European Union

Beginner Committee

Chair: Hudson Wang

Topic 1: Reforming Migration and Asylum Policies:

Introduction:

The policies on migration and asylum have become one of the most significant problems that the European Union (EU) is facing at the moment. In the last few years, the number of refugees and migrants has increased the strain on the EU. The regions plagued by war, poverty and climate change have only added to the number of refugees. Nevertheless, the EU has proposed different solutions, for instance the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), yet, the differences in the member states' asylum application processing still persist. The crisis in the Mediterranean, the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, and climate-induced displacement highlight the need for an urgent unified and fair migration policy. This committee will seek to develop and promulgate a new, better and more equitable set of policies on asylum and migration and at the same time respect human rights of EU citizens.

History:

The EU migration and asylum issues are part of historical and geopolitical challenges. The Schengen Agreement was signed in 1985 to take down the internal borders of European states. The agreement was made without taking into consideration the different levels of migration pressure that the external borders of the EU have on countries like Italy, Greece, and Spain. Furthermore, the refugee crisis of 2015 revealed the weaknesses of the EU's migration policies. Other than the EU migration policies, the civil war in Syria, as well as the wars in

Afghanistan, Libya and other countries, led to a flood of asylum seekers into Europe. The Dublin Regulation was adopted to address the system, which provided that all asylum seekers must request asylum from the first EU country of entry. In the end, it put a great deal of pressure on the frontline states. This lack of a coordinated EU response has generated political tensions and the rise of nationalist rhetoric in some member states, resulting in the adoption of more restrictive migration policies.

Current Situation:

Today, although the EU is still in the process of implementing changes, the policies on migration and asylum are still a subject of controversy. For example, the Mediterranean is still a deadly way for migrants, and thousands of people die every year in an attempt to reach Europe. On the other hand, the member states have very divergent views on this issue. Some focus on the humanitarian dimension while others concentrate on controlling the borders. The EU has also sought to work with third countries like Libya and Turkey to help control the numbers of migrants and refugees. But instead of solving the problem, these partnerships have brought about concerns about human rights because of reports of torture and poor conditions in detention camps. At the moment, one of the issues being discussed is the modification of the Dublin Regulation. This is because frontline states still demand a fair share of asylum seekers. Moreover, climate change also plays a role in the issue and enhances migration trends. Hence, it is important to come up with long term measures that address the root causes of migration which include; poverty, conflict and environmental changes. Finally, the most recent case studies also demonstrate different angles of the problem. Greece and Italy still deal with overpopulated refugee camps. On the other hand, Germany has called for the EU to show more solidarity in accepting asylum seekers. Poland and Hungary, however, did not cooperate with the EU's

attempts to impose compulsory refugee quotas and argued that migration policies should be a national domain. Moreover, the UK's departure from the EU has further enriched the migration context as Brexit changed the rules on free movement and cooperation in asylum.

Questions to Consider:

1) How can the EU create a more fair system for distributing asylum seekers among member states?
2) How can EU migration policies address security concerns while considering human rights obligations?
3) What role should third party countries play in this matter?
4) How can the EU address the root causes of migration (migration, poverty, environmental degradation)?
5) What measures should be implemented to improve conditions in refugee camps and processing centres?
6) How should the EU handle internal political divisions among member states regarding migration policies?

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Topic 2: Promoting Green Energy Transition in EU Member States

Introduction:

To begin, the European Union (EU) has pledged to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, which resulted in a number of policy initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions due to this commitment. An example of a policy is the European Green Deal framework. However, the shift to renewable energy sources itself has posed challenges to the EU. More specifically, the supply of finance to enable large-scale green energy projects, and the economic and social divergence between member states. This committee will be exploring ways to accelerate the EU's transition to renewable energy while ensuring that economic stability and equitable access to sustainable resources are not jeopardized.

History and Context:

The EU has been a leading power in the fight against climate change for many years and has paid much attention to the energy sector transitions. More specifically, improvements were noted with policies like the Renewable Energy Directive and the European Green Deal, which provided a good basis for an energy transition that would prioritize wind, solar and hydro power over coal and gas. Nevertheless, this attempt was not without some constraints and limitations, and hence the EU's vision of climate neutrality could not be achieved. Today, many EU countries continue to use fossil fuels. Additionally, the European Union's energy dependency on external sources has posed a challenge on the energy security of the EU and this has only been

worsened by the fact that the dependent energy source is Russian gas. In 2022, the Russian attack on Ukraine increased the EU's energy dependency problems and the need to diversify supply sources from non-EU countries. These challenges must be dealt with now, and it needs a collective effort so that all member states can move forward without regard to their economic status.

Current Situation and Case Studies:

Although the EU has already made progress in expanding renewable energy capacity, yet, disparities among member states pose challenges to a unified transition. There are countries such as Germany and Denmark that are committed to this mission, and have made significant investments in wind and solar energy. Conversely, nations like Hungary and Bulgaria face financial and infrastructural obstacles that slow their shift to green energy.

Primarily, the European Green Deal framework is one of the key initiatives for this transition. The framework aims to allocate significant funding toward renewable energy research, development in infrastructure, and reduce gas emissions. At the same time, The NextGenerationEU recovery plan has also provided financial assistance to help member states accelerate their transition while mitigating economic disruptions. However, concerns remain regarding the feasibility of these policies, especially for economically weaker nations that struggle with high costs and lack of technological advancements. Finally, a crucial aspect of the green transition is energy security. The EU has sought to diversify its energy imports, expand domestic renewable energy production, and strengthen cross-border energy cooperation. The REPowerEU plan, introduced in response to the Ukraine crisis, aims to reduce reliance on Russian gas by investing in renewable alternatives and improving energy efficiency.

Questions to Consider

1) How can the EU ensure a fair and inclusive green energy transition across all member states?

2) What policies can support economically weaker EU countries in transitioning to renewables?

3) How can the EU balance environmental sustainability with economic stability?

4) What role should carbon pricing and incentives play in accelerating the EU's green transition?

5) What strategies can reduce the EU's reliance on non-EU fossil fuel imports?

6) How can the EU boost innovation and research in renewable energy technologies?

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