



| STUDY GUIDE

EUROPEAN COUNCIL

**Suspension of the asylum process in Greece and its impact
on the EU migration policy**





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LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL



1. Letter from the Secretary General

Dear delegates and faculty advisors of PUCP MUN 2025,

It is an honor to address you as the Secretary-General of the 14th edition of PUCP MUN 2025. Over the past seven years of participating in Model United Nations, taking on various roles and engaging at both national and international levels, I have had the privilege of experiencing the transformation these events bring to young people. This experience has given me a unique perspective on MUN: they are one of the most powerful tools for youth education and empowerment, more than we often realize. MUN has changed my life, offering me the chance to enhance my leadership, public speaking, and teamwork skills, as well as gain a deep understanding of international issues. This long but rewarding journey has now led me to the honor of leading the biggest conference in the country, with the primary goal of providing you with a unique and formative experience at all levels.

For this edition, we have managed to bring together more than 1,000 participants and, through great effort, we have established valuable connections with the United Nations and other international organizations. With the support of Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, this conference is grounded on three fundamental pillars: academic and organizational excellence, decentralization, and the formative experience we offer.

From my perspective, we have identified three key issues that will guide this conference. First, closing educational gaps to provide an accessible space for all students. Second, bringing Model United Nations closer to the real work of the United Nations. And third, placing the human factor at the center of discussions, recognizing that behind every committee and every debate are human lives directly impacted by the issues we address.

I deeply thank the team that has made this edition possible, as well as PUCP for its unwavering support. To you, delegates and participants, I assure you that you will experience a journey filled with learning and personal growth during PUCP MUN 2025. We eagerly await your participation and hope that you make the most of this opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Micaela Loza Rivera", is placed below the "Sincerely," text.

Micaela Loza Rivera
Secretary General of PUCP MUN 2025



STUDY GUIDE

2. Introduction to the Committee

The European Council is a body composed of the Heads of State or Government of the EU's Member States, the President of the European Council, and the President of the European Commission. When the topic of foreign policy is discussed, the High Representative may take part. The role of the European Union is not to legislate; rather, it establishes the Union's strategic direction and resolves the most challenging political trade-offs by adopting Conclusions that provide guidance to the Council of the EU, the Commission, and EU agencies.

In relation to the subject of asylum, the European Council serves as the primary forum for negotiating significant agreements on migration. It establishes strategic directives for the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (Art. 68 TFEU), provides guidance to the Council and Commission on CEAS reforms (e.g., the Pact on Migration and Asylum), determines the balance between solidarity measures and responsibility measures, and establishes the external dimension (partnerships with transit and origin countries, the EU-Turkey framework). In crisis moments it can convene extraordinary meetings, coordinate frontline support (Frontex/EUAA deployments), signal rule-of-law guardrails, and align financing in the EU budget.

3. Introduction to the Topic

Migration has become one of the most debated topics around the world in recent years. While globalization has made the movement of goods, ideas, and people easier than ever before, it has also deepened global inequalities, paradoxically making geography a crucial determinant of opportunity and stability. The Mediterranean migration processes are a testament to this. Greece's geographical position as a gateway between Africa, the Middle East, and Europe makes the country one of the most visited places by asylum seekers every year. Especially the Aegean islands, because of its close proximity to Africa, has turned into the predilect place to get for many African migrants trying to get asylum.

The growing number of people entering the islands closer to Turkey has meant that the Greek government has been forced to distribute better their resources not only among their already increasingly growing population, but also with people that find in the Hellenic coast the only way of finding a better future for them and their families. The growing tensions between both groups has eventually resulted in increasingly strict migratory policies by the Greek government; on the one hand, because of their inability to secure good and efficient services to these increasingly large new groups of people, with their already scarce resources; and on the other, because of the mounting pressure from the European Union (EU) itself. The Dublin Regulation, since 1997, obliges the country of first entry to offer assistance to asylum seekers, which has resulted in countries closer to

major migration hotspots, such as Greece, receiving more people and using more resources than other EU members.

These newly imposed, restrictive measures include reinforced border controls, increased cooperation with Frontex, and expedited deportation or relocation procedures. These, however, have also sparked debate among European countries. Said actions reflect Greece's attempt to maintain national security, restore public order, and respond to growing domestic frustration over overcrowded camps and strained local economies. Nonetheless, they have drawn criticism from human rights organizations and EU institutions, which argue that such practices often undermine the principles of asylum and the protection of refugees under international law.

The situation raises fundamental questions about the future of migration policy within the European Union: To what extent should member states be responsible for managing the EU's external borders? How can the Union reconcile national sovereignty with the protection of human rights? And what reforms are needed to ensure a fair distribution of responsibility among all member states?

