



EUN-NET Simulation Game

Elaborated in collaboration with:



**UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY**

UNU-CRIS

**Institute on Comparative
Regional Integration Studies**

*With special thanks to
Alice Marinelli, Beatrice Carlesso, Ewout Ramon,
Isidoro Noack, Olesya Dovgalyuk and Therese Mager*

Please note: the simulation game as described below focuses on the **migration / refugee crisis** in the framework of a **special session of the European Council**. However, it can also be played with another thematic focus, such as EU negotiations on a common position on **environmental protection** (an example being decisions as to how much each Member State needs to reduce emissions in view of the Paris Climate Accord) or in another institutional setting, an example being a session of the **Foreign Affairs Council** (chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy).

Moreover, the game can be played either in the context of a (special) meeting of the European Council, or a **coordination meeting at the European Union Delegation to the United Nations in New York**. It is important that students understand the (institutional and substantive) context of the negotiations. In the case of an alternative thematic focus, it is recommended that a teacher provide instructions to students early on to let them elaborate the respective positions of the various Member States and other actors involved (e.g., **European Commission, European External Action Service**). To make the game as realistic as possible, when simulating a meeting of the European Council or of the Foreign Affairs Council, it is recommended to refer to the Rules of Procedures of the European Council (2009).

The simulation game can either be played in a shorter version in the framework of **one three-hour class session**, or as a more extensive game, simulating negotiations over the course of **one day**. Moreover, the **size of teams** will depend on **class size** and can vary from a relatively small group (15-20 students) to a larger class size. In the latter case, it is important that the simulation is supported by several persons, to ensure the game is running smoothly and according to the guidelines provided. In either scenario, it is recommended to involve students with experience in **Model United Nations games** or similar simulations to assume the role of the **President (or chair)** of the meeting.

Simulation Game on the Migration / Refugee Crisis

Background

The refugee crisis began in the EU in 2015, when hundreds of thousands of people fleeing persecution and conflict in the Middle East and Africa arrived in frontline European states in search of asylum. Over the years, thousands have died while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea to reach the European Union. According to Eurostat, the numbers of asylum applicants reached its peak in 2015, with over 1.3 million applications filed; similar numbers were filed in 2016, but then declined sharply in 2017. In the first three months of 2018, the number of applications submitted again fell as compared to 2017, with an estimated 131,000 new cases (similar to 2014, or pre-crisis, levels). The top three countries of origin for these asylum seekers are Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. In the face of the continued, albeit reduced, influx of refugees and the pressure it has placed on frontline states in particular, the EU has worked to create a set of systems to assist the countries receiving refugees, and the refugees themselves.

The Dublin system (comprising the Dublin III Regulation and EURODAC, a fingerprint database of asylum seekers and irregular border-crossers) is the current EU legal framework for asylum protection in accordance with the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951). It places the responsibility for refugees on the Member States of first entry and has been criticized for putting a disproportionate burden on frontier states, such as Italy, Spain, and Greece, and encouraging secondary movements of asylum seekers within Europe. To alleviate this burden, the European Council agreed in July 2015 to the relocation of 40,000 asylum seekers over a period of two years, and in September 2015, the Council accepted to relocate a further 120,000 asylum seekers from frontier states. However, neither of these relocation schemes have been sufficiently implemented; as of June 2018, only 34,691 asylum seekers have been relocated from Italy and Greece. Despite its shortcomings, Dublin III remains in effect, with the European Court of Justice ruling on 26 July 2017 that Member States retain the right to deport asylum seekers to the state of first entry.

EU asylum policy is also guided by the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), an initiative created in 1999 that was meant to harmonize EU standards for the treatment of asylum seekers. However, the large influx of asylum seekers in 2015 highlighted the CEAS's shortcomings, with Member States offering wildly varying rates of protection and welfare benefits. Shortly after the crisis began, Member States quickly took to modifying their own immigration policies, with some taking a hard line to all forms of migration (forced or otherwise) and others taking a more welcoming stance. By the end of 2016, rates of asylum application success ranged from 3% (in Hungary) to 59% (the average for the five most important host countries).

At the EU's frontiers, Operation Sophia (EUNAVFOR MED) was launched on 22 June 2015 as an EU-wide effort to monitor the Southern Central Mediterranean seas for migrant smugglers and traffickers. One of the supporting tasks of the operation was to train Libyan coast guard units, to try and limit deaths at sea. To date, more than 110 suspected smugglers and traffickers have been arrested and transferred to the Italian authorities for prosecution.

Furthermore, 470 vessels used by criminal organizations for human trafficking and other illegal activities have been neutralized. The mission, nevertheless, has been criticized for its failure to address the migrant flow itself, to curtail deaths at sea (which rose by 42% in 2016), and for its high operation costs (€18 million). Meanwhile, FRONTEX, the EU's border and coast guard agency, has grown exponentially over the past few years, and was responsible for returning 14,000 migrants and asylum seekers to their countries of origin in 2017 (representing 9% of returns from the EU for that year).

Externally, the EU and its Member States maintain numerous agreements with third party countries in an effort to reduce migratory flows. In December 2014, the EU established the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (the 'Madad' fund), an initiative to support countries neighboring Syria, which has amassed €1.5 billion in funding from EU financial instruments and Member States. In November 2015, EU leaders met with their African counterparts at the Valletta Summit, outlining an 'Action Plan' that prioritized addressing the root causes of forced migration, improving protections for asylum seekers, and enhancing cooperation on readmissions and returns. This Summit saw the launch of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, an initiative meant to lessen irregular migration flows through development, for which the EU has mobilized €3.3 billion to date. Many NGOs have signaled that the Trust Fund reallocates EU development finances towards increased security and controls, and note that the Fund may fail to secure cooperation from African stakeholders.

In March 2016, the EU reached an agreement with Turkey to stem irregular migration coming from the Middle East, with Turkey accepting to stop illegal migration flows westward in return for an initial €3 billion in financial support. The EU has also pursued cooperation with Libya over the years, assisting in the creation of refugee camps and promoting voluntary returns of migrants to their countries of origin, all while providing hundreds of millions of euros in aid. However, reports indicate that the camps and detention centers in Libya feature deeply inhumane living conditions, including sexual abuse, slavery, and torture. The EU's external agreements and actions have therefore been heavily criticized by NGOs, academics, and the EU's own Parliament as attempts at 'outsourcing' EU migration policy through thinly-disguised 'containment' efforts. Moreover, such policies are viewed as calling into question the European Union's consistency regarding its values and respect for human rights.

Since 2015, there have been calls on all fronts to improve the current approach towards dealing with the crisis – both internally and externally. UNHCR has outlined several faults and challenges on the part of receiving countries in Europe, "in providing protection and securing solutions for people of concern (...), including increasing restriction on access to territory; a lack of appropriate reception conditions, particularly for people with specific needs, including unaccompanied and separated children; and inadequate asylum procedures." In May and July 2016, the European Commission proposed two packages of reforms for the CEAS and the Dublin Regulation, including a corrective allocation ("fairness") mechanism, an expansion of the European Asylum Support Office's (EASO) mandate, and a harmonization of asylum rules, guarantees, and procedures across the EU. Nevertheless, committing to a coherent internal policy has proved difficult due to Member States' highly divergent concerns and interests, and reforms to the CEAS and the Dublin Regulation remain mired in debate.

