

Lahti 2019 Academic prep kit



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I. WHAT IS THE EU?

The European Union (EU) is a unique economic and political partnership between 28 European countries which, together, cover much of the continent. The EU was created in the aftermath of the Second World War.

The first steps were to foster economic cooperation: the idea being that countries who trade with one another become economically interdependent and so more likely to avoid conflict.

The result was the European Economic Community (EEC), created in 1958, and initially increasing economic cooperation between six countries: Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Since then, a large single market has been created and continues to develop toward its full potential.

From economic to political union

What began as a purely economic union has evolved into an organisation spanning policy areas, from development aid to environment. A name change from the EEC to the European Union (EU) in 1993 reflected this. The EU is based on the rule of law: everything that it does is founded on treaties, voluntarily and democratically agreed by all the Member States. These binding agreements set out the EU's goals in its many areas of activity.

Mobility, growth, stability and single currency

The EU has delivered half a century of peace, stability and prosperity, helped raise living standards and launched a single European currency, the euro. Thanks to the abolition of border controls between EU countries, people can travel freely throughout most of the continent. And it is become much easier to live and work abroad in Europe. The single or 'internal' market is the EU's main economic engine, enabling most goods, services, money and people to move freely.

Another key objective is to develop this huge resource to ensure that Europeans can draw the maximum benefit from it.

Human rights and equality

One of the EU's main goals is to promote human rights both internally and around the world. Human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights: these are the core values of the EU. Since the 2009 signing of the Treaty of Lisbon, the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights brings all these

rights together in a single document. The EU's institutions are legally bound to uphold them, as are EU governments whenever they apply EU law.

Transparent and democratic institutions

As it continues to grow, the EU remains focused on making its governing institutions more transparent and democratic. More powers are being given to the directly elected European Parliament, while national parliaments are being given a greater role, working alongside the European institutions. In turn, European citizens have an ever-increasing number of channels for taking part in the political process.



Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)

With rising temperatures rendering the Arctic region an increasingly viable source of natural resources such as oil and gas, how should the EU position itself regarding the exploitation of the Arctic, bearing in mind the geopolitical and environmental issues in the region?

Chaired by: *Abi Foskett (UK) & Senni Muuruvirta (FI)*

Introduction

[25% of the world's natural oil and gas](#) can be found within the Arctic region. Around 90 billion barrels of oil and [47 trillion cubic metres](#) of natural gas lie beneath the Arctic's dissipating polar ice. As other sources begin to deplete, and the Arctic's precious resources gradually become more accessible, private companies and governments alike are [racing to utilise](#) the Arctic's buried treasures.

In a heated debate about the distribution of the Arctic's resources, China and Russia have unveiled their large-scale plans to utilise the Arctic's freshly attainable assets. China has emphasized its [wishes to access](#) new Northern sea routes. Russia, meanwhile, as well as its plans to continue drilling within the Arctic, has [increased its military power](#), practices and commissioned a nuclear icebreaker fleet, [raising attention from NATO](#). In return, NATO conducted its largest military exercises since the end of the Cold War in Europe's Northern land.

As the United Nations remain continually concerned at the potential tension, the organisation, along with the Arctic Council have taken action to begin resolving issues within the environment. By creating several [policies and treaties](#) being enforced on the bordering Arctic countries, the UN has solidified protecting the Arctic as a priority.

Overall, disagreement about the distribution of the Arctic's remaining ocean floor for resource extraction, and debate over its future use has highlighted the geopolitical importance of the Arctic region. This topic asks us to examine how the EU should approach this complex issue, considering the welfare of local wildlife and native people, increasing environmental concerns, and friction between other influential stakeholders.

Key Concepts

- *Resources* are the natural oil, gas and minerals, such as phosphate, iron ore, copper, and nickel, buried in deep deposits and natural gas lines found within the Arctic ocean floors.
- *Fossil fuels* are natural fuels such as coal or gas, formed in the geological past from the remains of living organisms, they are a non-renewable energy source, meaning their supplies are limited. When burned fossil fuels release greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane which are [major contributors to global warming](#).
- *Climate change* is the change in climate patterns which can alter due to global warming, the rising temperature of the earth's atmosphere, caused by greenhouse gases produced by the use of fossil fuels.

