



EUROPEAN
COUNCIL
TOPIC BULLETIN

JUSTIN OH
SAMUEL ANCHIPOLOVSKY
CHAIRS

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Justin Oh and I am one of your European Council chairs. I am a junior in the Academy for the Advancement of Science and Technology here at Bergen County Academies and have been involved in MUN since my freshman year. MUN not only taught me current events that are essential to be cognizant of in the modern world, but it also enabled me to strengthen my researching, compromising, debating, resolution-writing, and public-speaking skills. Outside of MUN, I am the founder and organizer of BCA Flash, a Counselor-In-Training at Tenafly Nature Center, a stage manager for BCA's winter musical and one-act play, and a researcher in the Nano-Structural Imaging Lab. I hope you are as excited about this conference as I am. AMUN was one of my first conferences and I was frightened because I had little-to-no debating and speaking skills. However, it was one of the most rewarding and unforgettable MUN conferences I have attended due to the passion and confidence my fellow delegates had.

I am eager to meet you all and I look forward to the stimulating debate. I am thrilled to hear your stances on these two topics Sam and I handpicked. We believed these two topics were crucial to discuss in the European Council. Please put your best foot forward, go do your research, and just have fun with it!

Please feel free to email me any questions at jusoh20@bergen.org.

Best of luck,
Justin Oh, Chair, EC
jusoh20@bergen.org

Hello Honorable Delegates,

My name is Sam Anchipolovsky and I will be one of your chairs for the European Council committee. A bit about me: I am a junior in the Science Academy here at BCA, and I have been involved in Model UN since coming to BCA. What I value most about Model UN is its emphasis on current events being integrated into historical resolutions, as well as the valuable connections and relationships that you can form, inside and outside the committee room. Outside of MUN, I play ice hockey, do research in cell biology, sing in choir, and enjoy video games like Fortnite. I am excited to watch each and every one of you engage in passionate debate, heated discussions, and constructive collaboration. I hope all of you can take away something meaningful from this conference, work hard, and enjoy yourself in the process.

Best regards,
Sam Anchipolovsky, Chair, EC
samanc20@bergen.org



Topic A: Brexit

Topic Background:

A referendum was held on June 23, 2016 to decide whether or not the United Kingdom should leave the European Union. The majority of the 30,000,000 + voters chose to leave the EU by 51.9% to 48.1%. The European Union (EU) is a political and economic partnership in which 28 European nations come together to promote economic co-operation. The United Kingdom consists of England and Wales, which both voted for Brexit while Scotland and Northern Ireland voted against it. Theresa May became the first post-Brexit Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Although she was initially against Brexit, May is now in favor of it because she has stated that it was the British people's choice. Many senior figures, including David Cameron, former British Prime Minister, who are anti-Brexit forecasted an economic crisis as soon as the UK decided to exit the European Union. Both the UK and



EU have continued to negotiate since the day the British people voted to leave the EU in which they met face-to-face for one week every month. Their main goal consisted of creating an agreement and balance on the rights of the UK and its people and the EU. As of now, the UK is due to leave the EU on March 29, 2019.

Topic History:

On June of 2016, a referendum was held to determine whether or not the United Kingdom should leave the European Union. Over 30 million U.K. citizens voted, and the majority chose to leave the EU by 51.9% to 48.1%. England and Wales, which chose to leave the EU, and Scotland and Northern Ireland, which chose to stay in the EU, make up the United Kingdom. This decision resulted in Theresa May to become the first ever post-Brexit Prime Minister of the U.K. on July of 2016. Since she wants to represent the majority of her

people, May is in favor of Brexit although she was against it at first. She appoints David Davis, Boris Johnson, Liam Fox, and Philip Hammond as Brexit secretary,



foreign secretary, trade secretary, and chancellor of the exchequer, respectively.

Anti-Brexit individuals, including former British Prime Minister David Cameron, predict an economic crisis the day the United Kingdom leaves the European Union. Nevertheless, in August of 2016, the Bank of England decreased its interest rate to a record low 0.25% in order to expand its bond-buying program. In addition, Theresa May



continued to be optimistic about Brexit by exclaiming to her Cabinet that she would not make Britain subside in power in the European Union; she believed that success would be found as a result of Brexit. Brexit secretary David Davis stated that Brexit showed that the British have freedom to choose their borders, taxpayers' money, and laws. In September of 2016, the Prime Minister attended her first group of 20 summit in Hangzhou, China where she discussed about a points-based immigration system. However, the Czech Republic's top Brexit negotiator, Tomas Prouza, exclaimed that the Brexit proposals were "completely unrealistic." In the complication, for the first time in four decades, European leaders get together without the United Kingdom in Bratislava, Slovakia to share an idea about their future.