As of 2018, the 'crisis' is still in the headlines, despite the sharp decrease in the number of asylum seekers arriving in the EU. Populist parties have gained traction in many Member States on an anti-immigration platform, while other Member States advocate a more open policy alongside cooperation in burden-sharing among countries. From July to December 2018, the Council of Ministers of the EU will be headed by Austria, and migration will be at the very top of its agenda. Consequently, the IOM has issued a series of recommendations to the Austrian presidency, calling for the EU to prepare to implement the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (projected to be adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2018). It has also recommended that the Council work closely alongside its African counterparts for greater migration cooperation, and that the EU render its investments in migration-related issues more coherent and effective in the long term.

In view of the complexity of the issue, with diplomatic, socioeconomic, security-based, and cultural dimensions, the question remains: can Europe agree on a more comprehensive and harmonized approach to asylum policy?

Items of Negotiation

- 1) **Financial contributions** – who should contribute funds, and how much?
- 2) **Schengen agreement** on the free movement of people – should this be reconsidered with regards to non-EU citizens traveling between EU Member States?
- 3) **Allocation of budget** – should a majority of financial support go to the Member States hosting the greatest number of migrants, or should it instead be committed externally to countries of origin in Africa and the Middle East?
- 4) **Reform of the Dublin System – Burden-Sharing** – should Member States be required to accept mandatory quotas of asylum seekers?

Objectives

Working closely with the UN Secretariat and various UN Agencies, Funds and Programs, the EU has established a strong relationship with the UN. Cooperation takes place across a broad range of areas: development, human rights, climate change, peace building, crisis management, disarmament and non-proliferation, humanitarian assistance, fighting corruption and crime, addressing global health concerns, managing migratory flows, and labor issues. The UN General Assembly is the main deliberative, policymaking, and representative organ of the UN. The added value of the EU is to coordinate among its 28 Member States to present a unified position.

In 2011, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution A/65/276 which upgraded the observer status of the EU, allowing it to present common positions, make interventions, present proposals and participate in the general debate each September. As an observer with enhanced status, EU representatives can now speak on behalf of the EU and its Member States in the UN. The resolution also stipulated that it would be the President of the European Council who delivers the EU statement in the General debate, and no longer the rotating Presidency, bringing EU representation in New York in line with the Lisbon Treaty provisions.

The EU coordinates its voting within the General Assembly's six main committees and other bodies and agencies such as the Economic and Social Council. To this end, more than 1300 internal EU coordination meetings are held yearly at the UN in New York alone to develop a common EU stance and speak with one voice. Article 34 of the EU Treaty also stipulates that EU members on the Security Council must act in concert and foster the interests of the EU. In 2016, the EU delivered 32 statements in the UN Security Council and 208 in other UN fora, including those at high-level events and meetings.

You are all gathered here today for an urgent special meeting of the European Council, chaired by the President, to prepare a sustainable and unified agenda of how the EU proposes to tackle the ongoing refugee crisis, which will be used to determine the EU priorities for the UN in order for the President of the European Council to present the position of the EU at the next UN General Assembly meeting.¹ There is an urgent need to rethink and update the current strategy and reach a consensus on this issue.

Composition of the European Council

In terms of the composition of the European Council, the Rules of Procedure of the European Council (2009, article 4.4) provide the following information: “The European Council shall consist of the Heads of State of Government of the Member States, together with the President of the Commission. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy shall take part in its work.” In addition to this, the Rules of Procedure specify that “When the agenda so requires, the members of the European Council may decide each to be assisted by a minister and, in the case of the President of the Commission, by a member of the Commission”.

For this simulation, the group will be divided into teams, each team consisting of one to two people. One team will represent the **President of the European Council** (or chair). This team’s role will be to preside over the meeting, setting the agenda with input from the other participants, ensuring that each item on the agenda is addressed, and allocating time to each item. The President will also allocate time to each Delegate to speak by managing the Speakers’ List. The team approves Draft Agreements for presentation to the Council and may raise a motion to introduce an Agreement. With the support of a majority of Delegates, the President may initiate a vote on a verbal agreement or written draft agreement.

Teams representing EU Member States will consist of the **Head of State or Government** and a **Minister** (if there are two players).² The principal role of the Head of State or Government will be to make speeches and represent the country within the context of the debate. The task of the Minister is to support the Head of State or Government, by doing research and

¹ The simulation game may also be played as a coordination meeting at the EU delegation to the United Nations in New York to prepare a common position to be presented in the framework of the EU’s enhanced observer status at the UNGA. In this case, delegates will be representatives of the respective Member States, at ambassadorial level or delegate level.

² The team may be expanded when the game is played in a larger class setting.

passing notes about the topic of discussion. Players on Member State teams may switch roles between agenda items.

If there are enough players, one team will take up the role of the **European Commission**, and one the role of the **High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (EEAS)**. (These teams may also be combined into one.) Their main objective is to participate in the discussion representing the EU's institutional stance on the issue and try, together with the President of the European Council, to achieve a consensus among other delegates. This can be done via interventions in informal meetings and the General Speakers' List (where they have the same speaking rights as Member States). However, the European Commission and EEAS cannot participate in voting.

These positions are not fixed, can be interchangeable among the participants, and can also be tailored to their specific needs. The representatives may have overlapping roles at the beginning of the conference.

The following teams will participate in the meeting, in addition to the President of the European Council. The number of teams can be modified (for example, to include only the main Member States) according to group size.

Italy	Germany	France	UK	Greece	Austria
Bulgaria	Hungary/Visegrad Group	Denmark	Sweden	Belgium	Estonia
Spain	Portugal	Malta	Netherlands	European Commission ³	EEAS

Conduct during motions and voting

Cross talking in the formal setting and speaking out of order in the conference room is **strictly prohibited**.

Please bring one laptop per team. Dressing formally is highly recommended.

³ Can be combined with EEAS or played as a separate team according to group size.

Rules of Procedure

European Council meetings (or EU Summits) are not open to the public and are subjected to a limited number of procedural rules, many of which concern preparations to be done in the weeks preceding each summit. For our purposes, official Council rules have been adapted to fit a simulation game lasting from one class period to two days of negotiations. These rules are relatively informal.

1. Agenda Setting

- a. As per official Council rules, the Council shall adopt an agenda at the beginning of its meeting, agreeing upon the items to be addressed over the course of the simulation as well as the order (see “Items of Negotiation”).
- b. The President (Chair) shall thereafter be responsible for keeping time and ensuring that each item on the agenda is discussed according to the order agreed upon, with the help of a General Speakers’ List.

2. Speakers’ list

The President of the European Council chairs the meeting, decides at the start of the meeting how much time can be devoted to each item on the agenda, and tells Delegates how long they may speak.

- a) Having confirmed the presence of all Member States in the meeting, a continuously open Speakers’ List will be established for the purpose of general debate.
- b) The President shall ask the Council for those who wish to be added to the General Speakers’ List when it is first open and will ask again from time to time; the President shall keep a written copy of the order of the speakers. Any Delegate wishing to be added to the General Speakers’ List can do so by raising their placard when the President asks if there are any Delegates wishing to be added to the General Speakers’ List. No Delegate may be on the General Speakers’ List twice at the same time. This General Speakers’ List will be followed for all debates on the Agenda item, except when superseded by a motion for an informal meeting or a raised point. Delegates may speak generally on the Agenda item being considered and may address any Draft Agreement currently on the floor. Should the General Speakers’ List elapse, debate on the Agenda item shall be considered finished and the Council shall automatically move into voting procedures.

