



-STUDY GUIDE-

Y-MUN TRAINING
DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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I. Letter from Secretary-General

Esteemed delegates of European Parliament,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the 10th edition of Yeditepe Model United Nations Training and Development Conference as the Secretary-General. Organized by the oldest Model United Nations Club in Turkey, every year we try to use our knowledge to provide our participants with an exceptional MUN experience.

Being aware of the current issues that our world is facing, Y-MUN 2017 will simulate 16 different committees. Most of the committees aim to give our participants a demonstration of the world's most urgent problems while some special committees will take you to the past to simulate some crucial events. With our brilliant Academic Team, we are working to provide you the finest academic experience.

In European Parliament, our MEP's will tackle many issues within Europe that is affecting its security and stability. I would like to thank Mr. Yunus İşçener and his academic assistant Ms. Mjellma Vula for the preparation of this committee. Lastly, I would like to give my thanks to my Deputy Secretary-General Mr. Uygur Berk Edebali who supported me greatly during this process and also Mr. Onuralp Acar and his deputies Ms. Dilruba Akçınar and Mr. Ömer Cem Sipahi for their work in creating this amazing conference.

Welcome where the journey begins!

Ege SÜREK
Secretary-General of Y-MUN 2017

II. Letter from Under Secretary-General

Distinguished delegates,

I am really grateful and excited to be your USG for European Parliament committee. In this committee we will try to simulate, to the best of our ability, how the European Parliament functions. I hope that our MEP's will find this study guide and topics enjoyable and educational. It is our intention to create a realistic experience for all those who come to this committee.

European Union is at a crossroads. The fate of the union is uncertain due to rising tide of populism, migration, separatism and terrorism. In this committee we chose to focus on how we can solve the daunting problem of security, focusing on dealing with terrorism, which has struck horror and fear in the capitals of Europe in the last years. We will also cover the issue of independence movements and countries leaving the union, and how we could offer fresh solutions and approaches to these developments. We expect this EU parliament to increase security in the union and establish a foundation for stability for years to come.

I want to stress to all delegates and MEP's the importance of understanding how EU parliament functions. This study guide will try to explain in simplest terms what your objectives will be and how you can achieve them. This can be a really fun and interesting experience for you if you focus on the issues and try to take it seriously. Feel free to come to me during the committee sessions and ask any questions.

I sincerely believe that members of the European Parliament will be able to overcome all of these difficult issues to restore stability and security in the European Union.

Yunus İşçener

Under Secretary-General for European Parliamen

III. How delegates/MEP's should act and what's expected of them in the EU Parliament

European Parliament operates in a way that is different from the usual MUN committees because its rules of procedure are quite unlike the other committees such as DISEC or ECOSOC. Our committee will have its own set of rules and procedures which will be further explained during the conference.

The delegates who come to this committee will be expected to behave according to how MP's in European Parliament behave in reality, so we advise all who are coming to this committee to follow some basic guidelines;

- The MP's should **respect each other's opinions and refrain from using direct personal insults** against another members of the parliament.
- The MP's should research the topics and their political group's stance on the topics, each member of parliament is expected to generally follow their political groups guiding ideology and their respective countries interests when voting or speaking on an issue.
- The MP's are expected to act in in unity and cooperation with their own political group or association. Each member of parliament belongs to a specific political group, so you have to work with your team to dominate the debate in the parliament.
- The MP's are heavily encouraged to get to know other members in their own political group and act in coordination with them through the use of *message papers*.
- **Each political group must have at least one speaker on each issue.** For example, if the issue is increasing counter-terrorism measures in Europe, Christian Democrats must have at least one person from their group make comments and contributions on the discussion.
- The MP's are expected to respond to issues debated and potential crises with resolutions. Resolution is something similar to a law, in the EU parliament MP's are expected to pass

legislation/laws on important issues, basically passing laws and legislation is how the parliament will deal with crises and issues that will come up. It is the instrument of power for the Members of Parliament.

- When the EU Parliament passes a law or legislation it is legally binding for EU countries, and will directly affect all members of the European Union.
- **(IMPORTANT)** In this EU parliament we will have **three types of actions** (legal instruments) that members of parliament are allowed to initiate¹;

1. **Regulation:** Any member of the parliament has the power to propose a regulation for a specific issue.

It is one of the most powerful legislative forces that EU Parliament and members of parliament have, so use it wisely.

A regulation is a binding law or legislative act that creates certain rules, restrictions or sets guidelines for a certain topic. It has to be applied across all EU countries.

“As “European laws”, regulations must be complied with fully by those to whom they are addressed (individuals, Member States, European institutions).”

2. **Directive:** A “directive” is basically a mutual goal that EU Parliament sets for all member states.²

¹ http://www.europedia.moussis.eu/books/Book_2/2/3/3/index.tkl

² https://europa.eu/european-union/eu-law/legal-acts_en

Directives are not as powerful or significant as regulations because it is up to the EU member states to decide how they will reach these goals. It is not strictly legally binding, but EU countries are expected to follow-through.

Example: EU Consumer Rights Directive

What is it? – A directive on basic consumer rights on EU

How is it applied? – Each country can decide to enact this directive according to their own national positions and circumstances. France and Poland might have different ways applying it. It is not like a regulation, where each member applies it in exactly the same way.

