

EUROPEAN LIBERAL FORUM

PRODUCT GUIDELINES

RECOMMENDATIONS



**” EVERYTHING SHOULD BE MADE AS
SIMPLE AS POSSIBLE, BUT NOT SIMPLER.”**

The purpose of this guide is to help the member organisations of The European Liberal Forum (ELF) in the process of drafting and creating ELF products, including publications, policy briefs, videos and podcasts. The guide provides definitions of the different formats, a few recommendations and some examples. It is meant to support less experienced member organisations, as well as to serve as an inspiration for expert member organisations.

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PRODUCT FORMATS PRINT & DIGITAL

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BOOKS

An in-depth exploration of a topic using qualitative or quantitative methods. A book can be a study written for policy experts or can be more general and written for the public.

Length: more than 4000 words

POLICY PAPER

A policy paper provides background information and policy recommendations for policymakers and other interested experts. The topic should be well-defined with clear, tangible suggestions for future policies.

Length: 1500 – 4000 words

POLICY BRIEFS

A policy brief provides information to readers with limited time about a specific topic. It can be used to summarise the recommendations from a policy paper or as a stand-alone publication.

Length: 500–1500 words

ISSUE BRIEF

An issue brief provides a short description and context of a topic, without giving specific recommendations. It could be used as reading material before a conference/workshop/event.

Length: 500 – 1500 words

VIDEOS

A video is a visual way to present a topic, a discussion or to wrap up an event. Videos can be short clips or longer documentaries. Videos can also feature an interview.

Length: 1 minute – 2 hours

PODCASTS

A podcast is an communication format in the form of an audio file that can vary in length. A podcast can be a discussion or an interview and is an ideal format to create a direct connection to your audience and to launch calls to action.

Length: 10 – 30 minutes

OPINION PIECE

An opinion piece is used to present a position on a certain topic and to make this accessible to a broader audience. It is usually in the form of a commentary by policymakers, scholars, leaders from business and non-governmental organisations, changemakers and participants of ELF events.

Length: 500 – 2000 words

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT PUBLICATIONS

Here are some general guidelines to have in mind when when drafting ELF products. However, not all points will be applicable to all formats.

1 CHOOSE A GOOD TOPIC AND DEFINE IT

The topic should be relevant at the European level and for readers from different European countries. You may take examples and focus on one specific country, as long as you can show that the conclusions are relevant for others as well. Define which questions you do want to answer in your publication and which questions you do not. If you try to cover too much in your publication, there is a risk that you will not go deep enough in the topics.

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The study focuses on the intersection of those types of information that are published with an intended strategic-political effect on a topic of public interest, with the hypothesis that these may have the most effect on democratic processes and society. To fixate on what is absolutely relevant in the mentioned context, we have narrowed the focus from a broad concept of 'post-truth' media – which would include the diffuse misinformation, conspiracy theories and unpaid trolling, as well as offline propaganda and hate speech – to strategically disseminated political content that aims to mislead the audience.

This is a good example because it clarifies that the broad term “disinformation and propaganda” refers to political content that aims to mislead, thereby telling the reader what the publication is and is not about.

Taken from the publication [Disinformation and propaganda – impact on the functioning of the rule of law in the EU and its Member States](#) by European Parliament’s Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs.

1.1 Relevance and aim of the study

According to the latest figures, 2.3% of workers receive significant income from platform work (Pesole et al., 2018). Out of those, 69.5% have no maternity benefits and 63.1% have no access to unemployment benefits (Forde et al., 2017).

At the same time, platforms across Europe demand legal clarity regarding employment status and some have asked governments to allow them to buy collective social security benefits which they can provide to platform workers (de Groen et al. 2018).

The current systems were designed at a time when employment relationships were distinctly different and most countries have long known either an employed or a self-employed status. Platform workers are a typical example of a hybrid form: They are able to choose their work but have limited flexibility in how they manage and structure the work.

These questions are the context for the study. The first chapter will look at the broader economical and societal changes and assess the potential role of platforms. The second chapter will look at the platform economy itself and describe it along the lines that describe the organization and allocation of work. The third chapter will analyze the deficiencies of the platforms when it comes to working conditions. The fourth chapter will develop a model for an “Ecosystem Fund” which might be able to cover the deficiencies described in the third chapter. The study will conclude with a summary of the findings and an outlook on what some first steps might be.

This is a good example as it provides a background to the topic, justifies why the topic is relevant and gives the reader a clear picture of what the report will be about.

From the publication [You Had One Job](#) by ELF and NEOS Lab.

2 START WITH A SUMMARY

Your potential readers probably have a lot of papers to read. A summary at the beginning allows readers with limited time to understand the core message of your paper. It can also spark interest to continue reading.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FIRST, the more protectionist development of American trade policy of the last decade seems likely to be a permanent change for the USA, but still only a temporary anomaly in the world economy's movement towards increasing trade due to reduced trade barriers in general, and reduced tariffs in particular. However, removing other types of trade barriers, such as regulations based on health, safety and environmental concerns, is likely to continue to be unacceptable intrusions in countries' sovereignty.

SECOND, even without the 2016 election of Donald Trump happening, it is possible that there is an underlying, long term trend towards increased protectionism in the US. If so, it probably has gained strength from a rise in resistance against the consequences of globalization for some regions and industries, resulting e.g. in increased inequalities in income and wealth.

