



Economic & Social Council

MACMUN 2017 | ECOSOC Background Guide



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“There is nothing we can say to the world’s children that can convince them the world needs to be the way it is. That means we must do everything we can to close the gap between the world as it is, and the world as it should be.”
– UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

Committee Overview

Mandate and Function of the Committee

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is the central organ of the UN responsible for advancing sustainable development.

The 1946 Charter of the United Nations (MM1) states key aspects of ECOSOC's function:

“[to] make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters, [...] make recommendations with respect to any such matters to the General Assembly to the Members of the United Nations, and to the specialized agencies concerned [and to] make recommendations for the purpose of promoting respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.”

Additionally, a 2013 amendment (MM2) by the UN General Assembly expanded ECOSOC's role as:

- I. A leadership forum for policy dialogue and recommendations
- II. The lead entity to address new and emerging challenges
- III. A forum for the balanced integration of sustainable development
- IV. An accountability platform for universal commitments, monitoring and reporting on progress at all levels

The functions of ECOSOC are achieved through substantive discourse, innovative thinking, and the coordination of activities of diverse UN agencies and bodies to achieve balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development: environmental, social, and economic. These functions are performed through a series of programs and segments throughout the year.

Importantly, ECOSOC engages a variety of stakeholders, including representatives from the private sector as well as over 3200 registered NGOs, creating dialogue between member states and other non-state players (MM3). ECOSOC functions on the United Nations ideals of equality and cooperation amongst states, where decisions are made democratically by the Committee.

Members of ECOSOC are elected by the General Assembly in three year terms, with equal geographic representation. Every July, members of ECOSOC are elected by the Committee to form the Bureau, which consists of a president and four vice-presidents with one Bureau member from each geographical region (African States, Asian States, Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States, and Western European and Other States). The Bureau proposes the agenda, helps to coordinate the Council's programmatic cycle, and helps organize meetings.

Simulation Style/Composition of the Committee

The MACMUN simulation will consist of a simplified version of actual ECOSOC procedure in order to accommodate the short duration of the conference and ensure all students are afforded equal opportunity to engage and learn. Rather than having student delegates assume leadership roles as members of the Bureau, the function of the Bureau will be assumed by the conference Chairs. The Chairs will moderate committee meetings, wherein preselected issues will be debated and discussed with the ultimate goal of collectively forming a resolution to address the issue. In addition to accepted delegates, non-state stakeholders may be invited to contribute to the discussion on relevant issues. Delegates are expected to research their country's stance and prepare for the issues, which are outlined in this package. Additionally, depending on the flow of the meetings, hypothetical crises may also be presented to the committee and discussed.

The ECOSOC committee will be composed of two Chairs responsible for maintaining the course of debate in accordance to the National Model UN rules and procedures. The Chairs will announce the opening and closing of each committee meeting, recognize any points or motions on the floor and facilitate discussion. They are given the final rule on any disputed points, and declare when questions are to be voted on by the body. It is also the decision of the Chairs to pass any draft resolution to be introduced for debate.

The committee will consist of 35 delegates representing their assigned countries. Delegates are expected to research the following topics, submit a position paper, and be prepared to debate based on their countries global stance and foreign policy.

A representative of a non-governmental organization or non-state stakeholder may present their stance on the topic to the committee at the discretion of the Chairs during designated times in the meetings. NGOs and other non-state stakeholders do not have the same rights as full members of the committee and will not be able to vote on substantive matters nor be sponsors or signatories of draft resolutions.

One page will be present during committee meetings to pass notes between delegates. Pages will be screening notes to ensure appropriate content and to maintain a professional environment.

