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European Council
(EUCO)
Background guide

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Introduction to the Committee

This committee represents the heads of state of European nations. As such, you will be responsible for shaping the future of the European continent in the decade to come. Both of the topics are similar in the sense that they focus on pioneering legislative frameworks that will shape European cooperation substantially. While the interests of member states tend to coincide and the general goal of a more effective European Union is shared among all, the specifics of policy implementation might be controversial especially when it comes to distributing costs and giving up national sovereignty.

The first topic focuses on the European Green Deal and the sustainable revolution that was put forward by Ursula von der Leyen, the current president of the European Commission. Because of the far-reaching effect of those policies, the decisions made by European leaders will shape the green revolution on the whole continent for the 25 years to come. The other topic deals with the closer strategic and military cooperation of the European states and the formation of a common European foreign policy. Because of the sentiment of national sovereignty on these issues, this topic might be controversial for some of the member states.

Both issues have significant consequences on an international stage and a major impact on the future of the European continent. We are looking forward to a fruitful debate, hopefully reaching a ground-breaking consensus of member states on these collective issues.

History of the Committee

The European Council is one of the main seven institutions of the European Union. It was informally established in 1974 and gained official recognition as an EU institution through the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009. It comprises the heads of government of the individual EU member state and is the highest level of cooperation among the member states. As such, it defines the general political direction of the Union and sets the political agenda for European cooperation.[i] The members of the European Council meet on a quarterly basis for summit meetings and are chaired by a permanent president who is appointed for a 2.5-year term by the European Council itself.[ii] The current incumbent is Charles Michel.[iii]

The overall role of the European Council is to give the general political direction and to resolve complex political issues that cannot be tackled by a lower political body. Additionally, it sets European foreign policy and can appoint some of the leading political representatives of the Union, such as the President of the Commission and the Central Bank.[iv] As the prime organ of the EU, it is also often seen as the body in charge of determining European enlargement policy, changes to the treaties as well as the ratification of any other important treaties negotiated within the European Union. While the European Council cannot formally pass laws, it can pass on proposals to the European Commission that normally carry significant political weight and 'provide the Union with the necessary impetus for its development'.[v]

Within the European Council, most decisions are made unanimously to reflect the idea that decisions are made in the interest of all EU citizens. Since the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon, many decisions that do not touch upon the fundamentals of the Union or infringe upon the sovereignty of member states can also be made by a qualified majority. This means that 55% of heads of state representing 65% of the population of the European Union need to agree to a proposal.[vi]

Topic A: Legal Framework for the European Green Deal

Statement of the Problem

Climate change and the degradation of the environment and natural resources pose existential problems to Europe and the rest of the world. This has led to a significant increase in the global average temperature and implies that one eighth of the total species on earth are threatened by extinction.[vii] This has also led to the large-scale destruction of forests and to the simultaneous exploitation and degradation of oceans, which have had significant impact on human life and societal functioning.[viii]

Man-made climate change is mostly caused by greenhouse gas emissions, with the most significant being Carbon dioxide (C02) emissions. The European Union is still considered to be the third largest emitter in the world, with emissions accounting for 22% of global emissions annually, or 350 billion tonnes of CO2.[ix] While these largescale emissions still contribute substantially to global emissions and thus to accelerate the threatening consequences of climate change, the net emissions in the European Union decreased by 1.7% in 2019[x] and are now down by 23% from its levels in 1990.[xi]

Despite these remarkable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, current projections show that existing policies and measures can enable a 30% decrease in C02 emissions by 2030. While this positive outlook shows that significant decrease in C02 emissions is achievable in developed nations, it still falls short of the EU's target reduction of 40%. This means that despite the advances made over recent years, more efforts are needed to deliver successful climate policies in the upcoming years.[xii]

Because of the widely accepted negative consequences of a failure to meet this target, the newly appointed president of the commission, Ursula von der Leyen, presented her European Green Deal that proposes solutions to the climate issues of the European Union. It offers an action plan to boost resource efficiency, foster the transformation to a circular economy, and protect and restore biodiversity while drastically reducing pollution.[xiii] Von der Leyen and her commission also

proposed a European Climate Law[xiv] that should set specific targets for all member states and specify measures taken in order to reach that target. Such a law seems vital to achieve concrete targets for member states that are, unlike the targets set by the Paris agreement, binding and not set by states themselves. By meeting such targets, the EU can ensure that its climate targets are met and that it becomes climate neutral by 2050, while also taking global leadership in green technologies and leading the transformation to a green future.[xv] So far, however, this European Climate Law has not yet been passed and it seems essential that support for this initiative goes beyond simple European levels, involving widespread international cooperation.

This session of the European Council has been tasked with identifying the key aspects that the European Climate Law has to address. It is in the power of the Council to make legislative proposals to the Commission and emphasize, amend or add to the policies and measures that have already been put forward by the Commission in its draft of the European Climate Law. The Council's proposal needs to set priorities for the EU to address as well as advise targets to which extent reductions in emissions are achievable. Lastly, the Council is advised to gather as much support for the policy proposal as possible as wide international support is needed to guarantee the successful implementation of the European Green Deal.

History of the Problem & Previous Treaties

Changes in the global climate have occurred throughout Earth's history. Yet, the changes in global temperature measured since the middle of the past century are unprecedented.[xvi] As outlined previously, these changes in global climate are largely caused by the emission of greenhouse gases (90% of which are CO_2 and methane) and are further exacerbated by deforestation and agricultural pollution.[xvii] These man-made effects have led to increasing global temperatures, with average temperatures increasing by 0.2°C per decade.[xviii] This has led to an average temperature difference of 0.95°C between temperatures of the pre-industrial baseline (1850–1900) and the temperature records observed during the past decade.[xix] While these changes to global climate have already had significant negative impacts on life on earth and ecosystem functioning, the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has reported that effects will be vastly exacerbated if rising temperatures exceed pre-industrial levels by 1.5°C.[xx] Because of this, the past has seen numerous treaties that attempted to unite the global community under the shared aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Global Cooperation

The first major treaty aimed at reducing global emissions and tackling the threat posed by climate change collectively was the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that was proposed and ratified at the First Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro in 1992.[xxi] Since then, the 197 signatory parties meet annually at the Conference of the Parties (COP) to debate the mitigation efforts set out by the global community and to re-evaluate the policies of signatory states in tackling climate change.[xxii] The major idea of this first treaty was that nations should reduce the effects of climate change on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities and that developed nations should take the lead in dealing with the issue at hand. It encourages the increase of financial support for climate change mitigation and the focus on technological development as well as the transfer of technology among nations. One of the major specific goals set out was to stabilise international greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels up until the turn of the century.[xxiii]

Kyoto Protocol: Building on Cooperation

After the ratification of the UNFCCC, the Conference of the Parties met annually to assess the policies of signatory states. They evaluated measures set by the global community and agreed that the major aim of the UNFCCC to settle greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels was not enough. Instead, they convened in order to agree on the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 which would, for the first time, set out legally binding obligations for members to achieve.[xxiv] These obligations were split into two commitment periods: 2008–2012 and 2013–2020. All signatory parties of UNFCCC ratified the Kyoto Protocol, except for the United States, while Canada withdrew from the Kyoto Protocol before the second commitment period started in 2012.

