

European Union President's Letter and Topic Guide

Hello delegates. My name is Vinnie Bellardini and I'll be chairing the upcoming European Union congregation at St. Bonaventure University. I'm currently a junior and double majoring in both Journalism/Mass Communication and Political Science. My hometown is Cortland, New York—a small town about 30 miles south of Syracuse. I also host a radio show on WSBU 88.3, Saint Bonaventure's radio station. I know that my future career will take me to far and distant places around the world. The Model UN has been a wonderful learning experience and perfectly fits my career plans. I am looking forward to sharing my learning experience with you.

A word of advice to all of you: Do your research and know rules and procedure. See you in the spring.

The Crisis in Ukraine

When then-Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich and his cabinet abandoned a deal to establish closer ties with the European Union in November 2013 and decided to pursue a closer relationship with Russia, small protests in the Ukrainian capital city of Kiev ensued. These protests didn't seem like much at the time, however as time passed the numbers of protesters grew massively. Some 800,000 Ukrainians occupied Kiev city hall that December. They were stunned that their president had shut the door of joining a league of democracies (EU) and instead chose to consolidate his ties with an authoritarian state (Russia).

As the riots got more intense and more deadly, President Yanukovich disappeared and rioters took over administrative buildings. He later denied being forced out of his own country on television, but was eventually impeached by the Ukrainian Parliament. Shortly afterwards, the new Ukrainian administration banned Russian as Ukraine's second language, angering citizens in Russian-speaking regions. Though the vote was later overturned, it seemed to be the tipping point of the conflict.

Days later, pro-Russian gunmen forcibly seized buildings in the capital city of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula—a region that borders neighboring Russia and is inhabited mostly by ethnic-Russians. As the days and weeks went on, more Russian armed forces began to pour into Eastern Ukraine: Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed that these forces were sent to protect Russians in the area. Within days, the Crimean peninsula was absorbed into the Russian Federation after a referendum that asked its inhabitants if they wished to join the Russian Federation: allegedly 97% voted yes. Skeptical of this referendum's legitimacy, the U.S. and

E.U. imposed sanctions on Russia and travel bans on some of its officials. This has only led to more tension and the conflict persists to this day with little signs of diplomatic progress.

Your job as European Union delegates is to address the situation and plan the organization's strategy to handle it moving forward as peacefully and productively as possible. As a delegate of your nation, here are a few questions you might consider:

1. How does this conflict specifically affect my country?
2. What is my country currently doing to address the situation or deal with its effects?
3. How is the European economy being affected by this situation?
4. What resistance may the European Union face in trying to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict?
5. What are the security and strategic implications of Russia taking over the Crimean peninsula?

Here are a few sources you might start at, but I heavily encourage you to research as many perspectives as you can:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26248275>

<http://america.aljazeera.com/topics/topic/event/ukraine-uprising.html>

<http://csis.org/ukraine/index.htm>

http://europa.eu/newsroom/highlights/special-coverage/eu_sanctions/index_en.htm

The European Union and Climate Change

Like other countries in the world, the EU has to tackle the question of climate change. However, the EU is a collective organization whose members have to cooperate extensively to come up with a unified policy regarding global warming. To prevent climate change from reaching dangerous levels, the international community has agreed that temperatures must be kept below pre-industrial levels. The EU is therefore working hard to cut down its member countries' emissions and to promote similar action and commitment from other major countries.

Failure to take action now to combat climate change can be very costly in the long term. The growing demand for clean technologies also offers an opportunity to modernize Europe's economy and create 'green' growth and jobs. In the longer term, much deeper cuts in world emissions will be needed to prevent dangerous climate change. The EU is committed to reducing its emissions by 80-95% of 1990 levels by 2050 as part of a collective effort by developed countries. But with all of these facts and plans, how well will EU nations cooperate to get the issues taken care of?

I suggest that your delegates propose and pass resolutions to deal with the question of global warming. Some questions to consider:

1. How does climate change specifically impact my country?
2. What is my country's contribution to climate change? (CO2 Emissions, etc.)
3. What is my country doing to limit its negative affects?

These links should help you get started:

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/index_en.htm

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/an-overview-of-eu-environment>

http://europa.eu/pol/ener/index_en.htm

http://europa.eu/pol/env/index_en.htm

The European Debt Crisis

The European debt crisis (often also referred to as the Eurozone crisis or the European sovereign debt crisis) is an ongoing long debt crisis taking place in a handful of Eurozone member states since 2009. These states were no longer able to repay or refinance their government debt or to bail-out over-indebted banks under their national supervision without the assistance of third parties like the ECB or IMF. The European debt crisis has erupted in an environment of overly high government structural deficits and accelerating government debt levels. The crisis was so intense to the extent that four Eurozone states needed to be rescued by sovereign bailout programs, delivered jointly by the International Monetary Fund and European Commission - with additional support at the technical level by the European Central Bank. Together these three international organizations representing the bailout creditors, became nicknamed "the Troika". As for you delegates, you must discuss the details regarding the crises itself. Pay close attention to the recent elections in Greece and the coming to power of a party that rejects the "Troika" policies.

After discussing these details, cooperate amongst yourselves to discuss possible budget cuts, program shifts, or other methods of reform. Find a consensus resolution. Some helpful questions to consider:

1. How has my country contributed to the current financial crisis?
2. Based on your own nation's policy, how well will your nation cooperate with others?
3. How has your nation's GDP impacted the EU?
4. What are the implications of Greek elections? What is the future of the EU?

Here are a few helpful resources:

<http://www.cnbc.com/id/47689157>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-29751124>

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/debt-crisis>