As migration to Greece continues to test the limits of European solidarity, understanding the causes, consequences, and regional implications of its policies remains essential. Therefore, the European Council has a handy job, trying to find an effective middle-point between maintaining Greece's own security interests and, at the same time, finding a way to help the refugees arriving in the country.

4. Historical background

Greece's asylum system had been under strain well before 2020. In the 2011 *M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece* case, the European Court of Human Rights identified systemic deficiencies in reception and procedure. This prompted many states to halt Dublin returns to Greece and foreshadowed the chronic overcrowding on the islands under the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement, which required individual processing in Greece and enabled returns to Turkey for inadmissible or unfounded claims. Combined with "hotspot" containment, these arrangements made the Aegean islands a legal and logistical bottleneck.

In March 2020, after Ankara eased outbound controls and large groups approached the Evros land border and the Aegean Islands, Athens suspended the processing of new asylum claims for one month. The UNHCR stated that neither EU nor international law provides a legal basis to suspend the reception of asylum applications. The Council of Europe's legal service shared this view, and rights groups warned of refoulement risks. Weeks later, the fire at the Moria camp on Lesbos in September 2020 symbolized the

collapse of the islands' containment model and intensified calls for relocation and structural reform.

Politically, the 2020 suspension exacerbated existing EU divisions. Frontline states demanded automatic solidarity during surges, while northern capitals insisted that crisis tools remain within the CEAS and non-refoulement. Sovereignty-first governments rejected compulsory relocation. Institutionally, this episode contributed to the case for the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. First proposed in 2020, the pact was adopted in 2024. It replaces ad hoc suspensions with harmonized border screening, clearer border procedures, and mandatory but flexible solidarity, including relocations, financial support, and operational support. The pact also includes a crisis/force majeure instrument and stronger fundamental rights monitoring. Member states now have until mid-2026 to implement the package.

Since then, litigation and oversight have kept pressure on practices in Greece and at the EU's external borders more broadly. For example, there has been Strasbourg case law on pushbacks, as well as renewed UN scrutiny. Meanwhile, the Commission, Frontex, and EUAA have been tasked with turning the Pact's guardrails—screening, monitoring, remedies, and data—into an operational reality.

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5. Key terms

- a. **Asylum:** The legal protection granted by a State to individuals fleeing persecution, conflict, or serious violations of human rights. Within the European Union, asylum procedures are governed by the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), which aims to ensure uniform standards across Member States.
- b. **Refugee:** A person recognized under the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees as having a well-founded fear of persecution

based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, and who cannot return to their country of origin.

- c. **Migrant:** A broad term referring to individuals who move from one country to another, either voluntarily or involuntarily, for reasons such as employment, education, family reunification, or safety. Unlike refugees, migrants are not necessarily fleeing persecution or conflict.
- d. **Dublin regulation:** A cornerstone of EU asylum law that determines which Member State is responsible for examining an asylum application. Typically, it is the first country to enter the EU, a rule that has placed disproportionate pressure on border countries like Greece and Italy.
- e. **Suspension of the asylum process:** A temporary halt in the registration or examination of asylum applications by a State. In Greece, this measure was implemented in 2020 amid an increase in migratory pressure, sparking debate over compliance with EU and international refugee law.
- f. **Non-refoulement principle:** A fundamental norm of international law prohibiting the return of individuals to territories where they face threats to life or freedom. It is enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention and reaffirmed by Article 19 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- g. **FRONTEX:** The European Border and Coast Guard Agency, responsible for supporting EU Member States in border management, coordinating joint operations, and assisting in migration control and return operations while ensuring compliance with human rights obligations.
- h. **Burden-sharing:** A principle of EU solidarity advocating the fair distribution of responsibilities among Member States regarding the reception, processing, and integration of asylum seekers, to avoid overburdening frontline countries.
- i. **Hotspot approach:** An operational framework established by the EU in 2015 to assist Member States facing high migratory pressure. “Hotspots” serve as centers for the initial registration, identification, and fingerprinting of migrants and asylum seekers, often criticized for overcrowding and humanitarian concerns.
- j. **Schengen Area:** A border-free zone currently comprising 29 European countries. Originating from the 1985 Schengen Agreement and integrated into EU law in 1999, it allows the free movement of persons between member states. The system rests on three pillars:

- i. **Abolition of internal borders:** Citizens can travel freely between participating states without passport checks.
- ii. **Common external border:** Members share a unified visa policy and coordinate border control through Frontex.
- iii. **Shared responsibility:** Security concerns in one Schengen state affect all, reinforcing collective action as a single security space.

