

KU Leuven Model United Nations 2018

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REFOCUS: CHANGING THE SCENE OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Newsire

Study Guide

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Words of Welcome

Dear future Journalists of KULMUN 2018,

Let me first congratulate you on the wonderful choice of becoming a journalist at KULMUN 2018. My name is Aurora and I will be serving as your Editor in our upcoming conference. A wise woman once said (for those of you new to the MUN-world, this is a fancy saying to hide the fact that you are quoting yourself), that being a journalist is the most intense role you can fill at a conference. In this guide, I will do my best to introduce you to the world of MUNing and the role the media plays in this in order to make this experience for you as enriching as possible.

It does not matter if you are an experienced MUNer or a first timer who is a little overwhelmed with everything, in the media everyone plays a vital role. And as we will be a somewhat smaller team than the committees, we will make sure to foster a much more intimate group feeling. We will also not debate against each other but work with each other to create content that will inform and entertain the delegates, secretariat and Executive Committee. The media requires, more than any other committee, commitment and creativity, which are the only two requirements you need to make a valuable contribution.

During KULMUN you will be sure to make new experiences, gain new insights into international organs and journalism, and make new friends. I promise it will be an enriching experience for each and every one of you and I cannot wait to meet you personally in Leuven. If you encounter any problems or questions during preparation, please do not hesitate to contact me, I am here to help you!

Best Regards,

Aurora

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Committee Overview

1. Role of Journalists and Media

a. *A brief introduction to (the media in) MUNing*

MUNing is in its essence a game in which you try to simulate a real life international organisation. The participants represent a country's position in international institutions and thus learn how these organs work. In their role, the participants discuss international political matters and draft resolutions. This takes place on the one hand during formal debates, and on the other hand during informal meetings, when the participants work on their papers and try to convince other people by networking and talking to them to support their ideas. The aim is to reach a resolution which features the points discussed before, and naturally every delegate wants to put in their specific goals. Achieving a compromise is what makes the negotiations so heated but also so interesting. If you have never participated in a Model United Nations Conference I expect you to read the Rules of Procedure, the rules the debates follow, (and watch a YouTube video on how ModelUN works) so you will not be completely overwhelmed once you step into the committee. Rules of Procedure always seem much scarier than they actually are when you first read them. In essence, they exist to make sure the discussion does not escalate to a screaming contest. For this you have two "modes" of discussion: moderated, meaning one person after an other speaks about a specific topic for a certain amount of time, or unmoderated, meaning that everyone runs around and can speak with whomever they want. If you are a first-time MUNer you will get the hang of this very quickly once in the committee. If you have participated in an MUN before I still expect you to read the rules, as they often differ from conference to conference.

In KULMUN we will have six committees, being the Security Council, the 6th Legal Committee, NATO-OTAN, OECD, SOCHUM and the Historical Committee on Decolonization. All of these committees will have two chairs who will moderate the discussion, correct documents and make sure that everything stays in diplomatic conduct. Together with Hannah and Xhilda, our Secretaries-General, the chairs form the Secretariat. They are the ones who write the study guides and know about the topic and the committee. So, if you have any questions about the content of the discussion – they are the ones to ask. A conference such as KULMUN could not be organised without a very dedicated Executive Committee (ExCom). They know their way around Leuven and the conference, so if you are lost, always approach them. The third group of people and arguably the biggest, are the delegates. Be it first timers or seasoned MUNers, all delegates will have something interesting to say and I very much encourage you to talk to as many of them as you possibly can.

Whilst all the committees are discussing their topics in their respective rooms, relatively isolated from each other, the press team of a conference is the element that connects them all. By reporting on what happens in both the committee rooms and outside, the press creates the "group feeling" of the conference. Often a delegate will only know what happens in his/her

committee. By reading the news and gossip, the conference changes from being a series of committee sessions and parties to a collective experience for everyone. Also, the news can influence the course a session goes – exposing secret alliances or pointing out faults in the line of argument of a delegate. As pointed out, the press plays a major role in how public opinion is swayed and how certain events are perceived. Combined with the entertainment factor, the press at an MUN conference is what shapes the perception of a conference and how people will remember it.

