2017 EUROPEAN UNION BACKGROUND GUIDE

The University of Notre Dame Model United Nations Conference
Dear Delegates,

Welcome to NDMUN 2016! I am extremely excited to be the Chair of the special Model European Union committee at this year’s inaugural Notre Dame Model United Nations conference. Along with the rest of my dias, I cannot wait to have a successful conference full of meaningful discussion and diplomacy on pertinent international issues facing the EU. I greatly look forward to helping each and every one of you further develop your Model UN skills, whether you are attending this conference as a veteran member or just a beginner. As for myself, I am a sophomore at the University at Notre Dame. I have been participating in Model UN since my junior year of high school. I loved the Model UN process so much in high school that I decided to continue with it and join Notre Dame’s club team. One thing I have learned over the many conferences I have attended is that the most important key to success in MUN is a positive and active outlook on participation. Even if you are just a beginner, being an outspoken delegate and engaging with your peers is a sure way to not only better your chances of winning an award, but also better your own Model UN skills for future conferences. This being noted, proper preparation is equally vital for doing well at a Model UN Conference. If during your preparation you stumble upon any questions with your position paper or on how the committee itself will flow, please do not hesitate to contact me via email for help. Hopefully this conference will be as enjoyable and fulfilling for you as the preparation process has been for me and the rest of the dias. Good luck delegates!

-Claire Marie Kuhn, EU Chair
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Important Note:

A good starting point for your preparation for the conference is the attached background guide. Still, extra research is necessary in order to be a competitive delegate in February. If position papers are not turned in, delegates are disqualified from winning any awards. If they are written solely from information found in the background guide, delegates are unlikely to win an award. Since both of our topics are modern issues that are developing and changing, be sure to check with current events consistently during the days leading up to the conference and how they relate to the issues.
Topic A: European Migrant and Refugee Crisis

Topic Overview

The European Union is currently dealing with a refugee and migrant crisis that is getting worse by the day. Many of the countries surrounding the EU, in the Middle East and in Africa, have not been ideal places to live recently. Their weak economies, the threat of terrorism and the Islamic State in particular, plus brutal civil wars have led to a mass amount of refugees leaving their countries and attempting to find shelter within the EU.

The large majority of refugees are coming from Syria.

These refugees are coming into the EU in very unsafe and dangerous ways. Oftentimes, they are leaving dangerous situations but entering into another just as dangerous one. Some are paying smugglers for spots on overcrowded fishing boats or inflatable dinghies, while others may be paying for spots on overcrowded trains or buses.
For a while, not much had been done. After a boat capsized between Libya and Italy almost over a year ago, killing up to 900 migrants, EU leaders met to discuss how to distribute migrants and refugees. Pressure was building and last September, when the world saw photos of Aylan Kurdi, a drowned Syrian toddler, washed up on a beach in Turkey, action finally started to be taken.

*Thousands of them have died while trying to make it to the EU.*

The combined quotas of Germany, France, and Spain are larger than all of the rest combined.
As of now, the EU is proposing to redistribute 16,000 refugees across its member countries. Germany will be accepting the most, while less wealthy nations like Hungary and Greece have been more reluctant to give refugees a home. The U.S. has pledged to take in 10,000 refugees. Unfortunately, these numbers do not add up. The UN expects more than 800,000 people to cross into Europe by next year. In contradiction to the rules of the Dublin Regulation, formerly known as the Dublin Convention, some countries are simply allowing migrants to freely pass through their territory to richer European states without even trying to ascertain whether they are refugees entitled to asylum or economic migrants, who can be deported home. The Dublin regulation is a European Union law that states that the member state is responsible to examine an application for asylum seekers seeking international protection under the Geneva Convention. This distinguishing between refugees and migrants is a key issue to the crisis. Refugees are those who are forced to flee home to escape things like war. Migrants leave home voluntarily to try to make their lives better with a new job or education. As of now, refugees are more likely to be granted asylum in countries, but migrants are just as often risking their lives for a better one.

