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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRS

The United Nations (UN) depends on the cooperation and goodwill of its 193 Member States. Because each state has unique interests and concerns, it is challenging to write, negotiate, and pass resolutions. Every stage of the process demands creativity and diplomacy.

As your committee chairs, we will work to keep the European Union committee at the UNSC'21 running smoothly. We will do our best to help you understand parliamentary procedure and to ensure that the views of all delegates are heard and respected. We expect each delegate to come to the conference with an understanding of his or her country's positions and a willingness to forge agreements. To ensure that you act professionally and diplomatically, please learn and practice UNSC's Rules of Procedure, and additional resources.

Whether you're here to add an extra row to your MUN CV or to debate or to expand your social circle, we hope you have a fun, enriching experience at the EU of the United Nations Simulation Conference.

To all the delegates who have committed themselves to this conference, we sincerely hope that we meet all your expectations and help you thrive at the art of repertoire. Wishing you all the best for the upcoming conference.

Warm Regards,

The Chairs of the European Union
Viola Rodrigues & Tanisha Menon

Introduction to the European Union



Since 1974, the European Union has been a permanent observer at the United Nations, with improved participation privileges since 2011. Although the EU does not have voting powers, it is represented by its 27 member states. The EU is dedicated to multilateralism, which is centered on a strong and functional United Nations. This commitment stems from the belief that the international community needs an effective multilateral system based on universal laws and principles in order to respond to global crises, problems, and dangers. The EU has built a solid connection with the United Nations over the years. Cooperation occurs in a wide variety of sectors covered by the many UN bodies. The EU also attends the UN General Assembly every year (UNGA). The UNGA passed a resolution in May 2011 allowing the EU to speak ahead of other important groupings when speaking on behalf of EU member states, as well as inviting the EU to intervene in the general debate at the General Assembly's opening. As a result, the EU's external representatives - the President of the European Council, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European Commission, and the EU delegation - can present the EU's and member states' perspectives at the United Nations. Furthermore, the EU has been granted the power to offer suggestions and modifications verbally, a capability that no other observer has, as well as the right to respond once to a speech relating to EU viewpoints.

It has initiated actions – political, economic, humanitarian, social, and legal – which have benefited the lives of millions of people throughout the world.

The Silent European Economic Crisis and its Repercussions on the Global Market

The European economy is in the middle of its worst slump since the 1930s, with real GDP reaching a decline of -4% in 2009, the steepest contraction in the European Union's history. Although there have been recent hints of improvement, recovery remains unpredictable and fragile. The EU's reaction to the economic slump was immediate and forceful. The European Economic Recovery Plan (EERP) was initiated in December 2008, in addition to intervention to stabilize, recover, and reform the banking sector. The EERP's goal is to restore confidence and boost demand by injecting purchasing power into the economy in a coordinated manner, complemented by smart investments and measures to support business and labor markets. In the EU, the total fiscal stimulus, including the effects of automatic stabilisers, is equal to 5% of GDP. According to the Commission's estimate, unless policies address the new difficulties, the EU's potential GDP could permanently decline due to a number of causes. For starters, long periods of unemployment in the workforce are associated with a permanent loss of skills. Second, due to lesser investment, the stock of equipment and infrastructure will decline and become obsolete. Third, innovation may be inhibited because research and development is one of the first expenses reduced by corporations during a downturn. Member States have implemented a variety of measures to provide temporary support to labor markets, increase public infrastructure investment, and assist businesses. To ensure that the recovery sticks and that the EU's long-term growth potential is maintained, the focus must gradually shift away from short-term demand management and toward supply-side structural measures. Failure to do so could stymie the restructuring process or cause severe internal market distortions. Furthermore, while certainly necessary, the aggressive fiscal stimulus has a price tag.

