

McKennaMUN VIII Background Guide



European Union (EU)

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DIRECTOR'S LETTER

My name is Sahib Bhasin. I'm a third year studying Philosophy, Politics, and Economics at Claremont McKenna College. I was born in New Delhi, India and grew up in Budapest, Hungary. I've been doing MUN since high school. Back then, I attended conferences in Budapest, The Hague, and Berlin. My interest in the European Union (EU) stems from my curiosity about intragovernmental politics as well as my upbringing in Hungary. When I was younger, I remember deep excitement about Hungary's accession to the EU, but in recent years, Hungarians have expressed concerns about the organization's elitism, bureaucracy, and supranationalism. These concerns came to a head during the 2015 European migrant crisis. Countries like Germany, France, and Sweden criticized others like Hungary, Poland, and Austria for failing to take in their fair share of refugees. The latter accused the former of trying to change European values, culture, and heritage. As member states of the EU, we will turn back the time to 2015 to formulate a coherent, effective, and collaborative response to the crisis. In a series of updates, we will confront the root causes of migration, the smuggling of asylum seekers across the Aegean and Mediterranean, the Schengen Area and Dublin Regulation, and the processing, integration, and return of refugees. Our efforts will determine the fate of millions of asylum seekers as well as of the EU itself.

Sahib Bhasin

THE EUROPEAN UNION

History

The EU emerged from the ashes of the Second World War. Hoping to avoid similar conflict in the future, Europeans prioritized peace between countries across the continent.¹ Some scholars suggested linking European economies to achieve this aim: at least in theory, Germany would find it more difficult to attack France if France was Germany's main supplier of coal and steel. Statesmen keenly adopted this idea: such economic logic underpinned the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), founded by Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands in the Treaty of Paris on 18 April 1951.² But the ECSC was more than economic; it also laid the groundwork for the continent's future political union. It established High Authority, Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Ministers, Court of Justice, and Consultative Committee, the predecessors of modern EU institutions.³ The ECSC's aims included paving the way for a "European Federation," establishing a "common market" with free movement of "goods, persons, capital, and services," supporting research and commercial cooperation on the "peaceful use of nuclear energy," and fostering collaborative decision-making.⁴

¹ "The historical development of European integration," European Parliament, June 18, 2018, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/PERI/2018/618969/IPOL_PERI\(2018\)618969_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/PERI/2018/618969/IPOL_PERI(2018)618969_EN.pdf).

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

The Treaty of Paris was followed by the Treaties of Rome, which were signed on 25 March 1957.⁵ While the Treaty of Paris lasted for only 50 years, the Treaties of Rome were unlimited, making them “quasi-constitutional.”⁶ These Treaties formed two agencies to complement the ECSC: the European Economic Community (EEC) and European Atomic Energy Community (“Euratom”).⁷ The EEC intended to eliminate customs duties between European countries, institute a Common Customs Tariff, establish shared policies for agriculture and transportation, found a European Social Fund, establish a European Investment Bank, and foster closer relations between states.⁸ By contrast, Euratom focused on exclusively nuclear energy; originally very ambitious, it was eventually limited in its scope.⁹

The three treaties of Paris and Rome constituted the foundation of the modern EU, but the EU as we know it today was still far away. Article 8 of the Treaty of Rome mandated the establishment of a common market over 12 years, concluding on 31 December 1969.¹⁰ While the customs union and common external tariffs were completed by 1968, freedom of movement

⁵ “Treaty of Rome (EEC),” Eur-Lex, March 14, 2017, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Axy0023>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ “The Euratom Treaty: Consolidated Version,” European Union, https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europa.eu/files/docs/body/consolidated_version_of_the_treaty_establishing_the_european_atomic_energy_community_en.pdf.

¹⁰ European Parliament, “The historical development.”

had not yet been realized.¹¹ The Merger Treaty of 8 April 1965 merged the ECSC, EEC, and EAEC into a single executive body with a common budget titled the Council and Commission of the European Communities (“European Community”).¹² The Treaties of Luxembourg and Brussels in 1970 and 1975, respectively, focused on the budgetary powers of the new body.¹³ The European Community expanded with the entry of the UK, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Portugal, and Spain between 1973 and 1986.¹⁴ This progress was hampered by setbacks over the years. The failure to achieve political union culminated in the Davignon report in October 1970, which compromised on “political cooperation” until the Single Act.¹⁵ In 1966, deep disagreements about voting procedures were settled through the Luxembourg Compromise, which mandated member states to respect the vital interests of individual states in common decisions.¹⁶

The Single European Act represented a monumental step in the development of the modern EU. Signed on 28 February 1986, the Act extended the European Community’s powers by creating an internal market and incorporating monetary, social, and economic policy, improved the decision-making abilities of the executive branch of the European Community, and

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

strengthened the powers of the European Parliament (EP).¹⁷ The Maastricht and Amsterdam treaties added to this progress. The Maastricht Treaty, signed on 7 February 1992, transformed the European Community into the European Union, placing three pillars at the center of continental integration: the “European Communities,” which focused on instituting the single market on the continent, the “Common Foreign and Security Policy,” which protected “common values, fundamental interests, and independence and integrity,” and “Cooperation in the Fields of Justice and Home Affairs,” which include issues like immigration, policing, and anti-terrorism.¹⁸ The Amsterdam Treaty, signed on 2 October 1997, further refined the EU, putting the EP on equal footing with the European Council, legitimating independent cooperation between member states, and updating existing institutions to prepare for enlargement.¹⁹ The Treaty of Nice signed on 26 February 2001 aimed to perfect the EU by addressing issues like the “size and composition of the European Commission, weighting of votes in the Council of the European Union, and extension of qualified majority voting.”²⁰ Its reforms included increasing the maximum number of European parliamentarians (MEPs), ensuring broader representation

¹⁷ “The provisions of the Single European Act,” Virtual Centre for Knowledge about Europe, July 8, 2016, https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1999/1/1/243555aa-d219-4525-9978-34325bb5e17a/publishable_en.pdf.