3. Raising points and motions

Any of the points below may be raised by any Delegate at any moment provided that it does not interrupt another speaker (with the exception of a Point of Personal Privilege in extreme circumstances). A Delegate wishing to raise a point shall, at the appropriate time, raise their placard and state the point they wish to raise and then wait for the President to ask them to state it fully. The President shall then take any action required as per the rules below.

- 1) *Point of Personal Privilege*: if there is a circumstance preventing a Delegate from participating in the proceedings to their fullest ability, or if the Delegate is in personal discomfort, he or she may raise a Point of Personal Privilege. For instance, Points of Personal Privilege may be raised when the Delegate cannot hear what has been said, if the Delegate cannot see something being projected on a screen, or if the Delegate is not comfortable with the temperature in the room. A Point of

Personal Privilege may only interrupt a speaker if the Delegate raising the point cannot hear the speaker. If appropriate, the President will request that the speaker speak louder and/or more clearly or take another appropriate action. Points of Privilege for any other circumstance may not interrupt a speaker (except in cases of absolute emergency, at the discretion of the President).

- 2) *Point of Inquiry*: when the floor is open, a Delegate may raise a Point of Inquiry to ask the President a question regarding the rules of procedure. A Point of Inquiry may never interrupt a speaker. Delegates with any questions *not* regarding the rules of procedure, i.e. with substantive questions related to the *content* of the debate, should not raise this Point, but should instead approach the President with the question during an informal meeting or send them a written note.
- 3) *Motion for an Informal Meeting*: when the floor is open, as with a Point of Inquiry, a Delegate may raise a Motion for an Informal (unmoderated) Meeting of Heads of State. The Delegate raising the motion to summon informal debate, an opportunity for delegates to collaborate, negotiate and formulate Draft Agreements, must briefly explain its purpose and specify an overall time limit for the informal debate. The motion will be subject to a Procedural vote without speakers. The President may rule the Motion out of order if he or she feels that it is not constructive to debate or change the length of the informal meeting as he/she sees fit.

4. Draft Agreement (applicable for 1-day simulation game)

For longer versions of this simulation game, a Draft Agreement may be introduced once it has the support of three or more Delegates present at the beginning of the Council session and has been approved for review by the President. The Draft Agreement should include the names of its authors (Sponsors) and Delegates which support its presentation (Signatories), all of whom count towards the necessary three supporting Delegates. Signing a Draft Agreement does not indicate approval of the entire statement, and a Signatory has no further obligations. Draft Agreements may follow a similar format to EU Council documents (with a numbered list of statements and recommended actions); see annex.

Once a Draft Agreement has been approved as stipulated above and has been made available to the Council, the President shall call upon a Sponsor to introduce it. Before Seconds (i.e. endorsement speeches by other participants) and Objections can be heard, the operative clauses of the Draft Agreement shall be read out by a Sponsor or by the President. The President may call for a panel of Sponsors to answer questions about the Draft. More than one Draft Agreement may be on the floor at any one time, but only one Final Draft Position Statement may be passed per agenda item.

For a shorter version of this simulation game, the President and Delegates may settle on verbal agreements concerning each item on the agenda.

5. Amendments

An Amendment is a proposal that simply adds to, deletes from, or revises operative clauses of a Draft Position Statement. Amendments do not require Signatories and may be submitted to the Sponsor or directly to the President for approval. Once the Amendment has been

approved for presentation, the proposing delegation may formally introduce it when the floor is open. An Amendment must be unanimously adopted by the Delegates present.

6. Voting Procedure

The President of the European Council, the President of the Commission, and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (EEAS) shall not take part in the vote. Decisions of the European Council shall be taken **by consensus**. The vote to commit to a verbal agreement (shorter version of the simulation game) or adopt a draft agreement (longer version) shall take place on the initiative of the President, provided that a majority of the members of the European Council support the decision to vote.

If the verbal or draft agreement is adopted unanimously, the President of the Council shall announce the conclusions. If no consensus is reached but there is time remaining, negotiations can be resumed to draft a new document or amend a previous one to vote on it, with an aim to reach a minimal agreement.

In the absence of a minimal agreement, the Council shall fall back on a consensus from a previous Council summit for presentation at the UN General Assembly, and the topic will be further discussed in a future EU Council meeting.

General structure of the simulation game

These are suggestions for how the simulation may be structured, in a long-version and short-version format. The structure can be adapted according to the group's needs.

One-day class session

9:00 – 9:30	Introduction, presentation + questions
9:30 – 10:00	Hold mini-simulation to familiarize participants with rules of procedure
10:00 – 11:00	General Speakers' List (60 sec speaking time each)
11:00 – 11:15	Short coffee break
11:15 – 12:00	General Speakers' List (45 sec speaking time each)
12:00 – 12:15	Informal meetings to discuss first few agenda items
12:15 – 13:00	Break for lunch
13:00 – 13:30	General Speakers' List (45 sec speaking time each)
13:30 – 14:00	Informal meetings for drafting position papers
14:00	First Draft Agreement must be submitted
14:00 – 14:15	Presentation of first draft
14:15 – 14:45	Time for amending the first draft of the agreement
14:45	Final Draft Agreement must be submitted
14:45 – 15:15	Presentation of final output and final remarks, amendments if needed (delegates strive to reach consensus)
15:15 – 15:30	Vote on Final Agreement and closing ceremony

Three-hour class session

13:00 – 13:20	Introduction, presentation + questions
13:20 – 13:30	General Speakers' List (45 sec speaking time each)
13:30 – 14:00	I. Round – 1 st Agenda Item
14:00 – 14:30	II. Round – 2 nd Agenda Item
14:30 – 14:45	Informal meeting
14:45 – 15:30	III. Round – 3 rd Agenda Item
15:30 – 15:45	Informal meetings to seek verbal agreement on agenda items
15:45 – 16:00	Vote on final verbal agreement (Delegates strive to reach consensus)

Summaries of the main Member States' positions

ITALY

Due to its geographical position, Italy has been at the forefront of the refugee crisis since the beginning. UNHCR registered 153,842 arrivals in 2015 and 181,436 in 2016, though the number decreased to 119,369 in 2017. As of June, 15,316 people have arrived at the Italian border in 2018.

The states to the north of Italy (France, Switzerland, and Austria) have tightened their borders, returning any asylum seekers trying to leave the nation. This has limited the spread of asylum seekers throughout the EU, but has placed further pressure on Italy. In order to stem the flow of migrants arriving at its border, Italy has intensified its collaboration with Libya; in February 2015, it signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Libyan government and committed to provide equipment and technical support. Subsequently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs allocated €2.5 million to repair four of the Libyan coastguard's vessels and to provide training to its crewmembers.

This collaboration with Libyan authorities has been harshly criticized by many NGOs, as there are official reports of migrants suffering inhumane conditions in Libyan detention centers. Some lawyers argue that support for the Libyan coastguard is not a way to control migration, but rather a means to delegate push-backs to a country that is not a signatory to the Geneva Convention and where there is no protection for asylum seekers.