Preparing exit strategies now, not only for fiscal stimulus but also for government support for the banking sector and hard-hit businesses, will improve the effectiveness of these measures in the short term, as this is dependent on clarity about how quickly they will be phased out. Expectations are included into today's decision-making since financial markets, corporations, and consumers are forward-looking. The strength of the recovery, the vulnerability of Member States to the crisis, and the current internal and external imbalances will all influence the precise timing of exit plans. Part of the fiscal stimulus provided by the EERP was phased off in 2011, but it will need to be supplemented by significant fiscal reduction in the coming years to reverse the unsustainable debt build-up. Government guarantees and holdings in financial institutions will need to be gradually unraveled as the private sector grows stronger, while financial stability and competitiveness issues are carefully balanced. Any exit strategy must include addressing the fundamental causes of divergent competitiveness. By investing in renewable energies, low-carbon technologies, and "green" infrastructure, the exit plan should ensure that Europe remains at the forefront of the low-carbon revolution.

The purpose of this research is to give the analytical foundation for such a well-coordinated exit strategy.

Key words

The European Economic Recovery Plan

The Commission's reaction to the current financial and economic crisis is the recovery plan. Its goal is to re-establish consumer and business confidence, restart lending, and promote investment in EU economies, as well as to create jobs and assist the unemployed. The proposal is intended to lay the groundwork for speedy consensus among Member States in order to re-energize Europe's economy. The European Commission urges European Heads of State and Government to adopt the strategy at their December 11-12 meeting. The recovery plan outlines actions that will be taken at the European level to boost investments in infrastructure and important sectors such as automobiles, construction, and green technologies. Existing funding for the unemployed and those on the verge of losing their jobs will be activated. The strategy suggests that Member States coordinate their national budgetary stimulus programs in order to maximize their impact while avoiding negative spillover effects from one country to the next. The overall package is worth roughly € 200 billion, or 1.5 percent of the EU's GDP (European Commission, 2009).

Main Issues of Concern

Crisis control and mitigation

Minimize the harm through preventing systemic defaults, limiting production loss, and alleviating recession-related societal distress. As a result, its primary goal is to stabilize the financial system and the real economy in the short term. It must be coordinated across the EU to strike the correct balance between national concerns and spillover effects that affect other EU countries. Financial rescue plans have centered on restoring bank liquidity and capital, as well as providing guarantees, in order to get the financial system back on track. Deposit guarantees have been increased. Central banks slashed policy interest rates to record lows and made lender-of-last-resort facilities available to financial institutions. Governments also supplied liquidity to troubled financial institutions, as well as governmental guarantees on their liabilities, which were quickly followed by capital injections and impaired asset relief.

Impact on actual and potential growth

The financial crisis had a widespread effect on the EU's real economy, resulting in negative feedback effects on loan books, asset prices, and credit supply. However, some EU countries have been more vulnerable than others, due to disparities in current account positions, real estate bubble risk, or the presence of a significant financial center, among other factors. The financial crisis had a widespread effect on the EU's real economy, resulting in negative feedback effects on loan books, asset prices, and credit supply. However, some EU countries have been more vulnerable than others, due to disparities in current account positions, real estate bubble risk, or the presence of a significant financial center, among other factors. The

crisis has impacted not just actual economic activity, but also potential output (the level of output associated with full utilization of available production resources such as labor, capital, and technology), which has substantial consequences for the longer-term growth forecast and the economy. From the autumn of 2008 onwards, the financial crisis had a significant impact on the EU economy. The impact of the crisis on potential growth is critical since it is a key predictor of the medium- and long-term improvement of living standards. It's also a key predictor of the short-run measure of economic slack – the output gap – which, in turn, determines how much room there is for short-term policy stimulus before inflationary pressures materialize. Conversely, if potential output is underestimated, the risk of deflation – and the need for policy stimulus that goes with it – is understated.

Impact on labour market and employment

The EU's labor markets began to deteriorate significantly in the second half of 2008, and they continued to deteriorate in 2009. Internal flexibility (flexible working hour arrangements, temporary closures, etc.) combined with nominal salary concessions in exchange for employment security appears to have averted, if merely delayed, more major labor shedding in some enterprises and industries thus far. The EU labor markets had been performing rather well until the financial crisis broke out in the summer of 2007. The employment rate was approaching the Lisbon target of 70%, thanks to strong improvements in the employment rates of women and older employees. Importantly, the decrease in the unemployment rate had not resulted in a significant increase in inflation, showing that the level of unemployment at which labor shortages begin to cause wage pressures (i.e. structural unemployment) had decreased. The danger that unemployment will not simply return to pre-crisis levels once the recovery takes hold, because unemployment departure probabilities are bound to reduce and the average duration of jobless spells is projected to rise at this point, is a serious problem. In this regard, there is worry that, if not appropriately addressed by policy measures, the unemployed skills loss may contribute to their continued unemployment (hysteresis). This, together with long-term implications on potential growth, could jeopardize the European social welfare model(s), which are already under strain due to aging populations.

