

# **POLIS NETWORK**

## Editorial Style Manual

# POLIS NETWORK

## Editorial Style Manual

### Contents

---

Introduction	How the guide is arranged What is/is not included in the Editorial Style Manual Quick reference guide   <i>The general rule; POLIS or POLIS network?</i> Queries   <i>POLIS branding information</i>	<u>1</u>
Spelling	General rule	<u>2</u>
Abbreviations, contractions and acronyms (I)	General rule Abbreviations   <i>Ampersands, Measurements, Latin abbreviations</i> Contractions Acronyms	<u>3</u> <u>4</u>
Capitalisation	General rule   <i>Government and administration; Cities and regions; Organisations; Academia; Books, films, songs and others; Headlines, journal articles, chapter titles and lecture titles</i>	<u>5</u>
Numbers	How to write numbers   <i>Percentages, measurements and currency; Times; Dates</i>	<u>6</u>
Punctuation	General rule   <i>Bullet points; Dashes; Full stops, exclamation marks and question marks;</i>	<u>7</u>
Quotations	Quotation marks   <i>Direct Speech and Reproduced Text; Titles; Definitions; Using other punctuation with quotation</i>	<u>8</u>
References	General rule   <i>News and events on the POLIS website; Articles for the POLIS magazine</i> Articles for the POLIS magazine How to effectively cite quotations aside from footnotes	<u>9</u>

# POLIS NETWORK

## Editorial Style Manual

### Contents (II)

---

Copyright, figures and captions (II)	Copyright	<u>10</u>
	Figures and captions	<u>11</u>
<hr/>		
Equal and sensitive language	General rule   <i>Ethnic groups; Gender; Using the most appropriate words</i>	<u>12</u>
<hr/>		
Notes	On people with disabilities/disabled people	<u>13</u>
	On pronouns	

# Introduction

The POLIS network Editorial Style Manual aims to provide a guide to writing and formatting documents written by staff or external contributors on behalf of POLIS. It is part of the POLIS branding toolkit which enables POLIS formal documentation to be presented consistently across all communications - website and magazine.

## How the guide is arranged

The Editorial Style Manual is intended to be read as an interactive PDF, where it can be cross-referenced. However, the PDF can be printed if preferred for ease of reference.

## What is/is not included in the Editorial Style Manual

The guide does not tell you how to write. We aim to help you write correctly, and to encourage consistency across POLIS' written communications.

## Quick reference guide

### *The general rule*

If there are multiple (correct) ways of doing something, choose the one which uses the least space and the least ink. For instance:

- close up spaces and do not use full stops in abbreviations
- use lower case wherever possible
- only write out numbers up to ten and use figures for 11 onwards.

### *POLIS or POLIS network?*

These terms are interchangeable and can either be alternated for variety or kept the same for consistency.

## Queries

### *POLIS branding information*

If you have any queries about using this guide or wish to receive information on POLIS branding, including the use of the logo, contact:

**Alessia Giorgiutti**  
**Communications Coordinator**

**[agiorgiutti@polisnetwork.eu](mailto:agiorgiutti@polisnetwork.eu)**

# Spelling

## General rule

POLIS prefers spelling that is commonly associated with British English (BrE) as it is more common in EU-project jargon and requires fewer exceptions, such as:

- Use suffix -ise/-yse/-isation not -ize/-yze/-ization;
- Use the ending suffix -tre instead of -ter;
- Use the ending suffix -our instead of -or;
- Use suffix -ce instead of -se.

These are given for information only – do not use the US spelling unless you are quoting an American speaker or from American text (in which case the original should be kept).

British	American	Examples
-our	-or	colour/color
-ise	-ize	organise/organize
-yse	-yze	analyse/analyze
-re	-er	centre/center
-lling	-ling	travelling/traveling
-lled	-led	travelled/traveled
-ller	-ler	traveller/traveler
-ce	-se	licence/license

# Abbreviations, contractions and acronyms (I)

## General rule

Do not use full stops after any abbreviations, contractions or acronyms and close up space between letters.

