**Country: Croatia**

**Committee: European Union**

**Agenda Item: European Union During 2015 (Immigrant Crisis)**

Croatia, a multi-ethnic nation inhabited by mostly Croats, is located at the crossroads of Central and South East Europe. The territory now known as Croatia was first internationally recognized as independent on 7 June 879 until it was elevated to a kingdom status in 925. During the World War ll, Croatia was incorporated into a Nazi-installed puppet state (Independent State of Croatia) which was ultimately defeated in May 1945. Short after, Croatia declared independence amidst the dissolution of Yugoslavia, June 1991. With a population of approximately 3.9 million, Croatia was ranked 74th with a GDP of 68.69 billion USD. Known to be one of the largest developed social market economies in Southeast Europe, Croatia’s economy is dominated by its tertiary service sector and high levels of tourism. The country has one of the lowest birth rates with 8.253 births per 1000 people with the overall life expectancy at birth being 78 years. The Euro Health Consumer Index placed Croatia 16th in Europe, speculating that it might become a health tourism destination, however, clientelism must be addressed; healthcare policy inertia persists. Literacy rate in Croatia was recorded 99% overall with 99.5% female and 99.9% male in 2021, ranking 43 in Europe. The Republic of Croatia was admitted as a Member of the UN by General Assembly Resolution on 22 May 1992 and became an active member of the European Union in July 1, 2013.

Immigrant crisis is a large-scale migration flow. The first wave of immigration was from 1680 to 1776 where Scots-Irish and Germans were the major immigrant groups. On average 24 people worldwide were displaced from their homes every minute of every day during 2015 – some 34,000 people per day. By the end of the year, 65.3 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, political instability, economic hardship, lack of basic services, general violence or human rights violations in countries of origin, including Syria in first place, followed by Kosovo, Afghanistan, Albania, Iraq, Eritrea and Serbia while the hosting countries were France with the most refugees (252.000), Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom in 2014. Croatia agreed to take a high number of immigrants during the crisis, as the migrant population made up 13.6% of the total population that year. Croatia’s policy provides three types of international protection: refugee status/asylum, subsidiary protection and temporary protection. The policy is supported by the Inter-Agency Committee (which Croatia appointed to in February 2019), Act of International and Temporary Protection, Law on Croatian Citizenship, Act on Health Insurance and Health Care of Foreigners in Croatia, National Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings 2018-2021. “Since the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, the issue of international migration and its relation to development has risen steadily on the agenda of the international community.” stated the 2015 International Migration Report of the UN. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development not only includes several migration targets, but also encourages countries to disaggregate targets by, inter alia, migratory status. Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic of Croatia addressed The United Nations General Assembly on 22 September 2017, “As with all global challenges, here too a holistic approach is required. We therefore need to work together to fight the root causes of mass migrations – be it poverty, failing States and wars or climate change and natural disasters – while standing against exploitation and abuse in the context of human trafficking and people smuggling.”

In response to the escalating humanitarian crisis, the EU launched Operation Triton in November 2014, with the purpose of preventing further loss of life among migrants and refugees. Croatia played an important role in this operation as a way of ensuring a fair treatment for refugees. Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2254 (2015), endorsing road map for peace process in Syria. The Council requested that the Secretary-General lead the effort to determine the modalities and requirements of a ceasefire, while the Syrian Representative stated that Syria was ready to end its fight. The resolution adopted was a key-permanent solution to the immigration crisis of 2015, nevertheless, the principles mentioned were not all-inclusive of the challenge. Furthermore, the EU took similar actions, such as revising its asylum and regulations, and providing more reception in the region. However, gaps and disparities persisted. Strengthening the Schengen Area’s external borders is one way of battling illegal smuggling. It is necessary for the European Union to also cooperate with non-member states and organizations as the problem does not only affect the members. The major negative outcomes of mass migration are poverty, acculturation, education, and employment. These challenges can potentially be addressed by offering more migrants the option to resettle and work permanently in Europe as a significant proportion of refugees seek work opportunities. On the other hand, guiding asylum seekers who do not require protection back to their country of origin is suggested. Wealthy countries must also increase the support and funding they provide to people in conflict-stricken countries. Therefore, it is essential that countries work together to share the responsibility for safeguarding immigrants.