



VMUN 2024

European Union

BACKGROUND GUIDE



VANCOUVER MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the European Union at VMUN 2024! My name is Leanna and on behalf of the dais team, I would like to extend a warm welcome to each and everyone of you. I am honoured to serve as your Director, alongside your Chair, Kiran Sun and Assistant Director, Emily Cui. This iteration of VMUN will be a truly unique experience with the opportunity to engage in indulging debates and form new connections.

For the last two years, I have been an avid participant in MUN and debate; MUN specifically has strengthened my ability to hold diverse conversations and navigate global politics. Through dozens of conferences, I've attained a surplus of knowledge, made new friends, and challenged myself to become a better speaker. Regardless of whether this is your first or last conference, I encourage you to step out of your comfort zone, raise your placard, and aim to become the delegate that fosters a welcoming environment for others.

During the weekend we will discuss the importance of *Energy Security* and the *North African Refugee Crisis*. I encourage all of you to consider the historical, economical, and geopolitical factors in your research to fully understand these nuanced issues. This understanding will be crucial in developing effective and long-term solutions.

Please remember that we, the dais team, are here to support you to the fullest extent. Feel free to reach out to us anytime at eu@vmun.com if you have any questions or concerns. I look forward to meeting all of you and wish you the best of luck in your preparation for VMUN 2024.

Sincerely,

Leanna Liu
EU Director

Position Paper Policy

What is a Position Paper?

A position paper is a brief overview of a country's stance on the topics being discussed by a particular committee. Though there is no specific format the position paper must follow, it should include a description of your positions your country holds on the issues on the agenda, relevant actions that your country has taken, and potential solutions that your country would support.

At Vancouver Model United Nations, delegates should write a position paper for each of the committee's topics. Each position paper should not exceed one page and should all be combined into a single document per delegate.

For the European Union, position papers, although strongly recommended, are not required. However, delegates who wish to be considered for an award must submit position papers.

Formatting

Position papers should:

- Include the name of the delegate, their country, and the committee
- Be in a standard font (e.g. Times New Roman) with a 12-point font size and 1-inch document margins
- Not include illustrations, diagrams, decorations, national symbols, watermarks, or page borders
- Include citations and a bibliography, in any format, giving due credit to the sources used in research (not included in the 1-page limit)

Due Dates and Submission Procedure

Position papers for this committee must be submitted by **11:59 PM PT on January 22, 2024**. Once your position paper is complete, please save the file as your last name, your first name and send it as an attachment in an email to your committee's email address, with the subject heading as "[last name] [first name] — Position Paper". Please do not add any other attachments to the email.

Both your position papers should be combined into a single PDF or Word document file; position papers submitted in another format will not be accepted.

Each position paper will be manually reviewed and considered for the Best Researched award.

The email address for this committee is *eu@vmun.com*.

Energy Security	3
Overview	3
Timeline	3
Historical Analysis.....	5
Past UN/International Involvement	6
EU-US Energy Council.....	6
EU's Oil Stocks Directive	7
European Energy Program (EEP)	7
European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET Plan)	8
Current Situation	9
Case Study: Russo-Ukrainian War	9
Phasing Out of Energy Dependence	10
Trade Agreements.....	10
Possible Solutions and Controversies	12
Transition to Renewable Energy	12
Switching to LNGs	13
Inter-EU Collaboration	13
Bloc Positions	14
Major Economies	14
Energy Self-Sufficient Members.....	15
Green Nations.....	15
Energy Dependent Countries	16
Discussion Questions	16
Additional Resources	17
Bibliography	18

North African Refugee Crisis	23
Overview	23
Timeline	24
Historical Analysis.....	25
Past UN/International Involvement	27
European Agenda on Migration.....	27
Emergency Relocation of Refugees	27
List of Safe Countries of Origin.....	28
Addressing the Political Dimension of the Refugee Crisis.....	28
EU Moderated Development and Protection Programmes in North Africa.....	29
Current Situation	29
Economic Impact	29
National Identity and Values.....	31
Border Security and Control.....	32
Asylum Claims Process	33
Possible Solutions and Controversies	33
Prejudice Reduction Program	33
Enhancing Labour Screening.....	34
Technology on the Border.....	35
Bloc Positions	35
Southern Europe.....	35
Western Europe	36
Northern Europe	36
Discussion Questions	37
Additional Resources	38
Bibliography	39

Energy Security

Overview

Energy security refers to the availability, accessibility, affordability, and reliability of energy sources. It is the ability for a region to meet its energy needs without compromising its fundamental infrastructure. Generally, energy security involves safeguarding the uninterrupted supply of energy resources, diversifying such sources, and reducing energy dependence on external suppliers.¹

Since the late 19th century, fossil fuels have stood as a crucial energy source for the European Union. However, it continues to largely rely on external sources for fossil fuels as it fails to produce enough oil to meet domestic demands. Such dependencies expose the EU to a range of vulnerabilities including supply shocks and price fluctuations. As a result, foreign powers hold significant influence over the EU and often threaten to manipulate oil supplies.²

By limiting dependency on other countries and fostering energy self-sufficiency, the EU can mitigate potential consequences such as volatile global energy prices and overreliance on foreign states. Beyond the issue of dependency, environmental setbacks are prominent. Becoming energy independent allows members to pursue both environmentally and economically sustainable energy alternatives. By doing so, EU nations can attain a greater level of energy security.

Timeline

April 18, 1951 — The European Steel and Coal Committee is established, creating a common market for steel and coal among six founding nations: Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Italy and the Netherlands.³ The goal of this committee was to ensure energy security through pooling resources together and fostering collaboration.⁴

March 25, 1957 — The Treaty of Rome is signed, establishing the European Economic Community, which later evolves into the EU. The treaty establishes a free market of services, goods and capital.⁵ By creating a common market, this treaty facilitates the exchange of energy resources amongst members.

1973–1979 — The oil crises of the 1970s, caused by a Saudi Arabian oil embargo, underscores the vulnerability of European states to external energy shocks.⁶ The oil embargo led to a sudden price surge and scarcity of oil, putting a strain on European economies.

¹ Daniel Yergin, "Ensuring Energy Security," *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 2 (2006): 69–82. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20031912>.

² Ibid.

³ EU Parliament. "The First Treaties." N.d. pdf, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/en/FTU_1.1.1.pdf

⁴ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "European Coal and Steel Community". Encyclopedia Britannica, 20 Mar. 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/European-Coal-and-Steel-Community>.

⁵ Of EU, Commission, ed. "Treaty of Rome - reading references." European Council.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/library/library-blog/posts/treaty-of-rome-reading-references/>.

⁶ Peter, Stingelin. "Europe and the Oil Crisis." *Current History* 68, no. 403 (1975): 97–134. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45314119>.

December 1991 — The Maastricht Treaty is signed and becomes the foundation of the European Union.⁷ Prior to this treaty, each nation had full sovereignty over its energy related decisions; however, the Maastricht Treaty expanded the scope of EU involvement in energy policy as a union.

December 11, 1997 — The Kyoto protocol is signed by EU member states, committing them to cutting carbon emissions and greenhouse gases.⁸ This triggers a shift towards renewable energy sources and increases focus on energy efficiency.

January 1, 2006 — Conflicts regarding oil prices between Russia and Ukraine result in Russia discontinuing the supply of oil destined for Europe through Ukrainian pipelines. This situation prompts the EU to strengthen apprehensions about relying on external oil sources.⁹

December 1, 2009 — The Lisbon Treaty enters into force, strengthening the EU's energy policies and legal framework for common energy security measures. The treaty reforms the EU's decision-making procedures and enhances its ability to better streamline energy related progress.¹⁰

December 12, 2015 — The Paris Agreement is adopted, committing EU members to combat climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C. This agreement encourages the EU to focus on developing low-carbon technologies.¹¹

May 2020 — The European Green Deal is unveiled, setting a new roadmap for the EU's journey towards a climate-neutral economy by 2050.¹² The key components of this deal emphasize clean energy, circular economy principles, and a reduction of dependence on fossil fuels.

July 14, 2021 — The EU introduces the Fit for 55 package, a comprehensive set of legislative proposals to achieve net 55% emissions by 2030.¹³ This includes reforms to the EU Emissions Trading System, renewable energy targets, and energy efficiency measures.

July 26, 2022 — After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, EU member states agree to reduce natural gas demand by 15% to reduce Russia's oil revenue. At the same time, member states discuss the issue of their dependence on Russian oil amidst the Russo-Ukrainian conflict.¹⁴

June 6, 2023 — EU members agree on reforming certain parts of the electricity market. Reforms include separating the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity to minimize profit driven competition, and decreasing energy waste by creating controlled capacity during peak demand.¹⁵

⁷ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Maastricht Treaty." Encyclopedia Britannica, April 3, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Maastricht-Treaty>.

⁸ United Nations, ed. "What is the Kyoto Protocol?" United Nations Climate Change. https://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol.

⁹ "TIMELINE: Gas crises between Russia and Ukraine." 2009. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-ukraine-gas-timeline-sb-idUSTRE50A1A720090111>.

¹⁰ Sharma, Avinash. "The Entry into Force of the Lisbon Treaty: The European Union in Retrospect and Prospect." Canadian Yearbook of International Law/Annuaire Canadien De Droit International 49 (2012): 265–90.

¹¹ United Nations. "The Paris Agreement." United Nations Climate Change. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>.

¹² World Bank, comp. Making the European Green Deal Work for People. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/publication/eu-green-deal-for-people>.

¹³ Popp, Rebekka, and Namita Kambli. "Fit for Society: Benchmarks for a Social 'Fit for 5' Package." E3G, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep33888>.

¹⁴ EU Council. "Energy prices and security of supply." Council of the European Union. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/energy-prices-and-security-of-supply/>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Historical Analysis

In the 1950s, Europe's economy was driven by aspirations to modernize railways, establish new homes, and propel infrastructure development. During that period, European coal reserves were the most prominent source of energy, and as a result, nations soon depleted their coal supplies¹⁶ In the aftermath, the EU turned to Middle Eastern and Russian crude oils to fuel their large-scale construction projects.¹⁷

The EU first recognized the risks of relying on external energy suppliers in the 1970s, with Saudi Arabia oil embargoes severely limiting petroleum supplies.¹⁸ As a result, millions of Europeans had no heat in harsh winter conditions—once abundant, oil had become a scarce and costly commodity, exerting strain on the EU economy. In response, the EU enacted energy conservation protocols to curb oil consumption. Additionally, in anticipation of recurrences, the EU established oil reserves earmarked for use during emergencies.¹⁹ The embargo served as a catalyst for European nations to reassess their dependency on Middle Eastern and Russian oil. The recognition of this vulnerability propelled the EU's efforts to diversify energy sources and supply routes, aiming to reduce dependence on a single supplier.²⁰

Such efforts to reduce energy dependency, however, were largely unsuccessful. The EU continued to be largely reliant on Russia due to its close proximity and cost-effective prices. Throughout the last decade, the EU received a majority of its oil from the Turkstream and Nord Stream pipelines, flowing from Russia to Turkey and Germany. This reliance on Russian oil often led to concerns about Russia's use of energy as a political tool. For instance, in the Orange Revolution—a 2006 Ukrainian drive for independence from the Russian sphere of influence—Russia halted its gas exports through the Ukrainian pipeline that supplied gas to Europe.²¹ A similar scenario re-occurred in 2009, compelling the EU to take action by strengthening the diversification of energy sources and establishing the EU Energy Union.²² Subsequently, in 2014, Russia's invasion of Crimea added another layer of complexity to both political and energy related dynamics.²³ Fundamentally, Russia's importance to the EU's energy security lies in its role as a major energy supplier. The risks associated with over dependence have prompted the EU to pursue strategies to guarantee a resilient and varied energy supply in the midst of geopolitical uncertainties.