b. Working logistics

As journalists, you will have a slightly different schedule than delegates, as we do not only publish 2-3 outcome documents through the course of the conference, but ideally five newspapers and other media constantly. You will notice that the first day and the last day of the conference differ in times and are considerably shorter, thus we will most likely publish shorter newspapers on those days. At the beginning of every day we will have a journalist meeting in our room to outline the day and address possible struggles. You will also notice that you have two deadlines a day, one before lunch and the other after the second coffee break. Please come to the journalist's room right before lunch (essentially when your first deadline of the day is) so we can go to lunch together. After lunch, we (I say "we" as in you and me together as this is much more effective improvement-wise) will correct all articles that have been handed in and already try to plan the newspaper for the day. After the second deadline, right after coffee break, we will finish the newspaper and print it. Please also understand that not every article might always make it into the newspaper, entirely depending on the quality of the work and even more so on the amount of articles we will receive. Shortly before the end of sessions for the day you will return to the prospective committees and hand out the newspapers to chairs and delegates. The usage of Social Media will be further elaborated on later, however seeing as we will most probably be more journalist than committees, the maintenance of the Twitter account and gossip can be revolved around the week.

Writing and being creative are things that cannot be forced. Thus, there will be no word count on your articles. If creativity strikes you, write a detailed article, if not, a short interview or statement will suffice. You are however obliged to hand *something* in every deadline. I will try to give out individual feedback for every piece of work, especially at the beginning of the conference. Please remember however that we are working with a rather tight schedule and thus I expect everyone to proofread their work themselves before handing it in. You can choose if you want to write your pieces in the committee rooms themselves or if you would rather return to the (potentially much calmer) journalist's room. Prior to the conference every journalist will decide on two committees that he/she wants to cover. For those two you are obliged to read the study guides, so you know what topics they will be discussing. The articles that will be handed in before the conference will also cover these chosen committees.

Alternate Journalist Schedule (subject to change)

Dates and Times	Tue, 06.03	Wed, 07.03	Thu, 08.03	Fri, 09.03	Sat, 10.03
9.00-10.30		Journalist meeting Committee Session	Journalist meeting Committee Session	Journalist meeting Committee Session	(10.00-13.00) Journalist meeting Committee Session First Deadline
10.30-10.45		Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	(13.00-14.00) Lunch Fifth Newspaper
10.45-12.30		Committee Session	Committee Session	Committee Session	(14.00-16.00) Closing Ceremony
12.30-13.30		Lunch First Deadline	Lunch First Deadline	Lunch First Deadline	
13.30-15.00	Opening Ceremony (13.00-14.05)	Committee Session	Committee Session	Committee Session	
15.00-15.15	Opening Reception (14.15-15.40) First Newspaper	Coffee Break Second Deadline	Coffee Break Second Deadline	Coffee Break Second Deadline	
15.15-17.30	First Committee Sessions (16.00-17.30)	Committee Session Second Newspaper	Committee Session Third Newspaper	Committee Session Fourth Newspaper	
17.30-next morning at 9.00		Socials and Fun Time	Socials and Fun Time	Gala and super fun time!	

c. Moral Code

Most journalists work with a certain code of working ethics. Journalism sometimes requires you to be a little rude and make situations awkward through critical questions and articles. However, there are some ground rules of working that you always have to come back to. As a general rule about what can and will be published, always ask yourself if you would want something to be seen by your future employer and your mom.

- 1.) Be informed – *“If you can’t explain it simply, you do not understand it well enough”* said Einstein once. Remember when writing, that the people in other committees have not read the study guides of the other committees. Only if you are informed sufficiently will you be able to understand what is going on in the committee, analyze it, and write about it in a way that makes sense to people in other committees.
- 2.) Be positive – No, you do not have to be a beacon of sunshine every day. And yes, you are supposed to be critical of everything that is happening. But in media and MUN-media in particular, journalists tend to paint everything in an overly critical way, which frankly is a rather cheap way out. Everyone who is at an MUN (and those who don’t will soon enough) is aware that the international system is deeply flawed and the world as it is unfair and problematic. However, if you do not happen to have the perfect idea for a Security Council reform and fair redistribution in the world, it is the world order we will have to work with. Thus, try and not only criticize for the sake of being critical. Give praise where praise is due and criticize where appropriate, but try to avoid platitudes.
- 3.) Be on time – Be on time in the morning and be on time with handing in your work every day. If you are having trouble meeting a deadline, please make sure you communicate this as soon as possible.
- 4.) Be critical – Ask questions and *demand* answers. Avoid being rude but make sure people feel the need to justify themselves to you.
- 5.) Be attentive – Make sure you know what’s happening in the committee. Are Draft-Resolutions being written? If so, by whom? What is their agenda?
- 6.) Be present – Make sure every delegate knows who you are and what you do at the conference. Being a journalist does not mean sitting in the corner and writing quietly, but about being a *presence* in the room. Interview delegates, interview chairs, listen when people speak amongst themselves and most importantly: force people to realize the power you have.
- 7.) Be nice – It’s as easy as it sounds. Be a team player with your fellow journalists and editor and be nice to everyone else at the conference. *You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar* – and journalists want to catch flies.