When using abbreviations, contractions and acronyms in longer documents, consider adding a glossary, especially for non-technical readers.

## Abbreviations

Degree titles take the following form:

✓ BSc, MLitt, PhD

Do not use full stops in abbreviations:

✓ eg, am, pm, op, no, cf, ie, ed, etc

## Ampersands

Ampersands should only be used if they are part of official titles or names. Otherwise, spell out 'and'.

✓ Transport & Environment

✗ Transport **and** Environment

## Measurements

Follow the International System of Units (SI) as a guide for units of measurement.

It is fine to use **k**, **m** and **bn** as shorter spellings of **1,000**, **1,000,000** and **1,000,000,000** (or 'one thousand', 'one million' and 'one billion'), as long as you are consistent throughout the document.

## Latin abbreviations

If you are using Latin abbreviations, make sure you know what they mean and when to use them. Do not use full stops after them and do not italicise them – see the Highlighting/emphasising text section for when to italicise.

- etc [*et cetera*]  
means 'and the rest'; use to indicate the continuation of a list
- eg [*exempli gratia*]  
means 'for example' or 'such as'; use with examples which are not exhaustive (and do not follow with a comma)
- ie [*id est*]  
means 'that is'; use with definitions or lists which are exhaustive (and do not follow with a comma)
- ibid [*ibidem*]  
means 'in the same place'; use when making a subsequent reference/citation to a publication or other source mentioned in the immediately preceding note (ie no references to anything else have appeared in between)

## Contractions

Do not use full stops after contractions:

✓ Mr, Mrs or Dr

## Acronyms

These are formed from the initial letters of words and should be written as a single string of upper-case letters.

✓ Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan **SUMP**

# Abbreviations, contractions and acronyms (II)

When using an acronym that may be unfamiliar to your readers, spell it out in full the first time it is mentioned, with the acronym following in brackets; thereafter, use the acronym alone.

- ✓ **Urban vehicle access regulations (UVARs)** is a form of traffic management that regulates access in specific urban locations according to vehicle type, age, emissions category – or other factors such as time of day, or day of the week. **UVARs** can include Low Emission Zones (LEZs) and/ or Congestion Charging and involve a wide range of considerations in implementation.

"Urban Vehicle Access Regulations" Eltis.com  
<https://www.eltis.org/topics/urban-vehicle-access-regulations>  
(accessed 17 August 2022)

By default, acronyms are all in capital letters, unless specified otherwise:

- ✓ **Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan SUMP**
- ✓ **European Commission EC**
- ✓ **Mobility as a Service MaaS**

# Capitalisation

## General rule

Use lower case as much as possible and resist the tendency to unnecessarily capitalise words because they are deemed important.

### *Government and administration*

Never capitalise, whether referring to a specific country's government or the concept of a government. Same it goes for local authorities and administrations.

✓ The current British government is a coalition.

✗ The current British Government is a coalition.

### *Cities and regions*

Names of cities and regions should be capitalised if those are proper nouns and not if it is a general noun.

✓ The City of Bologna has implemented a SUMP.

✗ The city has implemented a SUMP.

### *Organisations*

Follow the preference, convention and/or guidelines of the organisation, if known; prefer full spellings instead of abbreviated forms.

✓ POLIS network's membership is growing.

✗ Polis Network's membership is growing.

✓ POLIS' membership is growing.

✗ Polis' membership is growing.

### *Academia*

Capitalise only when used as part of the title of a university or institution.

✓ The University of Ghent collaborates on EU projects.

✓ The university collaborates on EU projects.

✗ The university of Ghent collaborates on EU projects.

### *Books, films, songs and others*

Capitalise the first word of the title, and all words within the title except articles, prepositions and conjunctions.

✓ Feminist City: Claiming Space in a Man-made World

✓ Mobility Justice: The Politics of Movement in an Age of Extremes

### *Headlines, journal articles, chapter titles and lecture titles*

Only capitalise the first word, any proper nouns and the first word following a full stop/question mark/exclamation mark.