After recognizing the limitations of Russian oil amidst conflict, the EU embraced the promotion of liquefied natural gas (LNG).²⁴ In 2020, Germany invested in the reactivation of LNG terminals.²⁵ The appeal of these terminals was largely due to its storage capacity, energy diversification abilities, and supply flexibility.²⁶ LNG,

¹⁶ Casper, Julie Kerr. "The Beginning of Global Warming Management." *Climate Management*. Facts On File, 2010. online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=18889&itemid=WE40&articleId=368909.

¹⁷ Rosas, Allan. "Separation of Powers in the European Union." *The International Lawyer* 41, no. 4 (2007): 1033–46. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40707828>.

¹⁸ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Arab oil embargo." Encyclopedia Britannica, October 1, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Arab-oil-embargo>.

¹⁹ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Arab oil embargo." Encyclopedia Britannica, October 1, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Arab-oil-embargo>.

²⁰ Kettell, S. "Oil crisis." Encyclopedia Britannica, July 4, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/oil-crisis>.

²¹ "TIMELINE: Gas crises between Russia and Ukraine." 2009. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-ukraine-gas-timeline-sb-idUSTRE50A1A720090111>.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Gidadhubli, R. G. "Russia: Oil and Politics." *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 21 (2003): 2025–30. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4413593>.

²⁵ Mitrova, Tatiana, and Sarah O. Ladislav. "New Russian Oil and Gas Export Strategy." *Shifting Political Economy of Russian Oil and Gas*. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep23325.7>.

²⁶ Ibid.

with its extended storage potential in comparison to gaseous natural gas, offers a safeguard against abrupt supply disruptions. Furthermore, adopting LNG usage enables nations to broaden their resource base and reduce reliance on a single pipeline or supplier.²⁷ The earlier closure of these terminals were attributed to technical obsolescence and unfavourable market conditions. When most nations relied on crude oil via pipelines, the use of LNG terminals was unnecessary, and as a result, these terminals became outdated and economically inefficient to replace.²⁸ However, given LNG's emergence as a viable alternative to fossil fuels, nations find themselves compelled to reactivate these terminals.²⁹

In the early 2000s, climate change became increasingly prevalent, and studies began to show that greenhouse gas emissions, particularly anthropologically generated carbon dioxide, were the most powerful factor in increasing the Earth's average surface temperature.³⁰ Countries became aware that these rising could cause more frequent and severe natural disasters and elevated sea levels, which would have the potential to harm power plants, refineries, and pipelines.³¹ Furthermore, climate change induced temperature rises intensified the need for cooling in hot climate zones, straining energy grids and elevating blackout risks.³²

The use of clean energy to combat climate change can contribute to the diversification of energy sources, a vital aspect of energy security. In 2005, a carbon market— a system where companies can buy and sell permits that allow them to emit a certain amount of carbon or other greenhouse gases—was created with the aim of imposing penalties on major industries responsible for the greatest level of carbon emissions.³³ From that point on, the EU initiated efforts to address the connection between climate impacts and the journey to energy security through pollution reduction.³⁴ To this day, the EU continues to strive for reliable, diverse, and sustainable energy supply amidst a changing world.

Past UN/International Involvement

EU-US Energy Council

A significant pillar of energy security in the EU is cooperation with the United States.³⁵ The EU-US Energy council was created in 2009 to better facilitate energy security goals globally, as both parties shared similar values. Given that the EU-US trade relationship is the largest in the world and that their economies are largely interdependent, energy security is progressively gaining prominence in EU-US collaboration.³⁶ Since its establishment, many topics have been discussed, including how new markets can help secure new natural gas

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ McDonnell, Tim. 2021. "How many LNG import-export terminals are being built?" Quartz. <https://qz.com/2025722/how-many-lng-import-export-terminals-are-being-built>.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Fiona, Godlee. "Climate Change." *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 349 (2014). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26517394>.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Casper, Julie Kerr. "Cap and Trade and Other Mitigation Strategies." *Climate Management*. Facts On File, 2010. online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=18889&itemid=WE40&articleId=368506.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Planet Energies Org, ed. "Europe's Energy History: a Story with Twists and Turns." Planet Energies. <https://www.planete-energies.com/en/media/article/europes-energy-history-story-twists-and-turns>

³⁶ European Commission, ed. "A History of Europe." European Council https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu_en

resources.³⁷ Its creation aimed to strengthen collaboration and strategic dialogue related to energy security, diversification, and innovation.³⁸

The need for the council stemmed, in part, from the EU's need to find alternatives to Russian oil. At the time, Russia was increasingly leveraging gas supplies as a foreign policy tool.³⁹ Many other members of the EU agreed that cooperation with the United States was the best outcome in the process towards energy independence. Up until this point, the EU had not attempted to facilitate large scale operations to make energy independence possible, as there were 27 members with distinct priorities and interests; this hindered the progress of collective action. Consequently, the only thing that brought EU members together was an oil embargo in 2009 that left millions without heat.⁴⁰

EU's Oil Stocks Directive

In 2009, the EU formed the Oil Stocks Directive to prepare for a quick response to potential crises.⁴¹ It mandated that all EU members maintain emergency reserves of crude oil or petroleum that equates to at least 90 days of net imports or 61 days of consumption.⁴² Since 2009, the EU has continued to remain dependent on fossil fuels, underscoring the significance of maintaining emergency reserves to counter supply disruptions. The main success in this directive lay in its conceptual framework; while it proved effective in theory, however, its practical implementation fell short.

Despite the directive, the EU continues to have inadequate supply reserves. If an emergency were to happen today, some EU nations—such as Greece, Finland, and Belgium—would not be able to meet the 61-day consumption standard it set.⁴³ This was mostly a result of countries utilizing oil imports instead of keeping them in storage. However, some nations, like Germany and Spain would be able to meet the standards in the light of a crisis.⁴⁴ With the conflict in Russia, the EU has once again faced severe oil shortages and has found it increasingly difficult to prepare supply reserves.⁴⁵ Ultimately, the EU's oil directive was set up to be a solution to disturbances in the supply chain, yet only certain nations possess the ability to withstand an actual crisis.

European Energy Program (EEP)

The European Energy Program was launched in the aftermath of WWII, aimed to address the pressing energy challenges faced by Europe. Its primary objective was to promote cooperation among European countries in

³⁷ The White House, ed. "Joint Statement between the United States and the European Commission on European Energy Security." The White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/25/joint-statement-between-the-united-states-and-the-european-commission-on-european-energy-security/>.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Wilson Inc, ed. "The Future of U.S.-EU Energy Cooperation." Wilson Centre. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/the-future-us-eu-energy-cooperation>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ "EU oil stocks." 2009. Energy. https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-security/eu-oil-stocks_en.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ "Emergency oil stocks statistics - Statistics Explained." 2023. European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Emergency_oil_stocks_statistics.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

managing their coal and steel resources, crucial for post-war reconstruction and economic recovery.⁴⁶ The program allocated coal and steel resources in a fair and balanced manner among member states, creating a distribution method that prevented resource driven conflicts or disparities. Furthermore, it accommodated the pooling of resources to increase integration and reduce trade barriers in member states.⁴⁷

The European Energy Program was considered largely successful in terms of its broader implications in the post war time period. It played a significant role in enhancing energy cooperation amongst member nations. However, the EEP also faced challenges.⁴⁸ The program only focused on coal and steel resources, which doesn't fully encompass all of the energy landscape. Its success was centred on the specific context of post-war Europe. Thus, its impact might not have been as pronounced in addressing more modern energy security concerns like facilitating more expensive infrastructure or adapting to new energy sources.⁴⁹ If similar measures are applied modernly to alternative energy sources like renewable energy, it could prove highly advantageous in the present.

European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET Plan)

The European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET Plan) stands as a pivotal initiative in the EU's pursuit of sustainable energy solutions. The SET Plan was established in 2007 with the aim of addressing the broader challenges of energy security, climate change, and economic growth.⁵⁰ As the EU sought to transition from fossil fuels to alternative energy or renewable sources, the plan aimed to drive advancements in sectors such as solar and wind energies. Furthermore, it strived to promote research collaborations and investment across EU member states. In general, the goal was to promote energy security without compromising EU economies.⁵¹ Although the SET plan facilitated research and provided a framework for energy technology development, its effectiveness in achieving widespread commercialization of new energy technologies remained limited.⁵²

While the plan has contributed to shaping the trajectory of the EU's energy direction and promoting collaboration, its success in widely implementing low-carbon technologies is constrained.⁵³ In 2008, nations like Italy and Germany began contemplating pulling out of the plan due to the lack of economic benefits it brought.⁵⁴ This is largely due to varying national agendas, challenges in technology development, and the lack of substantial investments in infrastructure upgrades.⁵⁵ Other factors such as a lack of efficiency in technology development and commercialization have also contributed to a slower pace of change.

⁴⁶ "History of the European Union – 1945-59." 2020. European Union. https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu/1945-59_en.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ "Strategic Energy Technology Plan." n.d. Energy. https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/research-and-technology/strategic-energy-technology-plan_en.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Lonning, Eirik. n.d. "Actions From the Era Policy Agenda." The revision of the SET Plan aims at better supporting the European Green Deal objectives, making the SET Plan compatible with t. https://era.gv.at/public/documents/4596/11.2_-_Green_Transformation_-_SET_Plan_explanatory_document_revised.pdf.

⁵⁴ "Italy: Commission pursues legal action over waste management in the Campania and Lazio regions." 2008. European Union. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_08_705.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Current Situation

Case Study: Russo-Ukrainian War

Political tensions between Russia and the EU are at an all-time high, with Russia expressing discontent towards the EU due to its support for Ukraine, implementation of sanctions, and reduction of oil dependency.⁵⁶ Historically, however, the EU has always been extremely reliant on Russia for oil due to its geographic proximity and abundant resources.

Since the oil crisis of 2006 and 2009, the EU had always been aware of the vulnerabilities of depending on Russian energy.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, many countries continued to rely on Russian gas up until the start of the Russo-Ukraine War. Once the conflict started, the EU showed unwavering support for Ukraine, pledging to aid them financially and potentially militarily.⁵⁸ As a result, the EU also severed connections with Russia. It also became committed to reducing its reliance on Russian energy, thereby refraining from contributing to the Russian economy in any way.⁵⁹

The impacts on the EU have been highly unfavourable. Due to the sporadic nature of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, the EU had no time to prepare for energy shocks.⁶⁰ While the EU had previously implemented an oil stock directive, there were numerous deficiencies within the system that hindered its capacity to sustain the EU's long term energy requirements.⁶¹ Subsequently, half a year into the conflict, energy prices soared to unprecedented levels, with consumer costs surging by 35% compared to the previous year.⁶² In response, the EU has established price benchmarks that are 15% lower, adopted emergency regulation to assist citizens in lowering energy costs, and commenced a market correction for sudden price fluctuations.⁶³

Moreover, this conflict has placed strain on the relations between the EU and other significant stakeholders in their pursuit of energy security. For example, the EU has started collaborating with China in regards to energy.⁶⁴ Since 2020, China has participated in collaborative research and investments in energy technologies with the EU, even while China stands as an ally of Russia.⁶⁵ Additionally, as a result of the war, the EU had the idea to rely on China instead of Russia for oil.⁶⁶ In a broader context, the Russo-Ukrainian conflict has served as a great obstacle

⁵⁶ Tabak, John. "A Brief History of Oil." *Coal and Oil*. Facts On File, 2015.
online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=18889&itemid=WE40&articleId=368451.