Sample Timeline

9:30-9:40 – Roll Call

9:40-9:55 – Setting the Agenda

9:55-12:30 – Debate on the Agenda Topic and Motions

12:30-1:30 – Lunch

1:30-4:00 – Debate on the Agenda Topic, Motions, and Draft Resolutions

4:00-4:30 – Voting on the Draft Resolutions

4:30 – Closure/Adjournment of Debate

Forming Resolutions

Resolutions represent the opinions of the United Nations body as a comprehensive solution to the issue at hand. It is a final result of the discussions and negotiations regarding a topic that details a recommended course of action. A resolution is first considered a draft resolution prior to being voted on by the body. During the course of debate delegates can decide to work alone or collaborate with others to write a draft resolution. The delegates writing the resolution are considered “sponsors” and must recruit a certain number delegates as “signatories” in order for their resolution to be introduced by the Chairs to the committee. Signatories are members who wish to bring the resolution to debate but do not have to support the document. Once brought to debate, amendments can be made until the final resolution is voted on by the body.

Position Papers

The Position Paper is a detailed essay of your country’s policies and position on the topics that are going to be discussed in your committee. The creation of your position paper is an important task because it will help you, the delegate, to organize your thoughts and ideas about MACMUN topics so that you can successfully engage with the rest of the committee. Additionally, the position papers will be judged by the conference hosts, and the writer of the top position paper in each committee will be recognized at the conference award ceremony. Please note that to be considered for any award at MACMUN 2017, you must submit a position paper.

Your goals are to research your assigned country in depth, to examine the stance they take on the given topics, and to summarize this information in one position paper. The length should not exceed one page per topic, single spaced.

A strong MACMUN position paper should include the following:

1. How your country is affected by the issues
2. Your country’s policies with respect to the issues
3. Quotes from your country’s leaders about the topics
4. Actions that your country has taken with regard to the issues
5. What your country believes should be done to address the issues
6. What your country would like to accomplish in the committee’s resolution
7. Description of your relations with other countries’ as it relates to the issues at hand

Important Notes:

- Include your name, assigned country, and committee
- Please do not include illustrations, diagrams, decorations, national symbols, watermarks, or page borders
- Include citations and a reference page, making sure to use a standardized citation style of your choice consistently, giving due credit to the sources used in research (the reference page is not included in the page limit)

The deadline to submit your position paper is **February 5, 2017 at 11:59PM**; submissions should be emailed to macmunconference@gmail.com.

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Topic #1: The Macroeconomic Impacts of Refugees

"The profound sense of indignation caused by the picture of a dead Syrian boy on the beaches of Turkey and by the news of the 71 people asphyxiated inside a truck in Austria must be translated into unequivocal acts of solidarity. In a world where goods, capital, data and ideas flow freely, it is absurd to impede the free flow of people."

– Former Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff

Introduction

In the 2017 MACMUN conference, ECOSOC is examining the Macroeconomic Effect of the Refugee Crisis. The primarily economic focus will be on the large scale economic adaptations required for integration, resettlement and economic utilisation of refugees. However, the social changes accompanying economic policy will also be addressed, including but not limited to: the delicate balance of preserving a host country's culture versus adapting a mosaic-based national identity, social barriers between refugees and host countries, and the social identity of refugees within a host country.

History and Background

Although refugees to European Union countries currently primarily come from Syria, refugees also come from ongoing conflicts in other states. Ongoing violence in Afghanistan and Iraq, human rights abuses in Eritrea and poverty in Kosovo also drive people away from home and into more stable, prosperous countries nearby. In 2016, the top 10 origins of people applying for asylum in the European Union in 2015 include: Syria (360 000), Afghanistan (175 000), Iraq (125 000), Kosovo (70 000), and over 75 000 more spread out between Albania, Pakistan, Eritrea, Nigeria, Iran, and Ukraine. However, due to the scope of impact of the Syrian Civil War and the sheer number of refugees fleeing the state, the primary focus of background causes will centre around Syria's conflict.

The Syrian Civil War Grew out of the 2011 Arab Spring and escalated into armed conflict after President Bashar al-Assad's government violently repressed protests in Dera'a, calling for his removal. The Syrian Government was considered authoritarian by other international leaders due to restricted free expression, association and assembly, under emergency rule from 1963 until 2011. Authorities have harassed and imprisoned human rights activists and other critics of the government, who are detained indefinitely.