✓ Cost of living pressures are eased by cycling

✗ Cost of Living pressures are eased by Cycling



# Numbers

## How to write numbers

Spell out whole-number words from one to ten; use figures for numbers above ten.

Use a combination of a figure and a word for very large round numbers (such as multiple millions/billions etc), or abbreviate it to 'm', 'bn' etc.

✓ **Ten** cities have applied to the grant.

✓ **12** cities have applied to the grant.

✓ Horizon Europe provides funding of up to **€1.9 billion** until 2023.

✓ Horizon Europe provides funding of up to **€1.9bn** until 2023.

If there are a lot of figures in a paragraph or text, some above ten and some below, use figures throughout to allow easy comparison by readers.

✓ The project counts **12** cities, **7** research institutes and **1** network.

Spell out words for 'first', 'second' and so on up to and including 'tenth'; use numbers and 'st'/'nd'/'rd'/'th' for larger ordinal numbers. Do not use superscript.

✓ The **third** best city for cycling in 2022 is Antwerp.

✓ The **19th** best city for cycling in 2022 is Berlin.

✗ The 3<sup>rd</sup> best city for cycling in 2022 is Antwerp.

Use numbers and 'st'/'nd'/'rd'/'th' in titles - where a short count matters.

## Percentages, measurements and currency

Always use figures and symbols for percentages, measurements and currency. Use commas to punctuate large numbers.

✓ **68%** of the world population will live in urban areas by 2050.

✓ Horizon Europe provides funding of up to **€1.9 billion** until 2023.

✓ The population of the European Union is estimated to be **447,700,000**.

✗ 20 per cent of commuters use their cars.

## Times

Use either the 12- or 24-hour clock – not both in the same text. The 12-hour clock uses a full stop between the hours and minutes; the 24-hour clock uses a colon and omits am/pm.

If using the 12-hour clock, don't use additional '.00' for times on the hour, and close up space between the number and the 'am' or 'pm'.

✓ The meeting starts at 11.30**am** and ends at 1**pm**.

✓ The meeting starts at 11:30 and ends at 13:00.

## Dates

Always put the date before the month, avoid using 'th' etc with dates and never precede the number with 'the'. Use days with dates only for emphasis or the avoidance of confusion/ambiguity.

✓ The conference is on (*Thursday*), **17 November 2022**.

✗ The conference is on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

# Punctuation

## General rule

Use as little punctuation as necessary while retaining the meaning of the sentence.

### Bullet points

Do not punctuate the end of bullet points which are a **list of items**.

- ✓ Pilot cities:
  - Rome
  - Brussels
  - London

If the **bullet points form a complete sentence with preceding text**, add a full stop to the end of the last point.

- ✓ Pilot cities are:
  - Rome
  - Brussels
  - London.

In these cases, bullet points can start both lower and upper case.

However, if **text inside the bullet point is a complete sentence in its own right**, add a semicolon to the end of each point, 'or' or 'and' (depending on the sense of your sentence) to the end of the penultimate point, and a full stop to the end of the last one.

- ✓ The framework uses a three-step approach:
  - Consider cities between 10,000 and 20,000 inh;
  - Survey citizens on measures to be taken;
  - Organise focus groups to assess solutions.

In this case, it is important to start each point with a capital letter.

## Dashes

While yphens join two or more words together while dashes separate words into parenthetical statements.

- **m-dash (—)**  
Do not use; use an n-dash instead.
- **n-dash (-)**  
Use in a pair in place of round brackets or commas, surrounded by spaces.

✓ The cycle lane - which was built in 2021 - needs to be repaired.

Use singly and surrounded by spaces to link two parts of a sentence, in place of a colon.

✓ The cycle lane needs to be repaired - or this is what authorities say.

## Full stops, exclamation marks and question marks

Use one - but only one - of these at the end of every sentence.

Use a **full stop**, not a question mark, at the end of a **reported question** - only use a **question mark** for a **direct question** (whether in quotation marks or not).

✓ Citizens were asked if the SUMP has had good results.

✓ "Has the SUMP had good results?" we asked citizens.

✗ We asked citizens if the SUMP has had good results?

