

FUTURE DEMOCRACY LAB / DEMOCRACY INSIGHTS

POLICY BRIEF (PB) GUIDELINE

The goal of a Policy Brief (PB) is to introduce the audience (policymakers, think-tankers, and academics) to timely events or subjects related to the state of democracy in different regions of the world, and to promote awareness of issues concerning the potential future directions of democratic development. Its main ambition is to combine in-depth analysis with a concise, policymaker-friendly format, limited to a maximum of **2,500 words**.

Structure

Lead up to 70 words

- Includes the essence of the PB, reveals what it is about and states its purpose (*what for?*),
- Informs the reader what the key question is,
- Should catch the attention and encourage continued reading,
- Should contain 2-4 short sentences,
- Should avoid: passive voice, redundant words.

Introduction up to 400 words

- Titled not 'introduction' but with an appropriate subheading,
- Should include:
 - Problem statement (defines the problem or issue),
 - Overview of the problem,
 - Background of the problem (problem history),
 - Current status of the problem,
 - Importance of the problem,
 - Key questions.

The main body up to 2,000 words excl. references

Divided into subheadings.

Policy Recommendations and Conclusions up to 400 words

Contributors' bios up to 100 words each

References

FDL Democracy Insights uses hyperlinks rather than citations for references.

We encourage authors to provide links directing readers to more detailed reports or other pieces of research, news items, other blog posts, especially when quoting facts, figures and speeches etc.

Open access sources are preferred.

Please insert a hyperlink at the relevant point in your piece that you would like to reference – e.g., “Joe Blogs has said [insert hyperlink on the next word]”.

To insert a hyperlink in Microsoft Word, copy the address of the website, highlight the phrase you’d like to appear as a link in the text, and press “Ctrl” and “K”. This will bring up an option menu that allows you to paste in the web address.

Please try to avoid using footnotes wherever possible.

Common Language Issues

Ensure consistency by using either British or American spelling throughout.

The paper is in the English language, and so the names of all institutions, organisations, and quotes should be translated to English with links to original sources provided (if required).

Try to minimise acronyms, or at least spell the full name or phrase first, and then bracket the acronym for use going forward.

FDL Democracy Insights uses the Oxford comma; i.e., in a series of three or more items, add a comma before the conjunction. Thus, we would write ‘Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia make up the Visegrad Group’ rather than ‘Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia make up the Visegrad Group’.

‘Policy-making’ should be one hyphenated word, while ‘healthcare’ should be one word without hyphens.

With the exception of such widely-used phrases as ‘status quo’, ‘laissez-faire’, etc., italicise foreign terms and phrases.

Avoid contractions.

Spell out ‘percent’ rather than using the symbol %.

Unless you are referring to percentages (e.g., ‘According to one poll, 60 percent of respondents say that...;’ ‘The European Commission predicts 3 percent GDP growth for the region...’), spell out all numbers less than one-hundred as well as all multiples of one-hundred and one-thousand, one-million, etc. Examples: ‘Joseph Stalin is seen as responsible for twenty million deaths;’ ‘In the twenty years since Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic joined NATO...,’ etc.