

# GUIDELINES FOR WRITING ARTICLES

April 2026



**IFAIR**  
Young Initiative on Foreign Affairs  
and International Relations e.V.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**MISSION STATEMENT** **1**

---

**AUDIENCE AND CLARITY** **1**

---

**SCOPE** **2**

---

**LAYOUT AND STRUCTURE** **2**

---

**ANALYSIS, ARGUMENTATION AND  
OPINION PIECES** **4**

---

**RESEARCH, SOURCES, AND ACCURACY** **5**

---

**LANGUAGE AND STYLE** **6**

---

**RESPECTFUL AND INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE** **6**

---

**EDITORIAL PROCESS** **7**

---

**FORMATS AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT** **7**

---

# Mission Statement

Our publications serve as a platform for **in-depth analysis, thoughtful contextualization, and constructive debate** on international political, economic, and social developments.

The focus is not on breaking news, but on the **in-depth analysis of topics with structural or long-term significance**. Contributions should contextualize developments, highlight interconnections, and present different perspectives in a clear and accessible manner.

Authors may write both analytical and argumentative texts. **Transparency is key:** readers should be able to discern whether a contribution primarily analyzes, evaluates, or formulates concrete policy recommendations.

Our goal is to contribute to informed public debate through well-researched and clearly structured contributions.

## Audience and clarity

The articles are intended for an international readership from the fields of politics, academia, the media, civil society, and the general public.

Texts should therefore:

- be factually sound and analytically precise
- remain understandable to readers without specific expertise
- explain complex relationships in a clear and accessible manner

Authors should assume that readers are generally interested in politics but do not necessarily possess specialized knowledge in every subject area.

Technical terms may be used but should be briefly explained if they are not widely known.

# Scope

The length of a contribution should be appropriate to the format and topic in question. Texts should provide sufficient space to analyze a topic in depth, while remaining concise and focused.

As a guideline:

- Standard contributions are generally about **2–3 pages** (1.5 line spacing; Times New Roman, 12-point).
- Shorter formats, such as commentaries or debate contributions, may be correspondingly more concise.
- Longer analyses are possible if the length is justified by the content and contributes to the structure of the text.

Regardless of length, contributions should be clearly structured and focus on the central arguments. Unnecessary repetitions or digressions should be avoided.

The editorial team reserves the right to make cuts or structural adjustments in consultation with the authors to improve readability and clarity.

# Layout and Structure

A clear structure makes it easier to understand complex content. Posts should therefore follow a logical structure.

## Headline

The headline often determines whether a post will be read. It should:

- be concise and informative
- clearly convey the topic
- pique interest without being misleading



## **Introduction**

The introduction introduces the topic and presents the central question or thesis. It should make clear:

- what the paper is about
- why the topic is relevant
- what perspective or question is being explored

A current event, a central thesis, or a striking observation can serve as a starting point.

## **Main Body**

The main body provides an in-depth analysis of the topic. This includes, for example:

- background information
- relevant political or economic developments
- data, studies, or empirical examples
- different perspectives or positions

A clear thread is essential. The argumentation should be logically structured and guide readers step by step through the topic.

Subheadings can help structure longer texts and make them easier to navigate.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion summarizes the most important findings. Depending on the article, it may:

- formulate a conclusion
- provide an assessment
- highlight possible developments or policy options

A good conclusion revisits the central question of the text and rounds out the argument.

# **Analysis, Argumentation and Opinion Pieces**

Contributions can take various forms, such as:

- analytical background articles
- commentaries or opinion pieces
- interviews
- essays or debate contributions

Regardless of the format, the following applies: facts, analysis, and normative evaluation should be clearly distinguishable from one another. Analytical contributions focus on contextualizing developments and illustrating connections, while opinion pieces may present a well-reasoned position.

If a contribution contains a personal assessment or political evaluation, it must be clearly recognizable that this is the position of the respective author. Opinion pieces should therefore be labeled accordingly (e.g., as a commentary, essay, or debate contribution).

The positions expressed in such contributions do not necessarily reflect the stance of IFAIR. Clear labeling ensures transparency for readers and contributes to the publication's credibility.

Opinion pieces should also be based on sound arguments, reliable information, and relevant sources.

# Research, Sources, and Accuracy

The credibility of our publications is based on careful research and a precise presentation of information. Authors are therefore encouraged to support their statements with reliable sources whenever possible and to provide verifiable evidence for the information they present.

## The following principles apply:

- **Citation style:** The **Harvard citation style** is used for references. Sources are cited in the text as appropriate and listed in full at the end of the article.
- **Links:** Where possible, relevant sources, studies, data, or official documents should be linked directly within the text to enable readers to easily verify the information.
- **Source quality:** Preference should be given to scientific studies, official documents, reputable media reports, or recognized research institutions as sources. **Specialized literature should be the primary source of information.**
- **Quotations:** Quotations must be reproduced accurately and in the correct context.

Authors should also take care to present complex developments in a nuanced manner and avoid hasty generalizations. If different interpretations of a situation exist, it may be helpful to briefly outline them in the article.

# Language and Style

Clear and precise language is crucial for the readability of an article.

Authors should therefore pay attention to the following:

- short, easy-to-understand sentences
- clearly structured paragraphs
- active voice whenever possible
- sparse use of technical jargon

In addition:

- unnecessary abbreviations should be avoided
- institutional terms or technical terminology should be briefly explained
- long and convoluted sentence structures should be avoided

The goal is a style that allows for analytical depth while remaining highly readable.

## Respectful and inclusive language

Our publications promote a culture of objective and respectful debate. Contributions may represent different viewpoints and address controversial topics. Our work is **grounded in respect for the free democratic basic order of the Federal Republic of Germany**, as well as the fundamental principles of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

### **The following standards apply:**

- respectful treatment of individuals and groups
- no discriminatory or derogatory portrayals
- a nuanced presentation of complex social issues
- no content that questions or undermines fundamental democratic principles or the free democratic basic order

Authors should take care to avoid sweeping generalizations or stereotypical portrayals and to present social developments in as nuanced a manner as possible.

# Editorial process

All submissions are reviewed by our editorial team prior to publication. This process may need to be repeated over several rounds of revisions until a satisfactory result is achieved.

## **The editorial process includes, in particular:**

- linguistic and stylistic revision
- review of structure and clarity
- clarification of content, if necessary
- verification of sources and references

The editorial team works closely with the authors throughout this process. The goal is to refine the content of the article and improve its readability.

# Formats and Further Development

In addition to traditional analytical articles, we also welcome other formats, such as:

- Interviews with experts
- Contributions to debates on current political issues
- Essays or opinion pieces
- Data-driven analyses or visualizations

New formats may also be developed, provided they help to present complex topics in an accessible way and offer readers added value in terms of content.