The lack of effective and sufficiently funded social safety nets for affected individuals, as well as lack of access to new employment via retraining and further education, are often suggested as causes of resistance to globalization. However, the question of whether these explanations are enough remains.

When asked about the increasing resistance to globalisation, I always emphasise that globalisation affects individuals differently and that there are big differences in the political response to globalisation between the US and most EU countries. All western countries should not be lumped together when discussing the advantages and disadvantages of globalisation.

THIRD, one lesson from Trump's time in power is that it seems important to the rest of the world that the US Congress regains its legislative mandate in questions of trade policy. When passing the Trade Expansion Act in 1962, Congress surrendered legislative power to the president as a result of the decision to include Section 232 on "national security" in the bill.³ At that time, the president was seen as a champion for world trade and in any case more positive to free trade than Congress. Today, in accordance with the US Constitution's doctrine on separation of powers, the president's ability to act

This is a good example because it presents the conclusions at the beginning of the publication in a concise and clear way.

The example is taken from the publication [Turning the Tables on World Trade](#) by ELF.

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Globalization has boosted output in the Western economy



Globalization has enabled firms to specialize – and to increase the intensity of R&D, innovation and capital in their output.



Globalization has made it easier for new companies to start competing with old incumbents.



The trade sector has increased the number of people that it employs, both through exports and imports.

Globalization has raised household income



Globalization helped to reduce high inflation rates in Western economies, giving consumers more “bang for the buck”.



Globalization has increased real wages by lowering the cost of consumption.



Many goods that previously were affordable to only the few – e.g. a mobile phone or sewing machine – are now common in most households.

Globalization has given economies and people new opportunity



Globalization has spurred the spread of new technology, helping to make economies greener and more productive.



Globalization has helped to reduce gender wage discrimination and giving new opportunities to women.



Globalization has improved the quality of management in firms and the working conditions for people.

This is a good example of an illustrative summary at the beginning of a publication.

The example is taken from the publication [The Economic Benefits of Globalization for Business and Consumers](#) by ECIPE.

3 DEFINE AND EXPLAIN CONCEPTS PROPERLY

If you write about mega trends like populism, globalisation, digitalisation or automatisisation, explain what you mean by those concepts. The reader might have a different definition of those words than you. If you have to use specialised terminology, define the terminology early on.

'Fake news' and 'disinformation' > The term 'fake news' may be widely recognised in public debate, but academic and policy sources generally advise against it, recommending 'disinformation' instead.² While misinformation refers to material that is simply erroneous, for example due to error or ignorance, disinformation implies an intentional, malicious attempt to mislead – see Fig. 1 on page 5. In this paper, 'fake news' and 'disinformation' are used as synonyms.

This is a good example because it clarifies the widely-used term 'fake news' and, by doing so, makes the publication clearer.

The following example is taken from the publication [Disinformation and democracy: The home front in the information world](#) by European Policy Centre

Text box 1.1

Why these terms?

Terms related to migration are often differently interpreted. How do we define them here, and why?

The term **migrant** is used broadly in this publication. It refers to persons who leave their native country to live elsewhere, for any reason or period of time. Some migrants leave of their own free will for reasons of work or education. Others find themselves forced to leave for fear of their life.

Refugees are migrants of the latter category. In other words, they are distinguished from other migrants by their reason to leave. According to the UN Convention on Refugees, a refugee is someone with a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country without any expectations of protection by authorities. Reasons for persecution may be race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion

The term **asylum seeker** refers to an individual who is seeking international protection and whose claim has not yet been decided on by the country in which it was submitted. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee was initially an asylum seeker.

Related concepts, such as migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, can easily be confused with one another, which risks making the publication difficult to understand. However, this can be avoided by including clarifications like the one below.

The example is taken from the publication [New in Europe – A Vision on Migration](#) by ELF and the Hans van Mierlo Stichting.

4 USE SIMPLE LANGUAGE

Einstein is reported to have said that “everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler”. If you find yourself choosing between two words, opt for the simplest if it doesn’t change the meaning. It will make your paper accessible to more people. Even if your content is about something complex, it doesn’t necessarily mean that your language must be complex.

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of the arguments for the rule of law and free trade, as von Hayek suggested, we should not condone the use by socialist intellectuals of taxpayers' money in their campaign against these very same taxpayers. Society is not a suicide club, as British legal philosopher Herbert L. A. Hart once said.³²²

On the basis of the analysis offered in this report, some recommendations about policy can be made. Some of them may at present sound utopian, but we should recall that what is regarded as 'political impossible' greatly varies over time:

- 1.** The welfare state has to be reformed without tearing apart an adequate safety net for the helpless. The most urgent reform in most Western countries is of the pension system which has to change from pay-as-you-go arrangements to fully funded pensions.
- 2.** The pension age should also be raised: You should only be able to go on pension when you are 67 years or older, like in Iceland, and you should be able to work until you are 75 years, at least in certain professions where skills may actually increase with the year, or at least not decrease. People with experience, erudition and insight should not be excluded from the labour market.
- 3.** Welfare should as much as possible become a local issue, on the subsidiary principle often invoked by the EU. Welfare benefits, where they are retained, should be means-tested so that rich parents would not receive child benefits or the high-income elderly publicly funded basic pensions. The authorities should target those in real need, not the middle class.
- 4.** Unemployment benefits, when publicly funded, should not be so generous as to tempt people not to look for work. Unemployment, rampant amongst young people in Europe, should be reduced in the short term by greatly increasing flexibility in the
- 5.** Inequalities, privileges and monopoly profits created by the state should be eliminated, which means that rules should be revised on patents, copyrights, trademarks, and occupational licensing, and that the tax system should be simplified and exemptions reduced, and that tariffs and other direct or indirect subsidies to producers, also in the arts and sports, should be abolished.
- 6.** Even where there may be a political consensus that the state, or in other words usually the richest 20 per cent of the taxpayers, should pay for certain welfare services such as nursery schools and emergency wards, consumer choice and competition should wherever possible be introduced.
- 7.** Compulsory primary education should aim at creating the skills necessary in the labour market, fostering a sense of national identity and encouraging and rewarding exceptional students.³²³ It should be publicly funded, but with the possibility of choice and competition, for example through a voucher system.
- 8.** Higher education should be privately produced, and paid for by its consumers, although the state might facilitate a sustainable system of student loans.
- 9.** Medical services should be private produced, and paid for by its consumers, although the state might help to establish a system, even a compulsory one, of medical insurance.
- 10.** Inequalities stemming from individual luck, personal skill and consumers' choice and not from any acts of injustice should be accepted, and those earning high income because of their superior talents, special skills and expertise should be applauded rather than envied. The Mozarts and Einsteins of this world bestow benefits upon us, even if the self-esteem of their possible rivals might be reduced.

An example of a summary written in a simple language.

The example is taken from the publication [Spending other people's money](#) by New Direction.

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One recent example of such a spill over effect is when the US steeply raised tariffs on an array of imported Chinese goods in June 2018. In retaliation, China immediately introduced a 25% tariff on the import of, among other things, soybeans from the US.⁹ The Chinese retaliations reduced the profitability for farmers and exporters – primarily in Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota – by lowering the price of soybeans (China replaced soybeans from the US with increased import of soybeans from Brazil). The fact that China chose to have the bulk of their countermeasures affecting these three states is no coincidence since the election results from these states are likely to be crucial for the Republicans in future general elections.¹⁰

As a reaction, president Trump promptly promised a support package of twelve billion USD to the affected soybean farmers and other affected groups.

To sum up: The increased American trade barriers against China resulted in increasing subsidies to farmers in the US, lower prices for American soybean producers, the risk of Brazilian producers in the long run taking a portion of the Chinese market from American farmers, and a distorted competition in several markets.¹¹

Example of a course of events explained in an educational and simple way.

The example is taken from the publication [Turning the Tables on World Trade](#) by ELF.

5 EXPLAIN STEP-BY-STEP

Show step-by-step why the facts that you present lead to your conclusions and recommendations. Try to avoid big jumps from facts to conclusions.

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9	Foreword <i>by Sigrid Kaag</i>
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55	3.1 What integration is and should be about
58	3.2 Dilemmas and priorities
60	3.3 Country cases

The publication [New in Europe – A Vision on Migration](#) by ELF and the Hans van Mierlo Foundation is a good example of a step-by-step structure. The publication starts with a description of the migration system today, continues with liberal principles and ends with policy recommendations.

6 TRY TO BE SPECIFIC WHEN GIVING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Who should do what, and with which resources? Try to avoid recommendations like “this is an important problem and more resources have to be allocated to solve it.”

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4. Recommendations

4.1 THE EU AND MEMBER STATES

As it is the highest level at which effective policy can be implemented and enforced, the EU remains the most promising level for action against disinformation: it is best placed to combat a cross-border phenomenon without the pressures of day-to-day national politics. In general terms, the **Code of Practice** and the **civil society/private sector aspects of the Action Plan** should be the priority: they err on the side of inaction, but this is preferable to clumsy or inappropriate action. There is a very real danger of making things worse.

Ultimately, the only truly effective way to fight disinformation will be to address the crisis of confidence in mainstream politics that is creating demand for alternative narratives, and this should be the first priority of any actor. In the meantime, however, **the focus of EU efforts should be to develop a supportive environment in which NGOs, civil society, the media and the wider private sector can construct the societal infrastructure needed to resist disinformation.**

- The Code of Practice is an excellent starting point, and it should remain at the heart of the European response to disinformation. Its **voluntary nature is a weakness, but compulsion would likely be counter-productive**. To keep the signatories bound to their commitments, the European Commission must therefore keep the option of regulation on the table as an incentive. **There must be consequences if signatories choose to withdraw from the Code** or specific commitments – the threat of regulatory measures that could be harmful to business practices should serve to keep the signatories committed to cooperation.
- Since it is implemented on a purely voluntary basis, the Code of Practice must be **widely advertised so that the public is aware of it** and can hold signatories to account. The Commission should insist that the reports, which signatories should submit each month, include details on their efforts to spread awareness among their users about the Code and what they are doing to meet their commitments. These **reports should be made public**, and the Commission should issue a **regular public evaluation** of how each signatory is doing, including recommendations of where improvements could be made.
- Fighting disinformation in Europe should **take place in the civil space** to ensure that actors are democratically accountable. There is a role for military strategic communications in countering state actor interference, but excessive concern over the influence of 'Russian bots' in European democracy risks neglecting the very real home-grown threat from populists, trolls and the far-right. The European public

space must be reclaimed by the **European public, not by the EEAS or state security services**, and allowing the fight against disinformation to be framed as a national or European security matter rather than a domestic challenge will only contribute to further alienating a sceptical public. This is why the Code of Practice, with its focus on civil society and the private sector, should take priority over security sector actions.