2. Types of Media

At KULMUN 2018 we will use Facebook and Twitter as the two main social media platforms, which will be connected to each other. Newspaper with articles, memes and pictures will be printed whilst the rest of the content, being videos, gossip, more memes and more pictures will be posted. In a way, the newspaper is the more “serious” part whilst social media is more “fun” part (fun and serious being in quotation marks because obviously also tweets can be very serious and thoughtful and articles incredibly funny).

a. *Newspaper*

i. Good articles

Writing good articles in a very limited time is the main challenge of being a journalist at an MUN conference. As a wise woman said above, being a journalist is really tough. Whilst very few people will realize when a delegate rests his eyes and brain for a few minutes (especially in the morning or right after lunch), it will be immediately noticed when a journalist does the same. This should not discourage or intimidate you however, as it creates a very intense learning experience. As mentioned above, you will not have a word count. There are different types of articles and they require different lengths. To adequately prepare you, here are a few Dos for writing good articles (most of these correlate with each other, thus you will find that for writing good articles you will have to take all of them into account):

- 1.) **DO** – *Have a sense of your audience* – remember WHO you are writing this for: neither a group of preschool children, nor a panel of experts waiting to be briefed. Instead you are writing for a group of educated students who have at least a basic knowledge about topics and committees.
- 2.) **DO** – *Have a sense of place and time* – where and when are you writing this? Make sure it is still relevant when the news is published.
- 3.) **DO** – *Have a sense of drama* – yes, drama. No one wants to know how well everything is going. You are simulating a newspaper – often it helps to be less politically balanced to achieve this. There is a reason Fox News has this big of a following. Their stories are *always* dramatic. During KULMUN you will be encouraged to write things from different standpoints and whilst you are expected to be informed about the topic, it does not hurt to exaggerate here and there to write articles that are perhaps a little polarizing. (On a side note: To assume a certain political position when writing an article can also help you overcome a writer’s block. You do not have to agree with what you are writing, but to be politically informed is also about knowing and analyzing an opposite political opinion for which being a journalist at an MUN is the perfect opportunity.)
- 4.) **DO** – *Have a sense of story, people and detail* – “The universe is made of stories, not of atoms” (Muriel Rukeyser) – Make sure that with every piece of writing you are

producing, you are telling a story. Humans love to hear about people, so be sure you are being precise in telling your story. For example: Instead of making a general statement about the state of affairs in the Security Council, try to tell a story about how two delegates are fighting a vigilant fight to pull the committee in a certain direction.

- 5.) **DO** – *Have a sense of relevance* – always ask yourself if you would read your article yourself. Is what you are writing about entertaining and or critical enough to be worth your own time? This includes not chronicling what is happening in the committee, but finding *the story*. Avoid phrasing like: “France said this: “...” and then the USA replied this: “...”.” Frankly, no one cares.
- 6.) **DO** – *Have a sense of your role* – Our job is to communicate and evaluate the events of the conference. We have a responsibility to the delegates to do so in an open manner, to respect their boundaries whilst asking difficult questions. Do not shy away from your role. As a journalist, you are in a much more liberal position than most delegates, not bound by policies but by your own consciousness and creativity. You can e.g. leave the room at any time or talk to the chairs whenever it doesn’t disrupt the proceedings. Make sure you use your freedom!

ii. Forms of articles

In the following you will find a few types of articles. As we are not in school, I will not be strict about formalities, however it can be useful when starting an article to have some formalities to hold on to and guide your own thought and writing process:

1) News

News is a short piece of text that concentrates on the W-questions (Where, Who, What, When, Why). It is delivered in a judgement-free and sober way. News are typically very short and written for the sake of informing readers. In an MUN context they would e.g. announce this night’s social.

2) Analysis

An analytical article is a systematic investigation into why things are happening the way they are happening and how they will most likely progress. The goal is to educate the reader on the situation. And whilst the way someone connects and interprets information is always also tinted by their own political beliefs, this form of an article tries to stay neutral and portray a situation without the I-perspective.

3) Interview

An interview can be a fun way to diversify the articles you are writing. You do not necessarily need to interview the most vocal delegate in a committee. Instead it can be much more interesting to speak to someone who does not speak up in the committee that often. You also do not necessarily need to ask questions concerning the committee debates – as pointed out above – try to find the story. Is this perhaps this person’s first

MUN? Make sure you prepare your questions in a way that they lead the interview somewhere and are as concrete and concise as possible.