3. **Decision:** This type of action is also important because it is mean to targets one member-state, a company or private individual.

A decision by the EU parliament could target a specific country or a single issue pertaining to a specific region or nation in EU.³

4. **Recommendation and Opinion:** These are the least powerful tools that European Union's legislative body has. They are used analyze and outline policy goals.

A recommendation could be used to express the desire of EU parliament on any given topic or subject.

Opinion can be used to express the opinion of the parliament on any topic or to analyze an issue.

³ <http://www.usda-eu.org/eu-basics-questions/difference-between-a-regulation-directive-and-decision/>

- In our committee there will be a President of the European Parliament. This individual will chair the parliamentary sessions and will ensure order and decorum.
- Members of European Parliament have the privilege to ask a **Parliamentary Question** to the President of European Parliament regarding how institutions function, what rules they should follow or any other information related to the topics being debated.
- **Voting procedure:** The President of EU Parliament will call on each political group separately to vote on the given issue. This will be done in order to maximize efficiency since it will be too timely to ask for the vote of each individual MP separately.
- A **Simple Majority** will be enough to pass regulations, directives, decisions, recommendations or opinions. 50% + 1 will be satisfactory.
- Each political group has right to discuss among themselves strategy or issues which they may consider important. This privilege could be used during the committee sessions if so desired. *The group will be given their own space to discuss specifics.*
- **Each political group will have a leader** that is pre-determined, this can be changed through an internal political group voting procedure through a simple majority.

IV. Introduction to European Politics and Policy

The European Parliament is the only directly elected international legislature in the world. It has 751 members also referred to as MEPs who are elected directly by EU citizens for a renewable five-year mandate. Today, the Parliament and the **Council of Europe** are considered to be the main law-making institutions of the European Union even though in the past this wasn't always the case. In the early days of the EU, the Parliament only played a consultative role and its members had to be nominated by national governments until the Treaty of Rome which changed the indirect election process into direct one. The **Lisbon treaty of 2009** gave the European Parliament new law-making powers and increased the number of its members.

The Parliament has three main powers: to legislate, to do budgetary supervision and to monitor the democratic process.⁴ The parliament shares the power to legislate with the Council of the European Union where laws are adopted by a mutual decision procedure. The Parliament has the power to make amendments to different pieces of legislation. The power to supervise and approve EU's annual budget is another power it shares with the Council of the EU. The parliament can decide on budget spending on different cultural/educational programmes, humanitarian aid and also refugee programmes. It monitors all democratic processes within the EU by supervising and investigating all community activities. Human rights are among its main priorities. The European Parliament also has a say on EU's enlargement endeavors. It monitors the negotiations with different candidate countries such as Turkey and at the end of the negotiation process it has the power to approve or deny their membership.

The parliament has four main bodies: The first one is The Presidency, which is made out of the president who chairs the work of the parliament and represents it externally. The president is assisted by 14 vice presidents and they are elected for a mandate of two and a half years. The second body is the Conference of Presidents which brings together the Presidents of the different political groups who plan the agenda for the plenary sessions. The third and fourth bodies are The Bureau and the Secretariat which deal with organizational and administrative issues.

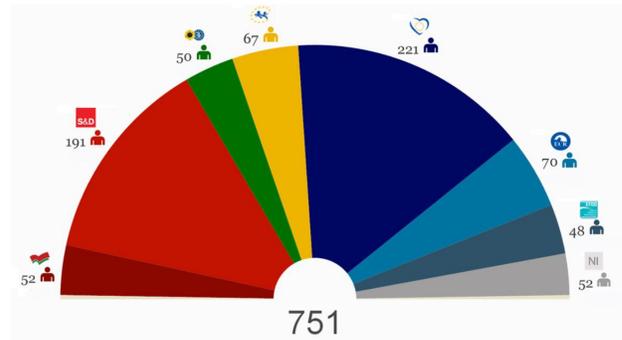
The number of MEPs seated in the parliament is proportionate to the size of the population of their respective countries. Elected Members can either participate independently or form political groups to defend their positions. This practice of forming political groups started in 1953, MEPs of that time even though selected by national parliaments decided not to sit in the form of national delegations but instead to sit accordingly to their political affiliation.

Today there are seven main political groups or blocs that dominate the European Parliament:

1. Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)

⁴Parliament in action. 2017. *The European Parliament in action - How the EP works*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://europarlament.touteurope.eu/understanding/how-the-ep-works.html>. [Accessed 07 November 2017].

2. Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
3. Group of the Alliance of Democrats and Liberals for Europe
4. Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
5. Group of the European Conservatives and Reformists
6. Group of European United Left/Nordic Green Left
7. Group of Europe of Freedom and Democracy⁵



These groups study different committee reports, then they discuss and formulate their positions on the matter at hand. They can also propose laws and amendments. In order to create a political group it is necessary to have at least 25 MPEs who come from one quarter of the member states. The biggest groups in the parliament are the European People's Party with 216 MPEs and the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats with 189 MPEs. The non-attached members are MPEs that don't belong to any of the groups mentioned above. The annual influence index released by Vote Watch, which ranks individual MEPs and countries, in its 2017 report stated that MPEs from Germany and Italy are the most influential and dominate the works of the parliament.⁶

⁵ Parliament in action. 2017. *The European Parliament in action - How the EP works*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://europarlament.touteurope.eu/understanding/how-the-ep-works.html>. [Accessed 07 November 2017].

