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**Preparation Paper/Study Guide:**

**Media Simulation Committee**

## **Why a media team at a MUN conference?**

**VIMUN live - the Media Simulation Committee** - is the official media body of VIMUN. Its first and foremost goal is to inform all participants of the conference about the latest events and developments that take place at the conference itself. The reason for this obviously is that most of the participants will be bound to their committee's rooms most of the time. So, in order for them to know what's going on in other corners of the conference, someone needs to tell them: This is what VIMUN live is all about. However, the aim of the Media Simulation Committee is also to tell the stories that the delegates would not have been able to detect themselves. VIMUN live will give a deep and detailed insight into the happenings at VIMUN!

Important to keep in mind is that VIMUN live is not a ordinary media outlet. It is not one newspaper, one TV channel or one online media that represents one political point of view. It is a collection of different media and therefore publicly shows different opinions on the matters at hand. In fact, the very goal of such a collection is to show different points of view and thus enable discussion. The journalists will present the happenings at VIMUN from the point of view their media outlet is known for - just like the delegates must always represent their country's policy. Journalists are therefore expected to stick to their media's editorial policy.

In the Media Simulation Committee, you will write articles about the events in the committees for the online editions of the newspapers or the websites of the news channels (Al Jazeera, Fox News), i.e. no videos for news channels. The articles will be published online for everyone to access.

## **Who will be covering VIMUN?**

### **Al Jazeera**

(<http://english.aljazeera.net/>) Initially launched in 1996 as an Arabic news channel and current affairs satellite TV, today, Al Jazeera has expanded into a media network with Internet as well as TV outlets in multiple languages. The media gained worldwide attention and popularity after its broadcasting of dissenting views over the Gulf War, as well as live coverage of the war in Afghanistan from its office there. The media broadcasts 24-hours a day, and however controversial, it is rapidly becoming one of the most influential agencies in the region.

### **Fox News**

(<http://www.foxnews.com>) FOX News is a cable and satellite news channel owned by the Fox Entertainment Group. As of 2009, the channel is available in more than 102 million households in the United States. The channel was created by Australian-American media mogul Rupert Murdoch and was first launched on October 7, 1996 to 17 million cable subscribers. The channel slowly rose to prominence in the late 1990s. In terms of regular viewers, Fox News rates as the United States' most watched cable news channel, ahead of CNN and MSNBC. Some observers have asserted that both Fox's news reporting and its political commentary promote conservative political positions. The channel however officially denies any bias in its news reporting and maintains that its political commentary and news reporting operate independently of each other.

### **Le Monde Diplomatique**

(<http://mondediplo.com>) Le Monde diplomatique (Literal English: The diplomatic world), called "Le Diplo" by its French readers, is a monthly newspaper. The original French edition has a circulation of about 350,000; 38 editions in 26 other languages exist. It is known for offering left-oriented analysis and opinion on politics, culture, and current affairs, most notably criticism concerning globalisation. Le Monde diplomatique's approach to news is an openly practiced advocacy journalism, taking a stand in matters, and not reporting entirely objective. Le Diplo does this mainly by writing objective lead articles, reporting facts and developments that are complemented by comments of the authors in columns or similar text forms.

### **El País**

(<http://elpais.com>) El País (literally: The Country) is the highest-circulation daily newspaper in Spain and it is based in Madrid, although there are regional offices in the principal Spanish cities (like Barcelona, Sevilla, and Valencia). There are regional editions as well as a world edition which is printed and distributed in Latin America. El País is owned by the Spanish media conglomerate PRISA and was published in May 1976, six months after the death of dictator Francisco Franco, and at the beginning of the Spanish transition to democracy.

The paper's ideology has been defined by a leaning towards Europeanism and is described to be situated in the centre-left and the left. For example, El País has repeatedly supported King Juan Carlos I for his

contribution to the consolidation of democracy, especially, for his decisive intervention in aborting the coup of 23 February 1981.

The paper is characterized by the amount of space it gives to the reporting of international news, culture and information regarding the economy, as well as Spanish news. It has specific columnists and contributors from different social backgrounds contributing to the democratic and pro-European editorial line of the newspaper.

### **Daily Maverick**

(<http://www.dailymaverick.co.za>) The Daily Maverick is a South African daily newspaper and the only one which is only published online. It was founded in 2009 and is - according to its website - "a unique blend of news, information, analysis and opinion". Its newsroom is based in Johannesburg, South Africa and the Daily Maverick is part of the "The Guardian Africa network".