Use a **full stop**, not an exclamation mark, at the end of a **reported imperative**.

✓ We asked them to give us feedback.

# Quotations

## Quotation marks

### *Direct Speech and Reproduced Text*

Use **single quotation marks for direct speech** or a **quote**, and double quotation marks for direct speech or a quote within that.

✓ 'The city is ready for change', said the mayor.

Use no quotation marks if the quote is displayed (ie not in line with the rest of the text).

✓ As the mayor said, the city is ready for change.

British style uses single quotes (') for initial quotations, then **double quotes (") for quotations within the initial quotation**.

### *Titles*

Quotation marks are traditionally used to enclose the titles of **articles, short poems** and **short stories** – the names of newspapers, books and films take *italics*.

### *Definitions*

When a **word or expression is defined**, the definition (or *gloss*) appears in quotation marks.

✓ MaaS stands for 'Mobility as a Service'.

When the word to be defined is given in its capacity as a word, it appears in italics.

✓ POLIS' name is clearly inspired by the greek word *pólē*, 'city'.

If the word or expression is paraphrased rather than literally defined, it does not require quotation marks.

### *Using other punctuation with quotation marks*

If the quote would have required punctuation in its original form, place the punctuation inside the quotation marks. If it is unclear, try writing the whole sentence out without quotation marks and 'they said' etc, and replicate the resulting punctuation.

✓ 'Is the city ready for this?' asked the journalist.

Place **any punctuation which does not belong to the quote outside the quotation marks** (except closing punctuation if the end of the quote is also the end of the sentence).

✓ 'Public transport', he said, 'is an essential for the city.'

# References

## General rule

All sources of information such as quotes or borrowed ideas must be acknowledged in your contributions for POLIS.

### *News and events on the POLIS website*

When writing a news or event for the POLIS website, **hyperlink your content** where needed so that it goes back to its source.

### *Articles for the POLIS magazine*

When sending the completed template of the article, remember to **hyperlink any online source** within the text and **use footnotes for sources that are not available online**.

**POLIS' footnotes use superscript numbers** that are inserted at the point in articles where contributors cite another author's work. At the bottom of the same page, contributors should repeat the superscript number, then follow it with the full details, including the page number of the author's work they are citing.

**Footnote numbering starts at 1** and continues throughout the article, and **footnotes are separated from the text of the article by a line at the bottom of the page**.

## Footnote and Reference styles

The Victoria University of Melbourne, Australia, offers a **guide** that divides references into different formats for ease of use. Hover your cursor over the Reference Formats links below to be redirected to your needed style:

[Books & e-books](#)      [Newspapers](#)      [Personal Communications](#)  
[Journal Articles](#)      [Internet/Websites](#)      [Multi-Media Formats](#)

## How to effectively cite quotations aside from footnotes

If the quotations are less than three lines use single quotation marks and include them within the text (see page 8: Quotations).

✓ According to Karen Vancluysen, Secretary General of POLIS, 'Achieving the transition to greener, cleaner, more resilient transport systems also means affordable, safe, and inclusive services.'

If longer than three lines, use an indented paragraph, no quotation marks and a line space below. For example:

✓ As Karen Vancluysen, Secretary General of POLIS, said:  
Walkability is also key to climate friendly, healthy and liveable cities, which cater to citizens' everyday mobility demands, from recreation to commuter travel. From Rotterdam to Ravenna, local authorities are prioritising the pedestrian experience while transforming walking into the most obvious, enjoyable and safe means of travel for short trips - for all age groups and abilities.

Alternatively, use:

✓ 'Walkability is also key to climate friendly, healthy and liveable cities, which cater to citizens' everyday mobility demands, from recreation to commuter travel. From Rotterdam to Ravenna, local authorities are prioritising the pedestrian experience while transforming walking into the most obvious, enjoyable and safe means of travel for short trips - for all age groups and abilities.'

Karen Vancluysen, Secretary General of POLIS network

# Copyright, figures and captions (I)

## Copyright

**Expressed permission must be obtained to use any material** (charts, illustrations, photos, illustrations, etc) that has not been originated by the author - just submit a written request, detailing the material and the context in which it will be used.

