

OSCE publications style cheat sheet

Recurring themes	Guidance and/or OSCE style
Spelling	
-z versus -s	<p>Words which can end in either -ize or -ise in British usage are to be spelled with z. There are a few exceptions, including compromise, analyse and exercise.</p> <p>Examples: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The Programme Office organized...</p> <p>However, you should use -s when it is the official spelling of an organization, project, etc.</p> <p>Examples: Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)</p>
Hyphens	<p>“Co-o” words are spelled with a hyphen at the OSCE. “Co-operate”, “co-operation”, “co-ordinate”, and “co-ordination” should be written with hyphens <i>unless</i> it is the official spelling of a job title, entity, or event; for example, the “Regional Task-force on Energy Cooperation in Central Asia”. Please consult the 2020 OSCE Publications Style Guide for more information.</p>
Plural forms	<p>The plural of the phrase “head of state” is “heads of state”. However, one speaks of “heads of delegations” with “delegations” in the plural — similarly with “heads of field operations” and “heads of institutions”, etc. The phrase “heads of state or government” should be noted.</p>
Capitalization and initial capitals	
Government (noun)	<p>Uppercase when referring to a specific national administration; otherwise lowercase (the adjective is always lower case).</p> <p>Examples: “The Government of Austria” or “the Austrian Government” “The OSCE assists governments...” “government representatives”</p>
Titles and entities	<p>Initial capitals are used for proper nouns (names), titles, etc. Capitalize titles such as “President” and “Vice Prime Minister” only when referring to a specific person or when spelling out their full and official title.</p> <p>Examples: President XX met with Foreign Minister YY... The minister was informed by the president that... The Russian foreign minister... Foreign Minister Lavrov...</p> <p>Unique entities, like the Central Election Commission, should be capitalized.</p>
Punctuation	
Titles & commas	<p>Do I use a comma between title and name?</p> <p>Ask yourself: does “the” precede the title? If the answer is no, then use no comma. In this case the name is considered part of the title; it is all one long appellation: Example: “OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid”</p> <p>If there is a “The”, then use a comma. The comma sets apart extra information (in this case the name): Example: “The OSCE Secretary General, Helga Maria Schmid”</p>
Quotations	<p>Quotations do <u>not</u> need to be italicized but do require quotation marks.</p> <p>Introduce the quote with a colon (:).</p> <p>She said: “The training course was excellent.”</p> <p>After the quote, use a comma (,).</p> <p>“The course was beneficial for all,” he said.</p>

	<p>Punctuation at the end goes INSIDE the quotation marks IF the quote is a full sentence.</p> <p>“The skills learned will enhance my future performance,” he said.</p> <p>If the quote is NOT a full sentence, the punctuation goes outside.</p> <p>She said the course had enabled her to “make a real difference”.</p> <p>Quotations should not be used for emphasis; if need be, ‘single quotes’ can be used.</p> <p>Please consult the 2020 OSCE Publications Style Guide for more information.</p>
Hyphens and compound nouns (number and noun)	<p>A hyphen is used to join two or more words that express a single concept when those words precede a noun (compound words).</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>The meeting was face to face. (doesn’t modify anything, no hyphens)</p> <p>The face-to-face meeting. (modifies the noun, thus needs hyphens)</p> <p>In order to give specific information about something, two nouns might be combined (e.g., a communications trainer). When compound nouns are a combination of a number and a noun, then the noun is written in its singular form and a hyphen is used.</p> <p>Example: a three-day training course, <u>not</u> a three-days training course</p> <p>If in doubt whether a compound noun should be one word, two words, or hyphenated, please check the practice at: https://www.lexico.com/en and the 2020 OSCE Publications Style Guide for more information.</p>
Names	
States	<p>States are usually referred to by their “short form” (e.g., “Kyrgyzstan”), but the full official designation (“the Kyrgyz Republic”) may be used where appropriate.</p>
Numerical data	
Dates	<p>Dates are written in day month year style with non-breaking spaces. Dates should not be split over two lines. This can be avoided by using a non-breaking or “hard” space (Ctrl+Shift+space bar) between day-month-year.</p> <p>Example: 9 August 2006</p> <p>Example: On 29 July at approximately 10 p.m. ...</p> <p>If describing events longer than one day in duration, write:</p> <p>On 1 and 2 June, the office organized... (not “On 1-2 June...”)</p> <p>If describing events more than two days in duration (range), write:</p> <p>From 1 to 4 June, the office organized... (not “From 1-4 June...”)</p> <p>Dates should be followed by a comma (,).</p>
Time	<p>Expressions of time should be rendered using the 12-hour clock: 8 a.m. or 3.30 p.m. A decimal point (.) and not a colon (:) should be used to separate hours from minutes.</p>
Time of day	<p>Use ‘in’ with morning, afternoon, evening and night, but use ‘on’ when talking about a <u>specific</u> morning, afternoon, etc., or to describe the part of the day. Examples:</p> <p>On the morning of 23 February 2019, ...</p> <p>In the morning, ...</p>
Percentages	<p>The expression “per cent” should be spelled out. The symbol (%) should only be used in tables.</p>
Numbers	<p>To express numbers up to and including ten, words rather than figures should be used: e.g., nine versus 13. Numbers above ten are normally written in figures, e.g., 24 days or 5,000 people. Write out numbers at the beginning of a sentence.</p>
Ordinal numbers	<p>An ordinal number is a number that tells the position of something in a list, such as the first, the second, the 11th.</p>