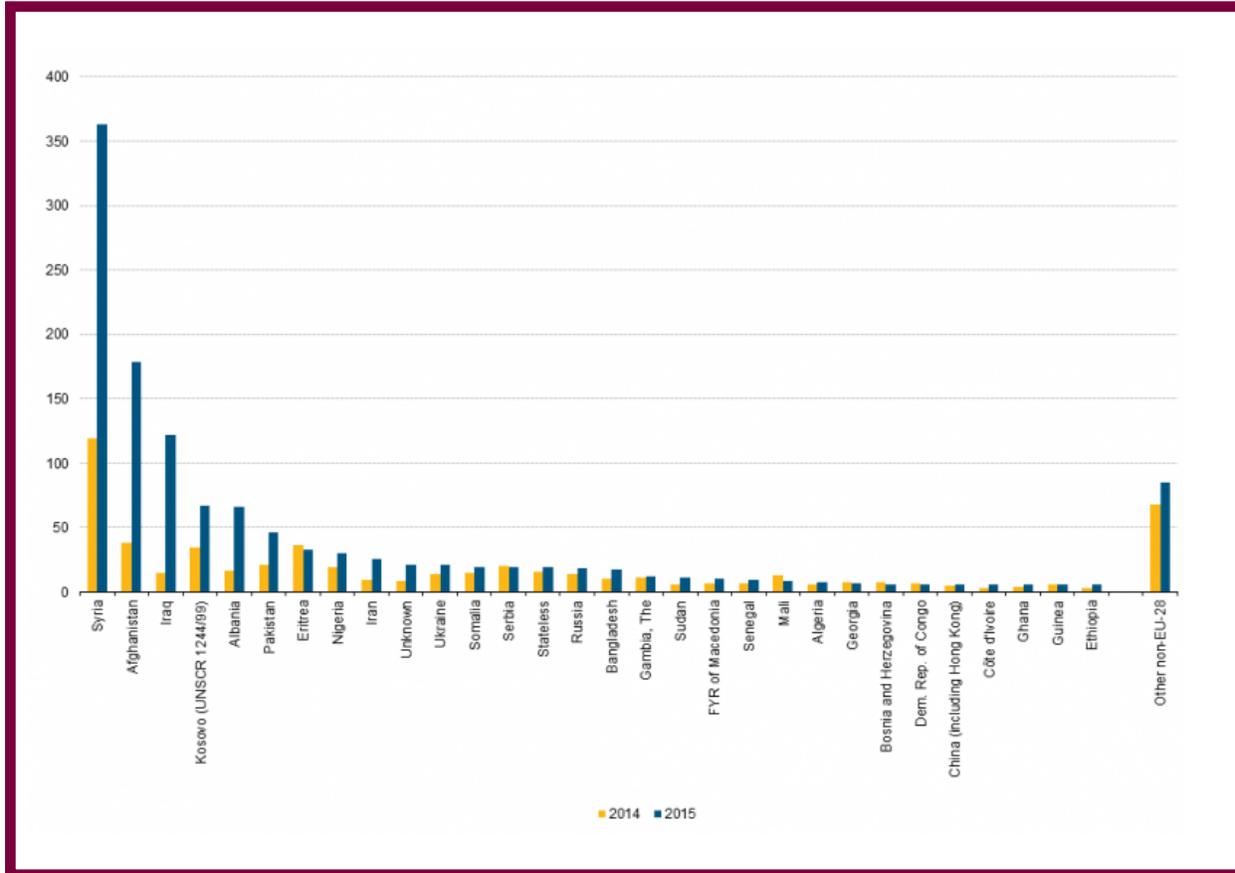


Figure 1: Countries of origin of (non-EU) asylum seekers in the EU-28 Member States for 2014 and 2015 in thousands of first-time applicants.

The Syrian Civil War is fought by several factions: Syrian government, Sunni Arab groups, Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces, Salafi jihadist groups, al-Nusra front, and ISIL. Those who supported the Syrian Government include Russia and Iran, the Lebanese Hezbollah party, and Syrian-based Palestinian group, PFLP-GC. Western powers such as France, UK, and the US backed secular rebel groups, making the conflict into a modern proxy war.

The Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) received military and logistic support from Iraqi Kurdistan and air support by US, Canada, British and French air forces, while other fighters such as ISIL had support from non-state groups and organizations. Fierce fighting and bombing of civilian filled cities, have resulted in huge fatalities; approximately 500 000 Syrians believed to have been killed in the conflict. The Syrian Centre for Policy Research UN’s tally of 250 000 might not represent the full picture because the organization stopped counting casualties in 2014 due to difficulty in obtaining accurate figures. So far, approximately 6.5 million people are internally displaced, with 4.8 million refugees externally displaced. Most external refugees have fled to Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq, with the rest making the sea voyage to Europe from Turkey.

The approximate total economic loss due to the conflict is estimated at 468% of Syria's 2010 GDP. World Vision and Frontier Economics estimate that conflict cost Syria \$275 billion in lost growth opportunities (150x pre-war Syria's health budget). The increased frequency of attacks on medical facilities has left more than half of Syrian hospitals partially or utterly destroyed. Half of all medically trained professionals fled Syria, while only about 1/3 of all Syrian hospitals remain functional. The demand for doctors is so high; there is 1 available doctor for every 4000 people, which is a concerning ratio for a country engulfed in war. Syria's population also decreased by about 21% in past 5 years, so less people to rebuild remain, and even less wish to stay in the country.

Current Situation

In the short term, and arguably, most urgently, the neighbouring developing countries bearing the brunt of migrants are running low on resources to sustain the ever-growing refugee population. Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq all have incurred serious economic depletions; 630 000 Syrian refugees have cost Jordan over \$2.5 billion a year (a quarter of the government's annual revenue) with Jordan's unemployment rate doubling since 2011 in regions with higher refugee concentrations, Turkey has hosted almost 3 million refugees but due to strain has announced the closing of the 2 remaining border gates to Syria to stem the flow, while Lebanon started requiring visas from Syrians in January 2016 as a similar attempt to control influx. As the war drags on and chances of prompt resettlement back into their home countries seems slim, methods to reduce strain on host countries are desperately needed.

In the long term, the current refugee crisis plays a crucial role in the world economy. As many refugees are streaming in Europe, a major economic power in the global market, their influence on Europe's economics will reverberate worldwide.

Due to geography, many refugees are migrating to Turkey, and then undertaking an often dangerous sea voyage to Europe, where they will arrive at external border countries such as Italy, Greece and Hungary. Due to the Dublin regulation, created to prevent asylum shopping (where applicants send applications for asylum to many potential host countries) as well as asylum orbiting (when no state takes responsibility for a "floating" asylum seeker), the first EU member



Figure 2: A map depicting the flow of refugees throughout Europe and originating countries such as Iraq and Syria. Most refugees attempt to reach countries that are Schengen Areas, regions that have abolished border control and allow for the free movement of people between countries.

state the asylum seeker enters, by default, is responsible for said migrant. Due to external border countries often being the landing spot for incoming migrants, there have been criticisms of unfair burdens, potentially leading to disproportionate economic impacts.

Under the Schengen Agreement of 1985, border checks between most member states of the EU are abolished, with the only border regulations existing in external Schengen border countries. Although done with the purpose of standardizing asylum laws, in the light of recent terrorist attacks and xenophobia, the Schengen Agreement - alongside with the foundation of open borders that the EU rests upon - is under threat. As seen by the example of the Brexit, which was spurred on partially by fears of Schengen Agreement-like economic migration and with its wide ranging economic impacts, the debate of open vs. closed borders (physical, security, political, economical or otherwise) rages on.

