

EU - MINI BACKGROUND GUIDE



*European Union (EU) · Mini Background Guide*

# **Topic 1: EU Military Reform**

# **Topic 2: Assessing the Relationship between Russia and the EU**

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*Enter with Curiosity, Exit with Courage*

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## Director's Letter

Welcome to the European Union at OakridgeMUN II! My name is Ivan Maykov, a Junior from Juanita High School, and I am honored to be serving as your Director. Joining me are the wonderful chair Taoyi from Semiahmoo Secondary, and the amazing assistant director Richard Min from Burnaby North.

The European Union is one of the most established intergovernmental regional organizations around the world, uniting twenty seven nations together with a shared government. With nearly 450 million residents within their border, the European Union generates nearly 20% of the world's entire GDP, united by their common currency, the Euro. Most nations within the bloc have a shared border system - the schengen zone - and all EU citizens have the right to live and work in any other EU nation. These unique circumstances present incredibly unique issues: as nationalism across the world grows deeper, the European Union must chart its path in the future as either a symbol of continental unity or a meritless bureaucracy. Our two topics hit to the core of these divides: European Military Reform and Assessing the Relationship between Russia and the European Union are two key topics the European instrument will be most challenged to solve within the next decade.

As the United States slowly draws back their military across the globe, it leaves a space for terrorism and enemy states to grow. The rise of China and other various authoritarian nations threaten the democracy-induced peace of the last 30 years, leading to Europe reckoning it's position in the world: after centuries of colonisation and warring, Europe has settled into one of the most peaceful continents in the world - with strong military support, mostly by the United States and Canada, Europe has been able to reduce military spending to near-zero amounts, instead investing in building up the continent. As nationalist sentiments grow in the western nations, this bond seems to be at the breaking point - Europe's security may not be guaranteed for so long. As delegates, your task is to forge a new system for the European military - will the individual militaries of each nation all stay separate, weakening any chance at a coordinated response, or will they all merge, possibly violating the sovereignty of the European Nations when they need it the most?

Russia has been the natural enemy of most European states since the Russian Empire was founded, only uniting in cases of extreme dire need, such as the first few months after the end of the Second World War. The EU currently regards Russia as a necessary evil, as nearly all natural gas and oil supplied to the 27

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member nations come from Russia. As the nation keeps pushing against liberal democracy, the EU has to both push them back due to the stark ideological differences, and pull them in due to the necessities the authoritarian nation provides to the European Union. With this topic, delegates must answer an incredibly tough question - is the EU-Russia relationship worth keeping?

From this backgrounder, you will learn the basics and fundamentals of these issues. This document is by no means the limit of your research - to gain a thorough understanding of both of these topics, using outside sources, both from the various EU governments and its critics, is imperative to fully capturing the depth of both topics. Position papers can be emailed to [eu@oakridgemun.com](mailto:eu@oakridgemun.com) and if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, do not hesitate to contact us, as we are here to help you. We wish you the best of luck researching these topics and writing a position paper, and can't wait to see you all in committee!

Thank you,  
Ivan Maykov  
European Union | Director

## Committee Intro

The European Union began as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1950 consisting of six member states with Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. It was established originally to control and organise free coal and steel movements in Europe as well as to improve the sources of production. Seven years later in 1957, the six member states signed the two Treaties of Rome that created the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), and also the European Economic Community (EEC) which enabled a common market and abolished tariffs within European Union countries in the late 1960s.

In 1965, the European Economic Community agreed to sign the Brussels Treaty that would combine the European Atomic Energy Community, the European Economic Community and the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community into one single commission.<sup>1</sup> These three communities would later become the principal institutions of the European Union and be referred to as the European Communities.

The Maastricht Treaty of 1993 (also known as the Treaty of the European Union) formed the current European Union (EU), which, at present time, contains 27 major states across Europe and represents almost 500 million citizens of Europe. This treaty allowed for citizens of every member state to be granted EU citizenship, enabled citizens to vote and run for office in elections of the EU country they lived in, and also began the process of establishing a central banking system and common currency (the euro).<sup>2</sup>

Today, the EU is a powerful voice on the world stage and strives to discuss economic, political, and social issues between its countries with the guidance of its 7 institutions within the union. These include the European Council, the European Parliament, the European Central Bank, and the European Court of Justice. Moreover, the EU built a single market that allows its almost 500 million citizens to travel and move freely within while also allowing its currency, the euro, to be a major world currency.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/event/Brussels-Treaty-European-history-1948>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/event/Maastricht-Treaty>

<sup>3</sup> [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/euro\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/euro_en)

## **Topic 1: European Military/Defense Reform**

As a major actor in international defense and foreign relations, the European Union is heading into a new age of military and defensive cooperation. Two major programs, the European Defence Fund and the Military Mobility initiative, are set out to begin this year. These seven year plans are aimed to foster military prowess and further set the EU's position as a superpower on the world stage.

The prospect of a European defense system has its roots back during the postwar era, but didn't begin until the later years of the Cold War, when the European Political Cooperation brought forth the proposal of coordinated policies. European defense integration continued to gain traction until the Treaty of Maastricht founded the official EU in 1992. In the modern day, the Common Security and Defense Policy stands as the pillar for the mutual military interests of the continent. The CSDP serves to identify common threats, pursue objectives, and adopt newer strategies as world events unfold.

This topic is aimed to tackle the plausible ways that the EU can bring together all its member states to construct a long term plan that can provide funding for the two new initiatives without hindering economic growth. Seeking out a security strategy that reaches out towards common goals and exploring the possibility of a more unified EU military in the long run are also desirable results for this topic.

## **Topic 2: Assessing Relations Between the EU and Russia**

Heading into the new decade, Europe-Russia relations are in a very strategic position where the possibility of mutual benefits and cooperation are quite high. As two extremely influential figures on the world stage, the EU and Russia face many issues where solutions can be more easily forged when working together. However, relations with Russia have been tense as the EU still has many long-standing disagreements with its Eastern neighbour; from aggressive actions such as the annexation of Crimea to its anti-NATO sentiment and pressures on regions such as the Middle East and the Black Sea.

Historically, these two entities were always in close proximity with each other, and have been known to cooperate. Although this tie was severed during the Cold War, it soon returned around the turn of the century. Being a very large supplier of energy resources and natural gas to the EU, the economic relations between Russia and the EU stand to this day. The current legal basis for connections between these two states are outlined in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which have been mostly upheld throughout the years.

The problem this committee aims to answer is that of developing this relation between Russia and the EU further. People have speculated that Russia is growing stronger, and its ambition may end up complicating relations with the EU. This committee will be discussing the economic and political connections to their eastern neighbours, outlining short term and long term goals on how to best achieve the EU's interests, and considering the direction that this relation will head towards in the future.

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