During the first commitment period between 2008 and 2012, developed nations committed to reducing their net greenhouse gas emissions and the global community agreed on limiting global temperature increases to 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels.[xxv] After the targets of the first commitment period were nearly successfully implemented (most of the signatory parties reached

their aims, with some of them resorting back to the flexibility mechanism and funding reductions in other countries), the global community amended the Kyoto protocol in 2012 to form the Doha Agreement that would set out the targets for the second period between 2013 and 2020.[xxvi] This agreement, however, only set out binding targets for 37 nations, including all EU member states as well as some other developed nations.[xxvii] With many significant nations (including the US, Canada, Japan and Russia) missing from the second phase of the Kyoto protocol it seems, however, highly unlikely that global targets can be reached if only a fraction of major emitters actively participates in mitigation efforts.

Paris Agreement: The Next Decade

In 2015, international negotiations started to decide upon the future of international cooperation on fighting climate change after the end of the Kyoto Protocol in 2020. This time, the result was not an amendment of the already existing agreement, but the formation and ratification of an entirely new agreement, known as the Paris Agreement. Its main aim is to curb temperature increases to 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels, recognising, however, that limiting rises in temperature to 1.5°C would significantly reduce the negative effects and risks associated with climate change. According to the agreement, each country has to determine and plan emission reductions and regularly report on the efforts it takes to mitigate its effects on global warming.[xxviii] These domestic plans should be in line with the main target of the Paris Agreement, often referred to as the 20/20/20 strategy: 20% reductions in CO2 emissions, an increase of the market share of renewable energy to 20% and the increase of energy efficiency by 20%.[xxix] It is also important to note that while the Paris Agreement does not specify concrete targets for member states, it does prescribe that targets should be ambitions and should follow a principle known as 'progression'. This means that targets should always be more ambitious and far-reaching than previous targets, thereby exponentially increasing mitigation measures over time and allowing states to learn from previous achievements.[xxx] While this mechanism allows nations to set targets according to their own capabilities, the Paris Agreement is often criticised for its lack of specific targets. This has

been said to leave too much freedom to member states and thus to allow them to leniently set targets, only hardly contributing to global mitigation efforts.

The Paris Agreement has been signed by 189 out of 197 member states. Among the eight states that have not become part of the agreement, only Turkey and Iran can be considered to be major emitters.[xxxi] In 2017, however, President Trump announced the withdrawal of the US from the Paris Agreement. Despite the change in US policy since, this movement signalled difficulties for the green agenda worldwide, with more governments and non-state actors demonstrating resistance to the policies proposed in programs such as the European Green Deal.[xxxii]

Current Situation & The European Green Deal

Given the current situation of insufficient international climate agreements, President Von der Leyen presented her European Green Deal in order to set more ambitious and especially legally binding targets that apply to all EU member states. These ambitious targets include the aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50%, and ideally by 55% in the next decade and becoming climate neutral by the middle of this century, at the latest. All existing legislation is to be reviewed in terms of its climate merits and effects on sustainability and should be adapted adequately. Furthermore, new legislation will be introduced concerning the implementation of a circular economy, construction, farming, innovation and protecting and restoring biodiversity.[xxxiii] The proposal of the European Green Deal has been approved by the European Parliament and the European Council has agreed to the proposed measures as well. The only country that has not yet committed to the targets is Poland, who requested both more time and financial support to reach its targets in line with the agreement. Despite Poland's opt-out policy, the other EU member states have agreed on pressing forward with the European Green Deal.[xxxiv] Three members states have even set the aim of achieving climate neutrality before the middle of the century: Finland has pledged to be climate neutral by 2035, Austria promised to achieve zero net emissions by 2040 and Sweden aimed to do so by 2045.[xxxv]

It seems apparent that there is widespread political support on both a national and European level for the European Green Deal. Despite this, there is no legally binding European Climate Law yet and all pledges by member states are currently only political statements. In order to arrive at such a legally binding law, the Commission has put forward an initial draft in early spring[xxxvi] that is currently undergoing the ordinary legislative review process by the European Parliament and the European Council.[xxxvii] During the legislative review process, it is up to the Council and to the Parliament to adapt the legal draft and factor in the specific interests of member states.

This session of the European Council has been tasked with reviewing the policy suggestions and targets of the proposed European Climate Law. It is in its power to emphasise which measures are paramount, to further expand or elaborate on the ideas of the Commission or to amend the legislative draft and recommend that certain goals should be removed from the final draft of the European Climate Law. The Council can also specify its own targets and suggest further changes to the European Climate Law in order to be in line with the policy requirements of the individual member states. Some of the central ideas that might be relevant to the Council are outlined below.

Reduction Targets

As outlined before, the European Green Deal stipulates increasing the reduction target to 50% until 2030, with the attempt to press for a 55% reduction. This would imply that the European Union goes beyond the current target of a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. However, the European Green Deal does not yet specify a goal for member states to reach by 2040 as this is still subject to negotiations by the Council and the Parliament.[xxxviii] After that, the goal for 2050 is clear: to make Europe net climate-neutral, meaning that emissions by member states cannot exceed the amount of greenhouse gases absorbed by (natural) carbon sinks. Carbon sinks are systems that absorb more greenhouse gases then they emit. Among the most notable natural carbon sinks are forests, oceans, and soils. Artificial carbon sinks like carbon capture systems would also assist member states in reaching net climate neutrality.[xxxix] This means that even in

2050, member states can still emit greenhouse gases, as long as those emissions do not exceed the amount of greenhouse gases that are absorbed by natural or artificial carbon sinks.

While some press for research in the field of carbon capture technologies to create artificial carbon sinks, many experts and climate activists warn that relying on this technology, which remains uncertain, might be hazardous and delay necessary actions. Instead, they suggest that member states should attempt to fulfil their climate targets by reducing actual emissions while also investing in carbon capture technologies. If these become feasible in the upcoming decades, they can then be used to further fulfil climate targets and thus perform better than expected, rather than risking an under-performance should carbon capture technologies not be capable of offsetting our ongoing emissions.

Whilst it seems unclear whether to focus on reducing actual emissions or increasing carbon offset schemes, the actual policy aim also seems unclear to many European lawmakers. The Swedish Social Democrat MEP Jytte Guteland suggested a 65% reduction by 2030, which is in line with what scientists deem necessary. According to the UN, this would also bring Europe's climate action in line with the goal of the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5°C.[xl] While the European People's Party has already announced that it would not support a reduction target that is that high, and that they would only accept a goal higher than 50% if given an adequate cost-benefit analysis, the European Social Democrats and the European United Left are broadly supportive of a reduction target of 65%. The French MEP Pascal Canfin, however, suggests that a target higher than 55% seems unrealistic, especially for states such as Poland that are further away from reaching this goal in comparison to others. He thus suggests that it is most likely that the Parliament and the Council will settle on a 55% reduction target by 2030.[xli]