The Italian government has used high-profile occasions and intergovernmental bodies such as the EU Interior Ministers summit in Tallinn and the G20 to express its desire for greater cooperation. Unfortunately, these appeals have often been rejected by other EU Member States, who cite concerns over the protection of their sovereignty and borders.

Matteo Salvini, the new Italian Interior Minister and leader of the far-right party League, has declared that he will adopt a hard line on asylum and migration. On 10 June 2018, he closed the Italian ports to the rescue boat Aquarius, carrying 629 migrants, and asked Malta to take the vessel. The Maltese authorities refused, claiming that Italy was responsible, as the rescue operations were coordinated by Rome. Eventually, the Spanish Prime Minister granted the vessel permission to dock in Valencia. Salvini commented on the decision to close the Italian harbors, saying, "We have opened a front in Brussels" and that Italy will no longer be "Europe's refugee camp."

GERMANY

Germany, while not a border country, is one of the most active Member States in dealing with the refugee crisis. According to Eurostat, it became the most important destination country for asylum seekers in 2015 with 35% of all first-time asylum applications in the EU, and in 2016 it granted international protection status to 445,210 asylum seekers.

However, the current political situation has put a strain on the “open door” policy. In the last elections, Angela Merkel’s coalition lost consensus, while the radical right-wing Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) entered Parliament for the first time as the third-largest party, a signal of growing discontent in the country.

During the negotiations for forming a coalition government in early 2018, Chancellor Merkel had to impose a limit on the number of asylum seekers arriving in Germany, even though she had opposed this idea in 2016. By 2017, however, the number of asylum applications in Germany had already dropped to 186,644, showing a decrease in pressure on the country. A greater emphasis is now placed on the responsibility to provide more ‘lasting structures’ and to ensure a ‘fair distribution’ of refugees among all Member States. This altered stance was reinforced in a speech made by the German Chancellor during her summer press conference on 29 August 2017. Germany supports measures that shift the burden from the border states of Italy, Greece and, increasingly, Spain, but is also wary of the political situation in Central European states, especially Hungary and Poland.

In response to reports of human rights abuses in Libya – including executions, rape, bribery, and torture – Merkel has said, “the EU cannot strike a Turkey-style deal in which the Libyan government would be given substantial EU donations in return for keeping people in Libya.” On 28 August 2017, Merkel stated at the mini-summit of the “Big Four” (Germany, Italy, France, and Spain) and the African states of Niger and Chad that the only way to tackle human trafficking and illegal migration is through development aid. In support of this statement, she then pledged €50 million to “tackle illegal human trafficking in the Mediterranean” together with UNHCR and IOM.

These declarations notwithstanding, in December 2017 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the allocation of €120 million to the UN-backed Libyan authority, meant to stabilize the country and improve the conditions of migrants.

FRANCE

As the third most important country of destination in Europe, France received 100,755 new asylum applications in 2017 according to the French Ministry of the Interior, a 7% increase from 2016. After the infamous Calais 'Jungle' camp, populated with asylum seekers hoping to cross the Channel to the UK, was demolished in 2016, its inhabitants were relocated across the country. Numerous informal refugee camps have since sprung up in France, including settlements in Grande-Synthe, Calais, and Seine-Saint-Denis (Paris). These camps face pressure from the government, which regularly carries out evacuations.

In November 2015, despite heightened fear following terrorist attacks in Paris, President Francois Hollande committed to accepting 30,000 refugees over the following two years. Nonetheless, the government still refuses to open French ports to refugees (despite Italy's requests) and continues to avoid opening an official migrant reception center in Calais, fearing it would serve as a "magnet for other migrants." Examples such as these show the French administration's contradictory attitudes and policies.

Soon after coming to power, the new French President Emmanuel Macron put forward a proposal to deal with the crisis, centered on the establishment of so-called 'hotspots,' or processing centers, in Africa. Such facilities would be set up in Niger and Chad to identify migrants eligible for asylum in Europe. While the 'hotspot' proposal has yet to be implemented, several European leaders made the first step towards their creation at a summit with leaders from Niger and Chad on 28 August 2017, and the French government agreed to welcome 3000 more refugees redirected from these countries by 2019.

The situation at the Alps border with Italy is becoming more critical. In April 2018, French border patrol agents used a facility at the Bardonecchia train station (Italy) to carry out a drug test on a Nigerian traveling from Paris to Naples. The action was denounced by a humanitarian organization present at the station to provide help to migrants, and provoked the reaction of the Italian authorities, who summoned the French ambassador for clarifications. Humanitarian associations denounce the French authorities' frequent crossing of the border to prevent migrants from moving into France. Meanwhile, the French legislature has begun working on a new asylum law in 2018, with the draft legislation entering debate in the Senate in June. The draft bill requires faster processing of asylum claims while making it easier to deport those whose claims are rejected, and has been criticized for being both too harsh (by left-wing legislators and NGOs) and too lenient (by right-wing advocates).

UNITED KINGDOM

The UK has a controversial track record both when it comes to the EU refugee crisis, and its actions in the Middle East-North Africa (MENA) region. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair's government was strongly criticized for supporting Gaddafi's dictatorship through the UK-Libya 2004 oil agreement and the controversial 2007 prisoner transfer deal, which saw UK and US secret agencies allegedly facilitating the rendition of Libyan opposition leaders (specifically, the Belhaj and al-Saadi families who were then supposedly tortured in Gaddafi's prisons). One of the most prominent actors on the ground and an active NATO-backer (the government still defends its 2011 intervention despite a damning report from the Foreign Affairs Committee in Parliament), the UK subsequently distanced itself when it came to dealing with the post-conflict management of the civil war-torn country, and diplomatic dialogue between the EU and the African states during the subsequent refugee crisis. It has offered humanitarian support to the Government of National Accord, the only UN-recognized legitimate authority in Libya, having lately allocated £9 million in funding. In Syria, while backing the US and its coalition in actions against Daesh, the UK is still wary of a full-scale military intervention: this position has remained unaltered since the 2013 Parliamentary vote when the majority of Members of Parliament voted against the government intervening in Syria.

According to current Prime Minister Theresa May, the UK is the second-biggest bilateral donor to the Middle East and Africa, contributing £2.3 billion in aid. The UK government prioritizes offering help at the source, and only accepts the most vulnerable members of the displaced populations, "who particularly require the help and support that [can be given] in the UK." This has encouraged stringent levels of selectivity (especially after the Brexit vote); for instance, Eritreans are not recognized as refugees in the UK, despite UN reports of the gross violations of human rights in that country. Consequently, the number of asylum applicants in the UK has been steadily decreasing since 2015 (especially those from Syria, Sudan and Eritrea). In 2017, the government reported 26,350 asylum claims, of which 56% were successful or led to another form of international protection.

GREECE

In the past two to three years, Greece has taken in a great number of people forced into displacement by war and other extreme conditions in their homelands. In 2016 alone, around 1.2 million migrants entered Greece, and currently 62,000 remain stranded in the country while neighboring countries are reticent to accept asylum seekers. The agreement between the EU and Turkey in March 2016 closed off what is known as the “Balkan migration route”; this agreement radically decreased the immigrant influx by land, relieving pressure on Greece. In addition, agreements have been made to shift the maritime route of immigrants from the more dangerous Aegean Sea to a legal, safer, and more monitored route. These changes and improvements have led to a better humanitarian situation for refugees, though many of the smaller islands still have difficulties providing for resident asylum seekers while their applications are reviewed.