The British currency dropped more than 6% in just minutes to a record-low level on October 7, 2016. The European Union, according to the Financial

Times, sought 60 billion euros from Britain when it leaves the group. Many European leaders scrambled to create agreements and express their concern. Italian minister Carlo Calenda stated that "chaos" played a large part in the Brexit planning and German Chancellor Angela Merkel met with the British Prime Minister saying that she does not have time to have close discussions on Brexit. European Union President Donald Tusk told British lawmakers that Brexit made "anxiety and uncertainty," but did not state if British citizens living in the EU were allowed to stay. On March 29, 2017, Representative of the U.K. to the EU Tim Barrow gave Tusk the letter that began two years of discussion. Theresa May tells the Parliament that "this is an historic moment from which there can be no turning back."

Current Situation:



The United Kingdom and the European Union are meeting face-to-face for one week every month to negotiate. Both believe that their goal is to establish an agreement, or rather balance, on the rights of the people in the U.K. and the EU.

Prime Minister Theresa May officially notifies the European Union that the United Kingdom is certainly leaving the bloc. According to Downing Street, the official residence of the Prime Minister, she is going to write a letter to the European Council and also add some negotiations and plans in terms of their exit and future works. Discussion on the future connections and exit are not allowed until the United Kingdom officially concludes that it is leaving the European Union under the Article 50 process. May states that the referendum result “was not just about leaving the EU,” but also a “change in the way the country works.” She also adds that, “part of that is building a strong economy and ensuring that the benefits of economic growth

and prosperity are felt across every part of the U.K.”

European Council President Donald Tusk tweets that he will “present the draft Brexit guidelines to the EU27 Member States.” To instruct European Commission’s chief negotiator Michel Barnier, Tusk anticipates a summit of the European Union members. Overall, European Union leaders desire to end all talk within a year to enable the terms of Brexit to be approved by both the European Parliament and British Parliament, in addition to the majority of the EU members.

The EU summit, set to be on October 17-18, 2018, has been seen to be the deadline for a general consensus on the terms of the UK-EU “divorce.” This will allow more time for the European Parliament and British Parliament to give formal consent of Brexit. If a deal is not made by then, another EU summit in December will give another option if both sides of Brexit yet want to share an agreement.



As of today, the United Kingdom is set to leave the European Union on March 29, 2019.

Possible Solutions:

Currently, approximately 3.2 million non-British European Union citizens in the United Kingdom, and around 1.2 million U.K. citizens living across the EU. It would be unsuitable to send them back to their own countries since millions of people would be affected. A solution that not only does not separate family members, but also protects the rights of these individuals is certainly possible. This will include each citizen to access social welfare as well as fundamental healthcare.

Brexit has caused numerous problems on the Irish Border. Thus, the United Kingdom has ideas that include utilizing new technology and procedures to create an Irish Border “as free as possible after it leaves the EU trading bloc.” This is because, aforementioned, Northern Ireland

voted against Brexit. This solution will result in traders to potentially receive clearance for goods movements and there may also be unique allowances for operators that are smaller so that regulations are kept in crucial fields such as agriculture.

Bloc Positions:

In spite of the intricate discussions of Brexit made by European officials, the U.K.’s closest trading partners like Germany and France question about the economic relationship in the near future. They wish for the United Kingdom to remain close to the EU bloc so that talks can still be made frequently. On the other hand, countries such as Italy and the Netherlands, alongside the European Parliament and European Commission, want a more outlined plan before the United Kingdom officially leaves the Union.



Questions to Consider:

How should the European Council recover the costs from the United Kingdom leaving the EU?

What consensus will be made on behalf of the European Council as a result of Brexit?

How will European Union members implement changes to balance out time, money, etc. within the bloc?

How will EU members regulate British citizens living in their countries?