Renewable Energy

More than 75% of greenhouse gas emissions in the EU are attributed to the production or use of energy by member states while only 17.5% of energy produced stems from renewable sources.[xlii] Because of this, a major focus of the current proposal is to prioritise energy efficiency and to foster the transformation to renewable energy production. This should go hand in hand with completing the transition to a digitalised energy market while ensuring that energy supplies remain affordable to citizens and making clean energy sources not only ecologically, but also financially attractive.[xliii] In order to achieve these ambitious goals, the European Commission has also published a road map of the role that hydrogen energy will play in this transformation. Hydrogen does not emit any CO_2 (and hardly any air pollution at all) when used and offers a versatile material that can be used as fuel, and as energy carrier or storage.[xliv] As such, a transition to a more hydrogen-based energy sector seems necessary to achieve the targets set out, according to the European Commission.[xlv]

International reception of the plans to shift energy production towards renewable energy is mixed. The major problem cited by member states are the unequal starting points across different European countries. Some member states enjoy geographical benefits that have allowed them to shift towards a larger share of renewable energy in the past (e.g. Denmark which has been able to construct large-scale offshore windfarms or Sweden and Austria that have already been able to shift to hydropower).[xlvi] The Polish MEP Anna Zalewska has thus asked for a 'solidarity clause' to be added to the European Climate Law. This solidarity clause should distribute the burden equally among members states, meaning that those that are already closer to reaching the targets of renewable energy sources should provide financial support for those that are still more reliant on non-renewable energy sources.[xlvii] Hungary and the Czech Republic have joined Poland in its opposition to the deal, emphasising similar concerns about the unequal measures required from member states.[xlviii] The Czech Prime Minister has suggested that for the coal depended east of Europe, a transition away from coal power plants is only feasible if nuclear power is used as a transition technology. Whether other member states, especially those who have decided to move

away from nuclear power, will support nuclear energy being classified as sustainable energy sources does remain questionable.

The European Union has however been receptive to such critics and has proposed the so-called Just Transition Mechanism, aiming to provide more financial aid to these countries that rely more heavily on non-renewable energy sources. The Just Transition Mechanism is projected to raise around 100 billion euros between 2021 and 2027 to be invested in regions that need to make more efforts to reach their sustainability goals.[xlix] This summer, however, the Council has stipulated that the funds available for the Just Transition Mechanism will be curbed, thereby reducing financial aid available to these nations that needed extra help to reach their climate goals.[l] The future of the Just Transition Mechanism and the idea of a solidarity clause in the European Climate Law hence seems uncertain and is still up to the Council to decide on its future.

Sustainable Industry

The industry sector in the European Union is responsible for 20% of greenhouse gas emissions. Its level of extraction of resources has tripled since 1970 while materials sourced from recycled waste only account for 12% of total material consumption.[li] Because of this, another main focus of the European Green Deal will be to focus on innovating industries and moving towards a green, climate-neutral *Circular Economy*.[lii] This means that industry and markets should be organised in a way to facilitate recycling and to gradually turn away from linear consumption and production models employed today.[liii] In addition to this, the European Commission also suggests investing in research to modernise and decarbonise the energy sector and pollution intensive industries such as steel and cement production.[liv] Another suggestion is to revitalise different regions across the continent by supporting the development of clusters bringing together companies, universities, and research facilities to create local specialised groups.[lv]

In order to achieve these targets, both experts and private businesses need clear and long-term legislation to be used as a basis to build new industries.[lvi] Furthermore, a circular economy still needs to uphold competitive market standards to ensure that new business models can arise

around the management and reuse of waste products, enabling the former to become valuable resources. This again requires clear regulations that accurately define the rules for recycling and reuse, as well as specify exactly the conditions that products must meet to be considered sustainable.[lvii]

In order to reach some of the targets, such as the decarbonisation of high-energy sectors like steel and cement production, it seems vital that new technologies, and especially hydrogen energy sources, are used to combat the pollution caused by these sources.[lviii] This implies that investments in research and development are essential to reach a fully circular economy and implement the policies outlined as part of the European Industry Strategy.

Sustainable Mobility

According to the European Commission, roughly 25% of emissions are related to transport and mobility, of which 71% are related to road transport, and roughly 13% attributed to water transport and aviation respectively.[lix] The aim is to cut down on 90% of all transport related emissions by 2050 through three main policy initiatives.
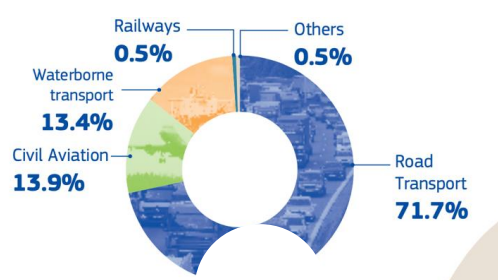
The first is to switch to different modes of transport that are less polluting and more sustainable. This involves encouraging freight transportation by rail or water as a cleaner alternative to aviation and fully implementing the European Single Sky initiative that will help reduce aviation related emissions by 10%.[lx]

Another policy aim is to use market forces and price changes to encourage the transition to more sustainable means of transport. This means that prices should reflect the impact that certain technologies have on the environment. The European Commission endorses ending all subsidies on fossil-fuel while implementing an effective pricing model for the use of European roads.

Furthermore, it suggests extending the emissions trading scheme to the maritime sector and having free allowances only for airlines that also follow that scheme.[lxi]

The third pillar of the European Sustainable Mobility Strategy is to boost alternative clean fuels, which implies heavily investing in hydrogen fuel research and providing effective infrastructure for electric vehicles. The Commission also projects that ten times more recharging stations for electric vehicles will be needed by 2025, increasing the overall number to one million across the continent. Furthermore, it aims to boost the adoption of zero and low emission vehicles and to increase the overall number from 975,000 today, to 13 million by 2025.[lxii]

With this sustainable mobility strategy, the European Commission hopes to encourage the transition to a sustainable transport sector and allow emission reduction targets to be reached in the upcoming decade.

Reception & Other Proposed Solutions

While the European Green Deal intends to cover a wide range of policy areas and to set an ambitious strategy for the European Union, some climate activists demand more radical and holistic measures, thus encouraging the Commission to expand on its current plans. They justify the need for further radical policies by citing experts and UN reports that say that even more ambitious goals are needed to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement and to keep global warming below 1.5°C relative to pre-industrial levels.[lxiii]

Greenpeace criticises the fact that some of the policies fight the effects of pollution instead of the sources. Instead of regulating the emission and release of toxic effluents from factories into rivers and oceans, the European Green Deal suggests adequate water treatment systems to reduce the impact that such effluents have. Furthermore, the measures suggested in the sector of sustainable mobility are also deemed to be insufficient. Indeed, the European Green Deal does not support a kerosene tax, but instead suggests to simply reduce pollution under current legislation. Instead of

prohibiting the sale of combustion engine cars, the Commission suggests to solely increase emission standards for cars, whilst Greenpeace instead suggests to fully prohibit combustion engine cars by 2025 to avoid further exacerbating the problem. Greenpeace also emphasises that European trade risks jeopardising all of the Green Deal's achievements. This is because the sustainable development chapter that is already included in European trade agreements, endorsed by the Green Deal, is in no way legally binding. This means that while industry and production within EU member states will be regulated, unsustainable products can easily be imported from non-European states. Such policy would threaten the competitiveness of European industries while achieving little to no improvements for the global climate, according to Greenpeace activists.[lxiv]