However, the number of arrivals in Greece is starting to increase again. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that in the first months of 2018, 7,300 people entered the country, compared to a total of 4,761 arrivals in 2017.

In response to numerous Member States within the EU that have refused Greece’s request to share the refugee ‘burden’, Greek Prime Minister Tsipras has emphasized the need for international collaboration to create a “new global framework for refugee management.” Additionally, Tsipras has expressed the importance of strengthening the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) to ensure that refugees are dealt with appropriately. Greece differs from other states faced with the refugee crisis due to its ongoing debt crisis, which as of May 2017 amounts to €344 billion. While Greece has been able to deal with both crises better than expected, it is reaching its limit. The EU has thus repeatedly offered financial assistance for accommodating asylum seekers in Greece, with emergency support reaching €401 million in July 2017. Overall, the EU has pledged €1.3 billion in support of Greece until the year 2020.

AUSTRIA

Between the summer of 2015 and mid-2016, Austria became one of the European countries most affected by the refugee crisis. In 2015, there were 88,160 first-time asylum applicants in Austria, making it the country with the third-highest per capita rate of asylum applications in the European Union after Hungary and Sweden. In 2016, another 42,255 applications were received, before declining to 24,715 in 2017.

Historically, Austria has a reputation for sheltering refugees; during the Hungarian uprising of 1956 and the Prague Spring of 1968, it opened its borders to thousands of people seeking protection. During the Balkan wars in the 1990s, Austria again welcomed many refugees fleeing former Yugoslavia. In 2015, the Austrian government followed the example set by Angela Merkel's 'open door' policy, welcoming thousands of refugees coming mainly from Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq. However, as migrant camps were stretched beyond capacity, a general skepticism about the large number of applicants entering the country soon surfaced. By the end of 2015, former Chancellor Werner Faymann was forced to close Austria's borders along the Balkan route. It was decided that only migrants at risk of death or inhumane treatment, or those who had already been granted asylum in Austria, would be allowed to enter. The Austrian government announced the acceptance of only 37,500 asylum seekers, but the European Commission signaled that such a quota policy was illegal under EU law. The German government has since been critical of Austria's controversial border policy, which compels asylum seekers to continue to Germany.

In December 2017, during the formation of the new Austrian government, Chancellor Sebastian Kurz from the conservative People's Party (OVP) reached a coalition deal with the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), making the country's hard line on immigration even more evident. Kurz stated that there would no longer be economic benefits for some migrants, and that their money and phones would be seized upon entry. The Chancellor has also rejected the EU's migrant quota, aligning with Hungary and Poland's positions.

In July 2018, Austria will take the lead of the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union, with migration as the main topic on the agenda. Chancellor Kurz announced the intention to shift the bloc's focus from resettling refugees among Member States to securing the EU's external borders. The Austrian government has urged a stop to illegal immigration and pledged that it will return migrants rescued in the Mediterranean to Africa. A solution that will likely be proposed under Austrian leadership is to expand the mandate of FRONTEX, the EU agency tasked with border management, increasing its capacity as the European coast guard.

An example of the differing positions of the leading six EU Member States is set out in the following table:

Country	Financial Contributions	Budget Allocation	Reform of the Dublin System	Reform of the Schengen Agreement
Italy	Higher contributions required from non 'frontline' states to offset the social costs faced by 'frontline' states	Most affected EU Member States should first and foremost be prioritized. In addition, EU should allocate more funding in the collaboration with countries of origin and transit.	Yes – asylum applications should be more evenly distributed across EU Member States. Italy backs the introduction of mandatory quota	No – wants to avoid any additional barriers to the reallocation of refugees
Greece	Higher contributions required from non 'frontline' states to offset the social costs faced by 'frontline' states	Most affected EU Member States should first and foremost be prioritized	Yes – asylum applications should be more evenly distributed across EU Member States. Greece backs the introduction of mandatory quota	No – wants to avoid any additional barriers to the reallocation of refugees
Germany	Willing to raise contributions slightly but does not want to foster over-reliance	Funding should also remain reflective of the total number of refugees accepted regardless of state GDP	Rather than total reform, advocates for an agreed quota system to try to appease both sides	Favors European integration and free movement of people but reintroduced border checks in September 2015
France	Prepared to offer further financial support to 'frontline' states in return for them keeping majority of refugees within their own borders	Proposed a controversial plan to use funds to set up refugee processing facilities 'at the source'	No – continues to keep its ports closed and carry out expulsions of asylum seekers that have entered the EU through another Member State	Favors European integration and free movement of people but reintroduced border checks following the Paris terrorist attacks in 2015. Requires Italian border authorities to intensify controls at the Alps border.
UK	Contributes a substantial amount of overseas aid. Considers that it should not have to provide further funds for this issue	Willing to support the external program proposed by France which complements its own development schemes in sub-Saharan Africa	No – Wants to maintain strict border control policy and keep flow of refugees to a minimum	Yes – arguably one of the leading explanations for Brexit
Austria	Contributes a substantial amount of overseas aid. Considers that it should not have to provide further funds for this issue	Money should be allocated to strengthen external border controls and to external cooperation	No –against the creation of any kind of quota, either mandatory or voluntary	Yes – wants to halt the free movement of non-EU citizens between EU Member States

Other Member States' positions (for expanded game)

BULGARIA

In 2013, Bulgaria adopted a containment policy aimed at preventing migrants to from crossing its borders; as a result, UNHCR reported that only 99 people entered the country in January 2014. In that same year, the European Commission opened an infringement proceeding against Bulgaria with the allegation of summary returns.

Nevertheless, summary pushbacks and violations of asylum seekers' rights continued in 2015 and 2016, as reported by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. Reception conditions remained poor, and asylum seekers were held in summary detention. A widespread climate of xenophobia and islamophobia in the country has since prevented asylum seekers from integrating. Amnesty International reported that in February 2017, the mayor of a Bulgarian town refused to receive a Syrian family, stating that "Muslims from Syria [are] not welcome". This unwillingness to accommodate people in need of protection is common in many municipalities, and the government does not provide effective measures for integration, such as access to social housing, education, and language courses.

Moreover, a government order issued in September 2017 restricts the freedom of movements of asylum seekers, who cannot move out from prescribed areas.

In 2014, Bulgaria started to build a fence along the border with Turkey. In 2016, the Bulgarian parliament voted to use the army at the Bulgarian borders, and in August 2017 the Ministry of Defense declared, "We cannot afford to continue having illegal migrants coming to Europe in droves. We should deploy NATO and EU troops in places like Italy and Greece, while defending the external borders of the EU, with armed force if necessary."

In 2016, Bulgaria received 19,420 asylum applications, representing 1.54% of the number of total applications in the EU. While it was expected to relocate 1,302 asylum seekers from Italy and Greece under the 2015 relocation scheme, as of February 2018 it has only relocated 10 individuals from Italy and 50 from Greece.

