

WBRG – Citizen Media Guideline

Why this guideline?

The Western Balkan Regional Gathering (WBRG) relies on **local voices**: shepherds, community leaders, NGOs, municipalities and institutions.

This guideline helps volunteers from the six countries to **collect, write and share information responsibly**, clearly and accessibly, using social media.

Our approach is based on an **ecology of citizen media**: grounded, local, respectful and useful.

1) WRITING A GOOD POST (TEXT)

A. Start with the basics: the 5 W

Every post should answer, as simply as possible:

- **Who** is involved? (shepherd, community, NGO, municipality...)
- **What** is happening? (meeting, practice, problem, initiative...)
- **Where?** (village, mountain, region, country)
- **When?** (date or period)
- **Why** does it matter? (pastoralism, land, community, future)

You don't need long explanations. **Clarity is more important than detail.**

✗ BEFORE (unclear)

A very important meeting took place today and many people participated to discuss serious problems.

✓ AFTER (clear)

Shepherds from the Stara Planina met today in Dimitrovgrad to discuss access to summer pastures and water shortages, as part of the IYRP 2026 process.

B. Information hierarchy: the inverted pyramid

Put the **most important information first**.

1. First sentence: the essential fact

2. Second sentence: context
3. Third sentence (optional): quote, detail, explanation

→ People often read only the **first 2–3 lines**.

✗ BEFORE (too slow)

For many years, pastoralists in this region have faced different challenges. Today, a meeting was organised by several local actors to talk about these issues.

✓ AFTER (direct)

A meeting on access to pasture was held today in the Stara Planina, bringing together local shepherds and municipal representatives.

C. Short posts, short sentences (VERY IMPORTANT)

- Prefer **short posts**
- Use **short sentences**
- **One idea = one sentence**
- Simple, concrete words
- Avoid jargon, slogans, long paragraphs

Rule of thumb:

If a sentence is longer than **two lines on your phone** → **shorten it**.

✗ BEFORE (too long, abstract)

Within the framework of the Western Balkan Regional Gathering, a very constructive exchange was organised in order to address the multidimensional challenges faced by pastoral communities.

✓ AFTER (simple, concrete)

Today, shepherds and local officials met to talk about grazing rights. The discussion focused on practical solutions for the coming season.

D. Language

- Write in your **local language** (Albanian, Serbian, etc.)
- English is optional
- What matters is that **local people understand**

When possible, ask people if they agree to be photographed or quoted, and respect their wishes.

2 IMAGES & VISUALS

If a situation is sensitive or risky, think before posting and prioritise people's safety over visibility.

A. Readable images

Before posting, check:

- Is the **main subject clearly visible**? (person, action, place)
- Is the image **simple**, not crowded?
- Is there a clear **foreground / background**?

Good light and simplicity matter more than "beautiful" photos.

✗ BEFORE (confusing image)

- Too many people
- No clear subject
- Dark or blurred

✓ AFTER (readable image)

- One main subject
- Clear foreground / background
- Enough light

Ask yourself: *What should the viewer see first?*

B. Format

- Prefer **vertical format 4:5** (Instagram-friendly)
- Horizontal images are less visible on mobile
- Avoid very wide panoramas

✗ BEFORE

Horizontal panorama (hard to read on phone)

✓ AFTER

Vertical image (4:5), subject centred or slightly off-centre

C. People & dignity

- Always respect people's dignity
- Ask permission when possible
- Avoid images that expose or stigmatise

BEFORE

- Faces without context
- Vulnerable situations exposed

AFTER

- People shown with respect
 - Work, gestures, environment
 - Permission when possible
-

D. Carousels (optional)

You may use carousels (**maximum 5 images**):

1. Context (place, landscape)
2. People (faces, hands, work)
3. Detail (tool, animal, gesture)

Do not overload.

BEFORE

8–10 similar images

AFTER

3–5 complementary images

MANDATORY INFORMATION (VERY IMPORTANT)

Website link

Include this URL in **all posts** (text or visual):

 <https://minoritymap.org/rg>

If information comes from someone else (shepherd, NGO, municipality), mention it clearly.

4 HASHTAGS (USE FEW)

Use only a few:

- #IYRP2026
 - #Pastoralists
 - #Rangelands
 - #WesternBalkans
 -
- **one local hashtag** (region / place)

✗ BEFORE

#peace #freedom #nature #animals #life #mountains #hope #future

✓ AFTER

#IYRP2026 #Pastoralists #Rangelands #WesternBalkans #StaraPlanina

5 LOCAL ACCOUNTS

For now, please use your **personal accounts**: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, BlueSky, TikTok, WhatsApp, Viber, Telegram, etc.

6 WHAT THIS IS (AND IS NOT)

✓ This is:

- Citizen information
- Grounded, local, human
- Respectful and accurate

✗ This is not:

- Propaganda
- Activism slogans
- Institutional marketing

We value **truth, clarity and care**.

7 FINAL CHECKLIST (BEFORE YOU POST)

Ask yourself:

- Is the information clear?
- Are the sentences short?
- Is the image readable?
- Is the website link included?
- Does this respect the people shown?
- Is the information verified or clearly presented as such?

If yes → **post**.

8 DO & DON'T — QUICK VISUAL GUIDE

DO ✓

- Share concrete facts
- Show real people and places
- Use short sentences
- Credit places and communities
- Keep a calm, respectful tone

DON'T ✗

- Speculate or exaggerate
 - Use shocking or humiliating images
 - Write long institutional texts
 - Overuse hashtags or emojis
 - Post without context or source
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What's next?

One or two **online trainings** will follow:

- Writing posts
- Images & visual storytelling

Until then: **keep it simple, honest and human.**