Once permission has been confirmed, then **identify the source as an image caption or footnote text:**

- ✓ Reproduced by permission of POLIS network
- ✓ Credits: Name Photographer, (Source platform, if any)

Always **source quotations:**

- ✓ Karen Vancluysen, Secretary General of POLIS network
- ✓ Karen Vancluysen, POLIS
- ✗ Karen Vancluysen, Secretary General

Most of us take images from Google and many times, knowingly or unknowingly, we download copyrighted images. As a result, we often face warnings from Google, national or international organisations, photographers, image sellers, and many others – and these warnings can become fines (and sometimes, there are no warnings at all!).

Hereby, please find **8 smart tips to avoid copyright infringement:**

- ➔ Even if a photo does not have a copyright notice or watermark, always assume that an image you find on the internet is copyrighted.

- ➔ To use it, find its original source by doing a **reverse image search on Google Image Search** or **TinEye**. If once you have found the source, you are still unsure about the photo being available for use, ask the copyright holder whether there is a license fee or not. Many photographers will grant you permission to use their images for free, but might ask for attribution with a watermark, link to their website or both.
- ➔ Images that **require credit without a fee** (whether watermarked or not), should be attributed as:
  - Image by [image owner] via [source link] (Creative Commons 4.0 License/CC 4.0)
  - Image via [source link] (Creative Commons 4.0 License/CC 4.0)
  - Via [source link] (Creative Commons 4.0 License/CC 4.0)
  - © [image owner] (Creative Commons 4.0 License/CC 4.0)
- ➔ If you are asked to pay a fee to the owner, consider to do so only if you really need the image, as you can always try to find other options for free (see points 5 and 6).
- ➔ **Prefer stock images** that you can find on [Pixabay](#), [Wikimedia Commons](#), [Unsplash](#), [Pexels](#) and [Public Domain Vectors](#) – and in some cases, on [Flickr](#), too (but that is a bit more complicated!).
- ➔ **Download pictures from Google Images only after changing “Usage Rights” to “Creative Commons licenses”:** search for “Images” and then click “Tools”, go to “Usage Rights” and select “Creative Commons licenses”.

# Copyright, figures and captions (II)

- ➔ Still cannot find a good stock-free pic for your presentation or still afraid of infringing copyright? The safest and fastest way to overcome this is to **purchase images from image selling websites** such as [Stockphoto](#), [Shutterstock](#), [iStock](#), [Bigstock](#), [Dreamstime](#), and [Adobe Fotolia](#).
- ➔ Consider starting **taking your own pics**, too – it is free and well, there is no one who knows what visuals would fit your article better than you!

Ensure that images used on the website are credited (and follow any conditions of use). Material covered by Creative Commons uses a number of different licences, that you can check [here](#).

## Figures and captions

Reports, papers, and articles should **reference Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3** (longer documents may group by chapter: Figure 1.1, Figure 1.2, Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2, etc.).

When captioning a picture or a figure that may need an **explanatory caption**, do it as follows:

- ✓ 'Title of picture/Explanation of picture', © Name Photographer (CC 4.0)
- ✓ 'Title of picture/Explanation of picture' — Credits: Name Photographer

# Equal and sensitive language

## General rule

Use:

- **deaf people**, not the deaf
- **people with disabilities**, not disabled people
- **wheelchair users**, not people in wheelchairs
- **people (living) with AIDS**, not AIDS victims
- **elderly people**, not the elderly or old people
- **ethnic minority group/community** or **minority ethnic group/community**, not ethnic group/community.

## *Ethnic groups*

POLIS prefers to refer to **ethnicity** rather than race.

Nowadays more and more groups of people prefer to be called by the name they have chosen, rather than by terms selected for them by others: eg being 'black', 'BAME' (black, Asian and minority ethnic) and 'BME' (black and minority ethnic) may *seem* interchangeable to some, but they are not.