⁵⁷ Drent, Margriet. "The European Security System Revisited: EU-Russia Relations." *Studia Diplomatica* 65, no. 1 (2012): 5–16.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26531515>.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ EU Commission. n.d. "Impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the markets: EU response." Consilium.europa.eu.
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/impact-of-russia-s-invasion-of-ukraine-on-the-markets-eu-response/>.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² "Energy crisis: Three EU-coordinated measures to cut down bills." 2023. Consilium.europa.eu.
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/eu-measures-to-cut-down-energy-bills/>.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ "EU-China energy cooperation platform." 2023. Energy. https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/international-cooperation/key-partner-countries-and-regions/china_en.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Bandyopadhyay, Kaushik Ranjan. "OPEC's Price-Making Power." *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 46 (2008): 18–21.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40278171>.

on the path towards energy security. Its repercussions extend beyond domestic quality of life and has made it more difficult for the EU to find alternative energy sources.

Phasing Out of Energy Dependence

The EU has long relied on external energy sources, such as Russia, to meet its energy needs. Over the past decade, the harms have been significant. This overdependence makes the EU subject to the use of oil as political leverage, price volatility, and supply shocks.⁶⁷ Due to these growing concerns, the EU has begun to phase out of fossil fuels and search for alternative energy sources. The objective of these initiatives is to diversify the EU's energy mix in order to limit the impact of supply disruptions or price fluctuations. Specifically, it has been working towards this by investing in clean energy, restarting LNG terminals, and continuing energy trade. The ideal energy source would incorporate self-sufficiency, sustainability, and cost efficiency—objectives currently pursued by many EU members such as Sweden, Finland, Poland, and many others.⁶⁸

Clean energy is by far the most cost effective, sustainable, and independent source to invest in. By transitioning to clean energy or increasing the use of renewable energies in the final energy blend, the EU can ensure energy independence, stability, and security amongst states. Nonetheless, in its current state, the climate has experienced repercussions due to past instances of excessive fossil fuel consumption and extraction. As a result, the deteriorating climate presents significant challenges in the pursuit of sustained clean energy utilization and the future of energy diversification. This poses a grave problem for the EU, as all nations have pledged to reach a significant percentage of clean energy consumption by the end of 2030 and 2050.

To combat this issue, the EU is making considerable efforts in creating new programs and setting higher standards. Most notably, the EU is carrying out the Fit for 55 package. This package makes putting a cap on emissions by 55% percent a legal obligation for member states, and it includes legislation that defines 15 different routes towards a cleaner and ideally climate neutral 2050. Particularly, the EU plans to initiate or sophisticate the EU emissions trading system (EU ETS), which is a carbon market based on a system of cap-and-trade of emissions allowances for energy-intensive industries.⁶⁹ This approach is taken due to the adverse effects of extreme weather, higher temperatures, and elevated sea levels, which all impact the availability of natural resources required to enhance energy diversity in the EU.⁷⁰ Through its ongoing efforts to limit carbon emissions and protect the environment, the EU is securing a trajectory towards energy diversification and, ultimately, ensuring unobstructed progress towards energy security.⁷¹

Trade Agreements

Deliberations concerning cross-border EU energy trade and international trade commenced in 2015. Subsequently, a series of agreements and treaties were formulated and put into action, including the European

⁶⁷ EU. "Fit for 55." European Council. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/green-deal/fit-for-55-the-eu-plan-for-a-green-transition/#package>.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Casper, Julie Kerr. "Cap and Trade and Other Mitigation Strategies." *Climate Management*. Facts On File, 2010. Accessed July 8, 2023. online.infobase.com/Auth/Index?aid=18889&itemid=WE40&articleId=368506

⁷⁰ Grubb, Michael. "EU ETS Objectives and Evolution." *Strengthening The EU ETS: Creating a Stable Platform for EU Energy Sector Investment*. Climate Strategies, 2012. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep15592.5>.

⁷¹ Szulecki, Kacper. "More than Just a Petrol Station: Norway's Contribution to European Union's Green Strategic Autonomy." Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), 2023. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep47024>.

Economic Area (EEA) Agreement, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), and the EU-Turkey Customs Union.⁷²

The EEA Agreement was put into effect in early 2016 and encompassed a broad range of economic incentives. Notably, the EU formed unilateral investment agreements with Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.⁷³ The main mechanism to incentivize trade and investments was the lowering of tariffs on energy imports, making it more cost-efficient during trade. By doing so, nations that collaborate will be able to achieve their energy goals without jeopardizing their economies. To illustrate, the EU reduced tariffs by 7% in 2020-21 on oil arriving to the EU from Ukrainian pipelines and similarly implemented tariff reduction for energy research trade with Georgia.⁷⁴

Likewise, on September 1, 2017, the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement was put into effect, establishing a partnership between Canada and the EU.⁷⁵ This agreement not only encompasses economic ties but also provisions concerning energy trade and investments.⁷⁶ This alignment serves to strengthen both nation's resilience and self-sufficiency in energy supply, while simultaneously strengthening the foundation for an interconnected global landscape.

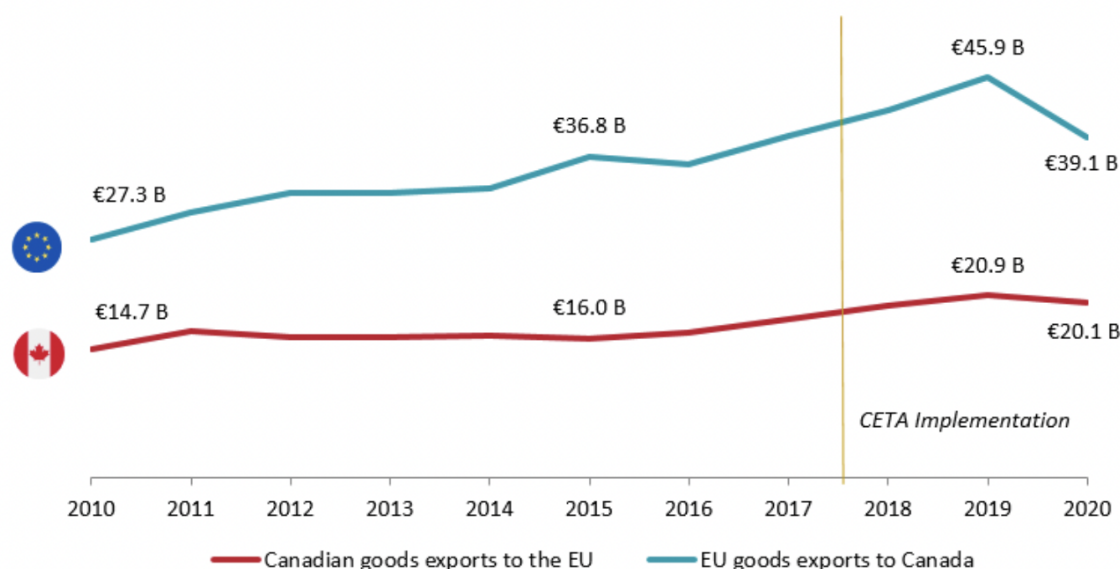


Figure 1: EU-Canada Trade Growth after CETA in EUR.⁷⁷

⁷² “EU-Mercosur Trade Agreement.” n.d. Language selection | Trade. https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/mercotur/eu-mercotur-agreement_en.

⁷³ “EU-Georgia Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area | Access to Markets.” 2022. Trade - European Commission. <https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/content/eu-georgia-deep-and-comprehensive-free-trade-area>.

⁷⁴ Hellyer, Mark. 2022. “SELLING TO THE EU UNDER THE DCFTA.” GOV.UK. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/249123/Selling2theEU_eng.pdf.

⁷⁵ “An overview of Canada-EU trade performance under CETA.” 2021. Global Affairs Canada. https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/economist-economiste/statistics-statistiques/overview_canada_eu-apercu_canada_ue.aspx?lang=eng.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

As shown in the figure above, both economies grew significantly after the implementation of CETA in late 2017.⁷⁸ Although this graph depicts the whole economic landscape of this agreement, energy related trade takes up at least 28% of the current growth.⁷⁹

Lastly, while not a full trade agreement, the EU-Turkey Customs Union promotes trade in industrial energy goods.⁸⁰ The goal with this collaboration is to promote a more diversified and stable energy mix by sharing the technology and sources that make it possible.⁸¹ At this point, a newer agreement is under development and is set to be put in motion by 2030.⁸² Overall, the EU is attempting to achieve energy security by collaborating with neighbouring states through various agreements to ensure mutual growth and reliability.

Possible Solutions and Controversies

Transition to Renewable Energy

The transition to renewable energy refers to a shift away from traditional, non-renewable sources towards cleaner and more sustainable alternatives. One of the primary motivations behind the transition is the need to address climate change and reduce carbon emissions. The transition to clean energy can diversify the energy mix of the EU, enhancing energy security in the process. Many countries rely heavily on imported fossil fuels, which make them vulnerable to price volatility and supply disruptions. By diversifying their energy mix and harnessing domestic renewable sources, countries can begin to strengthen their energy security and reduce dependence on foreign sources. The transition could involve deploying a variety of technologies, including solar power, wind power, hydropower, and biomass.⁸³ These sources are considered renewable because they either rely on natural processes or can be continuously replenished. Currently, this seems like the most viable option for the EU as it is already setting renewable energy targets, providing incentives for clean energy investments and promoting development in technologies.⁸⁴

However, this process is highly complex and has a high barrier to entry. Certain challenges include the intermittent nature of some sources, the need for advanced grid upgrades, new energy storage solutions and the “phasing out” of existing fossil fuel infrastructure.⁸⁵ This poses severe challenges for countries that don’t have the capacity to be building million-dollar hydro plants or fund research. Therefore, while the transition to renewable energy may be most viable for wealthier nations, it may be difficult for poorer countries such as Bulgaria and Romania.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ “EU trade relations with Türkiye.” 2023. Language selection | Trade. https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/turkiye_en.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Iea Statistics. “Renewables.” Iea. <https://www.iea.org/fuels-and-technologies/renewables>.

⁸⁴ EU Council. “Energy prices and security of supply.” Council of the European Union. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/energy-prices-and-security-of-supply/>.

⁸⁵ Kindley, Dr. “Power Systems.” N.d. [pdf guidelines-for-power-system-optimization-of-hydropower-projects.pdf](#).

