environment

Report Groups Heuner

**Felix** 

Security Policy 

& Defense 

OOOO

International Relations & Diplomacy

Theodor Himmel



Human Rights & Humanitarian Aid



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t.b.d.

# **EPIS Report Groups**

Peacekeeping & **Conflict Prevention**  Military Alliances

Crisis Management

Arms Control & Disarmament

Non-Proliferation of WMDs

**Security Policy** & Defense

Cyber Defense -Protection & Cooperation

Climate Protection

**Climate Policy** 

Environmental Security

& Environment

Topics

**Human Rights & Humanitarian Aid** 

Humanitarian

Migration Policy

Human Rights Promotion

**International Relations** & Diplomacy

Alliance Building

Bilateralism & Multilateralism

Multilaleralism

Conflict Resolution

International Agreements

Sanctions Policy

Resource Conflicts

**Energy Policy** 

Trade Policy

International

**Economic** 

**Relations** 

Refugee Assistance

Interventions

# **EPIS Report Groups**



## Scope

EPIS Reports analyse a single topic from multiple perspectives. The articles combine accessibility and expertise to provide readers with a clear and well-rounded understanding of key issues in international relations.

#### From Idea to Publication



#### **Structure**

- Editorial & Greetings from our Partners
- Essay Articles (2.000 2.500 words + 2 visualisations)
  - = present an argument to rethink a perspective, original and by the author; supported by references
- Review Articles (2.000 2.500 words + 2 visualisations)
  - = comprehensive summary (of existing literature) +
     presenting/comparing different perspectives
- Opinionated **Commentary** (1.000 1.500 words)
  - = written subjectively about a recent debate/event
- Guest Contribution
- Expert Interview
- Informatory Background Report (2.000 2.500 words)
  - Written Objectively as insight view into an organisation
- EPIS Basics Entry (500 600 words)

# **EPIS Formats**



## **EPIS Formats** Academics





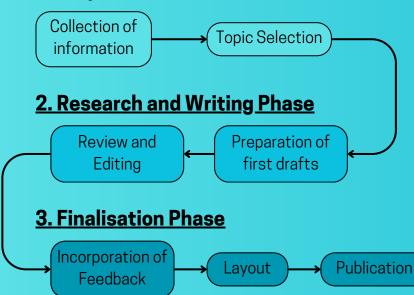


#### Scope

EPIS Academics offer the EPIS Study Scripts, EPIS Study Flashcards, and additional explanatory videos. They are designed to assist students in their studies by building a strong understanding of key concepts and theories. Simplifying complex ideas, EPIS Academics provides the tools needed for academic success and fosters a solid basis for future expertise.

#### From Idea to Publication

#### 1. Preparation Phase



## **Projects of EPIS Academics**

#### **Study Script**

70 pages pure international relations. Similar to EPIS Basics, but more comprehensive.

#### **Explanatory Videos**

No time to read? Watch instead! EPIS Academics Videos will provide you with everything you will need to know.

#### **Flashcards**

Flashcards that complement our script to allow you to study on the go - on the train, between lectures, or on the way to your best friend's birthday party.

## **EPIS Formats** Basics







#### Scope

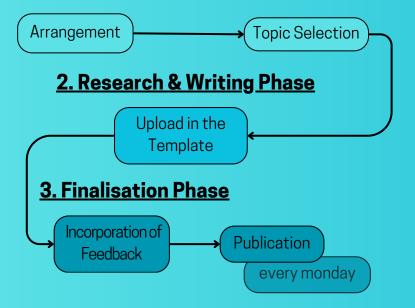
With EPIS Basics, we bring information on international relations in bite-sized pieces. We cover important personalities, theories and regimes to provide novices to the world of foreign affairs a point of entry.

#### Guideline

- Introducing certain personalities/theories/regimes of main concern in foreign affairs and security policy
- Video length: max. 60 seconds
- Text length: max. 500 words
- Add a visualisation

## From Idea to Publication

#### 1. Preparation Phase



## **Structure & Wording**

- There is not pre-determined structure but the text must be **well-rounded**.
- Start theoretical and provide an example.
- Do not repeat information.