Financial contribution	Budget allocation	Reform Dublin	Reform Schengen
Not willing to provide further financial support to the CEAS	Money should be allocated to strengthen external border controls and external cooperation	No - Bulgaria is against the creation of a mandatory quota. States can voluntarily relocate asylum seekers.	Bulgaria is not yet part of Schengen; to become part of the Schengen Area, the country has to undergo internal reforms in the area of justice. It is not seeking to change the Schengen acquis, but rather to hasten its process for membership

THE VISEGRAD GROUP (Czechia, Hungary, Poland [Slovakia])

The Visegrad Group (V4) countries have similar views and policies regarding the refugee crisis. According to Eurostat, the numbers of first-time asylum applications in Poland hovered around 10,000 in 2015 and 2016, but dropped to only 3,000 in 2017. Poland seldom issues protection compared to Western European countries, much like its fellow V4 members. Czechia and Slovakia both received low numbers of first-time applicants between 2015 and 2017, with Eurostat reporting close to 1,000 applications yearly in Czechia and little more than a hundred per year in Slovakia.

Unlike other members of the Visegrad Group, Hungary experienced a large influx of refugees in 2015; the Hungarian Statistical Office reported 177,135 asylum applications filed that year (a small fraction of which were successful). In subsequent years, the numbers have fallen considerably, with only 29,432 filed in 2016, and fewer than 4,000 claims in 2017. Nevertheless, these waves of asylum seekers have hardened Hungary's attitudes towards migration and EU membership, and led Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his populist Fidesz party to base their 2018 electoral campaign on an anti-immigration platform. After Fidesz secured a parliamentary supermajority in April 2018, Hungary passed a law placing more restrictions on asylum applications and rendering it illegal to offer aid to asylum seekers.

In a 2015 joint statement from their Heads of Government, the Visegrad countries expressed their willingness to enhance bilateral assistance, provide aid to countries of transit and origin, and give financial and material assistance to countries with a significant refugee population. This demonstrated a preference for an externalized migration policy, and allocation of funding to third countries. The V4 have strongly emphasized control and protection of the EU's external borders, reiterated in their 2018 Statement on the Future of Europe. In this statement, the Heads of State also insisted that EU action should be focused not on redistributing, but on preventing migration pressure in Europe. As a result, they have contributed €35 million for border protection in Libya.

In December 2015, the Hungarian and Slovakian governments filed a complaint with the European Court of Justice against the Council's 2015 refugee relocation decision. Their action was dismissed by the Court on 6 September 2017. Notwithstanding the Court's ruling, the V4 continue to oppose the relocation scheme. As of February 2018, Czechia and Slovakia have relocated only 12 and 16 asylum seekers respectively, whereas Poland and Hungary have not relocated any asylum seekers so far. In December 2017, the Commission referred Hungary, Poland, and Czechia to the Court of Justice for non-compliance with the 2015 decision.

Financial contribution	Budget allocation	Reform Dublin	Reform Schengen
Not willing to provide further financial support to the CEAS	Money should be allocated to strengthen external border controls and to external cooperation	No – they are against the creation of any kind of quota, either mandatory or voluntary	Yes - a reform of the Schengen area is necessary to ensure the internal security and to prevent secondary movements of asylum seekers

DENMARK

Like many other EU countries, Denmark experienced a sudden influx of refugees in 2015, with Eurostat reporting nearly 21,000 first-time applications for asylum filed that year. By 2017, that number had dropped to only 3,125. However, the exceptional changes in 2015 led the Danish government to adopt more restrictive measures. In July 2015, the newly-elected right-wing government announced that it would reduce the benefits for asylum seekers, a move meant to deter them from settling in Denmark.

In 2016, Denmark introduced a law that would allow the police to search asylum seekers and to confiscate any non-essential items worth more than 1,000 kroner (£ 1,000) to cover the expenses for asylum application and accommodation. In 2017, new controls were introduced at the border with Germany, in order to avoid the rise of asylum seekers in the country following the Swedish decision to introduce checks at the border with Denmark and to deny access to people without a valid ID document.

Amnesty International reported that in 2017, Denmark annulled its standing agreement with the UNHCR to resettle 500 refugees annually, thus demonstrating its unwillingness to host more refugees.

In May 2017, the European Council adopted a decision recommending that temporary internal border control in the Schengen area be prolonged for a maximum of six months. The decision involved five countries (Austria, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway) and followed two similar decisions adopted in November 2016 and February 2017. The five countries involved have continued to maintain these temporary controls, with their most recent extensions set to expire in November 2018.

Due to its unique 'opt-out' participation in EU asylum law, Denmark is not bound by the 2015 EU Council decisions on relocation. However, Denmark is party to the Dublin III Regulation.

Financial contribution	Budget allocation	Reform Dublin	Reform Schengen
Readiness to provide financial assistance to frontline countries to prevent secondary movements.	Money should be allocated to frontline countries to improve their accommodation capacity, but priority now should be given to borders control and externalization to stem the flux of migrants	Yes, a relocation quota should be voluntary. Those countries who do not want to relocate asylum seekers should contribute financially to support countries with higher numbers of asylum seekers. However, Denmark has an option to opt out of an eventual reformed Dublin Regulation.	In allowing temporary border controls with neighboring countries, Denmark has suspended Schengen for several years

SWEDEN

In 2015, Sweden received 163,000 asylum applications, 35,520 of which were from unaccompanied minors. This exceptional flow of newcomers prompted an EU Council Decision in June 2016 to suspend the relocation of asylum seekers from Italy and Greece to Sweden until June 2017. Indeed, Sweden had the highest number of applicants for international protection per capita in the EU in 2015 (11,503 applicants per million inhabitants). Nevertheless, the government maintained its commitment to the 2015 relocation scheme and resettled 491 individuals.

Sweden also made considerable efforts in resettling refugees from other countries in the world. In 2016 it resettled 1,907 persons and pledged to increase its annual resettlement to 3,400 people in 2017. In 2016, the government enacted a new law requiring all municipalities to receive newly-arrived refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection for resettlement or integration upon request from authorities. This law includes requirements for civic orientation and language courses.

Despite its initially welcoming attitude towards asylum seekers (also demonstrated by its compliance with the EU Emergency Relocation Scheme), the Swedish government quickly adopted a more restrictive policy on asylum and immigration. Sweden has long been an attractive county for asylum seekers and immigrants due to its generous migration policy dating back to the 1980s, but the 2015 refugee crisis and the exceptional influx of asylum seekers put a strain on the reception system. It was therefore decided that between July 2016 and July 2019, beneficiaries of international protection would be granted a temporary, rather than permanent, residence permit. Following these changes, Eurostat reports that the number of first-time applicants for asylum in the country fell to roughly 22,000 per year in 2016 and 2017. This fall in demand was accompanied by an increase in return decisions. In addition, Sweden has introduced temporary controls at the border with Denmark, requiring a valid ID document to cross the bridge between the countries. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven has said that these measures were not only intended to target internal problems, but also to encourage other Member States to accept more refugees.

In 2018, national opinion is split on the issue of migration, with the Swedish parliament voting in June to offer failed asylum applicants a chance to remain. New elections are scheduled for September, and the Sweden Democrats, a nationalist party, have been gathering momentum in pre-election polls.