⁶ VoteWatch. 2017. UPDATED: *Who holds the power in the European Parliament? Assessing the influence of individual MEPs* VoteWatch | VoteWatch. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.votewatch.eu/blog/updated-who-holds-the-power-in-the-european-parliament-assessing-the-influence-of-individual-meps/>. [Accessed 07 November 2017].

Throughout its existence the parliament has played a key role in many political and economic developments that have taken place within the Union. One of these developments with a significant importance to our agenda is the **Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)** which was established in 1993. Its main aims are strengthening international security and preserving peace and stability in the European Union. Despite the fact that the parliament has a limited role in EU's foreign policy, it has supported the CFSP from the start and has fought to extend its power.

In 2015, High Representative Federica Mogherini was given the task of preparing the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS). The goal of the Strategy was to provide the EU with a broad strategic framework for today's international challenges. The European Parliament played a consultation role in this process. As of 2017, the EUGS identified five priorities for EU's foreign and security policy:

- The security of our Union;
- State and societal resilience to our East and South;
- An integrated approach to conflicts;
- Cooperative regional orders;
- Global governance for the 21st century.⁷

Along the lines of these priorities the EU policy-makers have recently been dealing with momentous movements of independence and disintegration such as Brexit. These have disrupted the Union's internal equilibrium and caused a rise in anti-EU, populist, far-left and far-right political groups. Financial markets have become vulnerable and an underlying factor in all of these developments has been the economic crisis and the popular loss of confidence in the European Union. Separatism has seen a significant rise in the continent since the recent independence movements initiated by the Catalans, as well as independence movements among Scots, Basques, Corsicans and Flemings. These movements pose a big threat to the long term financial and political stability of the European Union. The way the EU and its institutions

⁷ Wanda Troszczyńska-van Genderen. 2017. *Foreign policy: aims, instruments and achievements*.

choose to respond to these external and internal events will decide what the future will look like for the Union.

V. Background on the formation of the European Union

The European Union we know today is considered one of the most successful examples of international cooperation. It has come a long way despite the fact that it is still an unfinished product. Understanding the European Union and the way it works is not an easy task since nothing in the academic field can quite capture its rather *sui generis*⁸ character. It shows many typical features of an intergovernmental organization but at the same time it also has some qualities of a state and it is constantly evolving and changing between the two.

The first seeds of cooperation in Europe started to take root right after the devastating results of the Second World War. Europeans became aware of the need for rebuilding their war-torn economies, combating extreme nationalism in order to prevent further conflict and providing security in the face of the growing tensions of the cold war era. They believed that if they could foster reconciliation between France and Germany the rest of the countries would follow. The first steps towards integration were taken in 1951 when the leaders of six countries: Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany signed the **Treaty of Paris** which entered into force in 1952 and created the European Coal and Steel Community also known as ECSC. The ECSC created a free-trade area and regulated the production of coal and steel industries. Supranational institutions were established in order to manage the ECSC and today's EU Institutions are largely based on this model. Even though the ECSC had limited powers it was recognized for being the first supranational institution where member states transferred significant powers. As French foreign minister Robert Schuman stated in his famous declaration on May 9th 1950: "*Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.*"⁹

⁸ *sui generis* adj. - unique

⁹ European Union. 2017. EUROPA - The Schuman Declaration – 9 May 1950 | European Union. [ONLINE]

In the years to follow efforts towards a deeper integration continued with the two Treaties of Rome in 1957 which established both the **European Atomic Energy Community** and the **European Economic Community** (EEC). The EEC was created to foster the integration of European economies; it created a common market which lifted trade and movement barriers on capital, labor, goods and services. During the 1970s and '80s the EEC took in new members and expanded its powers. The 1978 Single European Act (SEA) fostered intensive and rapid policy coordination between its members. The primary goal of the act was the creation of the common market by 1992. The European Union was formally established with the **Maastricht Treaty**, which was signed on February 7, 1992.

The Maastricht treaty created the three main pillars of the EU: The European Communities, a common foreign policy, and cooperation in justice and internal relations. The European Union that started as a peace project is now a political and economic union of 27 members and home to 508 million citizens. This grand experiment hasn't only fulfilled its primary goal of fostering peace among its members but it has surpassed it by offering a rule-based, democratic system with support for the liberal market and respect for human rights. It has turned into an international platform where member countries can discuss, negotiate and take mutual decisions on different international issues that benefit all countries involved.

VI. Security in Europe

European Union has gone through a rapid transformation in the last decade. There are many new security and societal challenges that European Union member states face; home-grown terrorist attacks, cybercrime, strategic threats, mass-migration, organized crime, youth unemployment, rise of extremism and radicalization. These emerging trends and challenges threaten not only the fabric of European society, but also significantly increases the security risks in each member state.¹⁰

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-security_en

We expect the MP's to pass new legislation/laws and regulations to deal with these problems.

As the European Parliament it is our mission to take these obstacles head on, and ensure that we reform and improve in **three main areas of European security policy;**

Counter-Terrorism, Cybersecurity, International Cooperation.