¹⁸ “The Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties,” European Parliament, November, 2019, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/en/FTU_1.1.3.pdf.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ “The Treaty of Nice and the Convention on the Future of Europe,” European Parliament, November, 2019, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/en/FTU_1.1.4.pdf.

on the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), and forming common policy on intellectual property.²¹

Though the Treaty of Nice made formidable progress, it was not the end of European history. The most recent treaty, signed in Lisbon on 13 December 2007, aimed to fill in the gaps left by the Treaty of Nice through both principled and institutional reforms. Principally, the Treaty of Lisbon delineates three types of issues in Europe: “exclusive competence,” where only the EU can legislate; “shared competence,” where member states can legislate; and “supporting competence,” where the EU merely supports member states.²² Additionally, it imbues the EU with a “full legal personality,” allowing it to sign treaties and join organizations, and affirms the EU’s commitment to three principles: “democratic equality,” “representative democracy” and “participatory democracy.”²³ Institutionally, it focuses on the powers of the EP, enlarging the maximum number of MEPs, expanding its jurisdiction to 73 policy areas, and ensuring that it shares budgetary power with the Council of the European Union.²⁴

Structure

The EU maintains a unique institutional design. Its four main organs are the European Council, European Commission (EC), Council of the European Union, and EP. Broadly put, the

²¹ Ibid.

²² “The Treaty of Lisbon,” European Parliament, November, 2019, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/en/FTU_1.1.5.pdf.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

European Council sets the general, overall direction of the EU.²⁵ Oftentimes, it resolves issues of such importance that they should be decided at only the national level.²⁶ The European Council consists of the heads of state of European governments as well as the President of the European Commission and meets four to five times a year.²⁷ The legislative and executive powers of the EU are entrusted to the European Commission, Council of the European Union, and European Parliament. Roughly described, the EC negotiates and proposes laws, the Council of the European Union and EP debate and vote on those laws, and the EC implements and enforces them.²⁸ Similar to an executive cabinet, the EC consists of one Commissioner from each EU member state responsible for a different policy area.²⁹ The Council of the European Union incorporates the relevant minister from each European country pursuant to the issue at hand.³⁰ Uniquely, the EP is democratically elected, consisting of MEPs chosen by the citizens of individual member states.³¹ MEPs are distributed according to population and grouped by political views.³²

²⁵ "Institutions and bodies," European Union, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies_en.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ "European Council," European Union, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-council_en.

²⁸ "European Commission," European Union, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission_en.

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ "Council of the European Union," European Union, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/council-eu_en.

³¹ "European Parliament," European Union, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-parliament_en.

³² Ibid.

Other institutions and bodies of the EU include the CJEU, European Central Bank (ECB), and European External Action Service (EEAS).³³

EC:

Proposes new laws

The Commission is the sole EU institution tabling laws for adoption by the Parliament and the Council that:

- protect the interests of the EU and its citizens on issues that can't be dealt with effectively at national level;
- get technical details right by consulting experts and the public.

Manages EU policies & allocates EU funding

- Sets EU spending priorities, together with the Council and Parliament.
- Draws up annual budgets for approval by the Parliament and Council.
- Supervises how the money is spent, under scrutiny by the [Court of Auditors](#).

Enforces EU law

- Together with the Court of Justice, ensures that EU law is properly applied in all the member countries.

Represents the EU internationally

- Speaks on behalf of all EU countries in international bodies, in particular in areas of trade policy and humanitarian aid.
- Negotiates international agreements for the EU.

³³ European Union, "Institutions and bodies."

Council of the European Union:

- **Negotiates and adopts EU laws**, together with the [European Parliament](#), based on proposals from the [European Commission](#)
- **Coordinates** EU countries' policies
- Develops the EU's **foreign & security policy**, based on [European Council](#) guidelines
- Concludes **agreements** between the EU and other countries or international organisations
- Adopts the annual [EU budget](#) - jointly with the European Parliament.