Financial contribution	Budget allocation	Reform Dublin	Reform Schengen
Sweden is already coping with asylum applications and the costs of reception; it is not willing to further contribute to the CEAS	Finances should be shifted to countries with higher per capita ratio of refugees; they should also support stronger external borders and third country cooperation	Yes – Sweden supports a mandatory relocation scheme to distribute asylum applications more equally across Europe	In allowing temporary border controls with Denmark, Sweden has suspended Schengen for several years

BELGIUM

According to EuroStat, Belgium received 44,660 asylum applications in 2015, 18,280 in 2016 (representing 1.45% of the total number of applications in the EU), and 18,340 in 2017. As of February 2018, 1,169 asylum seekers have been relocated to Belgium: 700 from Greece and 465 from Italy. In 2017, 1,309 Syrian and Congolese refugees from Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Uganda were resettled there.

In 2016, Belgium adopted a new asylum law, implementing restrictive and dissuasive measures. Theo Francken, the Secretary of State for Immigration, is known for his restrictive position towards immigration and asylum. In December 2017, following a meeting between Belgium's government and the delegation of the Sudanese government, a group of Sudanese nationals were repatriated. The decision was highly criticized, as the deportees later reported the human rights violations committed by the government upon their return. Street protests were immediately organized to demand the resignation of Francken. However, the Secretary did not resign, as the Flemish Nationalist Party would otherwise have withdrawn its support from the coalition government.

Belgium has allocated €10 million to the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, showing a strong commitment to externalizing migration policy and to stemming northbound migrant flows.

Financial contribution	Budget allocation	Reform Dublin	Reform Schengen
Willing to provide financial support to frontline countries to prevent secondary movements.	Besides support to frontline countries, there should be an increase in funding for border controls and external cooperation.	Yes – but it prefers a voluntary quota system. Those countries which do not relocate should contribute financially to support Member States with a higher number of refugees.	No – it is essential to protect the free movement of persons.

ESTONIA

Estonia has not received a high number of applications for international protection compared to other EU Member States, but more applications are filed each year. According to EuroStat, Estonia received 230 first-time asylum applications in 2015, 175 in 2016 (representing 0,01% of the total number of applications in the EU), and 190 in 2017.

As of September 2017, 141 asylum seekers have been relocated to Estonia from Greece under the 2015 relocation scheme. In the same year, the government presented a new asylum law that extended forcible returns to people who were sentenced to imprisonment for certain types of crimes. Amnesty International has also reported a lack of investigations for racially motivated crimes against refugees and migrants.

As holder of the Presidency of the European Council from July to December 2017, Estonia presented a proposal to reform the Common European Asylum System and the Dublin Regulation, introducing solidarity measures and a voluntary relocation scheme, rather than a mandatory one. However, the proposal was not accepted by the EU Member States.

Along with a voluntary distribution of asylum seekers, Estonia asks the EU to make a greater effort to stem migration flows by intervening in the countries of origin via humanitarian and development aid. In particular, it supports the idea of providing financial aid to third countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan in order to help them cope with the high number of refugees in their territory.

Financial contribution	Budget allocation	Reform Dublin	Reform Schengen
Willing to provide financial support to frontline countries to prevent secondary movements	More sources should be allocated to border controls and external cooperation with countries of origin and transit, to reduce the number to arrivals	Yes – but it prefers a voluntary quota system rather than a mandatory one.	No – it is essential to protect the free movement of persons.

SPAIN

According to EuroStat, Spain received 14,780 first-time asylum applications in 2015, 15,755 applications in 2016, and 31,120 in 2017. Most of the migrants arriving in Spain come from Morocco, Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea.

The migrants' screening and treatment protocols upon their arrival in Spain has raised some points of criticism. According to a Human Rights Watch report, migrants are held in cells in poor conditions, and placed in longer-term immigration detention facilities pending deportation.

Such episodes mostly occur in the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco, the entry points to Spain for 6,246 migrants in 2017. Due to the situation in these enclaves, the Spanish government adopted a special measure establishing that "those foreigners who are detected at Ceuta's and Melilla's border lines when trying to irregularly cross the border, can be rejected to avoid their illegal entry in Spain". This provision was harshly criticized by lawyers and NGOs, and in October 2017 Spain was condemned by the European Court of Human Rights for rejecting access to migrants at the borders of Ceuta and Melilla.

Another critical aspect of the Spanish asylum system is the length of the procedure. Data provided by Amnesty International shows that between January and December 2017, Spain received 28,853 applications, and in October of the same year 34,655 applications were still pending. Such a system constitutes a problem for the asylum seekers because the period during which they are entitled to government support expires before their application is processed.

In addition, as reported by Amnesty International, Spain did not fulfil its commitment to relocate 15,880 asylum seekers under the EU emergency relocation scheme; only 1,328 individuals were relocated by the end of 2017.

Financial contribution	Budget allocation	Reform Dublin	Reform Schengen
Asks for more financial support from other countries to manage asylum applications and to contend with the costs of reception	Additional sources should be allocated in favor of frontline countries and to strengthen external border controls	Yes – it supports a mandatory relocation scheme to more equally distribute asylum applications across Europe	No – it is essential to protect the free movement of persons.

PORTUGAL

According to EuroStat, Portugal received 895 asylum applications in 2015, 1,460 in 2016, and 1,750 in 2017.

Under the 2015 relocation schemes, Portugal relocated 1,518 asylum seekers from Greece and Italy, but authorities reported that of those relocated, over 720 had left the country by the end of 2017.

Indeed, Portugal is not an attractive country for asylum seekers, as there are not adequate reception facilities; refugees are often forced to live in rural areas where they are isolated and have limited possibilities to integrate.

Despite these structural deficiencies, Portugal has expressed its willingness to host more asylum seekers and refugees, and calls for more solidarity among Member States. Refugees are considered a precious resource for the country's economic development, helping to combat the demographic deficit. In 2015, António Costa, Portugal's Prime Minister, affirmed that "it is in Portugal's interest to be proactive, because there are areas of the country losing population and we have a serious demographic problem". A more efficient reception system was created in 2015 with the launch of the Refugee Support Platform, composed of national and local organizations. There is a welcoming spirit throughout the country and at all levels of government, especially locally, and in 2017 Portugal continued making a stand for solidarity with refugees. Portugal is striving to become a welcoming and attractive country for asylum seekers, but it needs financial support from the EU to develop an efficient reception system.

Financial contribution	Budget allocation	Reform Dublin	Reform Schengen
Portugal is still recovering from the economic crisis and cannot provide further financial support to the CEAS	Priority should be given to countries who host a higher number of refugees. Portugal lacks funding for the costs of asylum processes and accommodation, but is willing to host more asylum seekers; to do so, it needs financial support	Yes – it supports a mandatory relocation scheme to more equally distribute asylum applications across Europe and to foster solidarity. It also calls for additional funds for those countries who will relocate more asylum seekers	No – it is essential to protect the free movement of persons.

MALTA

According to EuroStat, Malta received 1,845 asylum applications in 2015, 1,930 in 2016 (representing 0.15% of the total number of applications in the EU), and 1,840 in 2017.

Malta is the smallest EU country and has the highest number of asylum seekers per inhabitant. Until 2016, a restrictive and discouraging policy on asylum was adopted; migrants arriving in Malta were immediately sent to detention centers, where they would have to remain for about 18 months. In 2013, Malta was already condemned by the Strasbourg Court for the poor conditions of detention in its reception centers, deemed to be inhumane and degrading. In January 2016, Malta introduced a new migration law to end the practice of automatic detention of people who enter the state irregularly. The new reform provides for accommodation and medical screening in a closed Reception Center for up to 7 days, where they will be informed of their right to apply for international protection.