## **EPIS Formats** Blog





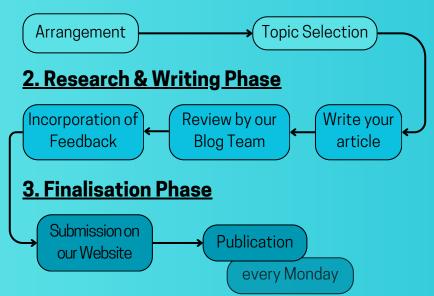


#### Scope

Through our blog, we aim to promote debates that go beyond superficial headlines, and we would like to give you the chance to participate in the debate. When contributing an article, you present your personal view on a topic in international relations of your choice.

#### From Idea to Publication

#### 1. Preparation Phase



#### Guideline

- Analyse a current issue related to foreign and/or security policy
- Share your personal perspective
- Length: 500-1000 words
- Add references as hyperlinks in the text
- Tip: Check your text with tools such as Grammarly or DeepL to elevate the level of your writing

## **Structure & Wording**

- There is not pre-determined structure but the text must be **well-rounded**.
- Do **not repeat information** but explain **your personal** view! Convince the reader of your perspective.
- Your analysis is the main part of your contribution.
   Provide only as much background information as is needed for non-experts to understand your opinion

## **EPIS Formats** Magazine







#### Scope

Our magazine contributes to the academic debate by combining expert opinions and student voices. That way, we foster a dynamic exchange of ideas and promote intellectual growth.

#### From Idea to Publication



#### **Structure**

- Editorial & Greetings from our Partners
- Essay Articles (2.000 2.500 words + 2 visualisations)
  - = present an argument to rethink a perspective, original and by the author; supported by references
- **Review Articles** (2.000 2.500 words + 2 visualisations)
  - = comprehensive summary (of existing literature) +
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- Guest Contribution
- Expert Interview
- Informatory Background Report (2.000 2.500 words)
  - Written Objectively as insight view into an organisation
- EPIS Basics Entry (500 600 words)

## **EPIS Formats** Talks





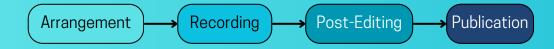
#### Scope

**dynamic discussions** on foreign & security policy. Aimed at young professionals, scholars, and engaged citizens, the podcast delivers **concise** episodes on strategies, careers, and key challenges, positioning EPIS as a hub for informed and inspiring conversations.

## Style

- Conversational, friendly, inviting. Speak freely, elaborate the magic comes from the conversation!
- Objective and well-founded, without being overly academic
- Ensure clarity and comprehensibility
  - → incorporate examples and personal anecdotes!
- If you misspeak, repeat your entire sentence/ sentence chunk (that eases editing)

#### From Idea to Publication



#### **Formalities**

- Discussions with experts from the domains of diplomacy, military, academia, etc.
- 30-45 min episodes
- biweekly release

#### Three-Part Structure

#### 1. Person

- Focus: Portraying an interesting person from the domains of diplomacy, politics, science, etc.
- Topics: Personal path, experiences, challenges in the context of foreign & security policy

#### 2. Field / Institution

- Focus: Analysis of a current issue in security or a pressing regional matter. Portraying the work of the interviewed actor with regard to this challenge
- Topics: Conflict zones, strategic developments, innovations

#### 3. Career

- Focus: Advice for listeners who aim for a career in international politics
- Topic: Practical tips, soft skills, etc.

# **EPIS Working Groups**



lasmina Stoian



North America Indo-Pacific



Benjamin Spindeldreier

Felix Heuner



Working Groups

Arctic & Space



Julia Gruber

Marvin Katsole



Sub-Saharan Africa

**MENA** 



Berat Ürküt

South America



# **EPIS Working Groups**

#### Scope

Our Working groups publish **monthly briefs** on important developments in their respective regions. Each brief is accompanied by a graphic that the main point of the article.

Which region are you interested in?

With these, we pursue 3 goals:

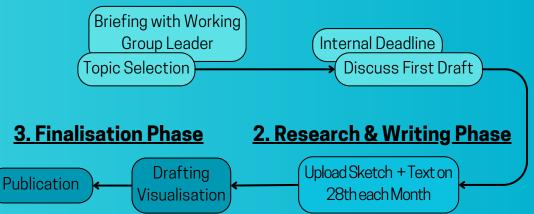
- 1. **Substantial work** in glance of the US think tank tradition.
- 2. There is already too much text about it visualise it!
  - thus making it **more appealing** to readers
- 3. A **flexible and autonomous** opportunity for new EPIS Research Fellows In essence: Keep the deadline, and you are free to choose the topic and organise your work

## **Organisation**



#### From Idea to Publication

#### 1. Preparation Phase





Don't Follow Trends.

Follow Facts.