EP:

Legislative

- Passing EU laws, together with the [Council of the EU](#), based on [European Commission](#) proposals
- Deciding on international agreements
- Deciding on enlargements
- Reviewing the Commission's [work programme](#) and asking it to propose legislation

Supervisory

- Democratic scrutiny of all EU institutions
- Electing the Commission President and approving the [Commission as a body](#). Possibility of voting a motion of censure, obliging the Commission to resign
- Granting discharge, i.e. approving the way EU budgets have been spent
- Examining citizens' **petitions** and setting up **inquiries**
- Discussing monetary policy with the [European Central Bank](#)
- Questioning Commission and Council
- Election observations

Budgetary

- Establishing the EU budget, together with the Council
- Approving the EU's long-term budget, the "Multiannual Financial Framework"

Our Committee

Though understanding each of the EU's contemporary structure is helpful, for the sake of simplicity and efficacy, we will not simulate any one organ of the organization. In design, our committee most closely resemble the European Council, a group of diplomatic representatives from each member state with equal voting power. Like the EP and Council of the European Union, we will pass directives in response to the various crises that confront us throughout 2015. Additionally, our committee incorporates the executive powers of the EC: we may choose to replace the Dublin Regulation, close down European borders, establish emergency refugee camps in Italy and Greece, institute mandatory quotas for each country, or implement any other measure conceivable. Delegates should assume unlimited funding but resist unnecessarily expensive or technically impossible measures. Additionally, we should remember the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights as well as the organization's founding principles when formulating and evaluating our policies. Finally, we may refer to existing EU institutions like the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and European Investment Bank (EIB) in our solutions. For example, directives deploying EASO officers to first entry states like Greece and Italy or charging the EIB to invest in tertiary education for refugees are welcomed.

THE EUROPEAN MIGRANT CRISIS

The Causes: Violence, Poverty, and Climate Change

It is important to recognize that the European Migrant Crisis did not begin in 2015. In fact, 2014 saw an extraordinarily high number of asylum seekers arriving in Europe: 4632 through the Western Mediterranean route, 170,100 through the Central Mediterranean route, and 41,038 through the Eastern Mediterranean route.³⁴ The root causes of the crisis are difficult to discern, but the geographic breakdown of asylum seekers arriving to Europe in 2014 places the crisis in a broader geopolitical context:

	2011	2012	2013	2014	Share of total	% change on prev. year
All Borders						
Syria	1 616	7 903	25 546	79 169	28	210
Eritrea	1 572	2 604	11 298	34 586	12	206
Unspecified sub-Saharan nationals	0	0	0	26 341	9.3	n.a.
Afghanistan	22 994	13 169	9 494	22 132	7.8	133
Kosovo*	540	990	6 357	22 069	7.8	247
Mali	2 602	657	2 887	10 575	3.7	266
Albania	5 138	5 651	9 021	9 323	3.3	3.3
Gambia	599	553	2 817	8 730	3.1	210
Nigeria	6 893	826	3 386	8 715	3.1	157
Somalia	3 011	5 038	5 624	7 676	2.7	36
Others	96 086	35 046	30 935	54 216	19	75
Total all borders	141 051	72 437	107 365	283 532	100	164

35

³⁴ "Migration through the Mediterranean: Mapping the EU Response," European Council on Foreign Relations, https://www.ecfr.eu/specials/mapping_migration.

³⁵ "Annual Risk Analysis," Frontex, 2015, https://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annual_Risk_Analysis_2015.pdf#page=59.

These figures from the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (“Frontex”) indicate that conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan, as well as throughout Africa played an integral role in causing the crisis. Migration from Syria stems from the tumult of the Syrian Civil War. This conflict has killed over 200,000 people, including over 8000 minors.³⁶ Syria has approximately over 22 million people, but 7.6 million were internally displaced, 3.2 million were refugees, and 12.2 million required humanitarian assistance to survive as of 2015.³⁷ In 2014, nearly 70,000 Syrians fled the country every month, and over 700,000 registered as refugees with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).³⁸ Syria’s neighbors have absorbed the majority of refugees from the country. Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey hosted over 600,000, 1.14 million, and 1.6 million refugees, respectively.³⁹ Benedetta Berti of the Institute for National Security Studies estimates that the number of Syrians in these countries is higher than the UNHCR reports as some decline to register “for reasons that range from fearing the consequences of having their names in official records, to lacking either proper information or access to registration points.”⁴⁰

While many Syrians flee directly to Europe, others attempt first to settle in Syria’s neighbors. The challenges awaiting refugees in these countries has a compounding effect;

³⁶ Benedetta Berti, “The Syrian Refugee Crisis: Regional and Human Security Implications,” https://www.inss.org.il/he/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/systemfiles/SystemFiles/adkan17_4ENG_7_Berti.pdf.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

oftentimes, refugees escape the conditions in Syria's neighbors as much as those in Syria. Firstly, these countries face difficulties "ensuring legal, physical, and psychological protection to the refugee population."⁴¹ Refugee camps serve as fertile territory for criminal activity, including drug trafficking, prostitution, and indentured labor. Children are particularly vulnerable: a 2014 Save the Children report estimated that "early and forced marriage among Syrian refugee girls has doubled since the onset of war."⁴² Refugees should also be afforded legal status, but Jordan's and Lebanon's failure to ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention provides an obstacle to formally recognizing refugees.⁴³ Most countries have developed separate mechanisms for accomplishing this goal: both Jordan and Lebanon have signed individual Memorandums of Understanding with the UNHCR, while Turkey has designed its own "Temporary Protection Regime for Syrian Refugees."⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² "Child marriages double among Syria refugees in Jordan," Al Arabiya, July 16, 2014, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/07/16/Child-marriages-double-among-Syria-refugees-in-Jordan->.

⁴³ Berti, "The Syrian Refugee Crisis."

⁴⁴ Ibid.