1. **Counter-Terrorism:** Home-grown or domestic terrorism has become a critical issue in last few years.¹¹ The reasons for these developments is complex, but it mainly has to do with radicalization and alienation of certain segments of the population, whether it be violent jihadists, networked groups or lone wolf attackers. The large-scale domestic attacks in France, Germany, Belgium and many other member states has raised alarm-bells across the European security apparatus and policymakers.

As the Members of European Parliament tackle this pressing issue on a federal and national level, they should focus on **four** aspects;

- ***Combating radicalization and recruitment:***

Radicalization has been a key factor in growth of domestic terrorism. Grievances against social, political and economic injustices, and cultural prejudices are used to recruit youth and the disaffected. Many of the terrorist attacks have been carried out by nationals who have grown up in the country which they have targeted. This radicalization is not only limited jihadist groups, but also left-wing and right-wing groups are affected. In 2016 there were 719 arrests related to jihadist terrorism, 86 for left-wing and 12 for right-wing.¹²

Some steps to combat radicalization, alienation and terrorist recruitment could potentially include; tackling online terrorist propaganda, detection and termination of internet based terrorist content, reaffirmation of European values through education and media, strengthening rules to

¹¹ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/tesat2017.pdf>

¹² <https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/tesat2017.pdf>

prevent new methods for terrorist activity, creation of new commissions to focus on specific issues regarding these topics, increased surveillance, and finding new cooperative initiatives to enhance the flow of information between European member states on security.

(MP's should ask the following questions and find reasonable solutions)

What is the problem of radicalization and alienation?

Why are terrorist groups successful in recruitment?

How can we prevent the radicalization of communities?

How do we stop terrorist groups abroad from recruiting EU citizens to join their causes?

Which EU policies are working? Which ones are not?

Could we use previous EU laws and improve upon them?

Is it possible to create and fund new commissions/organizations to tackle certain aspects of this issue?

- ***Protecting citizens and reducing vulnerabilities***

Protecting the lives of citizens should be the number one concern for all who try to reform and improve EU's security policy. In 2016 alone 142 victims died in terrorist attacks, while there were 379 injured. The heavy cost in human life is always permanent and cannot be reversed, and creates environment of fear and radicalization. Europe should be both safe and free, which mean we must protect EU citizens without infringing on their fundamental rights.¹³

In order to prevent more EU citizens from being targeted by terrorist attacks the European Parliament must find effective solutions in security cooperation and counter-terrorism strategies.

¹³ <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/implementing-european-agenda-security>

Members of Parliament should also take necessary steps to reduce vulnerabilities, which means focusing on areas that create security weaknesses for member states. These actions could include; protecting strategic targets, curbing access to fire-arms and explosives, strengthening transport safety, and reforming external border controls.

(MP's should ask the following questions and find reasonable solutions)

How have the recent global and regional developments changed the way in which terrorism is carried out?

Have European security measures in the recent years been enough to protect citizens?

What new steps could be taken to protect European citizens and population centers?

What are the security vulnerabilities of Europe? How can we strengthen them?

What is my political group's position on these issues?

Is it possible to increase security without suffocating freedoms?

Is it possible to take the necessary steps without outright discrimination?

- ***Reducing terrorist capabilities and information exchange***

Reducing the financing and money-laundering capabilities of terrorist organizations is fundamental in the fight to secure Europe.¹⁴ Terrorist organizations, including the IS have found new ways and methods to carry out their brutal attacks, through the use of digital domain, lone wolf attacks and clandestine financing.

According to the European Commission “Terrorist organizations and individual terrorists need financing – to maintain their networks, to recruit and supply, and to commit terrorist acts themselves. Cutting off sources of finance, making it harder to escape detection when using these

¹⁴ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/about-europol/european-counter-terrorism-centre-ectc>

funds, and using any information from the financing process to best effect can all therefore make a powerful contribution to the fight against terrorism.”¹⁵

In order to reduce terrorist capabilities and encourage information exchange the European Parliament could; strengthen and create new legislation against money laundering and terrorist financing activities, tighten and balance checks on cash flow from third-world countries, analyze and focus on threats linked to the utilization of new technologies in financial transactions, and give more power to financial intelligence units of member states, improve the exchange of financial intelligence between member states and other countries, and support increased tax and financial transparency through new regulations.

(MP's should ask the following questions and find reasonable solutions)

What does “terrorist capabilities” mean exactly?

What steps have been taken by EU to reduce these capabilities?

What more could be done in order to prevent terrorist financing?

Could the information exchange and intelligence sharing between EU member states be increased or improved upon? How so, what necessary steps could be taken?

How are new technology and cyberspace influencing terrorist capabilities?

What limitations or strategies could strengthen EU security in reducing terrorist activities which utilize new technologies?

- **Response coordination and expansion capabilities**

All European Union member states must be prepared to handle the crisis that comes with a terrorist attack. The response coordination becomes crucial, which entails minimizing and managing the consequences of a terrorist attack between national agencies, member states and both.

¹⁵ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1455113825366&uri=CELEX:52016DC0050>

The aim should be to minimize the impact of the attack and to recover as speedily as possible. Interoperability of different EU response agencies and member states could play a crucial role. Response coordination should take place between member states since terrorist attacks and threats can transcend national boundaries and take place/ or have connections in other member states.