Other organizations such as *Friends of the Earth Europe* and the *Institute for European Environmental Policy* support criticism brought forth by Greenpeace[lxv] while the *Corporate Europe Observatory* called the Green Deal a first positive step, before criticising the impact that the fossil fuel industry might have on it. They argue that the European Green Deal does not seek the elimination of all emissions but is simply striving for net climate neutrality. This means that emissions will still be possible if member states implement enough carbon offset schemes and also allows the fossil fuel industry to keep supplying non-sustainable infrastructure as long as they also focus on carbon removal programmes. Furthermore, they stipulate that the European Green Deal does not call for a complete change of the economic system. Simply accommodating the current economic system and setting to tackle the negative repercussions of climate change, it promotes economic growth while attempting to manage its environmental and social impacts. The Green Deal thus only strengthens the current failing system, according to statements made by the organisation.[lxvi]

Questions a Resolution Must Answer

This session of the Council will work on a resolution that will be submitted to the European Commission. In it, the Council has to address the current European Climate Law proposed by the

Commission as well as the major points of the European Green Deal in general. This resolution will not be legally binding, but it can be expected that the European Commission will follow it closely and as such, it is important that the members of the Council decide wisely which legislative proposals to follow for the upcoming decade. The council should emphasize the policy suggestions that it deems most important, to ensure that they will be included in the final draft of the European Climate Law. It is further encouraged to add any measures deemed necessary, even if they have not been included in the initial draft. Lastly, the Council can also suggest the removal of certain policy ideas, if the majority of member states seems to reject some measures proposed by the Commission. As such, the Council is tasked with establishing a holistic resolution that will clearly indicate the direction that the Council requires the legislative framework for the European Green Deal to go. While the proposal by the Council can be as extensive as need be, the following questions need to be addressed by you as head of government of one of the European member states:

- Settle on a reduction target for 2030 and suggest a possible aim for 2040.
- Analyse the future of the Just Transition Mechanism: Will there be financial compensation for member states that have to go further to reach their goals? If yes, how much financial capital will be supplied by the Just Transition Mechanism?
- Which energy technologies are considered to be sustainable? Will member states be allowed to increase nuclear energy production in order to reach their climate goals?

Should the focus be set on achieving net climate neutrality or should greenhouse gas emissions be eliminated completely? To what extent do carbon capture schemes play a role in achieving goals and should these future, but uncertain technologies be factored into account when setting climate targets?

- Address the most important criticism raised by climate activists as well as member states.

Bloc Positions

The Green Deal seems to constitute an interesting legislative piece that is officially supported by all member states. It seems that no European nation can afford to not recognize the problem at hand. In this sense, all member states support, to varying extents, the initiative of President Von der Leyen. However, it seems that the major disagreement lies on the speed at which nations should proceed and how measures should be financed. The great difference in economic growth, measured by GDP per capita, between Western and Eastern Europe seems to further fuel this debate and to divide nations on the issue of solidarity and sharing the financial burden. Some of the bloc positions that might be relevant are outlined below:

Hungary, Poland & the Czech Republic

These three states are the most notable critics of the European Green Deal. This can be traced back to their high dependency on fossil fuel and coal power that still prevails in these nations, paired with an abundance of coal reserves that enable these states to generate electricity generation using non-renewable technologies cheaply. As such, these countries (and most notably Poland) have asked for more time to implement the targets, as well as more financial aid to be supplied by other member states. Those states are among the main supporters for a solidarity clause to be added to the European Climate Law and to increase the funds available under the Just Transition Mechanism.

Austria, Sweden & Finland

These nations have committed to targets that are even more ambitious than the targets set out by Von der Leyen's initial plan. Finland aims to become climate-neutral in 2035, Austria in 2040 and Sweden in 2045. As such, these three countries are among the proponents of stricter and more ambitious goals for all member states. What further unites these three countries is that they enjoy the benefit of existing large-scale renewable energy production (most notably hydropower and wind power).

Scandinavian Countries & the Baltic Region

Nordic countries and the Baltic region are united by their adoption of the European Green Deal. What makes the proposed measures more easily feasible for those nations is either the pre-existing infrastructure of renewable wind energy, or the easy access to offshore wind fields that can be used to produce reliable clean energy at a comparatively low cost and large scale.

France & Germany

Those countries are among the leading nations pressing for the adoption of the Green Deal. Especially after the impact of Covid-19 in the past months, these two nations have been pressing for a more ambitious, green post-Covid-19 recovery plan.

Non-Nuclear Nations

Only 13 European nations have operating nuclear power plants.[lxvii] This currently still includes Germany that has committed to exiting nuclear power by 2022. Many of the nations that did not adopt nuclear power are seen as strong opponents of nuclear power and might disagree with more nuclear power plants being constructed in order to achieve the climate goals set out in the European Green Deal.

Suggestions for Further Research

Links for further research are listed below. This is particularly important because this background guide only provides a first insight into the topic of the European Green Deal. Because this committee will deal with reviewing the proposals made by the Green Deal and the European Climate Law, a natural starting point for your research should be those two documents proposed by the European Commission.

- The European Green Deal: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1596443911913&uri=CELEX:52019DC0640#document2
- European Green Deal (Overview – Look at the Section 'Policy Areas'): https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

- European Climate Law (Proposal): https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1588581905912&uri=CELEX:52020PC0080

- IPPC Report with climate policy suggestions for policy makers: https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15_SPM_version_report_HR.pdf

- European Hydrogen Strategy: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/hydrogen_strategy.pdf

- Circular Economy (An Explanation): https://sustainabilityguide.eu/sustainability/circular-economy/

- Effects of Circular Economy: https://www.webwire.com/ViewPressRel.asp?aId=263736

Topic B: European Union Global Strategy (EUGS)

Statement of the Problem

The global world order has become ever more interconnected through the process of globalisation, which has brought nations together and formed ties of peaceful cooperation. At the forefront of this development is the ever-closer cooperation of European States that has seemingly brought unprecedented peace, stability and democracy to Europe.

The recent decade has shown that the world order is continuously threatened and potentially destabilised.[lxviii] In 2014, a war at the borders of the European Union menaced the peaceful development of the European continent. In 2015, the refugee crisis challenged European communication to an unprecedented extent. In 2016, the first country in history, the United Kingdom, announced its withdrawal from the common European community and challenged the rest of the Union with establishing a future roadmap. Ever since, terrorism and war in the Middle East and Northern Africa have continuously shaken and affected European nations while nationalist policies and protectionism seem to undermine global cooperation.[lxix]

In such a world full of opportunity, technological progress, mobility and global cooperation, it seems that we might be set to live longer and freer lives.[lxx] However, at the same time, it seems that the European community needs to strike a balance between thriving off these unique possibilities

that we enjoy, while upholding its global interests and maintaining its power and strength on the global political stage.

It is under these conditions that the European Union has announced its Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy that outlines a shared vision for a stronger Europe. It emphasises the values that unite European states and citizens alike and intends to give the Union a shared path towards the future.[lxxi] It is meant to make Europe an influential participant on the global stage once more, combining internal and external policies to keep Europe safe and to promote its interests within and beyond its borders. Following the European Global Strategy, the EU will become more effective in ensuring energy security while successfully confronting the issues of migration, climate change, violent extremism and hybrid warfare.[lxxii]

This session of the Council has been tasked with reviewing the first four years of the European Union Global Strategy passed by the Council in 2016. It is also the responsibility of the Council to evaluate current measures and to propose a course of action for the European community to take. It seems that it is in the hands of the leaders of European states to decide upon the future of the Union and to determine its global position for the decade to come.

