Making Geopolitics Accessible

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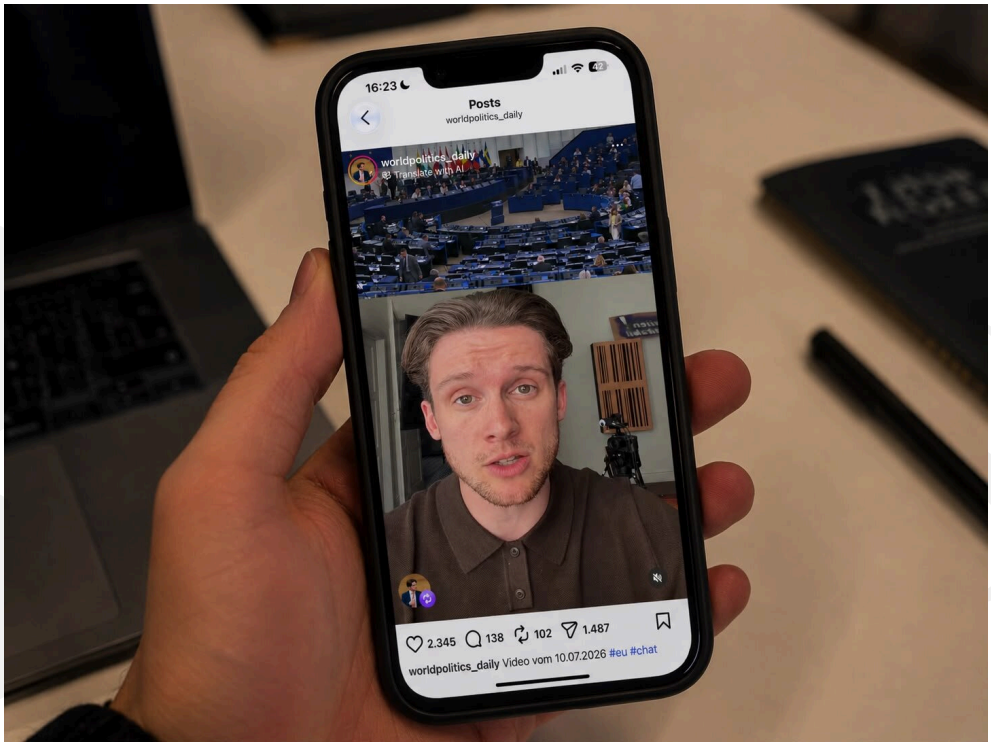

Making Geopolitics Accessible:

In an increasingly fragmented media landscape, where news competes with entertainment and attention spans seem to shrink by the day, a new generation of communicators has emerged. Among them is Andreas Grassl, an Austrian commentator and content creator who has built an audience of around 400,000 followers across social media platforms by translating complex international developments into concise, accessible content.

During an EPIS Informal Talk on 11 June 2026, Grassl reflected on his journey from aspiring journalist to digital storyteller, discussed the changing nature of journalism, and shared his views on trust, polarization, and the future of political communication.

From Geography Enthusiast to News Communicator

Grassl's interest in world affairs began long before he ever published a video online. "As a child, I was fascinated by geography," he recalled.

"That developed into an interest in history, and eventually politics." After studying journalism and gaining experience in traditional media, including sports commentary, he found his path when Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Recognizing a growing demand for accessible explanations of international events, he began posting short videos on social media.The response was immediate. What started as an experiment soon evolved into a full-time project spanning TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, podcasts, and other platforms.

Yet Grassl hesitates to describe himself as a journalist. "I usually call myself an analyst or translator," he explained. "My role is often to take information from first-grade sources and make it understandable for people who don't spend their entire day following international politics."

The distinction is partly strategic. Public trust in institutions, including traditional media, has declined significantly in recent years. Many audiences are more willing to engage with individuals than with established organizations. "People increasingly trust people rather than brands," Grassl observed.

Finding Stories in an Age of Information Overload

One of the questions raised during the discussion concerned how he decides which stories deserve attention. For Grassl, selecting topics is often a calculated gamble. "Every story is essentially a bet," he said. "You try to assess whether people will care about it. Sometimes you are right, and sometimes you're wrong." The challenge is particularly acute on social media, where countless stories compete for limited attention. To overcome this, Grassl emphasizes storytelling. Even highly relevant developments can go unnoticed if they are presented poorly. Conversely, a compelling narrative can draw audiences into topics they might otherwise ignore.

This approach occasionally invites comparisons to tabloid journalism. Grassl acknowledged that he sometimes uses attention-grabbing headlines or hooks, but stressed that there is a crucial difference between attracting interest and misleading audiences. "If the headline promises something, the content has to deliver it," he said. "The goal is to make people curious, not to deceive them." In his view, modern communicators must accept that presentation matters. The challenge is to use those tools responsibly.