In order to increase our response coordination efforts and expand capabilities we could; develop risk assessment tools to minimize damage, share and expand on the best practices, tools and resources on assisting victims of terrorism, revise and reform civil protection mechanism, create EU emergency and crisis coordination arrangements, review EU civil protection legislation and increase outreach and cooperation with third-world countries on the issue of counter-terrorism.

(MP's should ask the following questions and find reasonable solutions)

What is response coordination? How do we expand capabilities to support it?

Could the European response coordination in the cases of terrorist attack be improved?

What kind of legislation/directive could the EU parliament pass to move forward on this issue?

Have previous attempts to enhance response coordination and capabilities succeeded?

Would more federal cooperation and integration on this topic prove helpful to national government or over-complicate existing mechanisms?

What is the position of my political group for this issue?

2. **Cybersecurity:**

Cybersecurity has become one of the inescapable parts of security related discussions in European Union.¹⁶ Eighty percent of European companies experienced at least one cybersecurity incident and there were more than four-thousand ransomware attacks per day in 2016. It is clear to all observers that cybersecurity challenges will only grow in the future since our dependence on technology will, for the foreseeable future, continue to increase.

Most companies and government agencies are uninformed and lacking in technical expertise to handle these threats. According to one report, member states of the EU could risk losing more than 1.5% of their annual GDP to cyberattacks, or calculated as 41\$ billion for the European Union as total loss.¹⁷

European Commission has suggested that “The EU needs more robust and effective structures to ensure strong cyber resilience, promote cybersecurity and to respond to cyber-attacks aimed at the Member States and at the EU’s own institutions, agencies and bodies. It also needs strong cybersecurity for its Single Market, major advances in the EU’s technological capability and a broader understanding of everybody’s role in countering cyber threats.”

As the Members of European Parliament tackle this pressing issue on a federal and national level, they should focus on **two** aspects;

- *Reforming Cybersecurity policies and new initiatives*

The EU has to reform its agencies, strategies and institutions to be prepared for all kinds of new cyber threats. These threats could come in form of malicious cyber activities that not only pose a

¹⁶ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21480/cybersecurityfactsheet.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://threatpost.com/eu-struggles-to-determine-growing-cost-of-cyberattacks/119870/>

very serious threat to the economic stability and security of all EU's 28 members, but also threaten the integrity and function of military and civilian infrastructures.¹⁸

These threats originate from both non-state and state actors. At times these malicious threats are done with aim of gaining profit, but at time there are also done in the pursuit of political and strategic gains. Online propaganda, mass cyber operations and manufactured fake news are all part of the cybersecurity threat that faces European Union. European parliament need to encourage and strengthen European cyber resilience through new initiatives and strategies since the cybersecurity threats are ever evolving and shifting, EU needs to be able to keep up-to-date on these new emerging dangers and pitfalls.

To overcome these obstacles, the European Parliament could implement the following solutions; a new and common approach to EU cyber security policy which would focus on emerging threats and areas in which EU is behind, a new directive which would improve cyber security capabilities across member states and provides increased flow of information and intelligence, creation of new federal security measures and guidelines, new regulations which requires reporting obligations for operators of essential services, creation of a blueprint for how to respond to cyber-attacks and a federal level cyber research and competence institute.

(MP's should ask the following questions and find reasonable solutions)

What is cybersecurity? Why is it so important?

What are the cyber threats that EU faces?

How can we strengthen and reform the current cyber defenses of EU?

Have there been previous legislation and directives that were passed to ensure cyber security?

¹⁸ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21479/resilience_deterrence_defence_cyber-security_ec.pdf

What is my political groups position on increasing cybersecurity?

- ***Empowering the digital single market***

European Union must adapt to the digital revolution and the new internet based economy. Data has been cited as “the new oil of the economy”, and European Union is in an advantageous position to take lead on the expansion of this digital economic revolution.¹⁹ Empowering the digital single market will strengthen Europe’s ties to the cyberspace, emerging technologies and provide economic security in the future.

President of European Commission **Jean-Claude Juncker** has stated that “ I want to see pan-continental telecoms networks, digital services that cross borders and a wave of innovative European start-ups. I want to see every consumer getting the best deals and every business accessing the widest market – wherever they are in Europe.”

In order to empower a digital single market and ensure European economic and strategic dominance of cyber economic domain, the European Parliament could take the following steps; regulations that will make e-commerce much easier across member-state borders, reducing the burdens businesses face from different VAT regimes; implementation of a common VAT threshold, Europeanized copyright law that aims to harmonize copyright measures, launch anti-trust competition inquiries into the e-commerce sector, ending unjustified geo-blocking by service providers, encourage investments in the use of AI and supercomputers in the medical fields and energy efficiency, providing tax-relief to small and medium sized online startups to foster growth.²⁰

(MP’s should ask the following questions and find reasonable solutions)

¹⁹ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4919_en.htm

²⁰ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4919_en.htm

What is a digital single market? What are its benefits to the EU member states?

Should EU interfere in the organic growth of the digital economy?

What role should the European Union play in this digital revolution?

Are there any negative consequences of embracing a digital single market?

Would my political group support such an idea?