Syria's neighbors also struggle to provide refugees with basic services and employment. With regards to shelter, the UN estimates that approximately 85 percent of Syrian refugees reside outside of refugee camps.⁴⁵ Berti indicates that many refugees must contend with rising rent, and others simply elect to live in "abandoned or unfinished buildings," which "lack adequate access to water, sanitation, and electricity."⁴⁶ Those that live in refugee camps do not always have it better: mega-camps like Zataari lack basic services, while others like Azraq are criticized as hotbeds of criminal activity. Along with shelter, refugees also need healthcare and education. Yet the national infrastructures of host countries in these areas are under increasing

⁴⁵ "2014 Syria Regional Response Plan," UNHCR, <https://www.unhcr.org/syriarrp6/midyear/docs/syria-rrp6-midyear-full-report.pdf>.

⁴⁶ https://www.inss.org.il/he/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/systemfiles/SystemFiles/adkan17_4ENG_7_Berti.pdf

strain. Indeed, Syrian refugees account for 9 and 26 percent of the Jordanian and Lebanese populations, respectively; their healthcare and education systems were not built to absorb these shocks.⁴⁷ Education systems in particular have become “increasingly overcrowded, under financial strain, and with overworked personnel”; in Lebanon, there are more Syrians than Lebanese in public schools, and these students speak different languages, have different cultures, and are acclimated to different curriculums.⁴⁸ Dissuaded by the poor quality of education, older refugees often forgo school altogether; the International Labor Organization reports that in Lebanon, 55 percent of refugees attend primary school, but only 13 percent attend secondary school⁴⁹. Employment is as difficult to provide as shelter, healthcare, and education. Some refugees are unable to obtain work permits, others are restricted to unskilled jobs, and generally, refugees have increased unemployment and decreased wages in Syria’s neighbors.⁵⁰

Asylum seekers fleeing Syria as well as conditions in its neighbors constitute the largest portion of arrivals to the EU, but geopolitical situations in countries like Eritrea, Somalia, and Nigeria are often overlooked as root causes. Eritrea faces persistent human rights crises; ruled by the dictator Isaias Afewerki, Eritrea’s regime mandates men and women to complete military

⁴⁷ Bertj, “The Syrian Refugee Crisis.”

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ “Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon and their Employment Profile,” International Labor Organization, 2013, https://www.ilo.org/wcm5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_240134.pdf.

⁵⁰ Bertj, “The Syrian Refugee Crisis.”

service, which include torture, sexual abuse, as well as forced labor.⁵¹ Over 33,451 migrants arriving to Italy by sea in 2014 came from Eritrea for these reasons.⁵² Additionally, Somalia also faces tremendous issues. The terrorist group Al-Shabaab frequently targets or kidnaps civilians, and the country confronts famine. Mali has also dealt with a jihadi movement; from 2012 until 2015, the north of the country experienced widespread fighting between different groups. Nigerian nationals must often escape Boko Haram; Jonathan Zaragoza Cristiani of the Barcelona Center for International Affairs observes “a link between the increasing violence in the country in 2014, and the dramatic increase in the number of Nigerians arriving in Italy which shot up from 358 in 2012 to 8570 in 2014.”⁵³ There has also been a precipitous rise in the number of Palestine fleeing the Middle East; causes include Israel’s 2014 attack on Gaza and the fact that Lebanon and Jordan barred Palestinian refugees.⁵⁴

Finally, any discussion of the root causes of the migrant crisis is incomplete without a consideration of the impact of climate change on Africa. Indeed, Stefano M. Torelli of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) identifies four reasons for the effect of

⁵¹ Jonathan Zaragoza Cristiani, “Tragedies in the Mediterranean: Analyzing the Causes and Addressing the Solutions from the Roots to the Boats,” Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, July, 2015, https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/publication_series/notes_internacionales/n1_124_tragedies_in_the_mediterranean/tragedies_in_the_mediterranean_analyzing_the_causes_and_addressing_the_solutions_from_the_roots_to_the_boats.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

environmental changes on African migration: “the continent is highly dependent on natural resources and agriculture, which are the first assets to be undermined by climate change; it has poor infrastructure, such as flood defenses; its states are often characterized by weak institutions, which are less able to adapt to climate change; and its high poverty rate undermines the resilience of local populations to climate shocks.”⁵⁵ The Sahel belt is particularly divested by climate change: it has experienced rising greenhouse emissions, increasing temperatures, and “catastrophic events.”⁵⁶ One need only look at the Lake Chad region. Since the 1960s, the lake itself has decreased in size by 90%, which has left nearly 7 million people food insecure.⁵⁷ Farmers and fishermen are out of jobs, and 2.5 million people have been internally displaced.⁵⁸ Demographic trends only amplify climate change’s devastation. Africa’s population is expected to reach 2.5 billion by 2050; Niger itself will grow from 20 to 70 million people.⁵⁹ Outsized proportions of people in countries like Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali live below the poverty line, dependent on stable crops from agriculture; as rainfall decreases, the people will suffer.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Stefano M. Torelli, “Climate-driven migration in Africa,” December 20, 2017, https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_climate_driven_migration_in_africa.