Switching to LNGs

The energy crisis that Europe is currently going through can largely, if not entirely, be attributed to the conflict in Russia. The scarcity and dependence on Russian oil has sent shock waves through the EU: more than 70% of inflation in 2022 alone was caused by gas price fluctuation.⁸⁶ By changing suppliers and promoting liquefied natural gas (LNG), the EU can regain its footing. LNG is natural gas that has been cooled to -162°C , changing it from a gas into a liquid that is 1/600th of its original volume. This change allows for it to be transported safely and efficiently in terminals, providing supply flexibility, making it a more reliant source in times of emergency. Furthermore, the storage capacity of LNGs are far greater than traditional gaseous fossil fuels, allowing countries to create larger reserves.⁸⁷

Currently, Italy, Spain, and France have been taking the lead in the shift towards LNG. These countries took advantage of their existing LNG terminals and became the first to re-enter the LNG market.⁸⁸ In doing so, these nations have taken an active step in diversifying their energy mix to facilitate energy security. While nations may struggle to support themselves with clean energy, LNGs provide an efficient and easy source of energy.⁸⁹

However, LNGs can be just as harmful to the climate as fossil fuels. LNGs undergo a life cycle that includes the extraction, transportation, and consumption, encompassing a carbon footprint that could be significantly larger than traditional fossil fuels due to the increased storage capacity.⁹⁰ As countries rely on LNGs to transition away from fossil fuels, they inadvertently impede on the transition to green energy. The trade-off of this solution needs to be thoroughly discussed in accordance with the priorities of each country.⁹¹

Inter-EU Collaboration

Inter-EU collaboration involves EU members relying on each other for energy and infrastructure. Currently, nations such as Poland, Estonia, and Germany are beginning to move forward in this potential solution. Most notably, the Czech Republic now relies significantly on Polish coal, demonstrating the ability to foster collaboration.⁹² In 2022, Poland exported 1200 shipments of coal to the Czech Republic.⁹³ In 2015, EU nations began deliberating the possibility of implementing trade programs in tandem with other solutions. Shortly after, the draft was discarded as many EU nations primarily had net negative domestic resource production.⁹⁴ Moreover, infrastructural constraints hindered numerous members from achieving self sufficiency in energy production. In order for energy trade networks to work, the EU must cultivate a healthy energy market in every

⁸⁶ Ozawa, Marc. "The Russia-Ukraine War and the European Energy Crisis." Edited by Thierry Tardy. War in Europe: Preliminary Lessons. NATO Defense College, 2022. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep41406.9>.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Jha, Somesh. "Which European nations are handling the energy crisis best?" Aljazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/12/20/which-european-nations-are-handling-the-energy-crisis-best>.

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Chevron. "safely and efficiently transporting natural gas." Chevron <https://www.chevron.com/operations/liquefied-natural-gas-lng>

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² "Poland and Czech." OEC. <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/pol/partner/cze>.

⁹³ "Coal Exports from Poland to Czech Republic - Export data with price, buyer, supplier, HSN code." 2022. Volza.com. <https://www.volza.com/p/coal/export/export-from-poland/cod-czech-republic/>.

⁹⁴ EU Commission. "Communiqué G20 Energy Ministers Meeting: Istanbul." N.d. [pdf.https://energy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2018-10/g20_energy_ministerial_in_istanbul_2015_0.pdf](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2018-10/g20_energy_ministerial_in_istanbul_2015_0.pdf)

nation, a goal achievable by wealthier countries investing in projects within less affluent counterparts.⁹⁵ Then, nations must agree on trade agreements and contracts that illustrate how support will be given financially. Next, the EU must establish energy diplomacy in each member.⁹⁶ Although the initial plan was discarded, the current state of the EU holds promising prospects. Because all members wish to pursue energy security as a union, the implementation of trade networks could prove to be successful.⁹⁷

However, there are several concerns with this solution. Firstly, the economies within the EU differ greatly, and as a result, the diversity of EU economies pose a problem as it becomes difficult to accommodate every nation's needs and priorities equally.⁹⁸ Stronger economies in the EU may be unwilling to spend on others. This issue can be solved by implementing a quota system, requiring wealthy nations to fulfill a certain funding threshold annually.

The second largest concern is associated with fairness and energy diplomacy. Due to the wide range of political priorities, it is difficult to ensure that every nation is able to have its needs met.⁹⁹ For instance, Malta or Latvia might choose to develop more basic energy infrastructure such as grids, while others like Finland or Sweden would need to take the costlier path of constructing wind turbines and hydroelectric plants.¹⁰⁰ The challenge would be striking a balance between the distribution of financial resources while allowing nations to allocate the funds freely. In this scenario, a compromise is required. The resolution would involve allocating financial assistance to those with the lowest level of energy development.

Bloc Positions

Major Economies

Nations in this bloc include France, Germany, Italy, and Spain as they have larger economies, greater connections, and one common goal: to achieve energy security without negatively affecting their economies. Many often choose the more economically beneficial route, such as leaning on LNGs. Some solutions this bloc may support include using LNGs and diversifying energy sources to include more nuclear power. For this bloc, these are the most desirable options, as they can strengthen economies, provide reliable energy, and are easily controlled. Although this bloc may invest in clean energy or other renewable alternatives, it is more likely they will focus on solutions that are both effective and economically beneficial. Therefore, this bloc believes that obtaining energy security through finding alternative energy sources and suppliers is the unrivaled option.

⁹⁵ EU Commission. "Collaboration, Energy Crisis, Prices and Security of Supply." European Council. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/energy-prices-and-security-of-supply/#gas>.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Bluszcz, Anna. "European economies in terms of energy dependence." *Quality & quantity* vol. 51,4 (2017) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5486912>

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

Energy Self-Sufficient Members

Only three members are generally considered self-sufficient energy producers. These members include the Czech Republic, Poland, and Estonia.¹⁰¹ A key similarity between the states is their strategic coal mining industries and dependence on each other. To illustrate, Poland is the world's 9th largest coal producer and has an estimated 191 years of coal left in terms of potential depletion.¹⁰² Exports of Polish coal declined by 14.26% in 2022, with the highest share still being exported to the Czech republic; however, it is expected that Polish coal exports will rise another 2% in 2024.¹⁰³ As a result, these members lean more towards continuing to facilitate independent energy for themselves and their partners.¹⁰⁴ In June of 2022, the Polish and Estonian leaders assured others that natural gas and coal reserves were being assembled to disconnect themselves from Russian sanctioned oil.¹⁰⁵ Already, these states believe they have, or are very close to establishing energy security; however, this constant self-comforting has led members to become worried about the reality of their so called "energy security." In comparison to the "green countries," the EU has been more confident in the prospect of domestic production of oils instead of relying so heavily on nature.¹⁰⁶

Both Poland and Estonia have attributed their slow but obvious decline in reserves to Russia. If the rate of depletion increases, the number of years the reserves were intended to last decreases. Therefore, the policies that this bloc supports include promoting renewable energy or identifying new trustworthy sources.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the economies within this bloc will continue to prioritize their stability and may not exclusively support clean energy solutions. Ultimately, this bloc champions independence, inter-state collaboration, and the minimization of oil usage.¹⁰⁸

Green Nations

Sweden, Finland and Latvia are among the most prominent members of this bloc as they have the most green sources and are most prepared to go green. Both Finland and Latvia have been leveraging biomass, wind, and solar power to further develop its clean energy sector, and they believe that they can go green by 2045.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, Sweden has been phasing out fossil fuels by implementing more wind turbines across the nation to power as many businesses and homes as possible.¹¹⁰ All these nations have a deep awareness of their natural surroundings, and significant public support often motivates them to sustain their green initiatives. Due to their heavy reliance on clean energy, any disturbances in the climate caused by emissions directly affect their natural resources. To illustrate, a majority of Finland's clean energy is produced with biomass; however, biomass is extremely susceptible to heat and can lose its population due to rising temperatures. Thus, these nations are the

¹⁰¹ Bluszcz, Anna. "European economies in terms of energy dependence." *Quality & quantity* vol. 51,4 (2017) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5486912>

¹⁰² World Reserve. "Poland: Coal Data." World Reserve. <https://www.worldometers.info/>

¹⁰³ MT, Premium Insights. "Coal production in Poland and major projects." Mining Technology. <https://www.mining-technology.com/data-insights/coal-in-poland>.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ "The leaders seek to assure public of energy security." CNBC. <https://www.cnbc.com/>

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Limb, Lottie. 2023. "Sweden, Finland, Latvia: Which EU countries use the most renewable energy?" Euronews.com. <https://www.euronews.com/green/2023/01/20/which-european-countries-use-the-most-renewable-energy>.

¹¹⁰ Axelsson, Svante. 2021. "A fossil fuel free Sweden is within reach." Climate Champions. <https://climatechampions.unfccc.int/a-fossil-fuel-free-sweden-is-within-reach/>.

most dedicated to becoming carbon neutral.¹¹¹ Through their diverse mix of energy, these nations are at the forefront of maintaining energy security. This bloc advocates for cutting carbon emissions and environmental mitigation to counter climate change, driven by their dependence on clean energy sources. It continues to phase out of fossil fuels and frowns upon others who continue to remain heavily reliant on them.¹¹²

Energy Dependent Countries

Nations like Malta, Cyprus, and Luxembourg have smaller economies and still rely heavily on oil imports. At this point, phasing out fossil fuels would be inefficient due to their lack of domestic resources.¹¹³ To fit the ideals of the rest of the EU, these nations have set ambitious goals to promote solar and wind energy use; however, they require immense support from large nations in order to achieve this.¹¹⁴ To illustrate, Malta aims to achieve 100% clean energy by 2050, when currently, their clean energy is at 12.2%.¹¹⁵ For nations still extremely reliant on fossil fuels and external sources, only financial help from others will push their progress forward.

Initiatives this bloc would support include financial aid from other EU members to build infrastructure, continue research, and create new technologies.¹¹⁶ This bloc severely lacks the capacity to continue to strengthen their own energy landscape independently, and thus, is open to support from other nations.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the EU increasing its reliance on green energy?
2. How can the EU take into account different economies when it comes to developing infrastructure?
3. How can the EU balance its energy stability concerns with effective transitions to sustainable energy?
4. In the face of economical or geographical difficulties, is it acceptable to value affordability over sustainability?
5. How does inadequate investments in energy infrastructure affect a nation's ability to respond to potential crises?
6. How do geopolitical relations with energy suppliers impact a nation's energy security and strategic decision making in the energy sector?

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ "Archive: EU energy mix and import dependency." n.d. European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Archive:EU_energy_mix_and_import_dependency.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Clarke, Andrew I. 2023. "Malta's renewable energy share languishes at 12.2%, second lowest in Europe." The Malta Independent. <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2023-01-20/local-news/Malta-s-renewable-energy-share-languishes-at-12-2-second-lowest-in-Europe-6736248982>.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Additional Resources

Energy Security in an Insecure World:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFewUO9gGuM>

Consequences of Russia's War with Ukraine on Energy Security:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRsM3KDsJMY> (Timestamp: 14:05–18:50, 46:20–49:00, 4:45:18–4:52:37)

Dependence on External Energy Sources:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/30/nato-europe-energy-security-ukraine-russia>

How Climate Change Affects the Diversification of Energy:

<https://www.energy.gov/articles/climate-change-effects-our-energy>

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North African Refugee Crisis

Overview

The North African refugee crisis emerged in the wake of the Arab Spring, a series of political uprisings that swept across the Arab region in 2010.¹¹⁷ As a result, political instability, armed conflicts, human rights abuses, and economic struggles began to emerge in nations such as Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt. These conflicts fueled an increase in refugees fleeing towards the European Union through the Mediterranean Sea which continues to be seen today.¹¹⁸ Due to the influx of refugees, the EU faces numerous challenges. Most prominently, the EU currently faces difficulties in providing adequate humanitarian aid, shelter, and essential services to a large number of refugees arriving from North Africa. Furthermore, the EU encounters challenges concerning the social integration of refugees, border control, and pressures on the asylum system.¹¹⁹

In response to the surge of refugees, the EU has implemented numerous policies such as border control, search and rescue, and asylum frameworks.¹²⁰ Border control, along with search and rescue operations, are critical components of the EU's response, but disputes continue to emerge over how responsibilities should be shared.¹²¹ ¹²² The reasons behind these controversies are largely due to varying national priorities and concerns regarding economic and social impacts of hosting refugees.