**At any given time, members of a particular ethnic group prefer different terms, and certain words become outdated:** eg in books and articles that were written in the last century you may see expressions like *Oriental* or *Chinaman*, which are nowadays rightfully considered offensive and discriminatory, and that can be substituted by more acceptable terms, such as 'Chinese people'.

POLIS' preferred style is not to capitalise ethnic groups, (such as 'black' or 'white') unless that group's name includes a geographic place (for example, 'Asian', 'Indian' or 'black Caribbean').

## *Gender*

Because English has no singular common-sex pronoun, speakers have traditionally used the pronouns *he*, *his*, and *him*: however, English offers some ways to avoid using masculine pronouns to refer to groups that are made up of both men and women, such as:

- **Using the plural form for both nouns and pronouns:**  
eg All the stakeholders shared their own experiences.
- **Using the plural pronoun *their* after an indefinite pronoun:**  
eg Everyone shared their own experience.

Use 'women'/'girls' instead of 'females' and 'men'/'boys' rather than 'males' if unavoidable or necessary (as in the case of reporting statistics). Only use 'male' and 'female' as adjectives, and always **favour non-gendered language** eg 'people' instead of 'men'

## *Using the most appropriate words*

Since 'appropriate' words change all the time, it is not always possible to know what words show the most sensitivity or are the most appropriate for a particular situation.

To avoid offending people with inappropriate language, try following these suggestions:

- **When talking to members of a particular racial, ethnic, or other cultural group, ask them which terms they prefer.** It is better to ask people than to risk insulting them unintentionally.
- **Avoid using slang terms to refer to people. Slang terms for people are often very insulting.**

# Notes

## On people with disabilities/disabled people

In the past, POLIS has consistently employed the term '**people with disabilities**,' recognising that 'a disability is a functional limitation or restriction of an individual's ability to perform an activity' and emphasising the idea that 'people are people and not conditions.'

However, it is essential to acknowledge that language evolves over time, and we are aware of the increasing usage of the term '**disabled people**,' as well as the various preferences held by disability organisations and individuals with disabilities themselves.

Specifically, the term 'disabled people' is a valid alternative championed by disability organisations and activists who align with the **social model of disability** — this model validly argues that societal barriers, rather than an individual's impairment or difference, are responsible for creating disability.

POLIS acknowledges that there are no visibly or openly disabled individuals among our staff to provide a firsthand perspective on the best terminology to use. As a result, we adopt the approach of **being specific** and **respecting people's preferences**, and we encourage those who collaborate with us to share their preferred terms so that we may better understand and utilise appropriate language.

## On pronouns

**Pronouns**, also sometimes known as **PGPs** (Preferred Gender Pronouns), are linguistic tools used to refer to individuals. They can be categorised as 'gendered' (eg he/him/his; she/her/hers) or 'gender-neutral' (eg they/them/theirs; ze/hir/hir; ze/zir/zirs; xe/xem/xyrs; ve/ver/vis; ae/aer/aers; per/per/pers; and others).

**Using someone's correct pronouns** is a fundamental way to show respect. Using wrong pronouns can lead to feelings of disrespect, invalidation, dismissal, alienation, or dysphoria, and while misgendering can happen by accident, it is important to take accountability for one's mistake, apologise, and immediately use the right pronouns.

While pronouns can sometimes indicate a person's gender identity, it is crucial **not to make assumptions about someone's gender identity based on external expressions** like clothing, hairstyle, or mannerisms. Recognising that **not having to worry about pronoun usage based on perceived gender is a privilege**, it becomes evident that deliberately misgendering someone or ignoring their pronouns is not only offensive and disrespectful, but also a form of oppression.

Creating an inclusive space where people have the opportunity to share their pronouns is important, but it is equally important to understand that **not everyone may feel comfortable sharing their pronouns** and their choice should be respected: in this case, please refrain from using pronouns and refer to them by name.





If you have any queries about using this manual, please contact:

Alessia Giorgiutti  
Communications Coordinator  
POLIS network

[agiorgiutti@polisnetwork.eu](mailto:agiorgiutti@polisnetwork.eu)