The Daily Maverick is described as a "lively and valuable site, full of opinions and analysis that live up to the site's name and which regularly shows up the dull and predictable publishing that dominates our mainstream" by Mail and Guardian affiliates. Media commentator Gill Moodie says "The thoughtful, left-field news and analysis website quickly picked up an audience and became a fixture in our media landscape". The Daily Maverick set the editorial agenda on major news stories in 2012 including the Marikana miners' strike.

### **New York Times**

The New York Times is one of the most influential and most read US-American newspapers with more than 30 million unique visitors per month. Moreover, it is the newspaper that won most Pulitzer Prizes (112). Since it has been established in 1851, it has built up a reputation as a rather left-leaning, liberal newspaper that favours the Democratic Party – reflecting the paper's cosmopolitanism. However, this tendency has not always been decisive, for instance in the case of the Iraq war, when there has been severe criticism against the paper for not being critical enough. Also in its coverage of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, The New York Times tends to report from a pro-Israel point of view.

Furthermore, it is interesting that the newspaper has been cooperating with the CIA in some cases and seems to assist the CIA when possible.

### **RossiyskayaGazeta**

(<http://rg.ru>) RossiyskayaGazeta is a daily newspaper, owned by the Russian government and was founded in 1990. On the one hand, "RossiyskayaGazeta" enjoys official status, because it publishes the decrees and official documents. On the other hand, "RossiyskayaGazeta" is intended for the general reader, embracing daily news, special reports and interviews of government officials to expert commentaries on documents of state. According to the polls, most of the readers are inclined to conservative views.

### **The Guardian**

The British newspaper The Guardian is being published since 1821. Traditionally, the paper has a rather left-leaning, liberal stance – its target audience is similar to that of The New York Times. As of June 2012, the Guardian's online edition has been the third most widely read in the world. During the last years, the paper has increasingly built up its reputation for investigative journalism, breaking news about the News International phone hacking scandal in 2011 and revealed a lot of information about the US' surveillance program, which it got from whistleblower Edward Snowden.

## **Guidelines for your work as a journalist**

The following section deals with structures and principles you have to obey for being a successful journalist at VIMUN. Please, read them carefully and keep them in mind!

### **1. You are a real journalist!**

Participating as a journalist at the VIMUN actually means that you obtain the role of a real-time journalist representing one of the world's most popular media. This means that from the moment the conference starts, you are stepping into the reporter's shoes and should keep an adequate journalistic behaviour the whole time. Try to be as close as a real journalist as you can be, just as delegates need to be as close to diplomats as they can.

### **2. You are the one people are getting information from!**

Yes, it has been mentioned before, but you are the only source of news at the conference and news from the conference to the outside world. Do not forget the responsibilities that come from being a public news

service in world politics: The information you provide is from official UN bodies, affecting everybody in the world.

### **3. Know your media!**

It is of vital importance that you know how the media you are representing works. This can easily be prepared by reading, watching and visiting the media's website. You need to know the following things about your media:

- a. What is the style of writing/broadcasting, what is the media's editorial policy?
- b. What is its history and current development?
- c. What are the media main focuses as far as the content is concerned?
- d. How does this media broadcast international news?

### **4. Get informed about the different committees!**

Reporting the work of the United Nations organisation means that you absolutely must be well acquainted with the work of the UN and the responsibilities, mandates, processes and acts of the simulated committees. You can research that in three steps:

- a. Read more on the UN, e.g. here: <http://www.un.org/>
- b. Read more on each of the UN bodies that will be present at VIMUN
- c. When you know to which committees you will be assigned to later on during the preparation: read the study guides on each topic at the VIMUN homepage

### **5. Be up to date and on time!**

During the conference, where UN bodies have to take crucially important decisions for the world, many things can change in only minutes or seconds. Also, as happens in the real world, various crises and international issues are possible. This is why, as a journalist, you need to be up to date the whole time – pay very careful attention to what is going on in each moment. Also, do not be late for meetings and keep your deadlines, so that the articles are still fresh when published.

### **6. Pay attention to the committee documents**

While reporting for **VIMUN live**, you will be assigned to one of the committees to broadcast their work. This is why in order to adequately broadcast news, you need not only to listen closely about what is going on, but also pay attention on the documents they are issuing.

### **7. Ask delegates and chairs for additional information**

It is completely possible that you will not catch some of the processes in the committee you're reporting from. This is why in an appropriate moment, you can ask the committee chairpersons for some information. Furthermore, you should always ask delegates about their opinion and plans. That way, you'll find plenty of topics to write about. Also, take interviews or a simple Q&A session with the delegates during breaks.

### **8. Quote right!**

Be careful when spelling names – people might be very sensitive on that. If you need to quote what a delegation said on a specific issue, be careful when quoting – keep the right words. Very important when using information is to point from where did you take it- quote your sources. You should not do this in the way as it is done in a scientific paper for university, but by simply stating something like "according to the last UN development report..."

