

European Union

Welcome

Dear Delegates,

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you to BUSUN 2010! Over the course of this conference, you will be representing various countries in the European Union (EU). I will be the chair of your committee and can't wait to see how this conference plays out!

Before I begin explaining the logistics of this committee, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Rachel Bloom and I am a sophomore at Brown. I am currently an undecided major, though my potential concentrations are history and/or cognitive neuroscience. I have been active in Model UN since my freshman year of high school and have since attended several college conferences. At last year's BUSUN conference, I was the director of ECOFIN. Aside from Model UN, I also write for Brown's satire newspaper, the Brown Noser.

This guide should provide you with a good starting point for your preparation for this conference. There are three topics that we plan to cover in the EU, which will be described in detail in this guide. You should be familiar with how these issues not only impact your nation, but the other member nations as well, as this will prove invaluable as the committee begins to draft resolutions. (Also, as a quick note of caution: Though it may be tempting to voice your personal viewpoint during committee, resist this urge. The conference will be far more rewarding for all delegates if it is realistic!) If you have questions about any aspect of the conference, do not hesitate to email me! My address is provided below.

You can expect a fun, eye-opening experience from this conference, though it is truly what

you choose to make of it. Every minute spent learning about your country and its interactions with other member states will only make your time at BUSUN more enjoyable. This guide should help prepare you for the conference, but once you get to BUSUN, get a feel for things, listen to your fellow delegates, speak up, and put yourself out there! You never know what you can accomplish unless you try. Best of luck, delegates!

Sincerely,
Rachel Bloom
EU Chair
EU@busun.net

Committee History

The European Union consists of a group of twenty-seven member countries. The original group of countries joined together in 1993 with the Treaty of Maastricht, forming the EU. Over the years, membership has grown from six to the current twenty-seven states, with the last additions occurring in 2007. Within the EU, there are twenty republics and seven monarchies. In 2009, the Lisbon Treaty was signed, which established the EU as the UN representative body for these nations, superseding the European Commission. This BUSUN committee is focused on regional integration as well as political and economic cooperation between the member states. The EU strives to facilitate cooperation amongst its members for smooth political functioning across the continent.

During this conference, the EU will address topics that impact Europe's political and economic stability as a whole. The contentious topic of illegal immigration and its ramifications will be discussed, as well as the integration of the Balkan states as fully participating member nations. These topics will be discussed in the

context of the global economic crisis, whose regional manifestation is currently centered in Greece.

Topic 1: Establishing Economic Goals for the EU

Background

The official currency of the European Union is the euro, which is used in sixteen member states termed the Eurozone. With the exception of the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Sweden, the member nations that have not converted to this currency yet have made plans to convert once they have fulfilled a number of prerequisites. Agreed deficit levels have been set around 1% of the EU's GDP, though individual nations have been known to exceed the organization's suggested limits. The Growth and Stability Pact is meant to govern fiscal policy within the European Union and its member states, with specific requirements for the Eurozone nations. For example, it requires a nation's deficit to not exceed 3% of its GDP and for public debt to stay below 60%.

Wealth (measured by GDP per capita) is concentrated mostly in Central Europe, with the Eastern European nations on the lower end of the scale. However, in recent years, new member states in Central and Eastern Europe have experienced accelerated economic growth compared to the existing member states.

The European Union benefits from an excellent trading system amongst the member states that removes trade barriers such as tariffs as well as a common currency for the Eurozone nations. The services sector makes up nearly 70% of the EU's GDP. There is still a great deal of wealth disparity within the organization, with the fifteen comparatively poorest provinces (as determined by the percentage of average European Union GDP) dispersed across Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, and Hungary.

Current Situation

Within the past year, a fiscal phenomenon known as the European Sovereign Debt Crisis became a major issue for the European Union's economy as a whole. Concern about government debt levels due to recent economic downfalls in markets worldwide has led to a loss of confidence in the financial system and alarm within financial markets.