History of the Problem

European strategic cooperation has a long and complex history, following the terrors of WWII, the subsequent division and occupation of Europe and the cold war that kept the continent dangling between the East and the West. Under such conditions, it seemed evident that the Union needed its own strategic targets and security, military and foreign policy strategy as well as the forces to effectively implement its goals and manifest its global power.

European Security and Defence Policy

While Europe had strategic targets ever since the end of WWII and the first inception of a united Europe, the European Security and Defence Policy, which provided the first comprehensive

framework for European military and strategic cooperation, was only established relatively recently. This was possible because the European Union had been formally established by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, which was followed by an agreement by the then British Prime Minister Tony Blair[lxxiii] and the French President Jacques Chirac,[lxxiv] who agreed that the EU needed its own military forces to defend its global interests. This support for common European forces was put down in the Franco-British St. Malo Declaration in 1998,[lxxv] which stipulated that Europe should have its own credible military forces, granting it the capacity for autonomous action in cases in which NATO is not involved in or fails to follow European interests. This turn in European military policy can be seen as a direct response to the European Union's failure to intervene in the Kosovo war in 1998/99.[lxxvi]
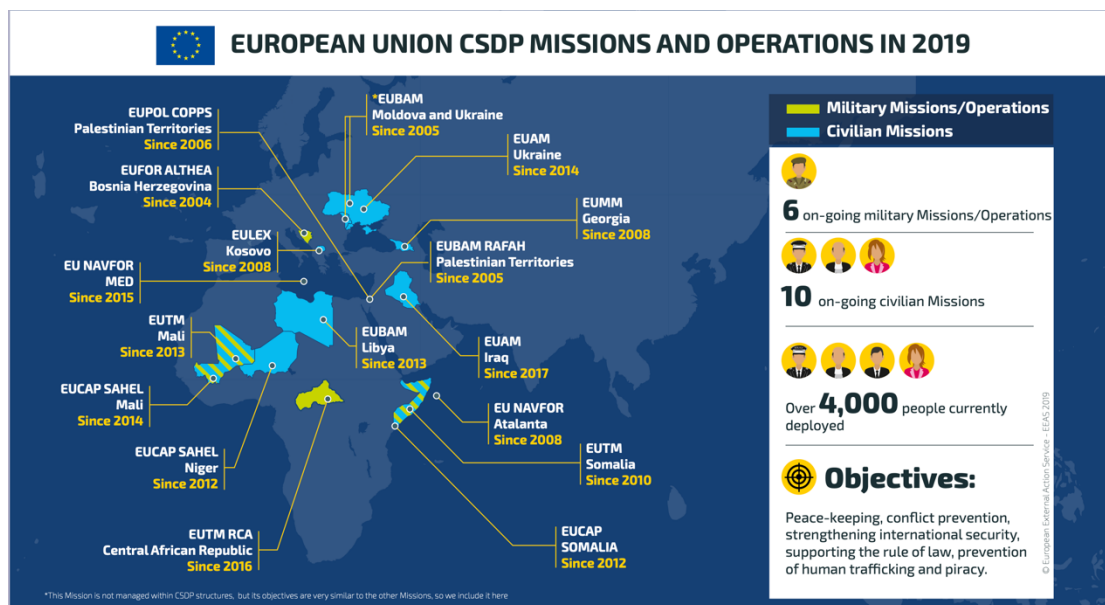
First Missions and European Security Strategy

In 2003, the Treaty of Nice entered into force and provided the legal foundations for the European Security and Defence Policy. This allowed it to conduct its first mission, a European police support mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina,[lxxvii] in the following year. In 2003, the European Union also agreed on the so-called European Security Strategy which came to be the predecessor of the European Union Global Strategy of 2016. The European Security Strategy was the first joint military security strategy drawn up by the European community and was seen as a monumental effort of European cooperation. However, the success of the joint European defence forces was limited, especially because the UK often blocked the establishment of more elaborate and permanent organisational structures, which it deemed to undermine NATO.[lxxviii] As such, the permanent strategic cooperation of the European Union seemed often limited to declarations only and was missing effective enforcement. In a way, it seemed to pursue ad hoc temporary interventions instead of long-term strategic goals.[lxxix]

Common Security and Defence Policy

The Treaty of Lisbon in 2009 introduced the current name for European strategic planning, the so-called Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The CSDP involves military and civilian

missions that are aimed at preserving peace and strengthening international security and stability. First and foremost, any action set under the CSDP is explicitly intended to follow the guidelines set out by the UN Charter and is carried out by forces provided by member states. The CSDP was also the first European strategy that entailed a collective defence clause, implying that if one member state should experience military force or attack, other nations are obliged to come to their aid, according to their possibilities (which does not force states to abandon their neutrality in the case of war).[lxxx] The CSDP also established the so-called Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), which allows deeper cooperation for a subset of EU member states (the only ones to not participate are Malta, as this would undermine its constitution and Denmark).[lxxxi] PESCO allows member states to pursue structural integration of military forces, meaning that resources and equipment will be harmonised and a common research and funding agenda will be followed. Being a member state of PESCO also requires countries to supply military forces or operational equipment upon request and to partake in peace-keeping tasks and humanitarian interventions.[lxxxii]

CSDP missions in 2019[lxxxiii]

Building on these past networks and treaties, the European External Action Service published the European Union Global Strategy in 2016. This strategic paper replaced the European Security and Defence Policy and intended to react to strategic changes in the past decade to enable a more

comprehensive response to future challenges. It was sparked by the global events that Europe was confronted with in recent years and its apparent failure to deal with most of these global issues.[lxxxiv] Most of these issues, however, do not seem to reside in the past, but seem to shape the future of geo-politics and global cooperation. As such, it seems even more important for the EU to develop an effective framework for cooperation.

Some of the issues that the European Union Global Strategy was intended to react to are outlined below.

Annexation of Crimea

The Crimean Peninsula was annexed by the Russian Federation in 2014 and has been governed by the Russian government ever since.[lxxxv] The annexation involved a military intervention by Russian military forces that led to a referendum being held in Crimea about the future of the peninsula and whether or not to join the Russian Federation. An overwhelming majority of 97% voted in favour of become part of the Russian state.[lxxxvi] Because the referendum was held under the presence of Russian military forces, the referendum was not recognised by most other UN member states and the annexation itself is often seen as a breach of international law.[lxxxvii] The European Union and all its (by then) 28 members deeply condemned the military intervention and the referendum, which was labelled by European Parliament to be an 'illegal manipulation'.[lxxxviii] The EU (and many other Western nations) imposed major sanctions on Russia and suspended negotiations regarding trade agreements, investment, military and visa-regulations.

Despite the implementation of sanctions and the suspension of important negotiations, the EU was unable to prevent Russia from intervening and failed to prevent war on its continent. Subsequent actions also failed to restore the pre-annexation status and European actions during the Crimean crisis are often seen as a failure of EU diplomacy.[lxxxix] The failure to act comprehensively on its own continent and foster its interests credibly has further sparked the need for a more holistic framework of European strategic cooperation.