Actors & Stakeholders

As some of the world's largest and most influential countries illustrate their interest in the Arctic's land and ocean floors, friction becomes apparent between those who live there and those who wish to utilize it. China has already [revealed its vision](#) for a [Polar Silk Road Project](#) and suggested its interest in integrating Northern sea routes to access the Arctic's resources. China has also [announced](#) their intention to use the previously isolated [North Eastern pathways](#), with the capability of [cutting over 6,000 miles](#) from East Asia to Western Europe.

Russia, while [owning](#) 200 nautical miles (230 miles) of ocean sea bed bordering its coastline, has been, alongside [NATO](#), carrying out military exercises on a large scale in Northern Europe. Russia specifically has been increasing its military presence within the Arctic, highlighting their key interest of remaining present in the Arctic - going as far as reopening Soviet-era military bases. Russia's Natural Resources and Environment Minister also mentioned his support for letting private oil and gas companies work on the Arctic shelf.

Private sector organisations also have an interest in the Arctic region, as an opportunity to utilise its land and seas for profit. As ice melts, access to rich minerals found buried in the ocean floor, and the accessibility of oil and fish resources increase, causing companies previously off put by very risky exploration and costly process at this moment, to be attracted to the region. [Shell](#), a company who have previously drilled in the Alaskan region of the Arctic,

but left due to the high costs and poor return stated "Shell continues to see important exploration potential in the basin," indicating the financial value still held within the Arctic despite its risks. While drilling for oil already takes place in specific areas of the Arctic, primarily in Alaska, these new appearing areas indicate new fortunes to be found as accessibility increases.

NATO's attention has been brought to the Arctic as a result of Russia's military action. NATO are responsible for monitoring Russia's progress in the arctic as far north as the North Pole, which is part of NATO's area of responsibility and covered by [Article 5](#). In response to Russia's increasing military action, NATO coordinated its [largest military exercises](#) since the Cold War, using 50,000 soldiers in military drills, revealing possible future difficulties for NATO in keeping the Arctic conflict free.

The [Arctic Council's](#) concerns relate directly to exploitation of the Arctic's resources and the damage potentially caused to the land, people and surrounding wildlife. The council created a 90 page guideline called the '[Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines](#)' designed for all Arctic countries. Despite not being legally binding, it acts as recommendations that can be applied during oil and gas extraction by any country. The council and its members also [work with](#) multiple other groups globally to contribute to the solutions of many issues related to the Arctic, including climate change. These key acts carried out by its members and permanent observers illustrate the level of commitment the council has to the Arctic's conservation.

The [UN](#) is considered one of the most key actors in this topic as they hold jurisdiction on the arctic outside any exclusive economic zone. They have had a major input in the protection of the Arctic and have highlighted a dedication to continue. They have already created a set of [policy objectives](#) with the Arctic Council, and committed to working with [The Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership](#) (NDEP). They also issued the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People](#) in 2007, relevant here as this dictates the requirements for protecting native people such as the inhabitants of the Arctic Circle.

As the environmental movement urges on, the general public have become more aware of the alarming reality climate change is generating. Organisations such as the [Earth Day Network](#), who work with over 75,000 partners in over 190 countries, are raising awareness and tackling the biggest issues caused by climate change and creating a powerful social movement. As wildlife conservations, scientists and charities alike are banding together to draw attention to the future of the Arctic if climate change rages on, the mass public are finally generating their own valuable opinions on geo-political issues in the Arctic.

The 4 million [indigenous people](#), sometimes known as native people, that live within the Arctic circle, including the half a million EU citizens that live in the region, evidently are in a critical position as this debate rages on. As ice thawing continues, erosion of arctic land places [31 Alaskan towns](#) that home indigenous people in immediate risk. [Greenlands 50,000 inuits](#) are also affected by climate change. Rising temperatures due to climate change are causing [Greenland's ice sheet to melt](#), forcing them to migrate to other places to hunt and live. Their livelihood and culture depend on the resolutions of the heated topic, and can come into direct conflict with the interests of states and private companies.