- The policy expert consensus is that EU vs Disinfo provides a valuable service in the Eastern Neighbourhood; but to avoid playing into conspiracy theories or hostile narratives **its role within the EU member states should be reconsidered**. As a platform that casts judgement on whether something is true or false, it is potentially vulnerable to these criticisms and should tread carefully. Either it should be moved from the EEAS to the Commission (or better still, to an independent body not directly affiliated with political interests) and tasked with a specifically domestic brief, or it should restrict its operations to analysing Russian state media and propaganda in Ukraine and other Eastern Neighbourhood countries. In any case, it should be rebranded to remove the reference to the EU in its name, and if it seeks to convince as well as document then it should consider using more detailed disproofs and a more professional tone.
- The European Commission should expand its horizon beyond the hosts and distributors of online disinformation, and look into what it can do to **support not only NGOs but also private sector actors** with an interest in maintaining high informational standards in public life, as these have may have access to specialist knowledge and resources out of the reach of governmental actors. A **European-wide advertising blacklist of suspicious sites**, updated regularly with input from consultants or advertising agencies across the continent, would be an excellent start to cutting off the revenue stream that makes disinformation profitable.
- If national governments seek to legislate against disinformation, such as by expanding hate speech laws, they must tread carefully. **It should ultimately be up to the courts to decide what is disinformation and what is not, not private companies or politicians**. It is true that legal prosecution is too slow to be effective in preventing content from reaching large numbers of viewers. But the response should not be to use this argument to justify clamping down on media freedom, but rather to recognise the limits of legislating against disinformation and invest efforts elsewhere.
- The EU must ensure that **it does not overlook or permit threats to media freedom implemented**

This is a good example of policy recommendations with information about who should do what.

The example is taken from the publication [Disinformation and democracy: The home front in the information world](#) by the European Policy Center.

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This report follows the argument that a new form of work needs new protection mechanisms even if old standards might be adapted (Todolí-Signes 2017). Within this chapter, a model similar to the German artist insurance model will be proposed to address the challenges outlined in chapter 3.

Social security systems are meant to protect individuals from risks. The following elements are usually covered by social security systems (Forde et al. 2017):

This chapter from the publication [You Had One Job](#) by ELF and NEOS Lab is a good example of a detailed policy recommendation.

7 SHOW YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS IN A CLEAR WAY

Use bullet points or numbering when you list your policy recommendations.

What does the book conclude and recommend?

1

BECCS is a key mitigation technology in climate scenarios resulting from integrated assessment modelling but their theoretical potential should be interpreted cautiously.

2

Existing European point sources of biogenic CO₂ indicate a substantial potential for BECCS, particularly the paper and pulp industry.

3

Evidence suggests that BECCS research and development will not be a 'slippery slope' in need of constraint, but instead an 'uphill struggle' in need of incentivization.

4

Policy makers should turn their attention to incentivising BECCS research and development, starting with the harmonization of existing climate policies at different levels of governance.

5

There should be broad societal involvement in defining the tools – and terms – of incentivising BECCS research and development.

6

Policymakers should refrain from using the absence of BECCS as an argument for holding back instruments that could create demand for them.

Example from the publication
[Policy Brief – Bioenergy with carbon capture and storage](#) by ELF and Fores.

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CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusion of this report is that Georg W. F. Hegel, Michael Oakeshott, Sir Roger Scruton and other conservative critics of the free market present some noteworthy arguments, which however carry more weight against rationalistic, utilitarian or pragmatic liberalism than against the conservative liberalism articulated by Friedrich von Hayek and before him by Edmund Burke, David Hume, Adam Smith, Alexis de Tocqueville, Carl Menger and others. There is a coherent political position which combines respect, even reverence, for tradition and commitment to the free market. This is a tradition of cautious and continuous reform. It welcomes choice and change, but places it firmly within local ways. Perhaps von Hayek, Sir Karl Popper and some other scholars from the German-speaking community of the multi-lingual Habsburg Empire were not very sensitive to the legitimate national aspirations of the small nations of Europe.¹⁷³ But the fundamental difference between the conservatism of Oakeshott and Sir Roger on the one hand and conservative liberalism on the other hand might be that von Hayek and other modern conservative liberals would be universalists in the sense that they would think of freedom as the desirable general condition of all mankind, and not only as a product of Anglo-Saxon experience, confined to Anglo-Saxon countries. As no other than Hegel put it, history is the story of the gradual extension of freedom: In the orient, there was only the freedom of one, the despot; in Ancient Greece and Rome, there was the freedom of some, the ruling class; and in modern times there is the freedom of all.¹⁷⁴ And when it becomes the freedom of all, the task presents itself, as von Hayek recognised, which principles will enable mutual adjustments of different individuals, often seeking initially incompatible aims.