4) Column

A column is a type of article that will be written by the same person or group of people (almost) every edition of the newspaper. It is often cynical, sassy or ironical and often about topics that are typically considered irrelevant. Especially during MUNs this can be used to write things that are not topics of discussion in the committee but still conference-relevant.

5) Comment

A comment is a form of article that clearly states the author's opinion on something. You still use facts (or alternative facts, in case you want to polarize with your comment) as the basis of your article, but clearly state your opinion.

6) Report

In a report, your aim is to make the readers feel like they are experiencing the story you are telling themselves. Often it is combined with embedding facts in the real-life situation of the adventure the author is telling.

7) Press Statement

A press statement is a communication from a delegate to the media, stating something they consider newsworthy. It will be up to the discretion of the media (us) where we will publish this press statement (apart from the committee Facebook group). Good press statements might make it into the newspaper, but not all press statements are good and relevant enough to be of use for all conference participants.

8) Picture

When handing in your article, please always remember to also attach a picture you would like to go with it. Due to copyright reasons, it will make everyone's life easier if you use pictures you took yourself or a fellow journalist/delegate.

b. Twitter and Facebook

As with every gathering of human beings in one place, an MUN conference comes with lots of gossip and other fun shenanigans. At KULMUN we will gather this gossip, judge it on the basis of its entertainment value and publish it accordingly via the KULMUN Newswire Twitter account, which will be connected to the KULMUN Newswire Facebook page. You as journalists will not have to post something into the gossip box for it to be published. All journalists will have access to the Twitter account. With this it is especially important to remember the rules of reflecting if you would like this posted about yourself prior to posting. This does not mean none of the things posted can be somewhat mean and funny. Striking a balance here is very important and in case of doubt please always refer it to me first. A general rule is to look at the person you are mocking - if it is an obviously shy delegate speaking up for the first time, mocking that person online is just mean. If it is a confident delegate messing something up - a comment might be okay.

Another important thing to remember while using Twitter is that tweets cannot be edited, while they can be deleted, if you write something full of errors this will come back to haunt you (#covfefe). Things that are not technically gossip but will still be published are all fun things that happen in a committee. However, not everything that will be sent through the gossip box and that happens when people laugh is actually funny and Twitter-worthy. Situational humour is very hard to translate to Twitter, but I trust all of you to be aware of this mishap of recreating humour.

c. Memes, Pictures and Videos

This is basically where your creativity determines everything. Whilst some of us may be very talented in writing, someone else's talents might lie more towards Photoshop or witty captions to pictures or memes. There are quite literally no boundaries to your imagination here. Go all out - be as funny and creative as humanly possible. Short videos will be especially useful when reporting about the nightly socials, which obviously all of you should attend (this goes for all delegates, but as we are a smaller team struggling for recognition and being known by everyone thus being *present* is part of the job-description of a journalist). When taking pictures, please remember that we will have an official conference photographer. Thus, taking pictures of people debating and doing other MUN-like things is surely an honourable goal but entirely inefficient for a journalist. Instead, try to take picture of things that are special, force people to pose for you. To illustrate this here is a small example:



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3. Preparation

a. *How to prepare*

Preparation for the media team is key! As mentioned several times before, the nature of a conference is that we will work with a tight schedule. Thus, preparation is of vital importance. If you are a little unsure about the writing and/or English is not your native language I strongly encourage you to read English newspapers. Be it the Guardian (especially useful as they do not have a pay wall), the Economist, the New York Times or even a Breitbart-News platform, the more you read the easier it is to express yourself and to be creative. Please make sure you indicate which two committees you would like to cover and read those study guides. Also make sure you follow the news prior to the conference (as intelligent young people I expect you do this anyway, but try to be sensitive to writing styles and types of articles). As further preparation, I ask you to write one articles on each committee you chose. Be sure to use two different types of articles so our first newspaper is already diversified style-wise. If you have special talents in visual arts (memes, pictures, videos etc.) I will also accept this as a substitute for an article. As with everything, if you have any questions or remarks please do not hesitate to contact me!

b. *List of things to bring*

- USB stick
- Laptop (AND charger!)
- Camera (if you have one)
- If you wear high heels, please remember that Leuven is a medieval city with LOTS of cobblestones. As a journalist, you will walk more than the average delegate and thus either bring a second pair in the morning or wear flat shoes in general. I would really like to avoid broken feet and ankles ☺.