In light of the refugee crisis, the EU's existing asylum and migration policies underwent significant developments. For instance, the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) established common standards for granting protection. This system includes qualification regulation to limit irregular migration by making it compulsory for refugees to undergo an internal protection assessment. Moreover, this system provides places of residence and imposes reporting obligations to limit refugees travelling between member states.¹²³

Despite efforts by the European Union to address the North African refugee crisis, nations continue to face economic difficulties alongside an increase in hate crimes and anti-immigration rhetoric. According to some nations, refugees have burdened their economies, as out of obligation, countries had to increase expenditures to accommodate refugees.¹²⁴

¹¹⁷ "North Africa, Europe's Last Resort on Migration." 2017. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/68097>.

¹¹⁸ Rice, Mark, and Jennifer Rankin. 2017. "How Europe exported its refugee crisis to North Africa." The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/30/how-europe-exported-its-refugee-crisis-to-north-africa>.

¹¹⁹ EU. 2023. "Middle East and North Africa (MENA) | EEAS." EEAS. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/middle-east-and-north-africa-mena_en#12770.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Frontex. 2023. "Tasks & Mission." Frontex. <https://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/who-we-are/tasks-mission/>.

¹²² "Middle East and North Africa | Global Focus." n.d. UNHCR Global Focus. <https://reporting.unhcr.org/operational/regions/middle-east-and-north-africa>.

¹²³ EU Commission. 2023. "2.1 The Common European Asylum System and current issues." European Union Agency for Asylum. <https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2020/21-common-european-asylum-system-and-current-issues>.

¹²⁴ Taylor, J. E., Mateusz J. Filipowski, Mohamad Alloush, Anubhab Gupta, Ruben Irvin Rojas Valdes, and Ernesto Gonzalez-Estrada. 2016. "Economic impact of refugees." PNAS. <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.1604566113>.

Timeline

July 28, 1951 — The Convention of 1951, an article under the Geneva Convention outlining the humanitarian obligations of protecting refugees, is signed by 146 parties, including almost all nations now in the European Union. This convention outlines the rights and assistance to which a refugee is entitled.¹²⁵

February 18, 2003 — The Dublin Regulation is adopted by the EU with the aim to revise the regulations and standards of processing an asylum application. Additionally, it aims to deter asylum shopping, a situation in which refugees attempt to remain in a country of their choice, regardless of whether it is the initial arrival country.¹²⁶

October 26, 2004 — Frontex, an organization established by the EU to maintain border control in response to an influx of refugees, is created to facilitate and secure the free movement of people.¹²⁷ Since its establishment, Frontex has undergone reforms that brought about two changes: firstly, Frontex border agents are now authorized to carry service weapons; secondly, they can exercise executive powers against violence on the border.¹²⁸

December 2010–2013 — A wave of pro-democracy uprisings known as the Arab Spring emerges throughout the Middle East and North Africa. The protests begin in Tunisia and Egypt, but other Arab nations swiftly follow suit. Protests were met by harsh crackdowns and violence, driving people to flee their countries.¹²⁹

March 8, 2011 — The Arab Spring causes an influx of refugees seeking asylum in the EU. In response, the EU proposed a partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean due to its proximity to the Middle East. They intended to foster “deep democracy,” create new jobs, and facilitate visas.¹³⁰

June 22, 2015 — Operation Sophia is established to help the UN’s efforts to enforce a Libyan arms embargo in an attempt to facilitate peace in the North African region. The availability of weapons has fueled conflict in Tunisia and Algeria, in turn, driving people to flee.¹³¹

August 25, 2015 — German chancellor Angela Merkel begins to allow Syrian refugees who have already applied for asylum in other EU countries to enter Germany. At this time, the existing asylum system within the EU was facing criticism for its inefficiencies and inability to manage the crisis effectively. Merkel’s decision was seen as an attempt to address these shortcomings and bring about more pragmatic policies, but this policy violated EU law which requires asylum seekers to be returned to the first country they arrived in.¹³²

¹²⁵ UNHCR. n.d. “The 1951 Refugee Convention.” UNHCR. <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-are/1951-refugee-convention>.

¹²⁶ “Country responsible for asylum application (Dublin Regulation).” 2023. Language selection | Migration and Home Affairs. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system/country-responsible-asylum-application-dublin-regulation_en.

¹²⁷ FRONTEX - EU. 2023. “Tasks & Mission.” Frontex. <https://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/who-we-are/tasks-mission/>.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ali’s, Ben. 2023. “Arab Spring | History, Revolution, Causes, Effects, & Facts.” Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Arab-Spring>.

¹³⁰ EU Commission. 2011. “The EU’s response to the ‘Arab Spring.’” European Union. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_11_918.

¹³¹ EU. 2020. “EU launches Operation IRINI to enforce Libya arms embargo.” Consilium.europa.eu. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/03/31/eu-launches-operation-irini-to-enforce-libya-arms-embargo/>.

¹³² Vonberg, Judith. 2018. “Why Angela Merkel is no longer the ‘refugee chancellor.’” CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/07/06/europe/angela-merkel-migration-germany-intl/index.html>.

September 4, 2015 — Angela Merkel relaxes border control between Germany and Austria, allowing tens of thousands of refugees to enter Germany. This causes social unrest and anger in Germany, as citizens were opposed to Merkel's open-door policy. Many believed that the influx of refugees would strain resources, create cultural tensions, and challenge social cohesion.¹³³

March 18, 2016 — The EU-Turkey agreement is signed to disrupt illegal entrance into Greece. Türkiye is granted EUR 6 billion to improve the humanitarian situation for asylum seekers staying in the country.¹³⁴ In return, Türkiye would take all necessary legal measures to prevent illegal migrants from entering Greece and accept any person rejected from Greece as a first arrival nation.¹³⁵

2016–2017 — Due to safety concerns regarding the influx of asylum seekers, national border security forces are given the permanent right by the EU council to search the phones of refugees, a measure criticized by human rights groups. In January 2017, at least 9,000 refugees had their phones searched. By the end of 2017, tens of thousands of refugee applicants were rejected due to the stricter search policies on the border.¹³⁶

January 31, 2020 — The United Kingdom withdraws from the European Union following a referendum.¹³⁷ Many who voted in favour of leaving the EU cited an influx of illegal immigration as a primary concern.¹³⁸

July 24, 2023 — An estimated 289 children either disappear or die while attempting to cross the Central Mediterranean from North Africa to the EU. Most children are alone or separated from their families. UNICEF calls for EU nations to better protect vulnerable children and reflect this value in the EU Migration and Asylum Pact.¹³⁹

Historical Analysis

On December 17, 2010, a young Tunisian fruit vendor lit himself on fire to protest against police brutality in one of the most oppressive Tunisian regimes.¹⁴⁰ His name was Mohamed Bouazizi, and his self-sacrifice ignited the Arab Spring, the largest Arabic revolution in history. His gesture went viral, igniting protests nationwide against the oppressive leadership of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.¹⁴¹ The 23 year rule of Ben-Ali ended 10 days later after he fled to Saudi Arabia, and he was the first leader of an Arab country pushed out by protests.¹⁴² The rest of the

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ EU. 2020. "EU launches Operation IRINI to enforce Libya arms embargo." Consilium.europa.eu. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/03/31/eu-launches-operation-irini-to-enforce-libya-arms-embargo/>.

¹³⁵ IRC. 2023. "What is the EU-Turkey deal?" International Rescue Committee. <https://www.rescue.org/eu/article/what-eu-turkey-deal>.

¹³⁶ Vonberg, Judith. 2018. "Why Angela Merkel is no longer the 'refugee chancellor.'" CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/07/06/europe/angela-merkel-migration-germany-intl/index.html>.

¹³⁷ "Brexit: What you need to know about the UK leaving the EU." 2020. BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32810887>.

¹³⁸ "The Refugee Crisis, Brexit, and the Reframing of Immigration in Britain." n.d. EuropeNow. <https://www.europenowjournal.org/2019/09/09/the-refugee-crisis-brexit-and-the-reframing-of-immigration-in-britain/>.

¹³⁹ UNICEF. 2023. "Eleven children die every week attempting to cross the Central Mediterranean Sea migration route – UNICEF." UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/mena/press-releases/eleven-children-die-every-week-attempting-cross-central-mediterranean-sea-migration>.

¹⁴⁰ "What is the Arab Spring, and how did it start?" 2020. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/17/what-is-the-arab-spring-and-how-did-it-start>.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² "Former Tunisian President Ben Ali dies in Saudi exile." 2019. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/videos/2019/9/19/former-tunisian-president-ben-ali-dies-in-saudi-exile>.

Arab world banded together to fight against corruption, poverty and authoritarianism.¹⁴³ The aftermath of the Arab Spring was hectic as civil conflicts erupted in multiple nations due to power vacuums, a rise in terrorist attacks, and heightened poverty rates.¹⁴⁴ Every country that experienced a successful uprising faced instability. As a result, militias, terrorist groups, and citizens alike all fought to gain power in their respective regions.¹⁴⁵

It was these conflicts that manifested into the North African Refugee Crisis.¹⁴⁶ Although the rest of the world promised to increase trade and support the democratizing nations of North Africa and the Middle East, civilians wanted nothing more than to leave.¹⁴⁷ Regardless of the promise of assistance from Western nations, the aspiration for a better life for refugees laid beyond the confines of their home borders. Refugees continued to face instability, violence, and poverty in their home countries.

As a result, many refugees fled to the EU due to its geographical proximity and relative stability. In 2013, a surge of refugees entered Europe, triggering a refugee crisis that continues to ensue to this day.¹⁴⁸ The crisis reached its peak in 2015, straining popular host nations like Germany, Hungary, and Italy. Combined, these three nations took in more than 500,000 refugees that year.¹⁴⁹

During this period, the EU was unprepared for a refugee crisis due to its magnitude and suddenness. The sudden increase in arrivals overwhelmed existing reception and processing systems.¹⁵⁰ Additionally, EU members had varying capacities, policies, and political priorities, and as a result, were unable to create a unified response.¹⁵¹ There were frequent disagreements among member states over the distribution of refugees, responsibility sharing, and the burden of hosting migrants, thus leading to policy paralysis and inaction.¹⁵²

Terrorists also began swarming into the EU during this period due to the lack of security and preparation on the EU border. On January 7, 2015, two al Qaeda fighters fought their way into the office of French satirical journal, Charlie Hebdo, killing 11 and injuring 6 employees. Their motive claimed to be “avenging” the depiction of Prophet Muhammed in the journal.¹⁵³ Several months later, on November 13, 2015, ISIS terrorists led a string of attacks in Paris, killing at least 130 individuals and injuring 300 more.¹⁵⁴ Later investigations found the motive

¹⁴³ “What is the Arab Spring, and how did it start?” 2020. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/17/what-is-the-arab-spring-and-how-did-it-start>.

¹⁴⁴ Karayilan, Eyup. n.d. “Journal of Tourismology, Vol.3, No.1 - Refugee crisis (RC) after the Arab Spring (AS) and its impacts on Turkish tourism industry: The case of Istanbul.” DergiPark. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/457633>.

¹⁴⁵ Fernandez, Alberto M. 2017. “Islamism after the Arab Spring: Between the Islamic State and the nation-state | Brookings.” Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/islamism-after-the-arab-spring-between-the-islamic-state-and-the-nation-state/>.

¹⁴⁶ Watson, Debbie, Kristen Cheney, and Heba R. Hezzat. 2015. “Children and young people in times of conflict and change: Child rights in the Middle East and North Africa.” Global Studies of childhood. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2043610615586106>.