On the basis of the analysis offered in this report, certain practical recommendations can be made on how to combine local ways and universal principles, tradition and liberty. These are 20 planks in a conservative-liberal political programme:

1. Government should do little and do it well. It should vigorously uphold law and order, maintain a strong defence and extend help to the helpless, and not to those who can look after themselves. It should certainly not try to redistribute wealth or income. Government subsidies to unsustainable lifestyles, however quaint and charming they might be, should be eliminated.
2. The legislator should encourage and facilitate the establishment and operations of local authorities (such as Scotland in the United Kingdom, Catalonia in Spain, and the land of the Basques straddling the French-Spanish border), regional councils (such as the Nordic Council and the Tyrol regional authority), religious congregations, autonomous associations and self-help organisations (such as those formed by the handicapped, and by former alcoholics, the AA).
3. While religious sects with strict, even illiberal, codes of conduct should be left alone by government, insofar as they pose no danger to public safety, the right of exit, as well as of entry, has to be protected. For example, Muslim women in Europe who do not wish to have their marriages arranged by their fathers or brothers must be able to choose for themselves.
4. Immigration, within reasonable limits, of people who are eager to work and contribute to society should be welcomed. "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers



The Long Room, Trinity College Library, Dublin. Government has to ensure that primary and secondary education transmits some understanding and appreciation of the history, language, literature and conventional morality which together constitute the national identity of a country.

- in the land of Egypt."¹⁷⁵ However, immigrants have to obey the law and respect the customs of their adopted countries, or else return to their homelands. For example, United States schools should not become bilingual just because of a surge of Spanish-speaking immigrants. Also, it is in no way wrong to put the obedience of immigrants to test, as Swiss local authorities did in 2018 when a Muslim couple in Lausanne were denied citizenship because they refused to shake hands with members of the opposite sex.¹⁷⁶
5. Devolution should be implemented to the furthest extent possible, in accordance with the subsidiary principle, well established in catholic political thought.¹⁷⁷ For example, local communities should make decisions about whether to allow recreational drugs, including alcohol, nicotine and cannabis, pornography, prostitution, gambling and other activities deemed immoral or degrading by many. This would to some extent establish choice in communities, mutual accommodation by exit and entry.
 6. Ensuring adequate civic education for all citizens should be a priority in liberal Western democracies. It should on one hand consist in basic professional

skills, such as reading and writing, and on the other hand in learning about the common identity of the nation, or nations, within a country, most importantly about her history, language, literature and conventional morality, including in Europe and the two Americas Christian values.

7. In teaching history, it is important to recognise and emphasise that the two totalitarian creeds of the twentieth century, national socialism and communism, systematically killed, starved to death, enslaved and imprisoned hundreds of millions of innocent people. Communism was as criminal in nature as national socialism.¹⁷⁸
8. Whereas there is a case for government, or in other words taxpayers, bearing the costs of education, it need not be produced by the state. Parents and students should be given the right to choose between schools, all of which would however have to adhere to minimum standards. This could be accomplished by 'vouchers' issued to families by government and used to pay for education.
9. The most important poverty relief is to add opportunities for people to produce themselves

Example from the publication [Why Conservatives Should Support the Free Market](#) by New Direction.

8 THINK ABOUT COUNTERARGUMENTS

Think about which counterarguments the reader can have to your recommendations and try to answer them preemptively.

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Example, from the conservative think tank New Direction's publication [Why Conservatives Should Support the Free Market](#), where the chapters dismantle counterarguments that conservatives make to oppose the free market.

Box 7: Greening the Economy through Trade

International trade, some argue, pollutes the environment because of the carbon emissions that come from the transport of goods, and therefore it is much better that people buy local goods. And it is true that trade is a source of carbon emissions, not just through transport but also because trade boosts output and economic growth. Yet the alternative is hardly better. While people in Europe may for a variety of reasons prefer to buy local food, it is far from certain that it will reduce carbon emissions. Buying apples in Europe just after the autumn harvest is better than buying them overseas, if carbon emissions is the only yardstick. But the substantial part of the food we consume in Europe requires emissions in the production that outweighs the total emission from production and transport when we buy from the Southern hemisphere. The energy that is necessary to produce food in Europe is a far bigger source of carbon emissions than the transport. Buying cut flowers from Kenya rather than Holland or broccoli from South America rather than Continental Europe cuts carbon emissions.⁴² Hence, trade is a method to economize with natural resources. Equally important, trade is also a way for countries, businesses and people to get access to new technology that reduces energy consumption and carbon emissions. Imagine what it would be like for a European country to reach its climate targets and the Sustainable Development Goals – without access to technology from other countries. A strategy built on closed borders would be unaffordable and countries would be saddled with technologies that are inadequate. Solar panels and wind mills would exist in just a few countries, and electric vehicles would be a luxury for the rich. Transfer of technology is powered by trade between countries and, without such flows, past and future achievements in greening the economy would not be possible.

Another option is to use text boxes in order to address counterarguments.

Taken from the publication [The Economic Benefits of Globalization for Business and Consumers](#) by ECIPE.

9 WRITE FROM A LIBERAL POINT OF VIEW

Use liberal principles to come to your conclusions and discuss policy options from a liberal point of view.

THE LIBERAL CASE FOR A UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

We now turn away from statistics and budget lines and explore a series of practical, political and ideological arguments concerning the basic income. We start by presenting a liberal case in its favour. We will argue that a universal basic income increases freedom, reduces inequality and makes for a smaller, less intrusive government.