	Ordinal numbers should be spelled out up to “tenth” and written in figures thereafter , except in referring to centuries: the sixth visit, the 14th meeting, the twentieth century. The suffix (th, etc) in ordinals written in figures should be in lowercase and not superscript , e.g., 14th not 14 th .
Currency	For consistency, monetary amounts should be written with the currency’s ISO code (all uppercase) and the amount with a comma in between, e.g., EUR 20,000. Signs (€, \$) placed <u>before</u> the amount can be used in tables.
Order	
Alphabetical order	English alphabetical order should be used when listing countries unless there is a reason for not doing so (i.e., participating States are sometimes listed in accordance with the order in which they were visited on a trip), which must be indicated.
Abbreviations	
Writing out	Except for standard and commonly used abbreviations (“a.m.”, “Mr./Ms.”, “IT”, “NATO”, etc.), abbreviations should be spelled out the first time they appear in a text. Use an abbreviation only if it occurs several times and not just twice, unless in the same sentence.
Plural	Abbreviations such as “CSBM” and “NGO” are written “CSBMs” and “NGOs” in the plural, without an apostrophe (’).
i.e., / e.g.,	i.e. , and e.g. , should always be followed by a comma. Latin usage and confusion between e.g. and i.e. e.g., stands for <i>exempla gratia</i> and means “for example”; it is used to exemplify a point. i.e., stands for <i>id est</i> and means “that is”; it is used to explain a point.
Articles	
Definite versus indefinite article	A definite article should be used in reference to “ the OSCE” or “ the HCNM” (except in adjectival use, e.g., “OSCE projects were organized...”). Insert definite (“the”) and indefinite articles (“a” or “an”), where appropriate. “The advocacy group was established by the NGO XYZ...” “...classified as a protected monument under Appendix II...”
Indefinite article before abbreviation	The choice of the form of indefinite article before an abbreviation is decided by the pronunciation of the abbreviation, e.g., “a CSCE mission” but “an ODIHR project”. The general rule for indefinite articles is to use “a” before consonants and “an” before vowels. However, the trick is to use your ears (how the acronym is pronounced), not your eyes (how it is spelled). If it begins with a vowel sound, use “an”.
Definite article with abbreviation	Definite articles are not used with abbreviations for certain organizations. This applies particularly in cases where the acronym/abbreviation is commonly pronounced as though it were a word, rather than a series of letters. “ The CSTO organized the conference...” “CICA organized the conference...”
Formatting	
Names of publications and projects	For stand-alone publications (doesn’t matter if they are printed or digital), use <i>italics</i> and write the full title. Example: <i>Handbook on Criminal Procedure</i> For projects , write the full title and use initial capital letters (no italics), quotation marks if necessary. Example: “Support to strengthening inclusiveness of electoral processes”

Word choice	
Training	At the OSCE, we conduct training courses, training seminars, training sessions, and training workshops, but NEVER trainings . Training is an adjective or an uncountable noun! It never takes an “s”.
Around versus approximately	Approximately reads better than writing ‘around’. Example: “ Approximately 40 participants attended the workshop, 15 of whom were women.”
That versus which	Use “that” when the words following it are necessary to identify the word “that” refers to. Use “which” when the words following it are not necessary to identify the word it refers to. When using “which”, use commas to separate the clause. When using “that” do not use commas. Examples: The handbook that I am using for this training was published last year. The handbook, which I’m using for this training, was published last year.
Youth	Youth is more professional than ‘youngsters’ or even ‘young people’.
Roundtable / round table	Noun: round table. Adjective: roundtable. “The delegation participated in roundtable discussions, hosted by the OCEEA, on challenges in the area of renewable energy. The round table was followed by a meeting on...”
Commit / Commitment to	COMMITMENT + ...ING “Commitment to”, “commit to” are followed by “-ing” words: Example: Commit to <i>lowering</i> taxes Example: Commitment to <i>taking</i> measures
Radicalization / VERLT	The word “radicalization”, used in the context of countering violent extremism or terrorism, should not stand alone. It must be qualified as linked to terrorism or violence. The OSCE has specific and intentional terminology for these concepts: violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT). For a shorter expression, there are several options to choose from: terrorist radicalization, radicalization to terrorism or violent radicalization.
Foreign words	Foreign words should be italicized unless they have been assimilated into English. Examples of non-assimilation: “The <i>akim</i> met with...” Example of assimilation: “The president held a <u>tête-à-tête</u> with the CiO.”
Footnotes	
Placement	The footnote number or asterisk is placed immediately after the word or phrase it concerns, before any punctuation, but may be placed after a final full stop (.) if it is regarded as concerning a whole sentence or several sentences. Example: “In accordance with the goals and objectives of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, the elimination of...”