¹⁴⁷ United Nations. 2011. “Germany: UN hears pledge for more trade to help democratizing Arab States.” UN News. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2011/09/389122>.

¹⁴⁸ Barkey, Henri. 2011. “Turkey and the Arab Spring.” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2011/04/26/turkey-and-arab-spring-pub-43731#uprisings>.

¹⁴⁹ “Record number of over 1.2 million first time asylum seekers registered in 2015.” 2016. Total population in the European Union is expected to increase of an additional 11 million during the first quarter of the two. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203832/3-04032016-AP-EN.pdf/790eba01-381c-4163-bcd2-a54959b99ed6>.

¹⁵⁰ EU Commission. 2015. “Refugee Crisis: European Commission takes decisive action.” European Union. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_15_5596.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ “Charlie Hebdo attack spurs EU anti-terror 'projects.'” 2015. BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30875705>.

¹⁵⁴ Hurley, Lawrence. 2015. “Paris Terror Attacks.” NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/paris-terror-attacks>.

to be retaliation against France and the EU for airstrikes against ISIS.¹⁵⁵ Both EU citizens and governments attributed these violent acts to the lack of security and control on the border along with the surge of refugees. As a result, Islamophobia became increasingly prevalent in the EU, and citizens started to demand a stop to accepting refugees.¹⁵⁶

Following these incidents, many nations began reconsidering their role in the refugee crisis.¹⁵⁷ Some nations such as Slovakia stopped taking in Muslim refugees, while others such as Poland vowed to close EU borders. These nations viewed the North African refugee crisis as both a social and economic threat to their nations. On the other hand, nations such as Germany continued to take in refugees as they believed that they had an obligation. Additionally, Germany had a greater capacity to accept refugees compared to other EU countries.

Past UN/International Involvement

European Agenda on Migration

On May 13, 2015, the European Commission put forth a package of proposals to address the refugee crisis. This package aimed to alleviate pressure from members most affected by the surge of refugees—notably Greece, Italy, and Hungary.¹⁵⁸ By implementing various measures, the EU was confident they could respond to the crisis effectively:

Emergency Relocation of Refugees

In response to increased illegal border crossings in the Central and Eastern Mediterranean in 2015, nations such as Greece, Cyprus, and Croatia sought significant support. The European Commission suggested the relocation of 120,000 refugees across EU countries, with destination decisions based on factors such as population, GDP, and unemployment rate.¹⁵⁹ All EU members were participants of this package; thus, refugees could be relocated to any nation in the EU.¹⁶⁰

The relocation clause was accompanied by EUR 780 million as monetary support for refugee-receiving members. If for any reason a nation was not able to receive refugees—for example, due to natural disasters—they would be required to contribute 0.002% of their GDP to the EU asylum system budget.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁵ “France, Russia strike Islamic State; new suspect sought.” 2015. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/france-shooting-idUSKCN0T40F420151117>.

¹⁵⁶ Hume, Tim, and Don Melvin. 2023. “Pressure on ISIS builds: France, Russia consult; Britain calls for airstrikes.” CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/26/world/paris-attacks/index.html>.

¹⁵⁷ Connolly, Kate. 2015. “Refugee crisis: Germany creaks under strain of open door policy.” The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/08/refugee-crisis-germany-creaks-under-strain-of-open-door-policy>.

¹⁵⁸ EU Commission. 2015. “Refugee Crisis: European Commission takes decisive action.” European Union. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_15_5596.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

Ultimately, this clause was implemented to alleviate the strain on countries closer to North Africa, which frequently served as entry points for refugees. It helped distribute the obligation of protecting and housing refugees across the EU.¹⁶²

List of Safe Countries of Origin

The commission proposed to establish a list of “safe countries” to label nations the EU deemed safe for more efficient asylum procedures.¹⁶³ Current safe nations include Ghana, Togo, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, and several more. The criteria for inclusion involves signing key human rights treaties, maintaining democracy, and upholding minority protection.¹⁶⁴ The list, updated by the European Commission, expanded over time to encompass other countries and is undergoing continuous assessment annually.¹⁶⁵

The creation of this list has made it significantly easier to relocate or reject refugees. Amid constant concerns regarding an overwhelming refugee population in the EU, this list enables countries to securely transfer migrants to alternative locations with ensuring their safety and wellbeing.¹⁶⁶ For instance, the EU has already relocated roughly 6,667 refugees to Albania by the end of 2022.¹⁶⁷ However, there is one key inconsistency in this endeavour: the safety of these relocated refugees is largely dependent on the nation they are transferred to. Owing to the fact that the EU can not control the status of different nations, it is difficult to guarantee long term safety in another country.¹⁶⁸

Addressing the Political Dimension of the Refugee Crisis

A clause was added to provide a political resolution to the aftermath of the Arab Spring in North Africa and the Middle East. The EU supported internally displaced Syrians by financially assisting neighbouring countries hosting refugees, like Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, which received about EUR 3.9 billion collectively by 2016.¹⁶⁹ The EU aimed to cooperate with other nations in close proximity to areas of conflict in order to avoid a militarized approach. Notably, the EU provided monetary support for neighbouring nations hosting refugees and pushed to end the Libyan arms embargo.

A main focus of the EU was strengthening the Rabat and Khartoum processes with African countries.¹⁷⁰ The Rabat process involves creating dialogue surrounding migration and development between African and

¹⁶² EU Commission. 2015. “Refugee Crisis: European Commission takes decisive action.” European Union. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_15_5596.

¹⁶³ Orav, Anita. 2023. “Carriages preview | Legislative Train Schedule.” Carriages preview | Legislative Train Schedule. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/package-strong-asylum-policy/file-european-list-of-safe-countries-of-origin>.

¹⁶⁴ AIDA and ECRE. 2023. “Safe country of origin.” Asylum Information Database. <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/asylum-procedure/the-safe-country-concepts/safe-country-origin/>.

¹⁶⁵ EU Commission. 2015. “Refugee Crisis: European Commission takes decisive action.” European Union. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_15_5596.

¹⁶⁶ “EASO Situation Update on Safe Country of Origin Lists.” 2021. European Union Agency for Asylum. https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/EASO-situational_update-safe_country_of_origin-2021.pdf.

¹⁶⁷ Sheti, Sokol. 2022. “Roadmap for Cooperation EASO - Albania (2020-2022).” European Union Agency for Asylum. https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-02/AL_RM_Cover.pdf.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ UNHCR. 2017. “UN and partners launch plan to support five million Syrian refugees and countries hosting them.” UNHCR. <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing-notes/un-and-partners-launch-plan-support-five-million-syrian-refugees-and-countries>.

¹⁷⁰ EU Commission. 2015. “Refugee Crisis: European Commission takes decisive action.” European Union. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_15_5596.

European nations.¹⁷¹ The Khartoum process, on the other hand, aims to strengthen border control and security along migration routes. These processes were largely policy based and focused more on people actively migrating. Similarly, in 2015, the EU and other African countries such as Tunisia, Jordan, and Algeria discussed the potential political paths that could be taken to de-escalate conflict. These discussions concluded with the Cadiz Political Declaration and Action Plan, a plan that would strengthen the political framework in North Africa.¹⁷²

Although these political solutions were generally successful in the short term, they did not hold in the long term. It was difficult for the EU to facilitate democracy in several countries at the same time, resulting in severely unstable democratic governments or a failed attempt all together. For instance, in the short term, Niger underwent significant democratic developments; however, recently in 2023, a coup was held against the president the EU supported.¹⁷³

EU Moderated Development and Protection Programmes in North Africa

The EU's Moderated Development and Protection Programmes in North Africa are initiatives designed to address various challenges related to migration, development, and protection of the North African region.¹⁷⁴ These programs typically involve cooperation between the EU and countries in North Africa to enhance development, improve living conditions, and provide protection for vulnerable populations. In 2015, the RDPP spent GBP 6.3 million facilitating 57 projects, including building institutional frameworks, developing access to international aid and funding search teams to find refugees lost in the desert.¹⁷⁵ During the pandemic, these programmes were put to a halt, though there have been calls to restart them.

Although this initiative has created certain benefits, such as better quality of life or safety, the impacts have been limited as many North Africans still pursue asylum in the EU. The initial goal of this program was to ensure that the state of the North African nations were stable enough so that refugees were less likely or willingly to migrate.

Current Situation

Economic Impact

The fear of economic burdens on EU members stems from two sources: a worry that refugees will be a fiscal burden, and a fear that migrants will exhaust welfare resources.¹⁷⁶ The existence of the Dublin Regulation is a notable example of the EU's perceived economic and fiscal threat of migrants. This regulation was implemented

¹⁷¹ "Cadiz Political Declaration and Action Plan - Rabat Process." 2023. Processus de Rabat. <https://www.rabat-process.org/en/about/rabat-process/cadiz-action-plan>.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ EU. 2023. "Regional Development and Protection Programmes in North Africa projects' implementation." Language selection | Migration and Home Affairs. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/regional-development-and-protection-programmes-north-africa-projects-implementation-2023-07-05_en.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ "Refugees are not a burden but an opportunity." n.d. OECD. <https://www.oecd.org/social/refugees-are-not-a-burden-but-an-opportunity.htm>.

to disrupt “asylum shopping,” the act of an asylum seeker applying to multiple host countries, then picking and choosing one that provides the best social benefits.¹⁷⁷

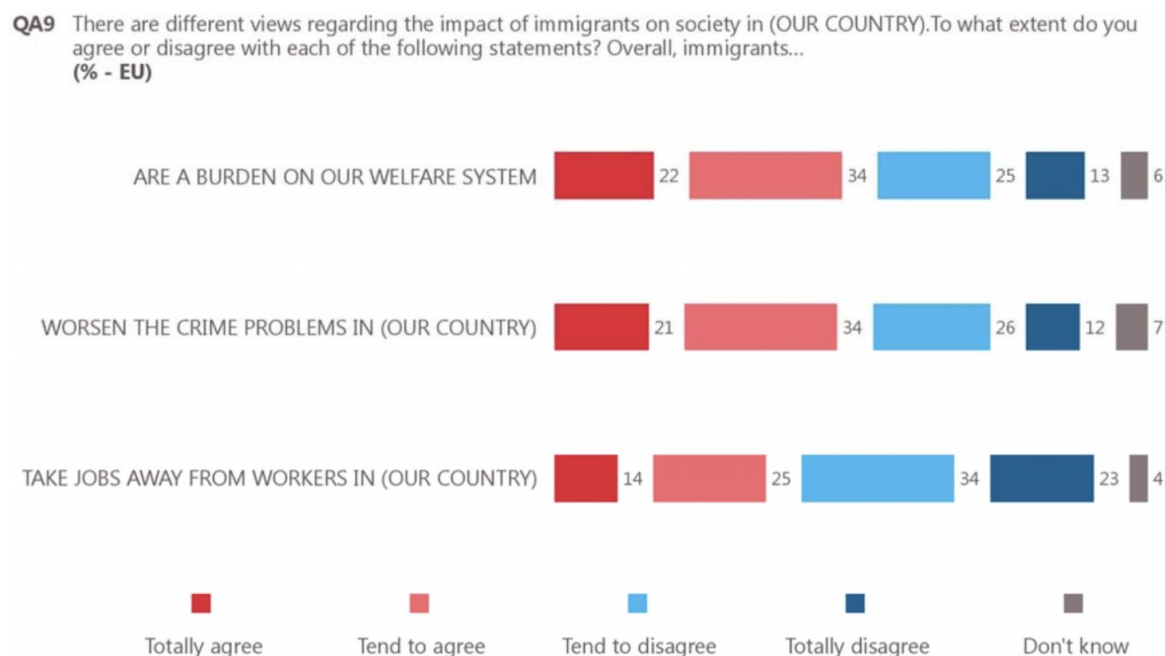


Figure 1: Views held by EU citizens towards refugees and welfare, 2020.¹⁷⁸

As social benefits are sustained through state taxes, a larger population can lead to an increase in taxation demands, as there are more people relying on welfare. However, the degree of fiscal burden is often tied to the skill level of the refugee; less skilled refugees are more likely to pose a fiscal burden.¹⁷⁹ In essence, the concern centres around the sheer volume of refugees arriving annually. A surge in illegal immigration translates to greater demand for jobs and public services. The issue lies in the assumption that immigrants might not contribute sufficiently to the economy, whether that be through taxes or work. This concern encapsulates the heart of the prevailing anxiety—the prospect of an influx of individuals who will create further difficulties. Considering that the EU’s expenditure in 2023 on refugee support has reached almost EUR 105 billion, the emergence of economic apprehensions is unsurprising.¹⁸⁰