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Addressing the European Migrant Crisis; with Special Emphasis on the Dublin Regulation

It is not new for EU member states to be faced with individuals seeking refugees within their borders. What is new however is the current crisis- indeed this is a crisis which has been described as unprecedented, second only to refugees during World War Two. It has been estimated that 84% of those fleeing to Europe are coming from Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Somalia and Iraq, which are all nations with high levels of violence and insecurity or governments which are extremely repressive (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Although other nations are involved in the crisis, the current crisis has been primarily driven by the Syrian civil war and the emergence of Daesh (ISIS), and it is thus the question of Syrian refugees in particular which has been discussed and debated. The topic of the refugee crisis is of critical importance to this committee, due to both the urgency of protecting human lives, as well as the need to aid and protect member states. This is a major humanitarian crisis which is deeply political, with different member states acting in different ways and taking opposite stances due to the lack of a coordinated EU regional response. The EU's failure to act swiftly has been met with a great deal of criticism. Indeed so far the EU has shown itself to be inadequate and the longer it takes for concrete action the more complex and dangerous the situation becomes, and the greater the risk to the lives of refugees. Furthermore, the current crisis highlights deep rooted issues of racism in EU countries, which is alarming and deeply concerning. It is for this reason that this topic is one which should be the focus of the committee's attention. There is a sense of urgency to not only resolve this crisis, but to put measures in place to ensure that the crisis is not repeated to the current scale in the future.

The European refugee crisis is already a grave one, and is being further aggravated by the shortcomings of the Dublin Regulation. The law has failed to provide fair, efficient and effective protection. The Dublin Regulation has been referred to as dysfunctional and negligent among many other scathing comments. The Dublin Regulation is a European Union (EU) law that determines which EU Member State is responsible for the examination of an application for asylum, submitted by persons seeking international protection under the Geneva Convention and the EU Qualification Directive, within the European Union.

Due to the obvious urgency of preserving human lives as well as the necessity to help and defend member states, the refugee crisis is a vital subject for this committee. Due to the lack of a coordinated EU regional response, this is a significant humanitarian catastrophe that is highly political, with various member states acting in different ways and taking opposing views. Furthermore, the current crisis highlights deep rooted issues of racism in EU countries, which is alarming and deeply concerning. That is why this subject should be the focus of the committee's attention; there is a sense of urgency to not only address this crisis, but also to put in place measures to ensure that a crisis of this magnitude does not occur again in the future.

Key Terms

Refugees' vs Migrants

A critical distinction to be made is that of 'refugees' versus 'migrants'. The two terms have a tendency to be used interchangeably in media reports, which combined with a lack of knowledge can be detrimental to understanding and debate. The term refugee is defined as people "fleeing armed conflict or persecution" (UNHCR viewpoint, 2015). Migrants on the other hand are individuals who take the decision to move to improve their lives by finding work, or for education or family reasons (UNHCR viewpoint, 2015). The critical difference to comprehend is that migrants are able to seek protection from their home governments and move by choice, whereas refugees are forcibly displaced due to an imminent threat to their lives or wellbeing, and individuals granted refugee status are accorded different legal rights. This debate is to be focused on refugees, whilst issues surrounding migrants may be discussed, this should not be the focus of the committee.

Timeline

15th March 2011: Syrian crisis begins.

October 2012: UNHCR urges EU states to uphold their asylum principles in response to an influx of refugees fleeing Syria.

September 2013: More than 2 million Syrian Refugees recorded, many of them attempting to get to Europe by sea.