Greece plays a main role in this crisis as it sinks lower into economic distress and governmental debt; Ireland and Portugal are also key players. Greece has focused on developing public sector jobs and social benefits since its democratic system was restored in 1974, leading to large deficits in infrastructure that were exacerbated by the introduction of the Euro, raising GDP debt to above 100%. The global financial crisis took a particularly hard toll on Greece, drastically suppressing its tourism and shipping markets. In addition, faulty accounting has led to the misrepresentation of Greece's expenditures since it joined the Eurozone. The risk of Greece defaulting on many of its loan agreements has therefore risen substantially, fueling the larger economic panic throughout the European Union.

The future of the European Union's overall economy heavily relies upon its ability to solve this crisis. Many proposed policies have been suggested, such as the imposition of fiscal austerity upon Greece or its removal from the Eurozone, as Greece's economic woes have substantially lowered confidence in the European currency as a whole. It is vital to ameliorate this crisis before its effects spread to other nations further than they already have. Long-term solutions, reactive and/or preventive, must be engineered for this purpose.

Though this issue is extremely important to the European Union's proper economic functioning, it is not the only issue that should be addressed. Effort must be devoted to not

only solving this crisis, but to increasing the recently stagnant GDP growth in central European economies as well as stabilizing and promoting growth in new member states throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Such policies can potentially help in strengthening the Union's economy and offsetting the effects of the crisis.

Bloc Positions

In considering your nation's position on economic issues, think about whether your nation is one of the newer, relatively poorer member states or if it is a more developed nation. Though the crisis in Greece concerns the entire European Union economy if not the world, Eurozone members may have a different perspective on the crisis (and specifically, the use of the Euro as Greece's currency) than do other member nations.

Questions to Consider

1. What type of measures should be taken to combat the economic crisis in Greece and the European Union as a whole? Should there be any changes to the currency?
2. Should Greece be forgiven for its accounting fraud or should harsher measures be taken?
3. What can be done to strengthen the economy of the European Union as a whole in terms of industry and economic development?

Helpful Links & Resources

- Q&A For the Economic Crisis in Greece
<http://www.cnn.com/2010/BUSINESS/02/10/greek.debt.qanda/index.html>
- Informative Video; Crisis Explained and Potential Solutions
<http://video.forbes.com/fvn/fact-and-comment/economic-crisis-in-greece>
- European Union at the UN Website
<http://www.europa-eu-un.org/>
- European Union Official Website
http://europa.eu/index_en.htm

Topic 2: Illegal Immigration into the EU

Background

The issue of illegal immigration is a hotly debated topic in the European Union. Many policy-makers aim to distinguish between the types of illegal immigration, though the distinction is not always so clearly demarcated. Illegal immigration can refer to people that have entered the country illegally or criminally with forged documents or those who have overstayed their visas without authoritative approval, but it can also refer to persons seeking asylum from their home country who are not granted permission to stay in the host country. This last type of immigration raises humanitarian sentiments, as preventing their stay and subsequent integration into the European Union would lead to greater human suffering at the hands of a hostile regime. The European Union as a whole is a relatively developed set of nations, so the pull for migrants is significant.

Current Situation

The question currently facing policymakers is what to do about illegal immigration into the European Union. Cracking down on illegal migrant populations would have negative humanitarian implications by forcing them back into potentially unstable environments, but these waves of people might at the same time overwhelm Europe's resources and cause unease amongst citizens. Estimates of annual illegal migration into the European Union fall around six figures, and it is predicted that migration pressures will only increase over the coming decades. The European Union has emphasized the importance of countering these waves of immigration and has drafted appropriate plans in the past, but illegal immigration still remains a significant problem. Due to economic instability, incorporating new population waves into society could strain the EU's resources. In the

past decade, a great number of illegal immigrants have come from the Balkans, the Russian Federation, China, and Southwest and South Asian countries, using regions in the Balkans, North Africa, Russia, and Eastern Europe as transitional points of entry.