Topic B: European Nationalism Risk

Topic Background:

The referendum that took place in Britain in 2016, now controversially known as Brexit, sent shockwaves not only through the European Union, but through the rest of the world. How would the EU survive without such a powerhouse economy, such a key cog of the Eurozone? The EU has ended up reeling from this momentous decision to this date, with the Euro and pound price falling significantly and the EU struggling to find a new direction moving forward. Yet, the same reasons that compelled Britain to leave the EU may be causing widespread changes among other Eurozone countries for years to come. Key issues like immigration and fiscal policy are driving citizens to pursue and elect more nationalistic governments, who seem to increasingly threaten leaving the EU as one of their campaign promises. This poses huge problems for the future of the EU as a whole, for if one nation





critical in solving the immigration issue leaves, it may weaken or cripple other, dependent nations, who now have to carry their weight—and more. Delegates will have to decide how to push forward, keeping the EU intact, and encouraging nations to act in the best interest of the EU as a whole.

Topic History:

C o o p e r a t i o n a n d
communication— those are the key
tenets behind the formation of the

European Union, and later the
Economic Council. When it held
its first informal meeting between
heads of state in 1974, the
European Council set out with a
purpose of bringing peace and
prosperity to a continent ravaged
by war and strife. This was a
monumental task--why would
nations that wanted nothing to do
with each other coalesce and
b e c o m e c o m p l e t e l y
interdependent, and even if they
wanted to, how could all of this be
done? Over the course of several
decades, as more and more
n a t i o n s j o i n e d a n d t h e



responsibilities and powers of the EU expanded, the leaders of the EC began partaking in more and more ambitious agreements, seeking to set common ground in government, economics, finances, and more. Several of these treaties and agreements remain significant to this day, and determine much of the activity and powers of the EU and the EC.

Some of the earliest agreements reached after the formation of the EU, such as the Schengen Agreement and the Maastricht Treaty, established important pillars that would come to define the Union for many years to come. Notably, the European Council was formally established in the Maastricht Treaty, tasked with providing general political guidelines for the direction of the EU, setting common foreign and security policies. Importantly, the EC deals with complex and sensitive issues that cannot be resolved in the lower ranks of the EU, giving power to the state heads in charge of the EC. This is a crucial component, and one that

provides a critical edge to the issue of nationalism.

In 1952, the Paris Treaty, the first founding treaty of the European Community, was hailed as a monumental agreement, one that would bring together a group of nationalistic countries in order to finally achieve world progress and move closer to peace. For a while, the European nations achieved exactly that: advancement after advancement was reached in the decades after the treaty, in areas such as economics, freedom, human rights, and many more. Despite the hardships that many of the nations faced, the strength of the Union persisted, and the wealthier nations were able to lift the rest of the Union up in times of poverty. Even if some of these nations were incurring serious losses and accumulating debts in their assistance of other member nations, the “common goal” of the Union was being preserved, and all was fine for the time being. However, as more serious problems started to present themselves, such as the crippling



effects of the 2008 recession, rise of terrorism, rising debt of member nations, and immense waves of immigration, EU members became more and more reluctant to put their necks out in assistance of other nations, when they had serious issues of their own to deal with. The wave of anti-globalism and anti-nationalism was on the rise, and it looked more serious than ever before.

Current Situation:

The election of Donald Trump as President of the United States sent shockwaves across the world, especially in the European Union, which reacted to this change in many different ways. Trump, an outsider with virtually no political history, ran promoting a nationalistic agenda, seeking to put “America first,” vowing to tear up many trade deals, implement a tight border and immigration policy, impose stiff sanctions and tariffs, and rewrite “the past 70

years of American foreign policy”, which had been an integral part in the formation of the European Union in the first place. Trump’s nationalistic agenda sparked similar rallying cries to begin emerging across Europe, which for years had struggled to recover in a post-recession landscape, and was being negatively impacted by the refugees pouring in from the Middle East. This led to the rise of many right-wing candidates, including Marine Le Pen in France, Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, Matteo Salvini in Italy, and Nigel Farage in the UK. Farage notably led the UK Independence Party, which spurred the British referendum that voted to leave the EU, dealing a shocking blow to the integrity of the EU. The rise of such right-wing parties threatens to change the EU forever.