Conflicts

Beyond the political conflicts in the region, there lies the possibility of long-term environmental effects. Damaged sea ice and oil spills are instantaneous threats to surrounding wildlife as human presence increases due to large scale extraction. The continued use of fossil fuels extracted in the Arctic only increases [carbon dioxide emissions](#), which are in part responsible for climate change's cataclysmic effects on the Arctic. The resulting changes to the Arctic, of melting ice, [rising water temperatures](#) and [increased sea levels](#), have had and will have drastic impacts globally. Its icy oceans have a [strong influence on the climate system](#), regulating heat exchange between the ocean and atmosphere. As sea ice reduces, weather patterns and atmospheric circulation are affected.

The EU has three Member States - Finland, Sweden and Denmark, within the [Arctic Council](#), and five permanent observers being Germany, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Poland. The European Union is still waiting for their application as permanent observers to be granted by the council, however the EU has created a number of relationships with private companies and committees in the [aim of protecting](#) the Arctic land and its future.

This invites the question of who has the right to benefit from the Arctic's riches. Bordering countries that are Arctic coastal states are entitled to 200 nautical miles (230 miles) of the Arctic, and its materials, beginning from their shoreline according to the [Law of the Sea Treaty](#). To claim further land a country must prove to the UN that the land rightfully belongs to them. These claims have been approved to these bordering countries, however overlapping declarations of land between several Arctic coastal states including Canada, Denmark and Russia are yet to be ruled on. The UN officially decides who has control and

rights to areas and resources in the Arctic. So far, the rights have only been granted to Norway and Iceland.

With huge demand for oil and gas, new sources need to be found. It is estimated that about [30% of the planet's](#) undiscovered natural gas and 13% of its undiscovered oil will be found from the Arctic region. Accessing these resources is very beneficial for the future, and with the ice melting due to climate change, accessing the resources becomes easier all the time. However, the Arctic region is an extensively protected area. Additionally, drilling in the Arctic would be extremely dangerous for the region's wildlife. Taking into account the vast size, remote location, and extreme weather conditions, response to oil spills in the Arctic is very slow and [ineffective](#). Broken ice and arduous weather conditions lead to oil spills and wells blowing out - catastrophically affecting the wildlife in the area. The entire Arctic ecosystem would be harmed, as even if hypothetically, only one species was directly injured, food chains would break.

As a result of global warming, a Russian tanker was [able to travel](#) from Norway to South Korea, without an icebreaker escort for the first time in 2017. The original idea of the Northern sea route originated with Russia, but China quickly became interested in the idea, as the sea route would [reduce](#) the distance from East Asia to Western Europe by more than 10,000 kilometers. Compared to the current shipping routes through the Suez Canal, this new route would save time and fuel. Arctic shipping is planned to connect through the Northern Sea Route to the Chinese Maritime Silk Road, creating the Polar Silk Road. China and Russia have [decided](#) to develop the Arctic shipping routes together, and jointly build the Polar Silk Road. . The Polar Silk Road may face some challenges. The route can be used only in summertime and the area is harsh and remote, requiring expertise and technology the Chinese [may not](#) be fully equipped with. Russia considers the Northern Sea Route as its own internal waters, so any ship sailing through will be under Russian jurisdiction.

Another major consideration in this issue is the fact that Russia has [expanded](#) its military action in the Arctic region, with the United States [acknowledging](#) it. Meanwhile, Russian officials are [suspicious](#) of increased NATO activity in the Arctic. The U.S. and Russia [both seek](#) total control over the Arctic. Last October, NATO [conducted](#) its largest military exercises since the end of the Cold War in Europe's north, indicating the increasing geopolitical importance of the Arctic region. A NATO official [claimed](#) to EURACTIV that in recent years, Russia has boosted its military presence in the Arctic, by re-opening Soviet-era military bases, deploying new weapons systems, radars and commissioning a new icebreaker fleet and that Russia has also set up an Arctic military command, NATO and its [allies](#) are watching Russia's Arctic build-up carefully. As the tensions between Russia, the Arctic coastal states and the UN

continue, the Second Cold War is [waiting](#) to unfold, decreasing the likelihood of the Arctic remaining a low-tension area.