Member states must find appropriate measures to address this issue. Border control along with communication with the country of origin and return policies must be reinforced. In addition, the integration of remaining illegal migrants must be addressed. Many of these immigrants may have been in legitimate danger in their home countries and were thus forced to flee, while other illegal migrants may have been purely seeking economic opportunity.

Bloc Positions

The general consensus within the European Union is that illegal immigration must be reduced; refugees with no other options should be granted asylum and illegal immigrants with purely economic goals in migrating should be turned away. However, there are still differences amongst states. Over the years, Germany has accommodated a disproportionate number of refugees, which led to its imposition of more restrictive asylum laws in 1993. This forced other states, such as Austria, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Britain, to address a higher proportion of refugees seeking asylum. France, Spain, and Italy deal with a relatively low number of refugee applications compared to their neighboring counterparts.

Questions to Consider

1. What are possible problems that could arise from attempting to distinguish between illegal immigrants and asylum-seekers? Would additional bureaucracy be required to address the issue?
2. What steps (if any) should the European Union take to better accommodate migration?
3. What can be done to strengthen barriers

to illegal migration? Should focus for border control be placed upon external, internal, or all borders?

Helpful Links & Resources

Report on Illegal Immigration into the EU

<http://www.arena.uio.no/sources/jpa/smuggling/europol/overview2006.pdf>

Illegal Immigration, Asylum and Border Control

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/security/illegal-immigration-asylum-border-control/article-117508>

Immigration News & Bills in the EU

http://www.workpermit.com/news/europe_immigration.htm

Topic 3: Integration of the Balkan States into the EU

Background

With the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, efforts have been made to integrate Eastern European states into the structure of the Western European nations. These ethnically diverse regions are somewhat difficult to incorporate due to differences in economic and social structure, as they have developed under a very different atmosphere over the past half-century than the rest of Europe. Each nation has a distinct cultural identity. Integration could either preserve these identities or compromise them for expedience.

The Balkan States not currently within the Eurozone or the European Union include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. Romania and Bulgaria are part of the European Union, but not the Eurozone. Slovenia has been integrated into the European Union and the Eurozone.

Current Situation

In order to strengthen its political influence and solidarity, the European Union

remains open to the idea of integrating the Balkan States. There are many aspects of this situation to consider, such as the distinct cultural barriers existing between the Balkan States and other European nations, as well as amongst the states themselves. Many Balkan nations are not currently incorporated within the European Union or Eurozone, and thus have their own currencies. Economic homogeneity could aid with the process of integration. However, the financial crisis in Greece has raised doubts about the European Union's ability to properly incorporate the poorer states of the western Balkans.

Political stability must also be taken into account. After Yugoslavia's disintegration in the 1990s, only Slovenia has met the criteria required to join the European Union and the Eurozone. At this time, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Croatia are seeking acceptance into the European Union and are at different stages of reaching this goal. Bosnia and Herzegovina is still coping with political discordance arising from ethnic tensions within its borders. In addition, Kosovo's independence has not been universally accepted by the member states within the European Union, and this could cause difficulties should integration be attempted.

Critics of integration feel that the European Union may be extending its political and economic reach too far by continuing to expand and incorporate more states, and critics of integration might site this as a problem. Despite its many challenges, the ultimate goal of integration is to establish an economically and politically unified Europe under a stable governing body while preserving the cultural integrity of its member states.

Questions to Consider

1. What are some of the advantages to integrating the Balkan States? Disadvantages?
2. For integration to be successful, what sort of steps would have to be taken to ease the nations into the European Union? Would these

states eventually become a part of the Eurozone?

3. What are the respective political compositions of these states? Are they compatible with the current European Union framework for political functioning? If not, what steps can be taken to ease this transition?

Helpful Links & Resources

-EU-Western Balkans Relations

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/eu-western-balkans-relations/article-129607>

-The Stabilization and Association Process: The Western Balkans

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/enlargement/western_balkans/index_en.htm

-Breakdown of European Union Candidate Process

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/index_en.htm