April 2014: EU adopts Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, part of which goes towards assisting EU member states. UNHCR, more information available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e48e996.html>

August 2014: Raqqa falls to Daesh, which is significant as this triggers even more people to flee the city in fear of the extremist regime that follows

July 2015: EU leaders agree to accept 32, 256 refugees from Italy and Greece

2nd September 2015: Aylan al-Kurdi Delegates may remember the devastating photo of a young Syrian child washed up on a beach having died at sea whilst making the crossing in September 2015. This is an event which is of critical importance to the crisis, as up until this point, although hundreds of people had lost their lives crossing the sea it was largely underreported in media outlets. When this photo was published the crisis became humanised and public opinion seemed to shift to putting pressure on governing bodies to react to the crisis. the 3rd of September the hashtag 'refugees welcome' goes viral,

12th September 2015: EU interior ministers fail to come up with solutions (Fry, 2015)

13th November 2015: The Paris Attacks – Daesh launches terrorist attacks at several locations in Paris. As at least one of the perpetrators is thought to have travelled from Syria concerns are raised about whether Daesh militants are using the refugee crisis to sneak into Europe undetected.

Main Issues of Concern

The refugee crisis is an incredibly complex issue, and there are multiple different aspects to consider, and there does not seem to be a political solution in sight for either the conflict in Syria or the response to the crisis within the EU. At the root of the crisis is of course the devastating civil war that has been tearing Syria apart, made worse by the emergence of Daesh/Islamic State who have been driving people out the stronger they become. For this reason part of the solution to the crisis lies in the world's (not simply the EU's) ability to resolve the internal crisis, if not the long term effects are likely to be severe. To provide an overview the study guide will look at the lack of a coordinated response by EU member states, issues to do with the basic safety of refugees, the issue of crossing at sea and national security considerations.

Protecting Refugees

The first issue which needs to be raised is that of the basic safety of the refugees who are fleeing, as they face great perils making the journey, and many do not make it to Europe alive. The Mediterranean Sea is claiming the lives of many refugees, who are risking everything to cross the sea in boats which are often overcrowded and it is not just at sea that refugees are losing their lives. In August 2015, 71 people including four children and a baby girl were found dead in the back of a Lorry in Austria. This is another example of the perilous journeys faced by refugees, and measures need to be taken to ensure that these types of situations don't keep happening. So far the EU has proved ineffective at preventing large loss of life within its borders which is an extremely concerning situation to be in, and there is no simple solution in sight. Furthermore, winter is likely to pose further threats for refugee safety as temperatures plummet, leaving refugees at serious risk of frostbite and death, particularly those staying in refugee camps in areas which are likely to experience heavy snowfall. One of the reasons for the high death toll, particularly at sea, is that smugglers in areas such as Libya or Syria are taking advantage of the situation and trafficking people, charging high amounts of money for a crossing. This is attractive to desperate refugees who are trying to flee dangerous situations but puts them at high risk. Some pay but end up being robbed by smugglers, others who make it more often than not end up in boats which are overcrowded in a bid to earn the smugglers more money, which can lead to people falling or being thrown overboard during travels. Sometimes if boats break down people become stranded without food or water

Struggles for the EU

“Europe cannot go on responding to this crisis with a piecemeal or incremental approach. No country can do it alone and no country can refuse to do its part” - Guterres, head of UN refugee agency (UNHCR, Sep 2015). The crisis is highlighting the weaknesses of the EU and causing massive internal problems. So far the EU has failed to come up with a coordinated regional response, so it is being left down to individual member states to deal with the crisis as and when it meets their borders which is extremely problematic. For geographical reasons, some member nations are feeling the strain of this crisis a lot more than others. This inequality is in large part down to the requirement (set out in the Dublin system) that the countries which refugees get to first take charge of them, meaning that Spain, Italy, Greece, Malta, Cyprus and Bulgaria are truly bearing the brunt of the crisis. There are concerns for these countries about strains on their education and public health systems and a lot of states are responding by shutting their borders and making it more difficult to qualify for asylum. The result of this is that the EU is struggling to uphold its role in the protection of human rights, and public opinion towards the EU is fast diminishing.