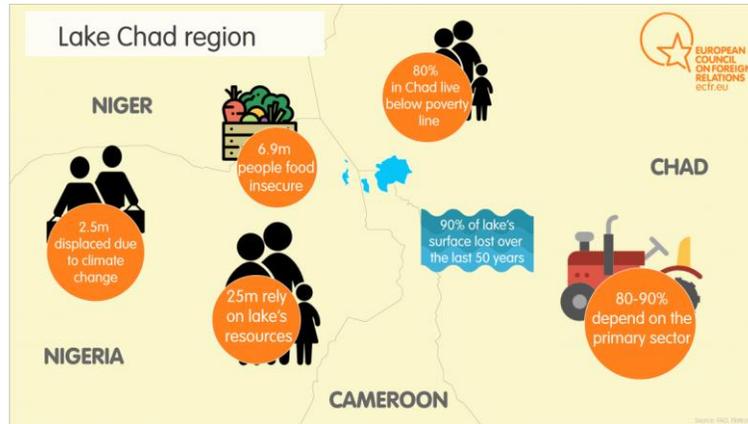
⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.



The Journey: Endless Danger

In order to reach Europe, migrants undertake long, difficult, and dangerous journeys. Depending on their countries of origin, they use a number of different routes. Migrants from Africa usually cross via the Mediterranean. In order to reach the Mediterranean, some migrants use the Eastern Africa route through Sudan, Egypt, and Libya.⁶¹ These asylum seekers are often from Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia.⁶² By contrast, migrants from Mali typically use the Western African route, while those from Niger usually employ the Central African route.⁶³ These migrants normally pass through Nigeria, Mali, Niger, Algeria, and Libya.⁶⁴ The cost of the journey depends on a migrant's country of origin, but the price of the trip from Niger to Libya provides an

⁶¹ Katie Kuschminder, Julia de Bresser, and Melissa Siegel, "Irregular Migration Routes to Europe and Factors Influencing Migrants' Destination Choices," Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, 2015, <https://www.merit.unu.edu/publications/uploads/1436958842.pdf>.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

approximation of the expenses incurred by African migrants: USD 2000-3000 according to the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime.⁶⁵ On the other hand, migrants from Asia typically cross through the Aegean. In order to reach that sea, people from Syria cross directly into Turkey, while those from Afghanistan normally travel from Iran to Turkey. The trip from Afghanistan costs a family's entire savings, if not more: Katie Kuschminder, Julia de Bresser and Melissa Siegel of the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance estimate USD 5000-6000.⁶⁶

The journey to the Mediterranean or Aegean is as dangerous as the journey to Europe itself. Jonathan Zaragoza Cristiani writes that "the number of migrants who died during their journey from their country of origin, before even catching sight of the Mediterranean Sea, is probably higher than the numbers of casualties who drowned while en route from Libya to Italy."⁶⁷ Zaragoza suggests that thousands of asylum seekers perish in the Western Sahara from famine and thirst.⁶⁸ Any discussion of the journey to Europe is remiss without mention of human trafficking. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime explains that the European migrant crisis has created a comprehensive, profit-seeking industry, generating billions in revenue for professional

⁶⁵ Tuesday Reitano, Laura Adal, and Mark Shaw, "Smuggled Futures: The dangerous path of the migrant from Africa to Europe," The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, May, 2014, <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/2014-crime-1.pdf>.

⁶⁶ Kuschminder, de Bresser, and Siegel, "Irregular Migration Routes."

⁶⁷ Cristiani, "Tragedies in the Mediterranean."

⁶⁸ Ibid.

criminals who systematically violate human rights.⁶⁹ Indeed, Egyptian traffickers sometimes “capture, rape, burn, and mutilate Eritrean migrants.”⁷⁰ In the Middle East, many smugglers imprison asylum seekers until their families pay huge ransoms to release them.⁷¹ Equally alarming, human traffickers sometimes promise Syrian refugees passage to Europe but hold them in “debt bondage” in countries like Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon.⁷²

The journey from Libya to Italy through the Mediterranean or from Turkey to Greece through the Aegean has received far more attention. In 2014, over 170,000 refugees reached Europe by crossing the Mediterranean from Libya to Italy.⁷³ This route has a tragic history. From January 1998 to September 2014, over 15,000 migrants died or went missing trying to cross the Mediterranean.⁷⁴ Infamously, in 2013, a boat with hundreds of migrants sank near Italy, resulting in the deaths of 368 asylum seekers.⁷⁵ Such incidents occurred throughout 2014, and that year authorities had to rescue over 29,000 migrants from the sea.⁷⁶ This issue reached its peak in 2015, the year of this committee. 479 migrants died or went missing between January and

⁶⁹ “Smuggling of migrants: the harsh search for a better life,” UNODC, <https://www.unodc.org/toc/en/crimes/migrant-smuggling.html>.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Cristiani, “Tragedies in the Mediterranean.”

⁷² UNODC, “Smuggling of migrants.”