The basic income enhances **freedom** in a fundamental way. Liberal democracies already guarantee an

THE LIBERAL CASE AGAINST A UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

Before rushing towards the basic income with open arms, we should recognise that there's also a liberal case to be made *against* the basic income. We choose not to focus on the question whether the basic income will cause people to **work less**. A number of experiments with a limited basic income have already taken place or are being rolled out. Hopefully, these will shed a light on this important issue.

The first argument against the basic income is that it might be **a solution to a non-existent problem**. There's no denying that labour markets will change profoundly as a result of automatisisation, robotisation

To give arguments for and against a policy recommendation's compatibility with liberalism is one way of doing it.

On the left are the opening paragraphs of two chapters from the publication [New Economic Models](#) by ELF.

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As a liberal reader, you might wonder why the forces of demand and supply fail to solve this puzzle. One reason is that the market is too small to function according to these laws. Tanks and frigates are being produced by very few companies and bought by a very small number of customers. This creates a bilateral oligopoly. Another important reason is that decisions on defence projects have security, political and social ramifications that touch on some of societies' most sensitive nerves.

As a liberal reader, you might protest that, on any market, the State should as far as possible be limited to the role of a regulator. But on the defence market, states are not only the umpires but also the main players. They are almost always customers and, in some cases, also the most important shareholders in defence equipment manufacturing companies.

Here is one example that shows that it is possible to write about a technical subject such as the European defence market from a liberal point of view.

Taken from the publication [Solving the European Defence Market Puzzle](#) by ELF and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation.

10 THINK ABOUT THE DESIGN

More people will read your text if it is accompanied by a good design. Graphs and pictures can be a tool to make your message clearer. ELF has a special template for the design of policy papers to ensure consistency and recognisability.



1

RUSSIAN INFLUENCE IN ROMANIA

Conversation with **Stanisław Górka, PhD**

Stanisław Górka

Agata Supińska: Historically, what did Romanian-Russian relations look like?

Stanisław Górka, PhD: There is a certain stereotype that Orthodox societies will always like each other and will have close relations. Despite being isolated, which took place earlier, the Romanian-Russian relations start as late as the beginning of the 18th century. At that time joint Moldovan-Russian undertakings appeared, some of which succeeded while others did not. There was Dimitrie Cantemir, a Moldovan hospodar and eminent scholar, who bound his fate with Peter the Great. In this arrangement, Russia seemed to be a patron of Christian societies in the Balkans and Middle East thanks to the Orthodox faith.

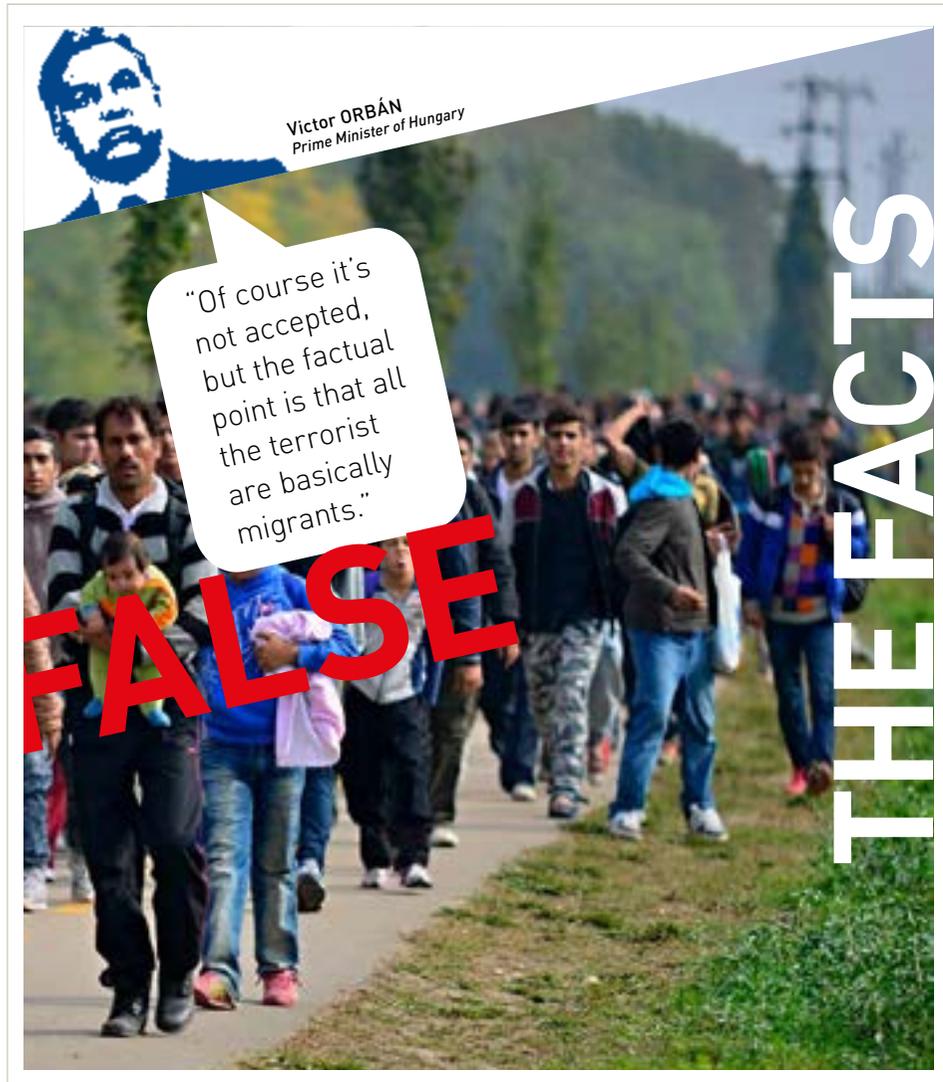
In the case of Romania, however, the relations weren't that simple. When Russia, at Turkey's expense, started to acquire the first parts of the territory in the Balkans, it did so at the expense of duchies, which now compose modern-day Romania. In 1812 Russia divided the Principality of Moldavia into two parts, thus