### **9. Double check your information!**

Do not forget what influence the media can have over people, politics and international organizations. Double and even triple check all the information you receive.

### **10. Get additional information**

If it is necessary: Use each resource you can get to improve your article, but do not forget to quote them. Additional information can really turn your article into a real reporter's masterpiece.

### **11. Mind your language**

### **What else to keep in mind?**

Here are three very important aspects of what constitute news in order to help you find the most appealing topics for your articles.

### **- News is timely**

As the word itself implies, news ought to be new. News is the fact, event or development that provides for the peg (the reason for publishing and broadcasting news). News is the fresh angle, the latest word, the most recent development. No matter what the timeframe, news ought to feel as fresh as bread straight out of the oven, not the day-old loaf marked half-price.

### **- News is important**

News matters. News must be able to surpass the typical question of "So what? Why should I care?". As a journalist you have learn to anticipate the readers' demand for relevance as well as develop the ability to analyse the news and thus create connection which would help the better understating of why an issue matters for who we are and what we do.

### **- News is interesting**

News is what makes the reader exclaim, "Gee Whiz!". In many professional newsrooms, journalists use the rule of writing about "Hey, listen to this!"-stories, stories that make the reader, viewer, or listener take notice and feel the need to spread the word to a friend. After all, discovery is at the heart of the news-gathering process. Journalists are like explorers, they possess a sense for what people find interesting and hunt for valuable information until the treasure of a scoop is found.

When choosing your topic, it is also always good to keep the following aspects in mind:

### **Audience**

A journalist must always be aware for whom the story is written and what is the nature of the reader (in this case, the other participants of VIMUN). A good journalist always takes into account his audience's specifics. Generally, there are three types of it – people who know nothing on what you write for, who know a little bit, and experts. When writing, try giving each of the three groups something that will be interesting for them. The main rule is to keep an eye of the audience – it can change its interest very fast and a good journalist must always be prepared for that.

### **Relevance**

News matters to people because it is a piece of information they need or believe to be important, if not vital to their lives.

### **Time**

News always include a time element. When did it happen? When will it happen? News storytellers even use chronology as a tool to organize information.

### **Drama**

One cannot deny it – news is action. It is for people by people, about human lives, conflicts, struggles in which they engage from their first breath till their last. It is all about how we interact with each other.

### **People**

News is the daily chronicle of the human race. Never forget that even if you write about affairs of diplomatic delegations and international relations, people are still the lifeblood of journalism. Not just names, titles, countries but also details about what those in the news look and sound like, how they behave, what they dream about.

### **Place**

This last, sixth sense is debatably the most poorly executed one in journalism. The setting is usually underestimated as a tool to developing a news story. Recreating an atmosphere can be just as powerful as any other journalist tool. Articles are sometimes delivered as if they are quotes from "floating heads" interviewed without any detail which would allow the reader to actually see the story as well as read it.

As a journalist from a world popular media, broadcasting the work of the biggest world organization, the UN, you should also pay specific attention to your language. Do not use jargon or slang, do not use rough or underestimating language. Respect your audience!

## **The five W's and the H**

In general, you should always try to include the five W's and the H in your articles. By doing so, you will make sure to answer all the questions your reader might have concerning the topic.

### **WHO?**

As pointed above, news is the record of human activity. As people are the focus of most stories, ask yourself:

- Who is involved?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- Who are the major players?
- Who supports and who opposes the major issue?
- Who is affected?
- Who is closest to the action?
- Who are the most knowledgeable sources?

### **WHAT?**

With this question you define the themes of the news:

- What are the forces in support?
- What is going on?
- What happened?
- What could happen?
- What are the key moments?

### **WHEN?**

Putting the information into a timeframe:

- When did the story begin?
- When did it end?
- When did the key moments occur?

### **WHERE?**

Take the audience to the event:

- Where did the story take place?
- Where is the main action or event happening?
- What does it look, sound and taste like?
- How can I make the reader see the setting?

### **WHY?**

News is about the causes of events. The job of the journalist is to ask why. Always ask why:

- Why did the event occur?
- Why are people behaving this way?
- Why do the forces care so much?

### **HOW?**

It is crucial that we as journalists understand how things work in our complex society. It is their stories that present the evolution of events and issues that make the news. Good journalists go beyond the W's and try to understand not just what happened, but also how.

- How did it happen?
- How does it work?
- How did things go wrong?
- How was the story revealed?

More details will follow once we are meeting in Vienna! We are looking forward to getting to know you in person!

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