ISIS and the Refugee Crisis

Another geo-political event that seemingly displayed the limits of European political and military power were the events in the Middle East starting in 2014 and stretching towards 2017.[xc] ISIS (The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) was a powerful terrorist group conquering large parts of Iraq and Syria and establishing a fundamentalist, Salafist proto-state.[xci] The rise of ISIS had not only local geo-political implications, but its effects stretched far into the Western world and were particularly notable in European Union member states.

Firstly, the fundamentalist religious ideology of ISIS was abused by pseudo-religious leaders to inspire acts of hatred and terrorism around the whole world. Amongst the most significant and tragic in Europe were the 2015 November attacks in Paris,[xcii] the bombings in Brussels in 2016[xciii] and the attacks in Nice in 2016,[xciv] among many others. These implications on human life in European member states have made European leaders more aware of the fact that political events in other parts of the world can have significant effects on European life, further proving the need for a comprehensive strategy.

A second factor that proved the need for more effective internal and external security policy was the refugee crisis of 2015/2016. Sparked by the ongoing civil war in Syria and the rise of ISIS, a wave of mass migration of people threatened by terror and prosecution started in the Middle East. This would redefine European politics and according to many, prove the inherent infectivity of European security institutions. On the one hand, it can be considered a humanitarian crisis, proving a lack of effort of European nations to accommodate refugees and the failure to offer a comprehensive strategy on how to save, register and manage migrant flows. On the other hand, what appears to be even more striking is the EU's failure to implement its own decisions and to offer an effective border control around the Schengen area.[xcv] This has again proven the contradicting interests of European leaders and has shown that a more comprehensive framework is needed to ensure European security and military cooperation.[xcvi]

Brexit

The 2016 Brexit referendum was a historic moment, with the UK being the first nation ever to leave the European Union. Brexit negotiations are still ongoing, with many aspects such as the post-withdrawal relationships between EU nations and the UK being unclear and subject to further discussion.[xcvii] Because of the global significance of the UK, the European Union not only lost a valuable member but also part of its current global significance, with the UK having held one of its two permanent UN Security Council seats. This change requires a reorganisation of European military and strategic cooperation and has shaped and inspired the European Union Global Strategy.[xcviii] On the positive side, however, the departure of the UK might imply stronger strategic cooperation between EU member states as the UK was often holding back more permanent military cooperation among EU states.[xcix]

Changes to Political World Order

Another important change to the political world order that was already relevant at the inception of the European Union Global Strategy, but has gained significance ever since, was the election of the Trump presidential administration in 2016. The European Union Global Strategy reports deem this an important change in world politics that needs to be handled with care by Europe.[c] Combined with this general uncertainty is the loss of faith in international institutions, the protectionist and nationalist attitude of many states and the loss of credibility of international agreements.[ci] Most notable among these was the withdrawal of the US from the Paris Climate Agreement,[cii] the US unilateral withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal[ciii] and the US withdrawal and subsequent termination of the INF non-proliferation treaty with Russia.[civ] Under such conditions of international uncertainty, the EU and its global strategy must offer continuity and act as a pillar of stability.[cv] As such, it has stuck to international agreements like the Paris Agreement, despite US withdrawal and attempted to save the Iran nuclear deal even in the absence of the US.[cvi]

Current Situation & The Global Strategy

Building on these developments of the last decade, the former European High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Frederica Mogherini put forward the European Union Global Strategy that was ratified in 2016.[cvii] This intends to make Europe stronger, preserve and promote its interests and ensure the safety of citizens. It also clearly identifies the need for both internal and external actions to achieve its goals.[cviii] It focuses on the idea that global challenges cannot be managed by any of the member states alone but that cooperation, in the face of recent complexity, is essential to ensure the protection of European interests.[cix] The most important policy domains that were proposed in the European Union Global Strategy are outlined below.

Security & Defence

Sparked by the threats that terrorism, cyber-attacks, climate change, energy insecurity and economic volatility pose, the EU has decided that the major goals of the Global Strategy should focus on the European continent itself. This implies that the EU needs to be able to act independently of NATO in order to ensure its strategic interests autonomously on its territory and beyond. This involves avoiding terrorism, both in the physical and digital realm, providing effective border protection and credibly ensuring the mutual defence of EU member states. To ensure this, it is vital that EU states maintain the infrastructure and equipment for independent action, which means that EU states need to invest more in defence spending but also increase the effectiveness of spending. This can be achieved by higher levels of cooperation and interoperability of military equipment, which means that member states all use similar technologies that enable compatibility, both in the equipment used but also in the trained military forces.[cx]

To prevent future terrorist attacks on European soil, the Global Strategy also encourages greater cooperation between intelligence services and the sharing of information. This entails communicating potential threats pre-emptively as well as preventing the spread of unlawful and hateful content across the media. Through education and international as well as civil cooperation, the EU will further prevent future extremist terrorism and the radicalisation of individuals.[cxi]

In the realm of cyber security, the EU aims to establish means to protect member states' cyber-infrastructure while ensuring a free and open cyberspace. This not only involves building resilient systems but also certifying and ensuring high standards of digital products and services and guaranteeing the protection of personal data. The aim of the cyber-security strategy is also to raise awareness for cyber-issues and incorporating them into other military strategies as an integral part of any comprehensive strategy.[cxii]

Especially after the events of the past decade, the EU identified energy security as a key aspect of strategic cooperation. This means that states will seek to diversify energy suppliers and routes, especially in the gas sector, and promote the safe operation of nuclear power plants. Within its own territory, the EU also seeks to promote energy cooperation through shared grids and increase the availability and distribution of sustainably produced energy.[cxiii]
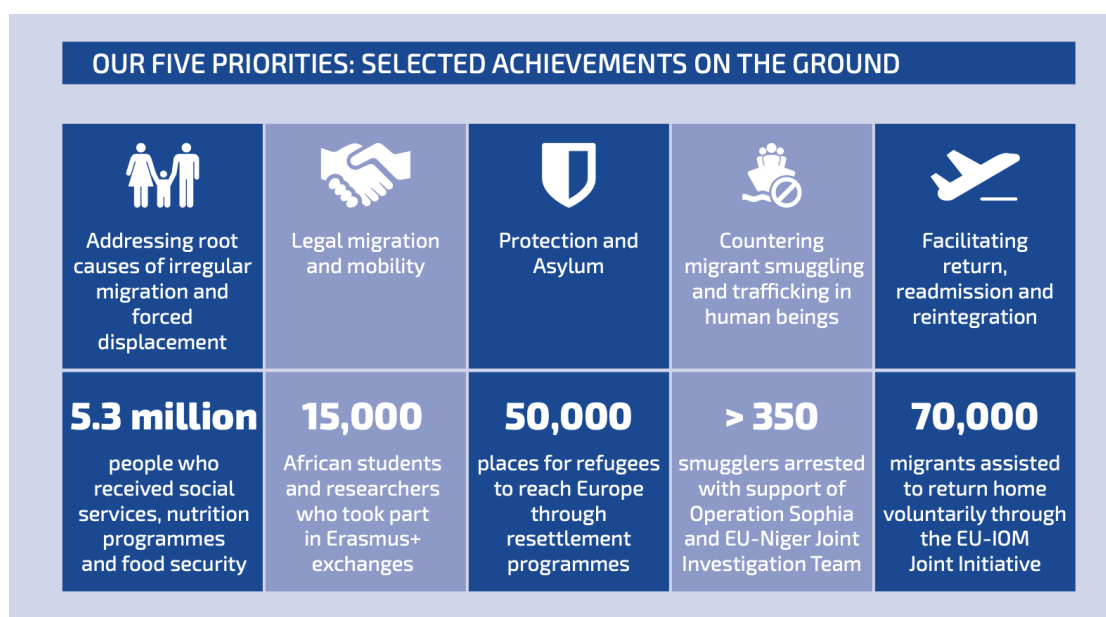
Building State and Societal Resilience