3. **Cooperation and Defence:**

The subject of cooperation is very broad since it is concerning the security cooperation of the 28 members of the European Union both among each other, and with NATO. European leaders have moved to established deeper strategic efforts and ties with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. EU and NATO aim to establish basis for greater cooperation in certain strategic areas and in turn strengthen European capacity for defense.

When it comes to defense, European Union is the world's second largest military-spender, with €203 billion spent on defense expenditure in 2015.²¹ EU defense and security policy has come to play an even more serious role in the recent years since tensions have increased in Eastern Europe with expansion of Russian Federation into Crimean Peninsul, the deepening civil war in Syria, and infiltration of European Union by IS terrorist networks. The events and forces around and within Europe are pushing member states towards pursuing much closer strategic ties in the areas of military defense, strategic planning and expansion of capabilities.

As the Members of European Parliament tackle these pressing issues on a federal and national level, they should focus on **two** aspects;

²¹ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/defence-security/>

- *Cooperation with NATO*

European Union's natural cooperative partner is NATO. The security challenges that EU and NATO face are identical, 22 members of EU are already NATO allies, which makes it impossible to downplay the interdependence of the two organizations.²² NATO-EU cooperation, in the last decade, has become completely integral to strengthening European defense, security and capabilities. As the Russian Federation annexed Crimea in 2014, it became clear once again that both NATO and EU have the same interests in the region, and that this partnership needs to be strengthened to overcome regional difficulties, support strategic planning effort and expand capabilities.

In order to deepen EU-NATO ties, and foster the growth of an increasingly mutually beneficial partnership, the European Parliament could; create a recommendation/opinion on strengthening ties with NATO, deepen cooperation on strategic communication and increase intelligence sharing between staffs, work together on analysis, expand coordination on cyber-security & defense operations and missions, develop interoperable capabilities, facilitate greater defense research and industrial cooperation, and begin parallel exercises in the near future.

(MP's should ask the following questions and find reasonable solutions)

On what basis should NATO and EU cooperate?

Is EU-NATO strategic and defense partnership beneficial for both organizations?

Will further cooperation be enough to deter Russian aggression?

²² https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/28286/EU-NATO%20cooperation%20-%20Factsheet

What is my political groups position on establishing closer strategic interests and ties with NATO?

Will these moves allow EU-NATO bloc to expand capabilities?

- ***Strengthening and boosting defense***

European Union policy makers and member states have begun making moves to strengthen Europe's security, separate from NATO and the influence of the United States. There seems to be a movement towards a more comprehensive defense union that would operate independently and alongside NATO, with its own budget and capabilities.²³

The statements coming from the new US administration have forced the hand of the European administration away from dependence and reliance on the United States led NATO. The most ambitious forecasts see the making of a common defense policy among the member state, where each member would have greater commitments to each other's security and EU would run specialized security and defense operations.²⁴

President Juncker has said that "For too long we have relied too much on the military power of others", We must now seize the moment to take charge of our own security. We owe this to our fellow Europeans." The European Commission VP for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness Jyrki Katainen has also stated that "People across Europe are worried about their and their children's security. Complementing our cooperation with NATO, we need to do more and better ourselves. Today we are showing that we walk the talk."

It's important for the future of European security and defense that European Parliament acts swiftly on this issue by providing a clear path forward.

²³ <http://www.newsweek.com/eu-defense-fund-tackle-russia-military-trump-nato-622648>

²⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/reflection-paper-future-european-defence_en

For the European Parliament to strengthen and boost defense across Europe the following steps could be taken; creation and implementation of a European defense action plan, establishment of a common European defense fund to deepen strategic cooperation and defensive ties among members, set a date for developing a basic list of common commitments among member states, coordinating annual defense policy, strengthening crisis management structures, move towards a permanent structured cooperation which would mean concrete capability projects and operations, prove that EU does have a rapid reaction capability and military presence through the utilization of EU Battlegroups (EU army), invest in infrastructure and capabilities of member states, implement common cost for EU Battlegroups, enhance the responsiveness of civilian crisis management, boost military spending and it's efficiency and expand the industrial foundation for military capability across EU.

Reinforcing a single market for defense industries across Europe and encouraging both foreign and member state based investment in defense industries are also other options to empower European security in the coming years.

(MP's should ask the following questions and find reasonable solutions)

What is current state of European defensive capabilities?

Does the EU have a common military force?

What are the weaknesses and strengths of European Union's defense?

How could we make European Union stronger in defense?

Is more cooperation and unity on defense among members good for EU?

Should there be a common European Army?

Should EU create a common defense fund? Do we need it?

What is my political party's position on these issues?

VII. Political Groups and their positions

There are eight major groups in the European parliament. They each have their unique ideology and positions across the political spectrum. Below we will briefly detail the policies of each group;

European People's Party (Christian Democrats)



The Christian Democrats make up the largest political group in the European Parliament with nearly 30% of the seats. Their policies are generally pro-European, which means that they tend to favor deeper integration of EU member-states. They are pro-business and focus on increasing economic growth, they support a European single market and a single digital market. Their policies tend to be center-right and slightly conservative.

Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (Socialists and Democrats)



The Alliance of Socialists and Democrats make up the second largest political group in the European parliament with 25% of the seats. Their policies are generally pro-European, they support integration and deepening of ties as long as economic inequalities are bettered and social freedoms are strengthened. They favor having more rules and regulations to make society fairer and more equal.

Alliance of Democrats and Liberals for Europe



(Liberals)

Alliance of Democrats and Liberals are the leading centrist group in the European Parliament. Their policies are mixed and vary according to member, however they tend to be neither completely left or right, they are moderates and centrists. They also tend to be pro-European and support the expansion European integration to a certain degree. They are pro-business and favor removing regulations to encourage growth of free-market. They make up 9% of the EP.

Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens)



The Greens make up 7% of the European Parliament. Their views are largely left-wing and progressive. Their members represent regional interests and environmentalist views. They care more about the environment than business interests.

European Conservatives and Reformists



Conservatives and Reformists make up almost 10% of the European Parliament. They are Eurosceptic and anti-federalist. They do not want further integration but just the opposite. Their members are generally right-wing, neo-liberal and conservative. They tend to dislike federalism intensely and support small government.

European United Left/Nordic Green Left



The European United Left makes up 7% of the European Parliament. Their membership is made up of socialists, communists, greens, and progressives. This group tend to be kind of Eurosceptic, although not always opposed to integration. They dislike neo-liberal and pro-business policies of other parties. They want to disband NATO.



Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy

EFD group has just 6% of the seats in the European Parliament but they are a vocal group. The group prides itself on being populist and very Eurosceptic. The members of this group tend to be center-right, anti-immigration and hardline Eurosceptic. They are pro-business and do support tax cuts and free trade.



Europe of Nations and Freedom

Europe of Nations and Freedom group has just 5% of the seats in the European Parliament. Their members are generally right-wing, nationalist, hardline Eurosceptic and very much opposed to immigration. They want a new Europe where the integration of the last 25 years is rolled back and national government can have authority once again.

VIII. Independence Movements and the Euro Exit Phenomenon

The European Union as a system has gone and continues to go through a dynamic life cycle. One of our objectives in this committee is to ensure the future stability of the European Union. While there have been many efforts put forth to ensure the sustainability and continuity of this complicated system, these efforts have come under serious threat in the events following the UK referendum to leave the EU held on 23rd of June 2016. To better understand how this process developed, we first need to take a look at the Lisbon Treaty: The first treaty to recognize the right of a country to leave the EU. Article 50 of the Lisbon treaty states in five paragraphs that, any member state may decide to leave the EU, and if so it has to notify the European Council of this decision also it has to negotiate and conclude an agreement with the Union. The article also states that there is a recognized timeline of 2 years for the state to reach an agreement and this timeline can only be extended if all states agree. The members of the European Council

representing the departing state cannot take part in the Councils discussions about its departure. The Lisbon Treaty put forward for the first time a never tested before mechanism for a country to leave the EU.

Thursday 23rd of June, 2016 will remain known as the day that activated the 50th article of the Lisbon Treaty. In total, more than 30 million people voted in the UK referendum and 51.9 percent of them voted for the UK to leave the EU. Wales also voted for Brexit while Scotland and Northern Ireland both voted for staying in the EU. These results pose an existential threat to the United Kingdom itself since Scotland, and Northern Ireland both stated the high possibility of conducting independence referendums in the near future based on the argument that they are being taken out of the EU against their will.

Britain with its geographical position as an island nation and with a strong tradition of parliamentary democracy has a significantly different national history from its European neighbors. To understand why the majority voted in favor of Brexit, we have to take a look at the main factors that caused the referendum and ultimately determined the result. First, a major factor that played a significant role was economics. The Brits that favored leaving saw the European Union as a failed and dysfunctional economic entity and believed that they would be better off if they left the Union. This argument was especially emphasized during the failure of the EU to address the ongoing economic problems that emerged after the 2008 financial crisis. A major problem for the British population was the significant economic gap between south European countries and other members like Germany and France which enjoyed a better economic climate and lower unemployment rate compared to south European countries which lacked behind in these matters. Second, recognized major factor was immigration. The economic differences among member states caused for the UK to experience a flux of immigration of workers from south European countries. According to the Office for National Statistics, the net migration of EU citizens to the UK in 2016 was a staggering 327,000 thousand which promoted the leave campaign to find wide support among Brits who were losing their jobs to their south European counterparts and feared the influx of refugees coming from conflict areas especially the Middle East. The third factor of Brexit was sovereignty which was reinforced with a rise of nationalism.

The British government believed that international organizations take sovereignty away from nation states and it regarded the EU as an organization that no longer served its purpose thus, it was strongly against deepening the integration of member states. Although, the causes of Brexit may vary according to different perspectives its short-term effects were unexpected and were felt throughout different sectors and the Union as a whole. In the wake of Brexit, stock markets around the world stuttered, and European banks suffered significant losses. A series of surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center found that following the UK referendum, the EU is experiencing a loss in public support and liability in most of its largest member states.

The European Union suffered a major decline in favorability with countries like Greece being significantly unsatisfied with the way the Union is handling its Eurozone challenges. Moreover, the EU saw a rise in populist far-right parties with their Eurosceptic and anti-immigration agendas. In the latest national elections, countries like Austria and the Czech Republic have politically turned to the right. Brexit accelerated and inspired pro-independence movements in different regions of Europe. The most striking example of these separatist movements is the Catalan movement in Spain.