The integration of refugees into the labour markets of host countries has also been a focal point of discussions surrounding resettlement policies. Concerns have risen regarding the employment prospects of refugees in areas with larger resettled populations. Often, the largest concerns revolve around difficulties in securing employment due to language barriers, differences in educational qualification, and the recognition of foreign credentials. A

¹⁷⁷ Camus, Renaud. n.d. “Explaining the main drivers of anti-immigration attitudes in Europe • Eyes on Europe.” Eyes on Europe. <https://www.eyes-on-europe.eu/explaining-the-main-drivers-of-anti-immigration-attitudes-in-europe/>.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Horn, Heather. 2016. “Can the European Welfare State Survive the Refugee Crisis?” The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/02/welfare-state-refugees-europe/463272/>.

¹⁸⁰ Genovese, Vincenzo. 2023. “Money spent by EU on migration policy becoming ‘complex’ to track.” Euronews. <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/07/04/money-spent-by-eu-on-migration-policy-becoming-complex-to-track-expert>.

study by the UNHCR in 2017 found that refugees from Jordan fleeing to Europe had an average educational standard only up until 9th grade, with only 30% of adult women and 10% of adult men receiving university level education.¹⁸¹ However, studies such as the English Acquisition Project show that after two years, 17% of refugees spoke English well, 67% had a moderate level of speech, and only 8% still spoke no English.¹⁸² This suggests that overtime, language skills will improve, and refugees will be able to better integrate themselves into the local market.

Lastly, the financial implications of accommodating and resettling refugees within member states have been subjects of scrutiny. Financial commitments include housing, healthcare, education, and integration programs. In the short term, there can be immediate fiscal pressures as resources are directed towards the basic needs of refugees.¹⁸³ Currently, these expenditures are sparking discussions about budget distribution and placing pressure on welfare systems. In the long term, however, refugees can contribute positively to host economies through labour force participation and consumption. For instance, nations like Portugal, which suffer from severe worker and population shortages, require both refugees and immigrants to sustain their economies.¹⁸⁴ Overall, the economic consequences of refugees can encompass both positive and negative outcomes, with the positive effects often unfolding over the long term.

National Identity and Values

Since the beginning of the North African refugee crisis, racism and xenophobia has been at an all-time high in the EU. These sentiments stem from pre-existing prejudices and national pride, with contemporary opposition to refugees often rooted in fear. Following the terrorist attack in Paris in November 2015, citizens became increasingly concerned about national security; terrorists were able to travel easily through North Africa into the EU, largely due to the significant number of refugees and inability to account for everyone.¹⁸⁵ Prejudice and intolerance significantly shape the reception of refugees within EU society, exerting a considerable influence on the border dynamics of the ongoing refugee crisis. These negative perceptions often hinder the integration of refugees into host communities by fostering environments of fear and discrimination. Such exclusion not only impedes the ability for refugees to rebuild their lives, but also social tensions within the host country.¹⁸⁶

To illustrate, a 2017 survey found that 72% of French people found Muslims and Black migrants threatening.¹⁸⁷ The primary reason was their origin from North Africa or the Middle East, raising concerns about potential

¹⁸¹ UNHCR. 2017. "Integration of refugees and other vulnerable migrants." OECD. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9789264311312-7-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/9789264311312-7-en>.

¹⁸² Hou, Feng. 2006. "Learning the Language of a New Country: A Ten-year Study of English Acquisition." ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229517526_Learning_the_Language_of_a_New_Country_A_Ten-year_Study_of_English_Acquisition.

¹⁸³ Genovese, Vincenzo. 2023. "Money spent by EU on migration policy becoming 'complex' to track." Euronews. <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/07/04/money-spent-by-eu-on-migration-policy-becoming-complex-to-track-expert>.

¹⁸⁴ Jurriaans, Kim. 2017. "Portugal Offers Refugees a Warm Welcome, but Can't Get Them to Stay." News Deeply. <https://deeply.thenewhumanitarian.org/refugees/articles/2017/09/01/portugal-offers-refugees-a-warm-welcome-but-cant-get-them-to-stay>.

¹⁸⁵ Camus, Renaud. n.d. "Explaining the main drivers of anti-immigration attitudes in Europe • Eyes on Europe." Eyes on Europe. <https://www.eyes-on-europe.eu/explaining-the-main-drivers-of-anti-immigration-attitudes-in-europe/>.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Fondation Jean-Jaurès. 2017. "Enquête sur le complotisme – Vague 2." Fondation Jean-Jaurès. https://www.jean-jaures.org/wp-content/uploads/drupal_fjj/redac/commun/productions/2019/0220/rapport_complot.pdf.

terrorist affiliations.¹⁸⁸ By attempting to preserve their perceived national identity and security, a significant portion of EU citizens essentially positioned themselves in opposition to the 32.5 million asylum seekers reading in the EU.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, addressing these issues is of paramount importance, due to their far-reaching implications. Prejudice and discrimination not only compromise the principles of solidarity, but also hinder the immediate effect of policy responses. Overcoming these challenges is essential for supporting the successful integration of refugees and minimizing social tensions.

Border Security and Control

Border control measures in the EU currently involve a combination of physical barriers, technological surveillance, and cooperation between international partners and member states. However, challenges persist with refugees attempting to enter countries illegally, such as bypassing official border checkpoints or not filling out an asylum application.¹⁹⁰ These illegal entries are often driven by a desperation to escape conflict, persecution, or poverty, coupled with the lengthy and uncertain asylum processes. Various established border security entities currently operate to manage this concern, including Frontex—a collective EU entity—and the autonomous border security personnel designated by individual nations.¹⁹¹

Currently, these organizations still face continuous difficulties in accounting for every refugee, efficiently screening every applicant, and processing every application.¹⁹² However, reforms have been made to the asylum process since 2015. Most notably, nations are now allowed to refer refugees to a second-choice location. As well, border security personnel can search phones and people before they enter the country.

Within the EU, differing perspectives on border security have emerged among member states. Some advocate for stricter controls to prevent illegal entry and address security concerns, while others emphasize a more humane approach, promoting the efficient processing of asylum claims.¹⁹³ These views reflect a complex connection of national interests and humanitarian values that EU members possess. That being said, the number of irregular entrances has significantly decreased since 2015. While there were over 1 million asylum seekers in 2015, that number has now fallen to roughly 180,000.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ Kakissis, Joanna. 2022. "Italy is all set to have its first far-right government since World War II." NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2022/09/26/1125172936/italy-is-all-set-to-have-its-first-far-right-government-since-world-war-ii>.

¹⁸⁹ EU. 2022. "Statistics on migration to Europe." European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe_en.

¹⁹⁰ "Border crossing." n.d. Language selection | Migration and Home Affairs. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/schengen-borders-and-visa/border-crossing_en.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ "Countering irregular migration: better EU border management | News." 2023. European Parliament. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20170627STO78419/countering-irregular-migration-better-eu-border-management>.

¹⁹⁴ "Irregular arrivals to the EU (2008-2023) - Consilium." 2023. Consilium.europa.eu. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/irregular-arrivals-since-2008/>.

Asylum Claims Process

The process of asylum claims in the EU involves a series of steps aimed at determining whether individuals seeking refuge meet the criteria for international protection.¹⁹⁵ Typically, upon arrival in a EU member state, asylum seekers register their intent to seek asylum and undergo a screening process that assesses their eligibility. This involves interviews and documentation checks to establish their identity, reasons for seeking asylum, and potential vulnerabilities.¹⁹⁶ From prolonged wait periods to intricate legal procedure, the asylum claims process often extend over months or even years. This not only contributes to the distress of asylum seekers, but also strains the resources and administrative capacities of nations.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, underlying issues such as inconsistencies in reception capacities of nations further compound the complexities and inefficiencies of this process.

A key practice in the current process is the requirement of refugees to stay in the first nation they arrive in. Often, this nation is Greece or Italy in the EU and Türkiye. This puts significant burdens on their ability and capacity to intake refugees. To combat this, the EU has created partnerships with neighbouring nations to minimize the amount of refugees travelling to Europe.¹⁹⁸ For instance, the EU struck a deal with Türkiye, named the EU-Turkey Refugee agreement, to ensure that refugees can reside in Türkiye instead of the EU. Türkiye was granted EUR 6 billion to ensure humanitarian aid for asylum seekers; however, in return, Türkiye is required to accept all refugees should they not qualify for asylum in another EU country.¹⁹⁹

Possible Solutions and Controversies

Prejudice Reduction Program

A prejudice reduction program would offer a systematic approach to address and mitigate discrimination against refugees. One such program is currently planned for implementation in Germany in the coming years, but other EU nations could follow suit by targeting racism through media and government campaigns, and providing better training to frontline workers who deal with refugees.²⁰⁰

At the onset of their arrival in the EU, refugees will interact with frontline workers, including medical professionals, security personnel, interviews, and more. A prejudice reduction program would aim to tackle biases within this sector, where prejudice would directly manifest as discriminatory treatment.²⁰¹ This could look like a biased interview or inadequate reasons for violence on the border.²⁰² One of the strengths of the program

¹⁹⁵ “Common European Asylum System.” 2023. Language selection | Migration and Home Affairs. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system_en.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ EU. 2023. “Asylum applications in the EU - Consilium.” Consilium.europa.eu. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/asylum-applications-eu/>.

¹⁹⁸ “The sea route to Europe: The Mediterranean passage in the age of refugees.” 2023. UNHCR. <https://www.unhcr.org/media/sea-route-europe-mediterranean-passage-age-refugees>.

¹⁹⁹ “Carriages preview | Legislative Train Schedule.” 2023. Carriages preview | Legislative Train Schedule. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-towards-a-new-policy-on-migration/file-eu-turkey-statement-action-plan>.

²⁰⁰ “Refugees, Racism and Xenophobia: What Works to Reduce Discrimination? - Our World.” n.d. Our World. <https://ourworld.unu.edu/en/refugees-racism-and-xenophobia-what-works-to-reduce-discrimination>.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

lies in its recognition of the media's influence on public perceptions. To counter the often detrimental portrayal of refugees, the initiative challenges governments and NGOs with launching positive media campaigns. A study by the Nature Journal concluded that negative rhetoric and representation in media generates negative emotional reactions, often evoking fear, which worsen intergroup relations within society.²⁰³

In terms of implementation, the program would require collaboration between various stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, and educational institutions. Cultural sensitivity training for frontline workers could be designed and administered through workshops or specialized courses. Furthermore, positive media campaigns would necessitate coordinated efforts between governmental agencies and media outlets.

