

**Country:** Portugal

**Committee**: European Council

**Agenda Item**: Refugee problem in Europe

The European Refugee Crisis has started to affect the European continent in many areas. The crisis has led to administrative and societal problems within the EU, especially during the sharing of responsibilities. The European Union has taken steps to address the crisis through legal frameworks such as the Amsterdam and Lisbon Treaties, which are part of regulatory actions to regulate migration issues and are based on the 1951 Migration Convention. Socially, the problem of failing to persuade citizens of EU countries to support certain policies has put them in a challenging situation in domestic politics. This situation has often been exploited by anti-EU right-wing populist parties, which typically find public support and hinder the progress of the process. A study emerging from a literature review method emphasized that, despite the appearance of sufficient legal infrastructure for the EU, the reluctance of member states to take decisive steps based on these frameworks is a significant obstacle.

On the other hand, the population of the European Union is continuously aging. The elderly population of the European Union (defined here as those aged 65 and over) will increase significantly from 90.5 million at the beginning of 2019 to 129.8 million by 2050. Extra-European Union migration is one way to address this problem, but it alone cannot solve the issue. Therefore, it is not feasible for the European Union to completely shut down migration. The lowest common denominator of EU Member States' migration policies is perceived to be restrictive policies aimed at creating an "European Fortress" image. Despite setting goals such as combating human trafficking and regulating Extra-EU migration, the implementation is often dependent on member states and international organizations such as UNHCR. This decentralized structure allows states to shirk or relinquish their responsibilities, resulting in varying policies and outcomes.The influx of refugees poses a dual challenge for EU member states: on one hand, the need for population regulation and productivity, and on the other hand, integration and unemployment issues. These conflicting priorities affect asylum policies, while the volume of accepted refugees is often associated with each country's migration policies. Despite being morally and legally responsible for accepting refugees according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the responsibility for granting asylum remains uncertain. Cultural conflicts and xenophobia further complicate migration dynamics and contribute to the rise of right-wing parties across the EU. This sentiment reinforces the image of the European Fortress by supporting the idea of closing borders and nationalizing solutions. Examples like Brexit and Hungary demonstrate how domestic politics are affected by these tensions and reflect broader societal concerns and attitudes towards migration.

As Portugal, we believe that the issue needs to be addressed both at the national and supranational levels. While different countries within the European Union have different experiences with migration, there is a common legal framework to deal with the issue. Despite some practical shortcomings, it is evident that the European Union is legally and structurally equipped to deal with the crisis. We believe that managing migration correctly, by assessing the negative impacts of migrants and addressing labor shortages in agriculture and industry while reducing external dependence, is crucial for maintaining the ideal average age in the EU. As Betts pointed out, every crisis requires a different approach, and we believe this crisis requires a specific strategy.