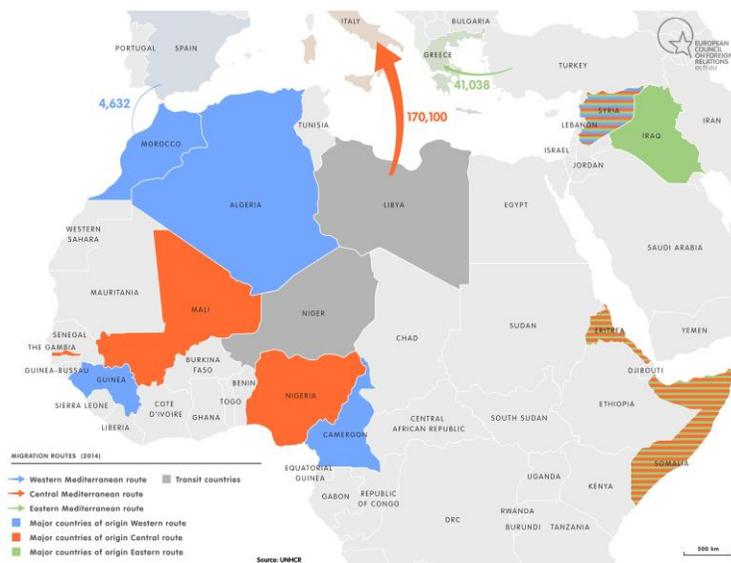
⁷³ Jeanne Park, “Europe’s Migration Crisis,” Council on Foreign Relations, September 23, 2015, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/europes-migration-crisis#chapter-title-0-4>.

⁷⁴ Kuschminder, de Bresser, and Siegel, “Irregular Migration Routes.”

⁷⁵ “The sea route to Europe: The Mediterranean passage in the age of refugees,” UNHCR, July 1, 2015, <https://www.unhcr.org/5592bd059.pdf>.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

March, and in April 1308 asylum seekers drowned in the Mediterranean.⁷⁷ 2015 also marked the year that this issue achieved international prominence; the photograph of three-year-old Alan Kurdi, a Syrian boy of Kurdish background, lying dead on the beach after drowning awakened the hearts and minds of millions to the terrors of the migrant crisis. Finally, 2015 bought about a shift in emphasis from the Mediterranean to the Aegean route; while in 2014, Italy received over three quarters of refugees and Greece less than one fifth, in 2015 “that picture has changed”; “67,500 people arrived in Italy, while 68,000 arrived on the islands of Greece,” mainly Lesbos, Chios, and Samos.⁷⁸



⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

This route is as dangerous as the Mediterranean one: in 2015, the Turkish Coast Guard estimated that 806 people perished while attempting to cross.⁷⁹ As this committee takes place in 2015, we will deal simultaneously with the persistence of crossings in the Mediterranean and with the increase in arrivals via the Aegean.



In Europe: A Cold Reception

Once asylum seekers reach Europe, they face shocking realities. The EU response was supposed to be guided by the Dublin Regulation. Instituted in tandem with freedom of movement throughout the Schengen area, the Dublin Regulation aimed to standardize the EU's

⁷⁹ "Victims in Aegean dropped by 85 percent in 2017," InfoMigrants, January 5, 2018, <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/6871/victims-in-aegean-dropped-by-85-percent-in-2017>.

response to refugee crises.⁸⁰ It underwent several rounds of revision: the Dublin Convention in 1990, the Dublin II Regulation in 2003, as well as Dublin III in 2013.⁸¹ Dublin prioritized expediency over fairness: its primary aims are to stop people from asylum in countries they simply want or moving around Europe aimlessly. Its three principles are: “1) asylum seekers have only one opportunity to apply for asylum in the European Union and, if the request is denied, this is recognized by all member states; 2) the member state responsible for examining the application is established by the criteria set out in the Dublin Convention, rather than the preference of the applicants themselves; and 3) asylum seekers may be “transferred” to the member state to which they have been assigned.”⁸² The aforementioned criteria include whether an asylum seeker has family in a member state, if the applicant has a visa in a particular country, or the migrant’s country of arrival in the EU.⁸³ The Dublin Regulation is accompanied by the EURODAD system, which stores the biodata of asylum seekers.⁸⁴ Authorities may employ this system to check if they are responsible for processing the request of an asylum seeker or transferring that person to another member state.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Blanca Garcés-Masareñas, “Why Dublin “Doesn’t Work”,” Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, November, 2015.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas deftly highlights three flaws of the Dublin Regulation.⁸⁶ Firstly, the Dublin Regulation is unfair.⁸⁷ It saddles a small number of states on Europe’s borders with the majority of asylum seekers reaching the continent, generating social, economic, and political tension in these nations. By contrast, it relieves wealthier, more central states of the responsibilities of housing, processing, and integrating migrants, exacerbating Europe’s disunity. Italy was rightly overwhelmed when it was made responsible for “almost a third” of refugees arriving to Europe in 2013.⁸⁸ The Dublin Regulation is also inefficient.⁸⁹ Most importantly, the majority of migrants do not want to remain in their country of arrival; in 2013, 64,625 of the 170,000 asylum seekers in Italy wished to remain there.⁹⁰ Most asylum seekers prefer to migrate north to states like Germany, Belgium, and Sweden. Garcés-Mascareñas highlights not only the “presence of friends and acquaintances in the preferred country” but also “asylum processes, reception conditions, social rights and the chances of finding work” to explain migrants’ divergent preferences.⁹¹ The Dublin Regulation’s inefficiency is amplified by the EU’s struggle to transfer asylum seekers to the nation responsible for their claims; here, Garcés-Mascareñas points towards the non-cooperation of migrants, the intractability of the legal system, and the fact that “the member states that send most transfer requests are also those that receive the