The EU not only aims to strengthen its power within its territory but also wants to promote resilient and stable states beyond its borders. The Global Strategy recognises that it is in the interest of European states and citizens to increase stability in nations both bordering the Union or stretching as far as central Africa or Asia. The EU also acknowledges that building resilient states has to go hand in hand with promoting the Sustainable Development Goals, incorporating the whole of society and promoting democracy as well as the wider trust in institutions. This means that the Union will expand its so-called European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and deepen the partnerships with European neighbouring states, offering more comprehensive cooperation, association agreements, elaborate trade agreements, widening the economic area, promoting mobility and connecting physical and digital infrastructure.[cxiv]

The EU also recognises that it has to engage on a wider political stage and promote resilience in other surrounding areas. It recognises that repressive regimes are inherently fragile and that

tailor-made policies are needed to promote inclusive and secure societies that respect human rights and join the fight against terrorism. In order to exert its influence on a global scale, the Global Strategy suggests using trade agreements to underpin sustainable development, human rights and rules-based governance. A part of its global influence will also be to promote the adoption of sustainable technologies beyond the European borders, most notably renewable energy, sustainable food production, energy liberalisation, water efficiency and availability improvements.[cxv]

While the EU recognizes that its global influence is needed in a multitude of nations, its focus will lie on the nations in which migrants and refugees depart from and transit through. This means increasing humanitarian aid and fostering education, especially for women and children and strengthening cooperation with local governments. Closer cooperation will focus on migrant flow management, border protection, legal migration as well as the return of migrants to their countries of origin. Responsible negotiation will be employed to reduce the root causes of migration and fight trans-border crime while closer European cooperation will allow to implement shared European asylum systems and review and adapt the existing legislative framework on migrant management.[cxvi]

OUR FIVE PRIORITIES: SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS ON THE GROUND				
Addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement	Legal migration and mobility	Protection and Asylum	Countering migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings	Facilitating return, readmission and reintegration
5.3 million	**15,000**	**50,000**	**> 350**	**70,000**
people who received social services, nutrition programmes and food security	African students and researchers who took part in Erasmus+ exchanges	places for refugees to reach Europe through resettlement programmes	smugglers arrested with support of Operation Sophia and EU-Niger Joint Investigation Team	migrants assisted to return home voluntarily through the EU-IOM Joint Initiative

EU priorities in migration policy[cxvii]

Lastly, the EU will make full use of its enlargement policy to encourage neighbouring states to apply for EU membership and thereby encourage non-members to continue the process of democratisation to meet European accession conditions. The EU will continuously provide fair, clear and transparent accession criteria and will work with local governments on achieving those in an ongoing review and reform process. However, even during this process, closer cooperation must have notable positive effects on shared policy on migration, security, mobility and must, at all points, promote the well-being of citizens.[cxviii]

International Cooperation

The EU will also foster international cooperation and focus on regional cooperation in areas with closer economic and cultural ties. This policy aim is inspired by the success story of the EU and will be used to achieve similar developments in other parts of the world. However, it does not attempt to simply export its political model but achieve mutual inspiration and support.

The EU recognises that such promotion of stable and prosperous regions has to start in Europe since it seems that, even here, the inviolability of borders and the upholding of international law can no longer be regarded as a given. 'Russia's violation of international law and the destabilisation of the Ukraine' has proven that peace in Europe is fragile and that the European community will not accept the 'illegal annexation of the Crimea' (EUGS, p. 33).[cxix] Future relations with Russia require a coordinated effort by all member states and need to be built on the recognition of international law. The EU will protect the freedom of its Eastern neighbours, allowing them to independently choose its approach towards the EU.[cxx]

In the Middle East and Africa, the EU will support nations to provide stability and foster dialogue in the regions deeply divided and polarised by conflict. It will further work on the implementation and upholding of a successful two state solution in the conflict between Israel and Palestine and attempt to encourage a democratic transition in Turkey to continue EU membership negotiations. Furthermore, the EU will support Arabian Gulf nations in building stable institutions, closely cooperate with Iran under the shared nuclear deal and encourage the protection of human rights and the fight against terrorism.[cxxi]

In the Atlantic area, Europe will continue its work on comprehensive trade agreements (especially TTIP) and will intensify cooperation with the US and Canada. The EU will build on previous diplomatic connections and expand its cooperation with South American states and will strive for a trade agreement as well as for cooperation on multiple other policy domains.[cxxii]

In Asia, Europe will expand its cooperation with China based on the rule of law and the respect for human rights. It will ensure adequate intellectual property standards and will work with China on sustainable policies, technological cooperation and common investments. Next to China, the EU will seek closer cooperation with Japan, India and South Korea and support local security, encouraging state building (for example in Afghanistan) and encouraging the de-escalation of conflicts such as in the Korean peninsula.[cxxiii]

Through these policies, among many others, Europe hopes to achieve greater geo-political relevance and effectively promote its interests on a global stage.

Solutions and Ongoing Implementation

Since the inception of the European Union Global Strategy, the EU has published annual reports on the implementation of the plans as well as suggesting other policies and solutions that might need to be implemented. These annual reports also allow the EU to keep its strategic plans up-to-date and adapt them to newly arising geo-political challenges. While the EU has worked on numerous policy frontiers, and has outlined, in the process, more and more possible solutions and strategic aims, only some of the central ones will be outlined here.

State building in Syria

The EU itself sees its role in Syria as central and has emphasised in the initial proposal, as well as in all three annual reports, that building resilience and an inclusive society in Syria is of utmost priority. It has also set itself the aim of supporting state building as soon as a democratic transition is under way and peace is reached in Syria.[cxxiv] While the EU has led numerous negotiations in an attempt to restore peace, its military presence and general involvement in the conflict was negligible. After the US withdrew its troops in October 2019,[cxxv] Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, supported by Russian military forces, was able to regain most of the Syrian territory and reaffirm his grip on the country.[cxxvi] The EU is often criticized for its lack of engagement in the conflict and for allowing the US and Russia to decide upon the fate of the Syrian state alone. The democratic

transition and the rebuilding of a resilient and inclusive Syrian nation, outlined in the European Union Global Strategy, however, seems far away with President al-Assad controlling most of the Syrian territory, as of September 2020. In order to ensure global relevance and reaffirm its strength, the EU seems to need other policies to regain its relevance on a global stage.