Although Marine Le Pen was defeated in French elections by the more moderate Emmanuel Macron, the dangers of nationalism still persist, and grow stronger than ever, throughout the rest of Europe, including in small



nations such as Poland and Hungary. While it is widely believed that economic troubles, and the refugee burden, have all contributed to the rise of right-wing groups in nations like the UK, Italy, and the Netherlands, a different factor has caused right-wing tendencies to appear in Hungary, the Czech Republic, and other, smaller nations in Eastern Europe. The Czech republic has experienced robust economic growth of 5% and an extremely low unemployment rate of 3%, yet the booming economy has not stopped the shift to a nationalistic policy under Prime Minister Andrej Babis. Same goes for Hungary and Poland, where Prime Ministers Viktor Orban and Mateusz Morawiecki, respectively, have allied themselves together, and refused to take in refugees, losing this decision in a lawsuit filed by the European Union. Even so, the refugee crisis has led many overwhelmed member nations to pursue policies of isolationism, and ethno-nationalism, in order to keep their national identities

intact, and to ensure national security.

Furthermore, the decision of the UK citizens to leave the E.U., which comes into effect next year on March 29, jeopardizes the financial and economic stability of the EU. As one of the nations that led the EU for many years, and made numerous sacrifices to national policy in order to preserve the Union, the UK's departure is a signal for other nations that they may not always have the assistance of wealthier member nations at their disposal, and shows just how dissatisfied the UK was with its internal immigration policy. Now, there are countries who accept far more refugees than the UK did, so such a precedent may be compounded even more when such nations begin to seek alternative solutions to their problems, such as leaving the EU. Overall, it cannot be overstated the threats such nationalism and isolationism poses for the strength of the EU, and this was accentuated by Donald Tusk, president of the



European Council, when he wrote to member nations that the greatest threats faced by the EU are volatile conditions outside of the EU, rising anti-EU sentiments and ethnonationalism, and the euroscepticism of EU elites.

Possible Solutions

A summit in Bratislava more than two years ago that was called upon in response to the Brexit news vowed to increase cooperation between member states, and outlined many changes in what came to be known as the Bratislava roadmap. The outline basically stated that the member nations were dissatisfied with the status quo, and sought to implement changes that would prevent future instances of Brexit from occurring. However, despite the seemingly optimistic and proactive stances and policies discussed at the meeting, some leaders, such as PM Matteo Renzi of Italy and PM Viktor Orban of Hungary expressed dissatisfaction at what they described as “weak”

policies regarding migration and terrorism. Nevertheless, the common theme persisted that the member EU nations would have to stick together in order to survive in a post-Brexit world. There remain several important steps that the leaders of the EU could take to preserve the strength of their union.

To mollify the concerns of nations such as Hungary and Greece, which have been forced to take in enormous amounts of refugees, often times more than they can handle, the leaders of the EU should plan to enforce immigration laws more tightly around the entire continent, and direct the flow of refugees to alleviate pressure off border nations as much as possible. Furthermore, the EC could decide to address the problem at its core, by focusing on economic, immigration, and youth employment reform. These key issues, which are fueling much nationalistic fervor, if addressed properly, could lead to the stabilization of the union as a whole.



Additionally, some more drastic changes could be implemented, which may not gather the full support of the Council. Some leaders may consider delegating more power and control over to nations threatening to leave, although this might incentivize more nations to express dissatisfaction and threaten to leave, in hopes of preserving the union. In addition, drastic bureaucratic changes could be proposed to the EC itself, such as forming a separate committee, getting rid of the council president, and more, in hopes that changes to the EC will spread beyond to the EU. Overall, delegates will need to decide which changes, and to what degree, they need to implement in order to preserve the EU.

Bloc Positions:

In spite of the sacrifices that they have made, and have been forced to make, strong nations like Germany and France, especially now with the election of Macron instead of Le Pen, will continue to

support the general interests of the EU, and provide aid and support to countries who need it. Their efforts will be countered by those of other European nations, like Hungary, Poland, and Italy, who seek to further their nationalist agendas. Intermediate nations will seek to strike a balance between the two and help facilitate an agreement.

Questions to Consider:

What effect will any of the changes implemented have on the stability of the Eurozone?

How much power are member nations willing to give up in order to appease nations threatening to leave the EU?

How should the European Council itself change (if at all) to help deal with the problem of nationalists rising to the top of political parties?

How should these changes be implemented (logistics, time, etc.)?



Can any incentives be offered to entice nations to remain and strengthen the EU?

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