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

most.”⁹² Ultimately, the EU only fulfilled 20% of transfer requests in 2013.⁹³ Finally, Garcés-Mascareñas worries that the Dublin Regulation threatens migrants’ rights. Indeed, she suggests that some states fail to evaluate claims quickly and impartially, while others neglect to verify if an asylum seeker has family in and is eligible for transfer to another state.⁹⁴

The fractured response of EU countries to the crisis actualizes the flaws of the Dublin Regulation. To understand the challenges faced by “first responder” countries on Europe’s borders, one need only look at Greece. In 2013, the Greek government attempted to stem the tide of migrants by constructing a barbed-wire fence on the Turkish border in “Operation Aspida.”⁹⁵ Yet the closing of the land route only fueled more dangerous sea crossings, resulting in over 240 journeys in 2015.⁹⁶ According to William Drozdiak of the Brookings Institution, “the Greeks, still suffering from economic depression, are woefully short of resources and totally incapable of handling even a fraction of the incoming refugee flows.”⁹⁷ Writing in 2016, Drozdiak observed how despite mounting casualties in the Aegean, NATO and the EU neglected to increase patrols.⁹⁸ Refugees who arrive in Lesvos are shuttled to the Moria refugee camp, which

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Park, “Europe’s Migration Crisis.”

⁹⁶ Ibid

⁹⁷ William Drozdiak, “Greece’s frightening inability to deal with the refugee influx,” Brookings Institution, February 5, 2016, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2016/02/05/greeces-frightening-inability-to-deal-with-the-refugee-influx/>.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

was constructed for 3100 people, houses over 20,000 people as of 2020, and experiences a litany of issues.⁹⁹ There is only one medical facility for the huge amount of people, frequent and prolonged electricity shortages, as well as rampant ethnic violence and sexual assault.¹⁰⁰



Most asylum seekers choose not to stay in Greece: they migrate north via countries like Macedonia, Serbia, and Hungary. As of 2015, 1000 people per day began this journey in Greece.¹⁰¹ UNHCR highlights its difficulty: asylum seekers confront abusive locals as well as predatory human traffickers.¹⁰² Macedonia banned migrants from using public transport, causing

⁹⁹ Annie Chapman, “A doctor’s story: inside the ‘living hell’ of Moria refugee camp,” The Guardian, February 9, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/09/moria-refugee-camp-doctors-story-lesbos-greece>.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ UNHCR, “The sea route to Europe.”

¹⁰² Ibid.

accidents as they traverse railway tracks and highways.¹⁰³ Hungary, for its part, faced over 102,342 border crossings from January to July 2015.¹⁰⁴ Notoriously, it constructed a fence along and militarized its border, and in 2015, it passed an emergency law allowing police to detain migrants.¹⁰⁵ Hungary ultimately allowed the masses of asylum seekers occupying Budapest's central train station to migrate north, without accepting any on its own. This situation has brought deep disagreements to the fore. Most Hungarians voted against accepting asylum seekers in referenda organized by the country's Prime Minister, Viktor Orban.¹⁰⁶ Slovakia has accepted only Christian Syrians, while Poland has evaluated asylum applications according to people's religious backgrounds.¹⁰⁷ France and Denmark have accepted fewer migrants due to security concerns after terrorist attacks in 2015.¹⁰⁸ These trends must be placed in the context of globalization, demographic change, and economic uncertainty across the EU.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Park, "Europe's Migration Crisis."

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.



The responses of states like Germany and Sweden to the migrant crisis also warrant attention. These countries have acted generously toward asylum seekers: in 2013, Sweden provided all Syrian migrants permanent residency.¹⁰⁹ Later, in 2015, Germany committed USD 6.6 billion to supporting 800,000 asylum seekers, and it also suspended the Dublin Regulation for Syrian refugees, allowing them to remain in the country indefinitely.¹¹⁰ While German Chancellor Angela Merkel has characterized Germany's actions as the country's moral duty, they have been costly. In response to domestic discontent about Germany's disproportionate actions, it revived border controls with Austria in 2015, and it has called for a permanent quota system to more fairly distribute refugees across the EU.¹¹¹ Even a short-term plan to resettle 120,000 migrants from southern Europe across the continent in 2015 failed due to resistance from countries like

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. To explain their actions, these countries blame Germany and Sweden for triggering migrant flows by promising asylum seekers gratuitous benefits; additionally, they suggest that the EU has failed to provide support to periphery states. In 2015, the European Commission allocated \$2.6 billion to helping countries deal with the migrant crisis, but experts contend that this is not enough.¹¹²

Finally, refugees whose claims are accepted must be integrated into the societies of their host countries: a long, difficult, and often unsuccessful process. Germany provides a case study. Herbert Brücker of the Migration Policy Institute draws upon data collected by the German Institute for Employment Research, the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, and the Socioeconomic Panel at the German Institute for Economic Research to evaluate the country's success at integrating the 3.1 million asylum seekers who arrived in the country from 2015 to 2017.¹¹³ Germany employs a number of interesting policies for integration: it processes applications quickly and effectively through the "cluster system," reduced the time that it takes to obtain a work permit from 12 to three months and provides 100 hours of instruction about Germany's "legal system, culture, and values."¹¹⁴ Economically, "40% of refugees who arrived starting in 2015 were in employment by 2019." That said, refugee women find it far more

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Herbert Brücker, Philipp Jaschke, and Yulia Kosyakova, "Integrating Refugees and Asylum Seekers into the German Economy and Society: Empirical Evidence and Policy Objectives," Transatlantic Council on Migration, December, 2019, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/TCM_2019_Germany-FINAL.pdf.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

difficult to find work than men, and most refugees are overqualified for their job.¹¹⁵ Socially, “the share of refugees with German language skills increased from 12% in the first year of arrival to 41% within three years of arrival,” but refugees continue to maintain different family values.¹¹⁶ The string of sexual assaults on New Year’s Eve of 2015 sowed widespread doubt about the compatibility of refugees with German society. Further research on integration would pay attention to areas like healthcare, education, and housing.