During Malta's presidency over the European Council in 2017, Malta proposed in a non-official document that the European Commission find legal ways to send migrants and asylum seekers back, but the Commission raised doubts about the proposal since countries like Egypt, Libya, and Algeria hold a poor human rights records.

Refugees also face difficulties with integration in Malta, as the country does not have an immigration history and its society has never been very multicultural. The country has frequently renewed its request to the EU to share the responsibility for asylum seekers, seeking to relieve the burden on southern countries.

Financial contribution	Budget allocation	Reform Dublin	Reform Schengen
Not willing to provide further financial support for the CEAS, but at the same time requests higher contributions to countries with high numbers of asylum seekers	Money should be allocated to frontline countries. Additional resources should be allocated to external border controls and external cooperation	Yes – it supports a mandatory relocation scheme to more equally distribute asylum applications across Europe	No – it is essential to protect the free movement of persons.

THE NETHERLANDS

According to EuroStat, the Netherlands received 44,970 asylum applications in 2015, 20,945 in 2016 (representing 1,66 % of the total number of applications in the EU), and 18,210 in 2017.

As of February 2018, the Netherlands has relocated 1,754 asylum seekers from Greece and 940 from Italy.

The 2017 elections, won by the center-right liberal party, raised some concerns about the rise of the far-right Freedom party, which obtained the second largest sitting in the Parliament. The electoral debate was essentially centered on immigration, with the radical right Freedom Party claiming that Muslim immigration could pose a threat Dutch national identity.

In 2016, the country adopted a policy encouraging returns, thus limiting access to international protection. It expanded the list of safe third countries and established an “accelerated procedure” for asylum seekers. It was also decided that temporary residence permits could be refused or revoked if the third country national had been sentenced without an appeal for at least six months (for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection) or ten months (for refugees), whereas the previous law foresaw the refusal or revocation of the permit following a term of imprisonment of at least 18 or 24 months.

In October 2017, the government presented a Coalition Agreement that restricted social assistance for beneficiaries of international protection, who would no longer receive social benefits, rent benefits, or care benefits during the first two years of their legal stay in the country. Instead, housing, health insurance, and assistance in the integration process would be directly provided by their municipalities.

Human Rights Watch has reported worsening reception conditions and asylum procedures in the country, as the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) reduced its shelter capacity from 48,700 to 31,000 places and closed 45 locations in 2017.

Despite these restrictive measures, the country is sensitive to the needs of unaccompanied minors and to the safety of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) asylum seekers in reception centers. Measures aimed at encouraging school enrolment of minors and at improving teachers’ expertise on trauma have also been introduced.

Financial contribution	Budget allocation	Reform Dublin	Reform Schengen
Not willing to provide further financial support to the CEAS, but is willing to give support to frontline countries in order to avoid secondary movements	More resources should be allocated to external borders controls and to external cooperation	Yes – but only a voluntary relocation quota. Those countries who do not relocate should contribute financially to support countries with a higher number of asylum seekers	No – it is essential to protect the free movement of persons.

Recommended readings

- Remarks by President Donald Tusk at the leaders' summit on the global refugee crisis: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/09/20-tusk-remarks-leaders-summit-refugee-crisis/>
- The EU at the General Assembly: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/unga/>
- Address by President Donald Tusk at the 71st United Nations General Assembly <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/09/21-tusk-speech-unga/>
- A condensed explanation of the Common European Asylum System: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum_en
- A very interesting video on the European Asylum Support Office by José Carreira: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qzz0VObN9Qg>
- On the EU-Libya Migrant Deal: <http://www.e-ir.info/2017/04/11/the-eu-libya-migrant-deal-a-deal-of-convenience/>
- Critical analysis of EU's actions in Libya: <https://www.ceps.eu/publications/libya-strategy-wasn%E2%80%99t>
- On relocating and integrating refugees, with a historical perspective: <http://www.medam-migration.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2017-MEDAM-Assessment-Report.pdf>
- Financial analyses on the refugee crisis response:
 - Den Hertog, Leonard, 2016, EU Budgetary Responses to the 'Refugee Crisis': Reconfiguring the Funding Landscape, *Centre for European Policy Studies Paper in Liberty and Security in Europe No. 93*, available online at: <https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/LSE%20No%2093%20LdH%20on%20EU%20Budgetary%20Responses%20to%20the%20Refugee%20Crisis.pdf> ;
 - Den Hertog, Leonard, 2016, 'Money Talks: Mapping the funding for EU external migration policy', *Centre for European Policy Studies Paper in Liberty and Security in Europe No. 95*, available online at: <https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/LSE%20No%2095%20LdH%20Mapping%20Funding%20final.pdf>
- Third Berlin Roundtable on Refugees & Migration (May 5, 2017), with representatives from UNHCR, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IOM and others: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gpm_BEgzC3E
- UNHCR summary of the refugee situation in Europe: <http://www.unhcr.org/publications/fundraising/5874f9b77/unhcr-global-appeal-2017-update-europe-regional-summary.html>
- The International Organization of Migration's (IOM) recommendations to the Austrian presidency of the Council of the EU (Ministers), July 2018: <https://www.iom.int/news/un-migration-agency-presents-recommendations-incoming-eu-council-presidency-austria>
- 'Zero' Draft for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, projected for adoption by the UN General Assembly in December 2018: https://refugeemigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180205_gcm_zero_draft_final.pdf

Annex – Example Document for Draft Agreement



Brussels, 29 June 2018 (OR. en)

EUCO XT 20006/18

**BXT 51
CO EUR 12
CONCL 4**

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

Subject: European Council (Art. 50) meeting (29 June 2018) - Conclusions

Delegations will find attached the conclusions adopted by the European Council (Art. 50) at the above meeting.

Conclusions – 29 June 2018

1. In light of the state of play presented by the Union negotiator, the European Council welcomes the further progress made on parts of the legal text of the Withdrawal Agreement. The European Council takes note, however, that other important aspects still need to be agreed, including the territorial application of the Withdrawal Agreement, notably as regards Gibraltar.
2. The European Council expresses its concern that no substantial progress has yet been achieved on agreeing a backstop solution for Ireland/Northern Ireland. It recalls the commitments undertaken by the UK in this respect in December 2017 and March 2018, and insists on the need for intensified efforts so that the Withdrawal Agreement, including its provisions on transition, can be concluded as soon as possible in order to come into effect on the date of withdrawal. It recalls that negotiations can only progress as long as all commitments undertaken so far are respected in full.
3. Work must also be accelerated with a view to preparing a political declaration on the framework for the future relationship. This requires further clarity as well as realistic and workable proposals from the UK as regards its position on the future relationship. The European Council reconfirms the principles set out in its guidelines and the position defined in March 2018. The European Council recalls that if the UK positions were to evolve, the Union will be prepared to reconsider its offer in accordance with the principles stated in the guidelines of 29 April and 15 December 2017 as well as of 23 March 2018.
4. The European Council renews its call upon Member States, Union institutions and all stakeholders to step up their work on preparedness at all levels and for all outcomes.