Climate change and militarisation in the Arctic has affected the habitats of indigenous people. Rights to the land and natural resources are important to these people from both a cultural and practical standpoint. Due to climate change, traditional harvesting of indigenous people has become [difficult](#), as species start to disappear and variable weather conditions makes hunting dangerous.

Melting of ice in the Arctic results in a significant rise in global sea levels, which will erase low coastal areas around the world and [cause](#) more dangerous hurricanes and typhoons. In [2018](#), parts of Greenland were exposed to open ocean for the first time on record. Finland, Norway, Denmark and Canada have [proposed](#) significant infrastructure investment within their respective Arctic zones.

Measures in Place

Under international law, Arctic states [can claim](#) an “exclusive economic zone” (EEZ) in the waters they border, up to 200 nautical miles (230 miles) offshore. The areas beyond the economic zones have an [international](#) legal status and are part of the world’s oceans. Below are some actions that have been taken by key actors to protect the Arctic Area:

- [United Nations](#)
 - [Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#), an international law, whereby shipping in the Arctic waters is highly regulated.
- [Arctic Council](#), an intergovernmental forum promoting interaction between the Arctic States, Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic. Initiatives they support and are involved in include:
 - The [Arctic Contaminants Action Programme \(ACAP\)](#) is a strengthening and supporting mechanism, which encourages national actions to reduce emissions and other releases of pollutants,
The [Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme \(AMAP\)](#) is intended to monitor the Arctic environment, ecosystems and human populations, and provides scientific advice to support governments as they tackle pollution and the adverse effects of climate change,

- The [Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group \(CAFF\)](#) protects Arctic biodiversity, working to ensure the sustainability of the Arctic's living resources,
- The [Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response Working Group \(EPPR\)](#) is intended to protect the Arctic environment from the threat or impact of an accidental release of pollutants or radionuclides,
- The [Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment \(PAME\)](#) is the key point of the Arctic Council's activities related to the protection and sustainable use of the Arctic marine environment,
- The [Sustainable Development Working Group \(SDWG\)](#) is intended to work in advance to sustainable development in the Arctic and to improve the conditions of Arctic communities as a whole,
- [OSPAR commission](#) works to identify the threats to the marine environment,
 - Works in [cooperation](#) with [Arctic Council](#),
 - Works in five regions, the first of which to implement the [OSPAR convention](#) being the [Arctic Waters](#),
- [The Barents Sea Fisheries Agreement](#), manages shared fish stocks in the Barents Sea,
- [The International Maritime Organisation \(IMO\)](#),
 - [Polar code](#), an international code for ships operating in polar waters, which works to reduce safety related concerns among environmental protection,
- The [Law of the Sea Treaty](#) allows specific undersea access to sections of the Arctic to Canada, the United States, Russia, Norway and Denmark. These nations have a claim to all the natural resources offered by the Arctic below, above or on the ocean floor up to 200 nautical miles (230 miles) from their coastal shorelines.
- Multilateral Environmental Agreements ([MEA](#)) apply to the Arctic under the international law,
 - The high seas including the North Pole and the region of the Arctic Ocean surrounding it, are not owned by any country.
 - The five surrounding countries are limited to an exclusive economic zone of 230 miles adjacent to their coasts.

Summary

As a result of climate change, ice in the Arctic region is melting and thus, all the resources lying beneath the polar ice become easier to access. Various companies, countries and other parties have shown interest in the resources of the Arctic region, including China and Shell. The Arctic region is extensively protected by many stakeholders. For development and sustainability, accessing the resources would be a great benefit. However, drilling in the Arctic region would have a huge negative impact on the Arctic wildlife. The main goal of most countries in their Arctic policies are to draw on its natural resources, while preserving its ecosystems, and to utilize the sea as a transportation method, while ensuring that it remains a zone of peace and cooperation. With huge demand for oil and gas, Arctic resources would be beneficial, however, drilling in the Arctic causes a major risk for the environment and wildlife, as there is no effective response to oil spills in Arctic conditions.

As conflicts between the stakeholders continue, military action in the Arctic region has been expanded by multiple actors, and a new Cold War could emerge. And amidst these global issues, indigenous people's cultures and livelihoods are at risk as their living space is shrinking and their source of livelihood has become more difficult.