There is a certain oversimplification that assumes if Bulgarians and Serbs are pro-Russian, then all Orthodox Balkan nations must be pro-Russian. Until World War II, the relations between Romania and Russia were sometimes good and sometimes bad. In the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Romania pursued a multi-vector policy with the help of Austria-Hungary, Prussia and France to prevent being reduced to mental vassalage by Moscow. Romanian historians emphasise that in the 18th and 19th century, Russia waged war in the territory of the Romanian duchies ten times, thus contributing to war-related damage and devastation. For various reasons common people, aristocracy and intelligentsia were disappointed by Russia. During World War I, the countries were close allies, but it didn't translate into lasting relations.

The relationship between Russia and Romania started to change after World War I. During the war for the territory left by the Russian Empire, both Romania and Poland fought for the shape of their future

Here are examples of good design for inspiration. Taken from the publication [The historical and current state of Romanian-Russian relations](#) by New Direction.

ELF PRODUCT GUIDELINES
RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT PUBLICATIONS



This example is taken from the publication [EU at the Crossroads: Populist Propaganda vs. Democratic Solutions](#) by the Institute of European Democrats.

11 PUBLICATIONS CAN BE INTERACTIVE

In the digital version of your publication, you can, for example, have videos and links on which the reader can click.

ELF PRODUCT GUIDELINES

RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT PUBLICATIONS

Check out how VVD does Facebook Live sessions with voters, often with Prime Minister Rutte himself:



[Click Screen for VVD's Facebook account](#)

Not just because it works, but also because it is extremely important for a politician to have these conversations. It is your job to talk to people and learn about their concerns.

Do it in a personal way. Not with political language, but with normal language. Just like you would talk to your parents, wife, husband or friends. Not with pictures or topics that interest you, but with things that interest your voter. Also: make sure it's real and sincere. Don't pretend to be interested in what people have to say, BE interested in what people have to say. Try to reach as many people as you can personally.

HAVE NO FEAR

Do not let yourself be bullied by bad populism. If they lie, call them out. If they attack you, don't complain about how dishonest it is. Don't complain about their style or tactics. Just be strong.

There is a delicate approach needed here. Because not everything that populists throw at you should be thrown back. They will try to shock you, scare you, or insult you at every possible moment. They will not back up their attacks with facts. Their attacks will be about emotions, not about rationality. So don't respond with rationality. If an attack is based on emotions, respond with an emotional appeal. Which is, of course, always based on rational arguments. That way, we make a clear difference.

See how the Dutch Greens turn the narrative of fear into a narrative of hope in their video "Nothing to fear but fear itself":



[Click Screen for GroenLinks on YouTube](#)