National Security

Part of the debate around the refugee crisis needs to focus on national security, in particular in light of the tragic attack carried out by Daesh militants in Paris. There are concerns being raised that one of the attackers may have entered Europe via Greece on a boat alongside genuine refugees, and despite being registered and having his fingerprints taken still managed to journey undetected to France (BBC, 2015). Whilst these concerns have yet to be officially verified and confirmed, it still raises a valid point that Daesh militants seeking to carry out attacks in the West could take advantage of the situation to be able to easily gain access to Europe. Furthermore there are concerns about the radicalisation of refugees. Debates surrounding terrorism and national security should however be treated with some degree of caution, as a lot of arguments are over exaggerated, and the reason that a lot of people are fleeing is to escape Daesh and its brutal regime. Nonetheless, it is still something which adds an extra layer of complexity to the issue, as it is still a consideration for national governments. There is considerable evidence to suggest that Daesh can and will continue to attempt to penetrate western security in this manner. Thus the debate of the committee should bear in mind security checks for people entering Europe, considering both the safety of European countries as well as the safety of refugees. This is of course easier said than done, the overwhelming number of refugees means that it is not too difficult to slip under the radar. It may be worth considering the use of shared intelligence in protecting borders, but not at the detriment of the safety of refugees.

Bloc Positions

*Positions on this topic are highly complex, so this section will highlight some significant broad positions in order to highlight the contentious nature of the response to the crisis.

More Economically Developed Countries

There has been a mixed response to the crisis among the EU's wealthier and more influential nations. Germany is doing an exceptional job compared to other EU member states, having granted refuge to thousands of individuals. However, Germany is beginning to struggle with the amount of people seeking asylum, and both Germany and France have called for binding refugee quotas for EU members (Willisher and Kirchgassner, 2015). On the other hand, the United Kingdom has taken in very little refugees and is being criticised for its lack of action. A recent vote however has meant that the UK is joining France and the USA in airstrikes against Daesh in Syria, so the nation is taking external steps to deal with the crisis.

Border Countries

The effects of the refugee crisis are not being felt equally across European countries. Those who share their borders with popular escape routes are finding themselves having to deal with the biggest consequences, and are quite simply overburdened and are struggling to cope. Countries such as Hungary are also becoming extremely significant. Hungary is "suddenly finding itself fielding the most asylum applications per million of population", and it is struggling. On the 13th of September 2015 a record number of 5,809 people arrived in Hungary, the following day a state of emergency was declared and those trying to enter the country were threatened with arrests. Hungary has also made the decision to put up a metal fence to prevent people from entering the country, a decision which has been met with a great deal of criticism from EU countries.

EU's Action

Whilst the regional action has been limited, it is important to know what actions the EU has taken to assist Syria. In response to the crisis the European Commission launched a Trust Fund, which has attracted 32.5 million euros in pledges from 13 member states, in addition to the 300 million euros that had already been allocated from the EU 2015 budget (European Commission, 2015). The EU is providing a great deal of humanitarian assistance in Syria as well as other nations affected by violence, the issues facing the EU at present are more to do with how to respond to the crisis when it crosses into its own territory.

Questions the Resolution Must Answer

The topic of the refugee crisis is an incredibly complex issue, and is something which has been greatly debated without the emergence of any concrete solution. Whilst the current crisis should be a priority, it is worth discussing action plans that can be put in place in an attempt to avoid this situation repeating itself in the future.

The following points should act as a rough guide of different aspects to consider when writing resolutions:

- An extremely important point to address is the distribution of refugees, which has already been highlighted in this report as being a highly contentious issue;
- The allocation of resources;
- How the EU can protect refugees at sea;
- Ways in which EU member states can tackle the reasons people are fleeing (for example Daesh in Syria);
- How countries not directly affected by the crisis can be of assistance;
- How to manage cultural differences and help refugees become fully integrated into society;
- Measures to protect national security;
- The long term political, economic and social aspects of the crisis;

Above all, resolutions should stress unity. A big problem is that EU member states are failing to work together, and it is becoming increasingly evident that individual state reactions are not going to solve the crisis- states must find a middle ground.

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