While a prejudice reduction program has the potential to reshape certain individual perspectives, it may not completely eradicate all instances of discrimination or xenophobia. The efficacy of such a program is based on the actions undertaken by the government. Some may embrace the program's objectives as a means to promote tolerance and inclusivity, while others may perceive it as intrusive or unwarranted.²⁰⁴

Enhancing Labour Screening

Labour screening is a practice aimed at better understanding the capacity of a refugee to work in regional markets. This practice can be implemented by the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), whose goal is to give refugees the best chance at integration in a new host country.²⁰⁵ Once migrants receive a residence permit, their education and skills are immediately assessed, and this information is used to find jobs in the region. This approach would enable refugees to begin their resettlement immediately after they arrive.²⁰⁶

The approach's success is contingent upon member states emulating the COA's model, which entails investing in training for language interpreters and investing in labour screening technology. Strengths of this solution include its potential to directly address employment challenges by analyzing a refugee's skills and knowledge, thereby expediting refugees' economic and social integration.²⁰⁷

However, the feasibility of this solution is linked to the willingness of host countries to intake refugees, as well as spend the time and money on the program. This program's efficacy also hinges on robust job opportunities matching refugees' skills, which is hard to guarantee.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, concerns might emerge around the need for continuous updates to adapt to changing labour market demands. Lastly, nations that are against migration or have severe regulation may not be able or want to implement a program like this. Due to the lack of refugee intakes for such nations, it simply would not be worthwhile to spend money and effort implementing this program.²⁰⁹

²⁰³ "Conzo, P., Fuochi, G., Anfossi, L. et al. Negative media portrayals of immigrants increase ingroup favoritism and hostile physiological and emotional reactions. *Sci Rep* 11, 16407 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-95800-2>." n.d.

²⁰⁴ United Nations IDPAD. 2023. "Actions taken | United Nations." the United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/observances/decade-people-african-descent/actions-taken>.

²⁰⁵ Arsieni, Nadia. n.d. "Screening and matching for Residence Permit holders." The Global Compact on Refugees. <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/good-practices/screening-and-matching-residence-permit-holders>.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid

²⁰⁸ "Integrating refugees into labor markets." n.d. IZA World of Labor. Accessed July 28, 2023. <https://wol.iza.org/uploads/articles/269/pdfs/integrating-refugees-into-labor-markets.pdf>.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

Technology on the Border

Technology improvements could help strengthen border security along EU borders. Countries in the EU could aim to strengthen biometric technology, such as fingerprinting, iris, and facial recognition systems.²¹⁰ With an anticipated 60% increase of growth in travel volume by 2025, this enhancement would ensure both public safety and the efficient flow of people across the border. Previously, refugees were accounted for only if they provided identification, making the process extremely difficult and time consuming.²¹¹ This solution can adeptly respond to sporadic events, influx of refugees, and security threats. However, potential drawbacks could involve technological challenges during implementation, due to its newness. As well, potential privacy concerns may arise, and potential resistance to change from nations.²¹² Overall, this solution is aimed at modernizing border control to meet evolving challenges. It is a peaceful, efficient, and feasible solution to border security concerns.

Bloc Positions

Southern Europe

Many southern European countries, such as Greece and Italy, have consistently advocated for stronger regulations against illegal migration due to security concerns and overcrowding. Situated in close proximity to North Africa, Greece and Italy often serve as primary entry points to the EU, meaning that every year, millions of refugees attempt to seek asylum in these nations. Additionally, anti-immigration rhetoric is becoming increasingly prominent among citizens and has been reflected in government regulations.²¹³ For instance, Greece has strengthened its security as a deterrence tactic against refugees along the border.²¹⁴ Furthermore, Slovakia's government has asserted that they will only take Christian refugees due to "concerns about terrorism."²¹⁵

Potential solutions supported by this bloc include increasing limitations on family reunification and restrictions on re-entry after individuals leave. Selecting refugees based on specific criteria, such as religion, may also be favoured by this bloc.²¹⁶ In terms of policy solutions, this bloc would support technology at the border to enhance border security and account for every refugee. However, this bloc may resist more humanitarian approaches or mandatory quotas for refugee resettlement, as it views refugees as a strain on the economy. Generally, the consensus in this bloc is shaped by security considerations, resource contrasts, and public sentiments.

Due to the Netherlands's previous open-door policies, the nation has become congested with asylum seekers; now, the Netherlands has refugees sleeping outside of their refugee camps. Thus, in 2022, the Netherlands has been working towards lowering their asylum capacity.²¹⁷

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Lerner, Davide. 2016. "Why Slovakia won't embrace migration – POLITICO." POLITICO.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/why-slovakia-wont-embrace-migration-lubos-blaha-josef-rydlo/>

²¹⁴ Fallon, Katy. n.d. "Tories hail Greek migration policies as an example. Instead, they should serve as a warning." The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/apr/12/tories-hail-greek-migration-policies-as-an-example-instead-they-should-serve-as-a-warning>.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ "Jacobsen, Karen. "Factors Influencing the Policy Responses of Host Governments to Mass Refugee Influxes." The International Migration Review, vol. 30, no. 3, 1996, pp. 655–78. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2547631>." n.d.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

Western Europe

Generally, Western European countries, such as Spain, Germany, and France have been more supportive of refugees. Nations such as Spain and Portugal have been facing declining population growth rates and often look towards intaking more refugees as a potential solution.²¹⁸ In Spain, for example, 80% of urban regions in Spain have witnessed a decline in population over the past decade. This percentage increases to 90% when accounting for towns as well.²¹⁹

In fact, much of Western Europe is facing a declining population growth rate, but some nations have found it challenging to accept more asylum seekers. Portugal, for example, has been struggling to fill refugee quotas as many new arrivals end up leaving. Many are concerned about its lack of infrastructure in refugee development. As a result, Portugal has pledged EUR 99.3 billion to solve this concern by 2027.²²⁰ Similarly, nations such as Germany and France have promised to fund EUR 1.1 billion in refugee housing by the end of 2023.²²¹ Germany and France stand as the primary host countries for permanent settlements, while countries like Romania or Bulgaria are often considered transit point nations.²²²

This bloc could advocate for several strategic actions aimed at effectively addressing the refugee crisis. One potential approach is the implementation of labour screening. By assessing the skills, qualification, and potential of refugees upon their arrival, member states can strategically place them in jobs that align with their skills. This would be specifically beneficial for nations who lack workers and want to boost their economy. Moreover, support for refugee integration programs, including language training, is a priority within this bloc.²²³ Language proficiency and social integration is vital for a refugee to feel comfortable, at home, and willing to stay. On the other hand, this bloc would be strongly against violent border control tactics, such as push back, and would take a more humanitarian approach.²²⁴

Northern Europe

Nations such as Denmark, Poland, and Hungary, strongly stand against illegal immigration.²²⁵ To illustrate, as of 2023, Lithuania and Latvia have legalized violent pushbacks and denial of entry against refugees.^{226, 227} Other countries, such as Sweden, are launching anti-immigration campaigns and policies to show their national

²¹⁸ Beato, Alfonso. 2023. "Spain Welcomes Immigrants in Battle Against Depopulation." VOA News. <https://www.voanews.com/a/spain-welcomes-immigrants-in-battle-against-depopulation/7087344.html>.

²¹⁹ Jones, Sam. 2020. "We need people here': the Spanish towns welcoming migrants." The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/10/the-spanish-towns-welcoming-in-migrants>.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ "The German government agrees to pay more for refugees – DW – 05/11/2023." 2023. DW. <https://www.dw.com/en/german-government-agrees-to-pay-more-for-refugees/a-65578656>.

²²² EU Commission. 2023. "Migration and Asylum in Central and Eastern Europe: Romania." European Parliament. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/workingpapers/libe/104/romania_en.htm.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ EU. 2023. "EU funds for migrant integration 2021-2027 | European Website on Integration." European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/funding/eu-funds-2021-2027-period_en.

²²⁵ Kirez, Timo. 2023. "Austria is the most anti-immigration country in the world: Survey." Anadolu Agency. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/austria-is-the-most-anti-immigration-country-in-the-world-survey/2893984>.

²²⁶ "Lithuania Legalizes Migrant Pushbacks." 2023. VOA News. <https://www.voanews.com/a/lithuania-legalizes-migrant-pushbacks/7065423.html>.

²²⁷ "Latvia: Refugees and migrants arbitrarily detained, tortured and forced to 'voluntarily' return to their countries." 2022. Amnesty International. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/10/latvia-refugees-and-migrants-arbitrarily-detained-tortured-and-forced-to-voluntarily-return-to-their-countries/>.

opposition towards refugees.²²⁸ In the 2023 EU summit, both Poland and Hungary strongly opposed the revamp of the EU's rules on reception and relocation of refugees, which aimed to increase the number of refugees relocated every year.²²⁹ In response to their disagreement, other countries in the EU made two compromises: fill a specific quota of asylum seekers or pay EUR 20,000 for each rejected applicant to the EU's budget allocated to refugees.

This bloc would favour a range of measures that ensure security. Among these measures is the legalization of forceful push backs, a strategy where authorities employ strict measures to prevent irregular entry at the borders.²³⁰ Additionally, this bloc may advocate for policies that grant them the authority to reject refugees or return them to their country of origin. This stands as a reflection of their national interest to prioritize their perceived safety. Furthermore, these member states may lean towards anti-refugee campaigns that cater to the sentiments of their governments or citizens. These campaigns would aim to foster a public opinion against accommodating refugees and emphasize the perceived risks associated with taking in refugees.²³¹

Discussion Questions

1. What are the potential benefits and drawbacks of intaking more refugees?
2. How can nations be held accountable for redirecting refugees to a safer second choice country if their asylum claims are denied?
3. If the majority of a nation's citizens are against illegal immigration, should that nation adopt that viewpoint? Why or why not?
4. How does the employment of refugees contribute to both their own economic well-being and the broader economies of EU nations?
5. What role does discrimination and bias play in the employment rates of refugees, and what measures can be taken to address these issues?
6. What tensions can arise between maintaining strict border controls and ensuring the rights of asylum seekers?
7. What potential consequences can arise from a lack of solidarity in addressing refugee challenges among member states?

²²⁸ Davis, Elliott. 2023. "Sweden Announces Anti-Immigration Information Campaign | Best Countries | U.S. News." USNews.com. <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2023-01-25/sweden-announces-anti-immigration-information-campaign>.

²²⁹ Liboreiro, Jorge. 2023. "Poland and Hungary hijack EU summit with anti-migration demands." Euronews. <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/06/30/poland-and-hungary-hijack-eu-summit-with-anti-migration-demands>.

²³⁰ EuroMed. 2021. "Malta's brutality against asylum seekers necessitates EU commission intervention [EN/AR] - Malta." ReliefWeb. <https://reliefweb.int/report/malta/malta-s-brutality-against-asylum-seekers-necessitates-eu-commission-intervention-enar>.

²³¹ Ibid.

Additional Resources

How Conflict Drives People to Seek Asylum:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKM1GKfm7ec>

Understanding the Journey to Safety:

<https://www.unhcr.org/desperatejourneys/#>

Violence on EU borders:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/6/25/rights-groups-urge-probe-into-deaths-o>

How Illegal Migration Effects Countries on the EU Border:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_rVSxXoXoM

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