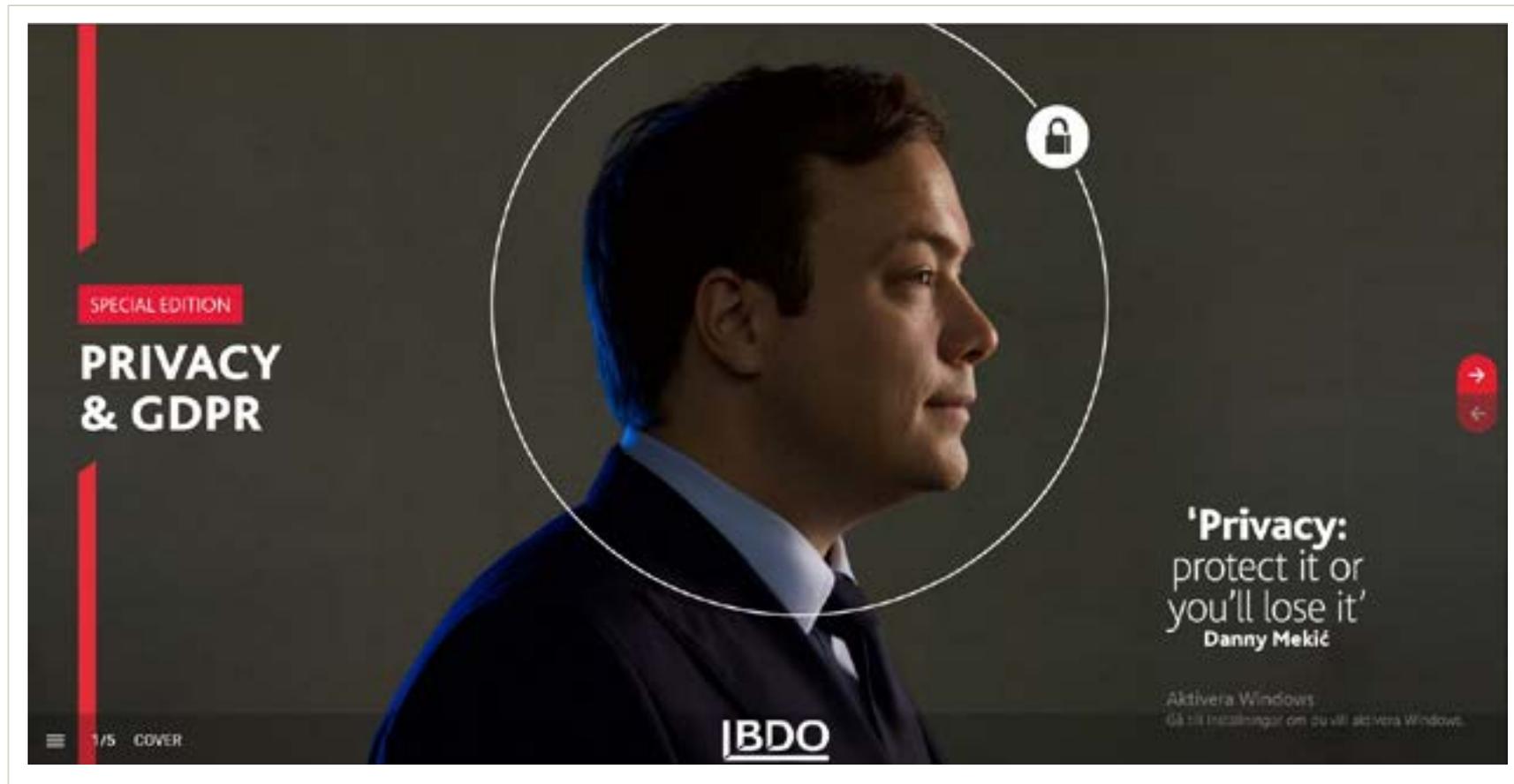
GET OUT OF YOUR BALLOON

Liberals like to talk about things that are not necessarily at the top of voters' priority lists. Be careful with this. You can compare it to being in a hot air balloon with your liberal colleagues. You're trying to give a speech to the people who are on the ground. Every time you talk about the single market, human rights, free trade or even populism, hot air will be pumped into your balloon and you will fly up a little higher. Until finally, your

[A toolkit against populism by ELF and FNF](#) is one example of an interactive publication.

ELF PRODUCT GUIDELINES

RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT PUBLICATIONS



[Privacy and the GDPR](#) by BDO is another example of an interactive publication.

12 THINK ABOUT HOW YOU CAN CREATE AN INTEREST IN YOUR PRODUCT

Define your target audience carefully and devise a strategy to reach them. Try to involve your target group while you are working with your product. For example, hold a workshop where you can simultaneously receive input and generate interest in your work. Distribute condensed policy briefs, blogposts or videos that summarize the content of your lengthier publications. Think of a catchy title in the form of a 5-W question. Would you be more interested in the book “Populism as the real issue of the 21st century” or “How to debunk populism online?”.

13 REVIEW YOUR PUBLICATION

A book, policy paper, policy brief or an issue brief should be peer-reviewed before you send it to ELF.

ELF PRODUCT GUIDELINES
RECOMMENDATIONS

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT VIDEOS AND PODCASTS

14 DISTINGUISH BETWEEN 'INTERVIEW' AND 'CONVERSATION' PODCAST

Avoiding a conflation between the two formats will help the listener to have a clearer understanding of the topic.

15 HELP YOUR GUEST

Prepare your guests. If they are briefed in advance, the conversation will be more natural. Also, remind them about the importance of taking pauses. Once they've made their points, take a few seconds of break.

16 DEFINE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Keep in mind who you are talking to when making a podcast or a video. Your target group will determine the amount of time you need to devote to introducing the topic. For example, is your target audience the “Brussels bubble” or a national audience?

17 KEEP A FLOW IN THE STORYLINE

When you prepare some questions for the interviewee, ensure a build-up of the story. Stick to one topic for the conversation and only use anecdotes if you can master them.

ELF PRODUCT GUIDELINES

RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT VIDEOS AND PODCASTS



THE WORLD IN 30 MINUTES

A good conversation podcast



PHILOSOPHY BITES

A good example of an interview-style podcast.

Two examples of good podcasts.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS VIDEO FORMATS AND GOOD EXAMPLES

ELF PRODUCT GUIDELINES

VIDEO FORMATS AND GOOD EXAMPLES



INTERVIEWS

This format is well-suited if you wish to create empathy around an interesting or inspiring person.



VLOGS

Vlogs are diary-style videos and are typically filmed by one person in front of a camera. They offer an effective medium for taking the viewers on a journey.



EMOTIONAL VIDEOS

This format is particularly suitable for personal storytelling and the promotion of ideas through stories.



TRAILERS OR TEASER VIDEOS

This format lends itself well to making announcements. The primary purpose of trailers and teaser videos is to increase expectations and to create hype.

ELF PRODUCT GUIDELINES

VIDEO FORMATS AND GOOD EXAMPLES



INFOGRAPHIC VIDEOS

This format is ideal for explaining complex ideas or concepts.



EXPLANATORY VIDEOS

These videos are shorter than documentaries. They take a single issue and analyze it in max 5 minutes with an expert.



DOCUMENTARIES

This is the lengthiest format and typically illustrates topics or policies in greater depth.

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