Failure, Mistakes, and the Value of Transparency

When asked whether he had ever failed, Grassl laughed. "Of course." Not every video performs well. Not every prediction proves correct. Some stories attract far less interest than expected, while others unexpectedly resonate with audiences.

For him, mistakes are unavoidable in any profession dealing with fast-moving events. What matters is how one responds to them. "You have to be willing to correct yourself," he argued. "People don't expect perfection.

They expect honesty." This commitment to transparency is particularly important in political and conflict-related reporting, where misinformation can spread rapidly and public trust is fragile.

Rather than presenting himself as infallible, Grassl believes credibility comes from acknowledging uncertainty and admitting errors when they occur.

Why Short-Form Content Works

A recurring theme of the conversation was the dominance of short-form content. Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram have transformed how younger audiences consume news. Critics often argue that these formats encourage superficial engagement. Grassl takes a more nuanced view.

Short-form videos, he argued, are not necessarily the enemy of serious journalism. Instead, they can serve as an entry point. "Many people simply won't watch a 30-minute documentary about a conflict," he noted. "But they might watch a 60-second video that sparks their curiosity." Once interest is created, audiences can explore deeper sources independently.

The challenge is finding the right balance between accessibility and complexity. "You have to meet people in the middle," he explained. "If you make content too simplistic, it loses value. If you make it too technical, people stop listening." For Grassl, successful communication means translating complexity without eliminating it.

Trust, Expertise, and New Voices in Journalism

Another discussion focused on expertise and authority.

In the digital age, audiences encounter information from a wide variety of sources. Some commentators possess decades of professional experience in politics or diplomacy. Others enter public debates from entirely different backgrounds. How do these perspectives differ?

Grassl believes that professional expertise remains enormously valuable. Individuals who have worked directly in politics, diplomacy, or policymaking often possess insights unavailable to outsiders. At the same time, he warned against assuming that expertise exists only within traditional institutions.

One of the strengths of modern media is that it allows a much broader range of voices to participate in public conversations. "A bricklayer, a waitress, a teacher, or an engineer can all have valuable perspectives," he argued. The democratization of communication creates opportunities for fresh ideas and greater diversity of viewpoints. Yet it also introduces risks. Audiences must become more critical consumers of information, learning to distinguish between informed analysis and unsupported opinion.

Ultimately, Grassl believes that credibility depends less on formal titles and more on consistency, transparency, and intellectual honesty.

Polarization and the Changing Media Landscape

The discussion also touched on political polarization. Grassl acknowledged that today's media environment is more polarized than in previous decades. Yet he does not view this development as entirely negative. On one hand, polarization has increased political engagement. More people participate in public debates, follow current events, and take an interest in policy decisions. On the other hand, heightened polarization creates opportunities for manipulation. Individuals and organizations can exploit emotional reactions, deepen divisions, and pursue hidden agendas.

Social media amplifies these dynamics because algorithms tend to reward emotionally charged content. As a result, communicators face a difficult balancing act: generating engagement without contributing to outrage-driven discourse.

For Grassl, the solution lies in focusing on facts, context, and transparency rather than activism. "My job is usually to explain what happened and why it matters," he said. "I try not to tell people what they should think."

Advice for Aspiring Journalists

Toward the end of the conversation, participants asked what advice he would offer to young people interested in journalism, particularly in conflict reporting. His answer was straightforward.

"Just do it."

Today's technology has dramatically lowered the barriers to entry. A smartphone and internet connection are often sufficient to begin producing meaningful content. At the same time, Grassl emphasized the importance of responsibility. Aspiring reporters should focus on creating valuable coverage rather than chasing danger for its own sake. Reporting from conflict zones can be important. Seeking unnecessary risks is not. The most important qualities, he suggested, are curiosity, persistence, and a willingness to learn.

Changing the World?

When asked about his long-term ambitions, Grassl reflected on a goal that many young professionals share but few openly articulate.

"Maybe one day, change the world."

Pressed on what exactly he would like to change, he pointed to a broader political vision: a stronger and more integrated Europe capable of addressing shared challenges collectively. Whether through journalism, public debate, or perhaps one day politics itself, Grassl hopes to contribute to shaping that future.

For now, however, his focus remains on helping audiences make sense of a rapidly changing world. In an era defined by information overload, that task may be more important than ever.

About the interviewed: Andreas Grassl is an Austrian political influencer, journalist, and commentator specializing in international relations and global security. As the creator of the popular platform Worldpolitics_Daily, he translates complex geopolitical issues into accessible formats for a massive digital audience. He is the co-host of the weekly political podcast Grassl & Matei, where he analyzes global power dynamics, and also works as a professional sports commentator for CANAL+.

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