Solutions: Moving Forward in Unity

Solutions should address the root causes of the crisis, increase the safety of the journey from asylum seekers’ country of origin to Europe, improve the conditions of refugee camps in the Middle East and Europe, ensure that applications are processed efficiently and that refugees are distributed equitably across the continent, and build upon existing best practices regarding the integration of migrants. As is made clear above, 2015 was an inflection point in the crisis, and our committee will confront many of the same issues as we simulate the year. The solutions implemented by the EU that year and since provide a starting point for preparation.

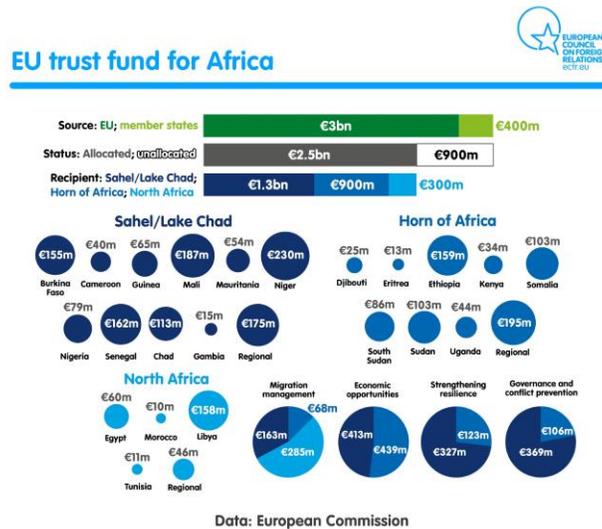
Firstly, the EU has attempted to address root causes in various and sundry ways. The EU has deployed troops to Niger to prevent human trafficking to Libya as well as implemented measures to block people from leaving for Italy.¹¹⁷ The ECFR has criticized both of these policies;

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ https://www.ecfr.eu/specials/mapping_migration

cooperating with the Nigerian government to tackle smuggling has impoverished hundreds, while securitizing the Libyan coast has “increased the political power of non-state actors.”¹¹⁸ More promisingly, in 2015, the EU launched the “EU Trust Fund for Africa,” which uses development aid to address exacerbating factors, but the ECFR reports that it has made negligible progress in addressing this issue.¹¹⁹



The Italian Coast Guard’s Operation Mare Nostrum to search and rescue asylum seekers crossing the Mediterranean provides a framework for alleviating maritime crises. The EU replaced Mare Nostrum with Operation Triton in 2015.¹²⁰ Triton was carried out by Frontex and operated with one third of the budget and “a narrower patrol range.”¹²¹ This committee will

¹¹⁸ Ibid

¹¹⁹ Ibid

¹²⁰ <https://munkschool.utoronto.ca/ceres/files/2017/10/Paper-Emily-Koller.pdf>

¹²¹ Ibid

decide whether to replicate Operation Triton or implement a significantly improved version as well as how to address similar tragedies in the Aegean.

Next, the EU's 2015 "Ten Point Plan" provides an example of broader collaborative action.¹²² Unfortunately, the Plan amounted to very little, and our committee must seek wider consensus and more effective solutions.

The 2016 EU-Turkey Deal provides a framework for states wishing to outsource the management of the crisis to countries outside the EU. This deal has several provisions, but at its core it aims to ease the burden on Greece and tackle people smuggling.¹²³ It achieves this by returning migrants whose asylum applications have been rejected from Greece to Turkey in exchange for settling Syrian refugees from Turkey to Greece.¹²⁴ Turkey assumes responsibility for preventing crossings of the Aegean; in return, it receives visa benefits, humanitarian aid funds, as well as the re-opening of accession talks.¹²⁵ Delegates hoping to strike a similar agreement should consider Human Rights Watch's questions about Turkey's suitability for asylum seekers

¹²² "Joint Foreign and Home Affairs Council: Ten point action plan on migration," European Commission, April 20, 2015, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_15_4813.

¹²³ Ignazio Corrao, "EU-Turkey Statement & Action Plan," European Union, September 20, 2019, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-towards-a-new-policy-on-migration/file-eu-turkey-statement-action-plan>.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

and ability to safely block crossings of the Aegean along with the fact that recent geopolitical events have effectively voided the agreement.¹²⁶

Finally, delegates should study the EU's 2016 "Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals," which lays out various measures to assist states with matters of integration.¹²⁷ The plan is a starting point, and delegates should look to expand it significantly.

¹²⁶ "Towards an Effective and Principled EU Migration Policy," Human Rights Watch, June 18, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/18/towards-effective-and-principled-eu-migration-policy>.

¹²⁷ "Migrant Integration Information and good practices," European Commission, December 6, 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/public/the-eu-and-integration/framework>.