6. Past actions

a. European Council Actions on Greece's Migration Processes:

The European Council has played a central role in shaping the European Union's response to migration, particularly concerning Greece, which has served as a primary entry point for asylum seekers arriving from Africa and the Middle East. Since the height of the migration crisis in 2015, the Council has repeatedly issued conclusions and coordinated actions to assist Greece, strengthen external border management, and promote solidarity among member states.

b. The Poseidon Operation (Precedent):

In May 2006, the European Union launched Operation Poseidon, one of the first large-scale joint border control missions under the coordination of Frontex. The operation was initiated in response to the growing irregular migration through the Eastern Mediterranean route, particularly across Greece's land and sea borders with Turkey. At the time, the number of migrants arriving in Greece, many of them from Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and various African countries, had begun to rise significantly, making it one of the main entry points into the European Union.

The operation began as a pilot project following a request from the Greek authorities, who faced difficulties in managing the increasing influx of migrants. The European Council and the European Commission had both expressed concerns about the inadequacy of border surveillance along the external borders of the Union, particularly in the Aegean region, and had encouraged greater operational cooperation among member states. Frontex's role was to provide that coordination. Thus, Operation Poseidon was conceived as part of a broader EU effort to strengthen Integrated Border Management (IBM) and to test the feasibility of joint operations involving border guards and equipment from multiple member states.

The objectives of the operation were primarily operational rather than humanitarian. Frontex coordinated joint patrols, surveillance missions, and information exchanges

among participating states. Border guards from other EU countries, including Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, were deployed to Greece to assist the Hellenic Coast Guard and Hellenic Police. The operation employed patrol vessels, helicopters, and aircraft for aerial surveillance, alongside radar and thermal imaging systems to monitor maritime and land borders. In addition to preventing irregular crossings, the mission aimed to identify and dismantle migrant smuggling networks operating between Turkey and Greece.

By the end of its first year, Poseidon had become one of Frontex's flagship operations, cited by EU institutions as a model for future cooperation. It was eventually expanded into a long-term mission, and its later versions, especially Poseidon Sea (2011) and Poseidon Rapid Intervention (2015), built upon the framework first established in 2006.

c. The European Migration Crisis (2015-2016):

During 2015, the European Union faced an unprecedented influx of over one million migrants, mainly through the Eastern Mediterranean route. Greece became the primary entry point, receiving thousands of arrivals daily on islands such as Lesbos, Kos, and Chios. In response, the European Council, through its October 2015 conclusions, called for stronger border management and the creation of *hotspots* to register arrivals and distinguish asylum seekers from irregular migrants.

To support Greece, the Council authorized Frontex operations in the Aegean Sea under *Poseidon Sea* and *Poseidon Rapid Intervention*, marking one of the agency's largest coordinated efforts. Frontex deployed technical equipment, surveillance aircraft, and vessels, assisting national authorities in search and rescue operations, registration, and fingerprinting, while preventing irregular secondary movements within the EU.

In March 2016, the European Council adopted new conclusions that redefined the EU's migration approach, prioritizing control of external borders and enhanced coordination among Member States. A central outcome was the EU-Turkey Statement (March 18, 2016), under which irregular migrants arriving on the Greek islands could be returned to Turkey. In exchange, the EU committed to resettling one Syrian refugee from Turkey for every return. This agreement aimed to curb irregular crossings, reduce deaths at sea, and ease pressure on Greece.

By the end of 2016, arrivals to Greece had dropped sharply—from nearly 850,000 in 2015 to around 170,000—demonstrating short-term success in reducing flows. However, the arrangement drew criticism for its humanitarian implications and legal controversies regarding the right to asylum and non-refoulement.

d. Expansion of Frontex operations in Greece (2019):

Between 2017 and 2018, the European Council focused on building a more sustainable migration framework. In its June 28–29, 2018 conclusions, the Council reaffirmed the need for shared responsibility and solidarity among EU member states, recognizing that frontline countries like Greece and Italy bore a disproportionate burden. It called for the establishment of “controlled centres” within the EU to manage disembarkations and “regional disembarkation platforms” in third countries to process migrants outside EU borders.

The Council also requested the enhancement of Frontex operations in Greece and along the EU’s external borders. As a result, Frontex increased its presence in the Aegean Sea, deploying additional personnel and equipment to assist Greek authorities in surveillance and search-and-rescue operations. The EU’s financial assistance to Greece also expanded during this period: between 2015 and 2018, Greece received over €1.6 billion in emergency funding for asylum, migration, and border management. These measures improved Greece’s administrative capacity but did not completely resolve overcrowding and poor living conditions in reception centres on the islands.

e. New Pact on Migration and Asylum (2020):

The European Council conclusions of June 20, 2019 reiterated the commitment to support Greece and other frontline states while emphasizing the importance of returning irregular migrants and preventing secondary movements within the EU. The Council also endorsed the gradual transformation of Frontex into the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, giving it a standing corps of 10,000 officers by 2027.