Common Migration Policy

Another key aim of the EU was to find a common migration policy, establish shared asylum systems and manage refugee flows effectively.[cxxvii] While the refugee crisis of recent years was officially declared to be finished by the European Council in March 2019,[cxxviii] events over the past weeks have very much proven that underlying institutional problems still persist and that the EU is still far from a collective asylum policy. After the refugee camp burnt down at the beginning of September this year in Lesbos, Greece, EU states still struggled to take responsibility and share the burden. Only 10 EU member states have agreed to take part in the redistribution scheme of unaccompanied minors who have become homeless during the fire.[cxxix] While some European countries like Germany, France, Croatia and Slovenia, among others, show solidarity, other countries like Austria, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic have refused to take part in redistribution scheme.[cxxx] Debate is further fuelled by the Greek prime minister demanding more help from other member states and a fairer common EU asylum policy. The reason that the Moria refugee camp housed 12,500, instead of only the 2,750 people for which it was built for, was that a common European asylum policy is still missing and that EU border states are mostly left alone with handling the influx of refugees.[cxxxi] It seems, however, that this incident proves that a common European asylum policy is still far from being implemented and that the cooperation among member states, as outlined in the Global Strategy, is far from being realised.

European Enlargement

Another pillar of the European Union Global Strategy was to promote stability and reform in non-EU member states in Europe and to advance enlargement and accession negotiations with these nations. In this policy area, the EU helped to settle the 30 year old dispute between Greece and

North Macedonia, helping to enable North Macedonia to join NATO as well as to start EU accession negotiations.[cxxxii] Furthermore, the EU successfully started negotiations with Albania and reports that Serbia and Montenegro have advanced in their respective negotiations with the EU, while progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina is continuously evaluated by the EU.[cxxxiii]

While EU enlargement policy in the West Balkan seems successful and helped advance reformation in the aforementioned countries, the enlargement process with Turkey has been stalling since 2016 and EU officials have declared that no further progress is expected. The European parliament has even suggested to suspend accession negotiations entirely.[cxxxiv] Instead of moving closer towards the European Union, Turkey has moved away and has been criticised internationally for human rights violations and deficits in the rule of law.[cxxxv]

As such it seems that the EU was partly successful in using its accession negotiations to spur reforms and stability in neighbouring countries, while failing in others.

International Cooperation

Another key aim of the Global Strategy was to inspire global stability and foster cooperation with other nations around the globe. One of the main aims was to strengthen relationships with the United States and finalise the long-awaited trade agreement TTIP. While many of

the challenges in transatlantic relations have been caused by the unpredictable and protectionist nature of the US administration after 2016,[cxxxvi] the trade deal was considered to be controversial before then and has been criticised ever since. Despite the vast benefits that the trade agreement is supposed to bring, the European Commission declared the negotiations 'obsolete and no longer relevant' in April 2019.[cxxxvii]
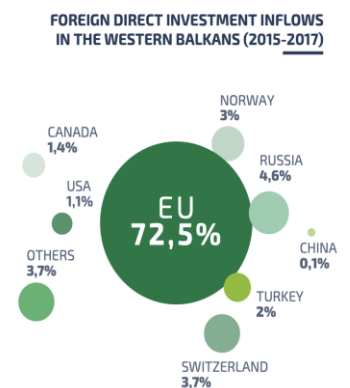
On the other end of the Channel, the EU withdrawal negotiations lasted for many years and created a whole host of issues. Relations particularly deteriorated after the UK prime minister Boris Johnson announced unilateral changes to the withdrawal agreement, to which the EU reacted with the threat of an international lawsuit because of the violation of international law. The question of how much Brexit has harmed UK-EU relations cannot be answered fully yet, but it is definitely changed the status quo of the region.[cxxxviii]

While the EU seems committed to upholding its global bonds and international relations, its approach seems ever more threatened by the unpredictability of other nations and global leaders. While the European Union Global Strategy acknowledges the more and more complex world, it has yet to deliver strategies on how the EU can advance its goals despite these international challenges.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer

This session has been tasked with reviewing the European Union Global Strategy four years after its first inception to prepare European cooperation for the decade to come. This means that the member states should review the implemented policies to decide those that should be continued and those that should be halted. Additionally, the members of the Council should reflect on the success and failure of the first four years and should adapt the Global Strategy in order to take into account the shortcomings of the first years. The goal is to achieve a resolution that will be proposed to the European External Action Services, which will then implement the decisions made by the Council. As such, this session of the Council will define strategic, foreign and military policy of the European Union for the decade to come.

Despite the vast array of policy domains that need to be taken into account, the key questions that any resolution has to address are the following:

- How can the EU ensure to keep and regain its influence on global conflicts and their outcomes? How can failures in crisis management such as the one in the Syrian conflict be prevented in the future?

- How can the EU achieve a common asylum system and tackle migration policy collectively? How can it better prepare for a possible future crisis in this policy domain and how can it avoid further controversies between member states?

What is the future of European enlargement and accession negotiations? On which countries should the EU focus? What should be the official stance of the European Council on negotiations with Turkey?

- How can the EU react to the unpredictability of the global world order and how can it foster an atmosphere of cooperation and multilateralism despite the increase in protectionist and nationalist governments?

- What is the future of trade agreements and trade cooperation? Should the EU attempt to revive TTIP negotiations?

- What will be the EU's stance on the withdrawal of the UK from the European community? How should it deal with the unwillingness of the UK government to establish a fruitful future partnership?

Bloc Positions

Because of the global and long-term significance of the proposed strategy, bloc positions and interests of member states seem highly volatile and change depending on government and policy domain in question. A few bloc positions that might spark debate have been outlined below.

Austria, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia & the Czech Republic

The recent debates about refugee distribution schemes in the EU have united the many countries in central and Eastern Europe that take a critical stance on European cooperation in asylum policies. These countries are united by the aim of avoiding another crisis situation like the one in 2015/2016 and share the opinion that any redistribution scheme will encourage another wave of immigration to Europe.

Italy, Hungary, Greece, France & Slovakia

These are the countries that have called for a relaxation of sanctions against Russia and who have asked for a review of the EU's policy towards Russia.[cxxxix] This is mostly justified by the fact that sanctions seem to have little effect on Russia, while they are imposing severe damage on the economy of some of the Eastern European states.

France & Germany

Those two countries are among the main proponents of closer European military cooperation and both of them also openly support the idea of a common European army.

Suggestions for Further Research

The major focus of this topic is the European Union Global Strategy and the progress made as well as adjustments needed. A natural starting point for your research is hence the Global Strategy itself, as well as the annual reports published since. Understanding key terms such as PESCO and reviewing recent opinions on closer European foreign and security cooperation might also help your research.

The European Union Global Strategy:

https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf

- The first annual report in 2017: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs-report-full_brochure_year_1.pdf

- The second annual report in 2018: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs_annual_report_year_2.pdf

- The third annual report in 2019 and looking ahead to the next decade: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs_annual_report_year_2.pdf

- The implementation plan outlined by the Commission: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs_implementation_plan_st14392.en16_0.pdf

Closing Remarks

We hope that this background guide has given you a first insight into the topic and has allowed you to understand a bit better how the European Union works, and which topics are currently on its political agenda. We understand that going through so much information at once seems intimidating and that dealing with two rather complex and potentially completely new topics might seem very challenging.

However, if you prepare well and use this background guide as a starting point for your research, exploring further details and the opinions of various countries, we are sure that you will find both topics engaging and exciting to deal with. It is also an exciting task to deal with issues that are normally discussed by heads of governments and that are essential to the current political world. By dealing with any of the two topics, you will explore and expand the frontiers of European policy making and will discuss issues that are more relevant than any other for our collective European life.

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