Bloc Statistics

- Unstable countries with fleeing citizens - Syria primarily
- Neighbouring countries bearing brunt of refugees - Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq
- Countries responsible for conflict/instability - USA, Russia, Syria, and countries contributing to and inputting resources for military action
- Countries able/willing to aid in refugee crisis - Undecided
- Countries directly or indirectly impacted economically - Most countries present in this meeting of the Economic and Social Council

Focus Questions

1. Will taking in refugees help or hurt your country's economy?
 - In the short term, if so, how?
 - In the long term, if so, how?
2. How will refugees fit into the current market demands of your countries?
 - Is education level, skill-level, training, salary demand and more a good fit for a particular country? If not, how to ensure each country gets the best match of refugees?
3. How do you plan to ensure cohesion in society between culturally diverse groups?
 - Consider societal value promotion (to be a melting pot or a mosaic? To assimilate fully or keep separate?), balancing ethnic demographics within classes (is it helpful to have a majority of one ethnic background in a particular working-class/upper-class enclave?), education of youth and etc.
 - Consider potential host populace cultural backlash - how might that affect employment? Economy? Long term sustainability (politics, economics, etc) of the country?
4. Assuming the Syrian War will end fully within the next decade, will repopulation and return of refugees to home country be feasible? What role will the rebuilt country play in the global economy and political sphere?

- Think about logistics of rebuilding a country - where will the money to rebuild destroyed infrastructure (and more) come from?
 - What economic (and subsequently political) influences will play a large role in the rebuilding of Syria?
5. Alternately, assuming war is not over, what impact will this disruption have on the world (and your country's) economy?

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Topic #2: The Implications of Economic Sanctions on Russia

“We are not afraid of economic sanctions or military intervention. What we are afraid of is Western universities.”
– Founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and former Iranian Shia Muslim religious leader, Ruhollah Khomeini

Introduction

The ECOSOC is also going to discuss the political and economic ramifications of UN trade embargoes placed on Russia, as well as their removal from the human rights council. This will facilitate in-depth analysis of the various alliances, blocs and rivalries between countries, as well as examine the changing power-balance processes happening in world politics. Focus will be put on the economic ramifications of trade embargoes, Russia’s (and allies’) role in the global economy and in terms of political influence and potential solutions to diminish tensions and belligerence.

History and Description

After the 4th Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich was accused of high treason for collaborating with Russia, he fled to Russia to live in exile. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict of 2014 ended in Crimea (Ukrainian Territory) being annexed by Russia.

In response, western powers removed Russia from the G8 (now known as G7), who, along with many members of the international community, condemned the Kremlin for instigating conflict, and the G7 has continued to host their meetings without Russia. Euromaidan was the name of the 2014 Ukrainian national movement to join the EU, and their former President being implicated in treason. The Ukraine-Russian War was seen as extremely unfavourable from both a political standpoint for the EU, and a moral standpoint for much of the international community.

In 2016, Russia began supporting the current Syrian president, led by Bashar al-Assad. Russian President Vladimir Putin’s commitment to aiding the Syrian Government can be explained through the geopolitical implications of the Syrian War’s increased devastation, and because of the proximity of Syria to Russia.

With the increased assistance from Russia, Assad was able to push the rebels out of Aleppo in late 2016, where the Syrian Government and Rebels have been fighting each other for four years. After initial news of the Syrian government’s victory, there were numerous reports that stated the Syrian government was executing innocents and rebels who had allegedly surrendered. Details of

the story emerged, and many civilians and rebel soldiers alike were requesting safe passage out of Aleppo. Initially, they were held up at certain checkpoints, but the Assad regime allowed them to leave in mid-December 2016.

Current Initiatives & Efforts

Aleppo is not the end of the Syrian Civil War, as the Rebels have not surrendered. The Rebels (and many western powers), believe that Assad is guilty of war crimes and is unfit to lead. While Assad has proven to be a firm and even aggressive leader, he has been a stabilizing force in Syria.

The fear of destabilizing the region through increased conflict, potential power vacuums, as well as aggressive military sanctions has made the international community hesitant to act firmly on “the Russia problem.” There are organizations such as the EU and NATO who believe Russia to be acting with ulterior motives in regards to the geopolitics of the Middle East. In 2014, Russia acted against the interests of the EU by meddling in Ukrainian politics and stunted their joining of the EU.

However, onlookers of the growing tension between Russia and the West feel that increasingly aggressive actions against Putin that isolate Russia further may leave the Kremlin with fewer and fewer peaceful avenues to pursue.