During 2020, the Council focused on the implementation of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, introduced by the European Commission in September 2020. The pact sought to replace the existing Dublin Regulation and ensure a fairer distribution of asylum responsibilities across member states. However, as of 2025, negotiations on this reform remain incomplete, and the Dublin system continues to place the main responsibility for processing asylum claims on countries of first entry such as Greece.

f. Task Force on Migrant Integration (2024-2025):

In May 2024, the European Commission, with the support of the European Council, launched a Task Force on Migrant Integration in Greece. The initiative aimed to strengthen social inclusion programs for non-EU nationals, promote access to education and employment, and improve coordination in the use of EU funds.

By April 2025, the European Commission announced that Greece’s mainland asylum and reception systems had significantly improved, citing the absence of systemic deficiencies

in accommodation and asylum processing. This was the result of continued EU financial support and technical assistance through Frontex and the Asylum Agency.

7. Bloc positions

a. MED5 Frontline:

MED5 frames the 2020 border surge as an extreme event that exposed capacity gaps. Therefore, they advocate for rapid, time-bound border procedures, streamlined returns and readmissions, and binding solidarity in the form of relocations or predictable financial and operational contributions under the new EU Pact. They support Frontex/EUAA surge deployments, hotspots with clear case-handling timelines, and additional funding for reception, screening, and return infrastructure. However, they insist that these measures adhere to EU and international law to prevent another blanket suspension. Expect to see clauses on automatic solidarity triggers during crises, increased anti-smuggling collaboration with neighboring countries (e.g., Turkey and the Western Balkans), and practical, non-punitive monitoring.

b. Northern Europe:

This block usually rejects any suspension of access to asylum, arguing that all crisis responses must adhere to the CEAS and the principle of non-refoulement. In exchange for strict compliance, they will demand money and relocations, as well as independent fundamental-rights monitoring, legal aid and interpretation at borders, guarantees of remedies and appeals, and transparent data on detention, decisions, and returns. They favor standardized screening and border procedures with robust safeguards for children and vulnerable groups. They will also push for accountability clauses, whistleblower protections, and public reporting while resisting language that normalizes exceptional measures or weakens oversight.

c. Central Europe and Visegrád group:

Their top priority is external border control and deterrence. They oppose mandatory relocations and prefer "flexible solidarity" (financial transfers, equipment, and personnel) to quotas. They support tougher returns, expanded safe third country arrangements, and more third country partnerships on readmission and anti-smuggling efforts. Politically, they avoid calling the Greek suspension "illegal," preferring neutral crisis language. They will back stronger infrastructure, fencing, technology, and operational leeway for border forces provided that texts avoid intrusive monitoring or second-guessing of national security decisions by EU bodies.

8. QARMAS

- What are the limitations of the recognition of the Schengen Area and how can it affect the perception of the right of sovereignty?
- How can we ensure that joint missions such as the Poseidon Operation balance both the effectiveness and the control of massive immigration and protection of Human Rights?
- How can we cover the limitations and difficulties of having a border mainly composed of islands such as the Greek border? Does its regulation imply different measures or do traditional border regulations work as effectively?
- How can we ensure that the responsibility of ensuring dignified conditions while protecting the external borders does not fall only on the country where the asylum seekers first enter?
- What measures can be taken in order to protect minorities and vulnerable groups who seek asylum? Do they need special protection or would a standard norm for all asylum seekers be enough?

9. Position Paper Guidelines

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of each delegation's stance, possible solutions, and role within the committee. Delegates are encouraged to follow a structured format when drafting their documents, as this will facilitate the writing process and improve readability for the Director. Furthermore, to be eligible for an award, each delegate must submit a Position Paper before the established deadline.

In the first paragraph, delegates should outline their country's position on the topic, clearly demonstrating an understanding of their nation's policy. In the second paragraph, they may mention the main previous actions taken by the United Nations related to the issue. The impact of these actions on their country should be analyzed, explaining why they were successful or not. Actions taken by other international organizations and by the country itself regarding the issue may also be included.

In the final paragraph, which is the most important, delegates must present their proposals to address the problem. Each proposal should be supported with detailed information, covering the who, what, when, where, and how of its implementation.

The document must comply with the following format specifications: a maximum length of one page, line spacing of 1.15, Times New Roman font, font size 11, and 2.5 cm margins on all sides. A bibliography following APA 7 citation format must be included. It is essential that all references used are properly cited. The document must be submitted to the following email address: positionpaperspucpmun@gmail.com.

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CERRANDO BRECHAS

