2019 NISPAcee Annual Conference
Pre-conference Seminar "How to Write a Good Policy Paper"

Lecture 3, Structure of the Policy Paper
Dr. V. Junjan, University of Twente, The Netherlands,
Dr. D. Klimovsky, Comenius University, Slovakia
Types of policy paper structures

- Depends on the type of paper
- Goal and target
- Expected communication channel
Example I

- Problem description: Context and importance
- Policy options
- Criteria: explicitly discuss the criteria and the assumptions used in formulating a recommendation
- Recommendation: ideally results from the application of the criteria to the policy choices
Example II

- **Executive Summary/Purpose Statement**
- **Background:** What is the current situation and why is it conducted this way?
- **Analysis**
  Why is the policy not working? Why is it necessary to find an alternative?
- **Policy options:** alternatives and their implications
- **Recommendation:** Provide your recommendation and how it can be implemented
- **Conclusion:** Summarize analysis and recommendation
- **Appendix:** figures, maps, graphics
Writing style

- Focus: prescriptive questions
- Goal: to be persuasive
- Writing style: efficient: usually accompanied by a policy brief
  - Clear and concise statements
  - BLUF (Bottom Line up front- begin paragraphs with conclusions)
  - Only essential information → BUT cover all the necessary aspects
Fact-base arguments ➔ do not argue with ideology but with a proposed course of action.

- Acknowledge potential downsides and ways to address risks.

- What needs to be clear: why the current situation is not acceptable AND what to do about it.
Recommendations

- Bear in mind the goal of the paper and the target group
- Consider the scope of authority of the target group/policy maker
- Consider external restrictions set by outside actors in formulating the recommendations