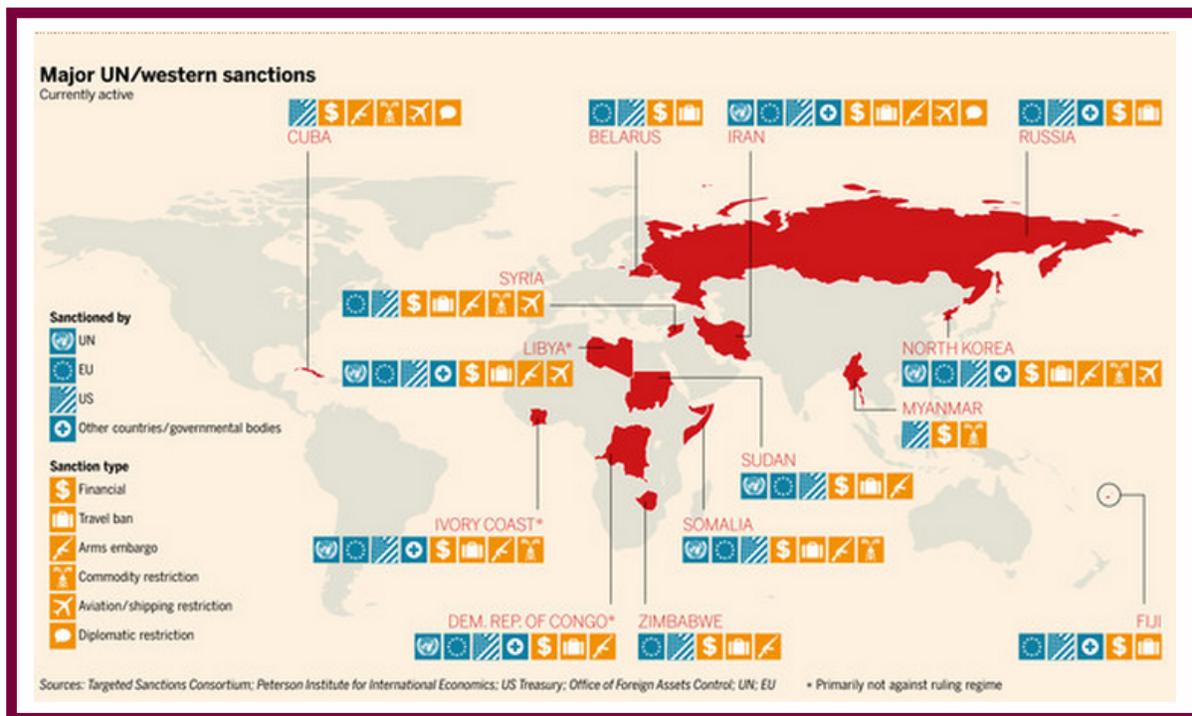


Figure 3: A map that depicts the types of sanctions currently active (2014) on countries around the world by the UN, EU, US, and other countries. Note that since the creation of this figure, changes have occurred, such as the US sanctions on Fiji being lifted.

Bloc Positions

- Pro-Sanction states: Germany (EU), Canada (possibly)
- Anti-Sanction states: Saudi Arabia, China (and possibly the rest of the BRICS)
- With Trump winning the American election, US-Russian tensions are subject to changes due to the two leaders' relationship. Some feel that such changes may be a good thing in the name of international relations, while others believe it to be a form of appeasement and cowardice.

With many opinions on the effectiveness of economic sanctions, dynamic relationships between countries, and recent actions, it will be interesting to see the stances of individual countries in this committee.

Focus Questions

1. Should western powers (US, NATO, EU) intervene in the Syrian Civil War? If so, is it in their best interests to invoke the ire of Russia?
2. Should the international community punish Russia for increased activity in the Eastern Hemisphere (Ukraine and Syria)? If so, should they mobilize their military or place economic sanctions and embargoes on Russia? Keep in mind past instances of military intervention and its successes and failures.
3. Should the international community allow these regions to sort their own problems out, while distributing aid to non-combatants who are caught in the crossfire?
4. Should the international community separate itself from this issue entirely until more reliable and consistent evidence presents itself? Or do the rebels have legitimate claims?

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