Until the 1700s, right before modern Spain was born, Catalonia was an independent region and enjoyed its own unique language and laws. It has a population of 7.5 million which makes up 15 percent of Spain's total population and 20 percent of its economic output. Catalans believe that they offer more financial support than they receive and they see their strong economy as a viable stepping stone for the creation of an independent nation. On October 1, 2017, the region held a unilateral referendum on gaining independence and separating from Spain. The referendum was deemed illegal by the Madrid government and the Spanish Constitutional Court which demanded its suspension. During the referendum, the Madrid government intervened, and more than 800 people were injured as police forces clashed with voters and busted voting stations. According to the Catalan government, 42 percent of the eligible voters voted in the referendum which resulted in a 90 percent pro-independence vote.

On 27 October, the Catalan government declared Catalonia's independence which triggered the Spanish Senate to activate the never used before the 155th article of its constitution which gives power to the Spanish government to take an autonomous region under its control if that region is not obliging to the constitution. The article also called for immediate regional elections which will be held on 21st of December. In the face of these events the Catalan president, faced with multiple charges from the national court fled the country and now refuses to return unless promised with a fair trial. These events made the potential destabilization in the rest of Europe possible. There was a rise in nationalistic movements in other European regions as well as a solidarization with the Catalan cause which in turn poses a serious threat to the stability of the Union. The fate of other "Catalonia's" of Europe is uncertain and faces immense political difficulties

Recently, Italy has posed a risk to the financial and political stability of the EU. In 2016, Italy sparked another Eurozone crisis by voting no to a national referendum on constitutional reforms of the country aiming to raise its efficiency and lower its bureaucratic costs. This result forced Italy's Prime Minister to hand in his resignation which facilitated a vacuum that enabled far-right movements such as the 5 Star Movement to rise in popularity. If this movement gains into power in the upcoming 2018 national elections, it has vowed to hold a referendum on a new currency and an Italian Eurozone exit.

In the wake of these developments, the EU has been shaken to its core and has committed to act as one to reestablish the stability that was lost during Brexit. The President of the European Council Donald Tusk said that: "Brexit would bind the remaining 27 member states together, and that the council and the European Commission had a strong mandate to protect the EU's interests". According to Mr. Tusk EU's priority is to minimize the uncertainty caused by Brexit and increase public support for the Union. The European Parliament drafted a resolution on the Brexit negotiations, and it set a tough tone for the Brexit talks with the British government. The EU believes that the UK should pay a significant fine to cover for unpaid budgets, pensions, and loans. The European Parliament will play an important role in determining the Brexit agreement because the Council needs the Parliament's consent to conclude the final withdrawal agreement.

The European Union has put forth three top issues for negotiating exit guidelines with the UK, and these are citizen rights, Britain's financial commitments and the border issue with Ireland. Brexit has divided and shaken the European Parliament, responses among its political party groups have significantly varied. Among the liberal political groups of the European Parliament, there has been a climate of concern while serious calls for unity and reforms have been made. Meanwhile, among the Eurosceptic groups, the climate has been different; it has been a climate of victory with many of the MPEs believing that the UK will not be the last member state to leave the EU. In Catalonia's referendum case the EU has condemned the brutal police violence but has regarded it as an internal matter of Spain and has preferred to turn a blind eye. Some MPEs have seen Catalonia's independence movement as a turmoil that would encourage similar separatist movements and therefore have emphasized the need to silence such movements to ensure a stable and strong European Union.

The main challenge that the European Union will be facing after these turns of events is the matter of increasing stability in the region. In times of uncertainty, effective institutions contribute to stability; the EU in this context faces an immediate need for reform to account for the recent developments. There is also a need for a recovery in the Eurozone area to foster a secure and stable environment for foreign direct investment and longer life expectancy of the euro. Amid these possible financial and structural reforms, there are a few possible scenarios for the future and the stability of the Union. Some scholars have found a possible solution to the instability of the region in the establishment of a so-called "Two Speeds EU." That is an EU that would work like a two-speed structure made out of two groups, first group of "core" countries which would be highly integrated and a group of "periphery" countries which would be more free choose which EU policies they want to adopt. This scenario could put an end to separatist and exit movements in the region by offering another option to EU membership, therefore significantly increase stability in the region. Others see a looser and more intergovernmental structure as a better solution to the current situation. Here the European Union integration process would be put on hold, and possibly reversed by giving sovereignty back to nation states in certain areas. Even though this solution seems most likely if Eurosceptic parties come into power, it could offer an easier road for the EU to expand and include countries such as Georgia, Ukraine, Western Balkans and Turkey.

Last but not least some scholars suggest that the EU will face its challenges and come out of them more united in a more integrated system. This system would stop enlargement and foster further integration among the remaining states. Certainly, to restore and maintain stability in the region is a complicated issue depended on many variable factors. Among them, an important and most overlooked factor is public confidence in the EU institutions which has seen a serious decline after the Eurozone crisis and Brexit. To expand the life expectancy of the Union significant work must be done to restore EU citizen's consensus and public confidence by providing more transparency, representation, and participation in European Union's economic and political processes.

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