Bloc Positions

Eastern Bloc:

Central and Eastern European nations are presenting a fierce resistance to the acceptance of migrants. Currently, they are supposed to take in very few migrants compared to their Western neighbors. Still, due to various reasons such as far-right movements, racial and religious prejudices, and economic issues, many of these former Communist countries are complaining about their quotas. Leaders from countries such as Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria have all
stepped forward to pledge crackdowns on the refugees and migrants flooding into their countries. In Slovakia and Poland, they have said they only want Christian refugees. Even smaller countries such as Latvia and Lithuania have seen far-right protests when agreeing to accept tiny amounts of refugees, as small as 200-500 of them.

Questions to Consider

1. What’s the exact difference between refugee and migrant? Should the UN legislation draw it’s own line? Does one of the two deserve asylum more than the other?

2. How can the international community help? Should aid be focused on the EU countries receiving the refugees, or on the sending countries and the sources of instability?

3. How can the EU work to insure there is no discrimination by the receiving countries, both by the general community of the countries and also by the varying governments?

4. Once received, what type of treatment and rights do the refugees/migrants deserve?

5. Should there be some sort of incentive to encourage countries to provide asylum, such as economic or military aid?

Helpful Sources


The UN Refugee Agency - http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home


The Economist - http://www.economist.com/migrationcrisis
**Topic B: Brexit: Moving Forward**

**Topic Overview**

With the EU reeling from the migration crisis and the European financial mess, David Cameron’s move to hold a referendum on the country’s membership in the European Union gained large support and momentum from people all across the country. After attempting to renegotiate the conditions of UK’s membership at a summit in Brussels, Cameron finally pulled the plug and accepted the pressures of some of the MP’s to hold the referendum.

*Public opinion has been very much oscillating on the issue, and it has a long history of considering it.*

Both sides of the debate were heard in Britain, and the “In’s” and the “Out’s” each had high-profile members of parliament backing them. Cameron himself was reluctant to officially declare, but he had ran on a campaign of EU bashing and negativity towards the UK’s “weak” position in the EU. Historically, Britain has overall been a positive member of the EU. Since its
joining in 1973, the EU has changed its agricultural and fishery policies to be less wasteful, has reformed its liberal single market, has made trade more free with less barriers and tariffs, and has gained major contributions to its budget from the UK’s economy. The question is less whether Britain’s exit is going to hurt the EU, because that seems quite obvious to be true. Instead, others are wondering if this exit will actually hurt Britain.

The referendum was held on June 23rd, 2016. Leave the EU won by 52% to 48%. The referendum turnout was 71.8%, with more than 30 million people voting. David Cameron resigned the day after and Britain received a new Prime Minister, Theresa May, the former home secretary. Mrs. May was against Britain leaving the EU but she says she will respect the will of the people. There is much debate about what Brexit actually means. Two key issues are how British firms do business in the European Union, and what will happen to the rights of European Union nationals living and working in the UK.

Being a member of the EU does make selling things to other EU countries easier. Since they have chosen to leave, there will have to be a great amount of negotiating either with individual countries to get trade deals set in place or, as most Britain’s hope, with the EU as a whole. The ideal situation is receiving “special treatment” from the EU. The flow of immigrants would also change the dynamic of Britain’s work force. The value of the pound remains near a 30-year low, but longterm effects on the UK’s economy are still uncertain. Major firms such as Easyjet and John Lewis have pointed out that the slump in sterling has increased their costs, while other banks have chosen to stay and claim to be unaffected.

Now that Brexit has been voted on and confirmed, there are many different steps that will have to occur for the actual exit to come into existence. It will take much coordination and coop-
peration throughout the EU. The graphic below outlines many of the important details of the process.
Questions to Consider

1. Does the Brexit help with the Eurozone’s financial problems, or worsen them?

2. What does Brexit mean for the EU’s international standing and security?

3. What red lines should the EU set down for compromise with Britain?

4. What new UK-EU relationship should be negotiated?

5. How should the EU negotiate any internal changes after a Brexit?

Helpful Sources

EU Website- http://europa.eu/

The Independent- http://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brexit


Works Cited


“Migrant and Refugee Crisis in Europe” http://www.unicef.org/emergencies/index_85510.html

“Europe’s Migration Crisis” https://www.hrw.org/tag/europes-migration-crisis


“Brexit: All you need to know about the UK leaving the EU” http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32810887