Links to Further Research

- https://ec.europa.eu/environment/international_issues/arctic_en.htm
- <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/arctic-uk-oil-gas-fossil-fuels-climate-change-carbon-emissions-environment-a8655926.html>
- <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/oceans/reference/arctic-ocean/>
- <https://www.arcticcentre.org/EN/research/NIEM/Projects/International-Arctic-Law>
- <https://www.newsweek.com/what-laws-protect-arctic-497467>
- <https://www.worldwildlife.org/stories/how-would-offshore-oil-and-gas-drilling-in-the-arctic-impact-wildlife>

Committee on Foreign Affairs II (AFET II)

Following the suspension of arms sales to Saudi Arabia by multiple Member States as a result of Saudi Arabia's involvement in Yemen, alongside tense relations surrounding the death of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, what stance should the EU take on its relationship with the Kingdom?

Chaired by: Emma Cox (UK)

Introduction

Saudi Arabia has undoubtedly been the face of widespread controversy recently, [from the murder of Jamal Khashoggi](#), a journalist and political figure, to their involvement in the conflict in Yemen. What is possibly overlooked, however, is the part that Member States have played in this. A strong weapons trade between France and Saudi Arabia, and between the UK and the kingdom, contributes [billions](#) to the European economy yearly. The majority of these arms are suspected to be used to aid the Yemeni government against rebel forces, and contributing to the ongoing military crisis in the country, with recent reports stating [24 million people need humanitarian assistance and protection](#).

What this topic asks of us is to define the stance the EU should take towards the Kingdom, bearing in mind the kingdom's controversies and the interests of Member States. Member states such as Germany took a leading stance in [suspending arms sales, however others such as the UK maintained a trading partnership with the Kingdom](#). Furthermore, the [UK has been condemned for three instances of illegally approving arms sales to Saudi Arabia](#), reflecting poorly on the country and spurring debate over their integrity towards human rights and their priorities. The EU currently has no [arms export policy](#) and do not oblige their Member States to take any particular stance, however there are expectations from allies to behave in line with Member States.

Key Concepts

- **Arms:** Refers to all government permitted military sales, such as ML10 licenses, referring to permitting sales of aircraft, helicopters and drones, and ML4 licenses, regarding grenades, bombs, missiles and countermeasures.

- International Humanitarian Law (IHL): seeks to limit the effect of armed conflict, however it is up to Member States' discretion as to what extent they adhere to these rules, as seen by the varying dates of arms sale suspensions.
- Yemeni Civil War: Military conflict between the Yemeni government and the rebel Houthis. A Saudi-led coalition has been aiding the government since 2015.

Actors & Stakeholders

- Saudi Arabia: The country which has aided the Yemeni government the most, leading a coalition within which 7 countries have contributed militarily. The country is currently ruled by an absolute monarchy, meaning the King is head of state and government, with the senior princes and royal family deciding on laws. Sharia law is practiced, which is derived from the Qur'an and has caused controversy in the Westernised world due to its conservative tone. Furthermore, the Kingdom teaches Wahhabi principles, derived from Wahhabism in the 18th Century, after the leader formed close relations to the House of Saud, and is currently [claimed](#) to be overtaking Sunni Islam within the Kingdom.
- Private Military Corporation: British aircraft, defense electronics and warship manufacturers which supply the majority of material to Saudi Arabia, for example BAE Systems, describing itself as having a 'long-term presence in the Saudi Arabian home market'.
- Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT): Independent NGO which aims to end international arms trade and launched a [legal campaign](#) in the UK to prevent arms sales to Saudi Arabia which they won in June 2019.
- Human Rights Watch (HRW): campaigns against the involvement of Member States in aiding Saudi and Yemeni efforts putting political pressure on the countries involved
- Arms Trade Treaty - adopted by the [UN General Assembly](#) with an aim to regulated international arms trading, with Member States being signatories.
- European Network Against Arms Trade
- <http://enaat.org/> - an example of the NGOs against arms trade
- SIPRI Stockholm International Peace Research Institution: provides impartial commentary to political issues and conducts research on matters relating to global security such as conflict and armament.
- Saudi Royal Family: Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, current deputy prime minister, with the Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia held by King Abdulaziz. The family is estimated to comprise 15,000 members, however the majority of the wealth is

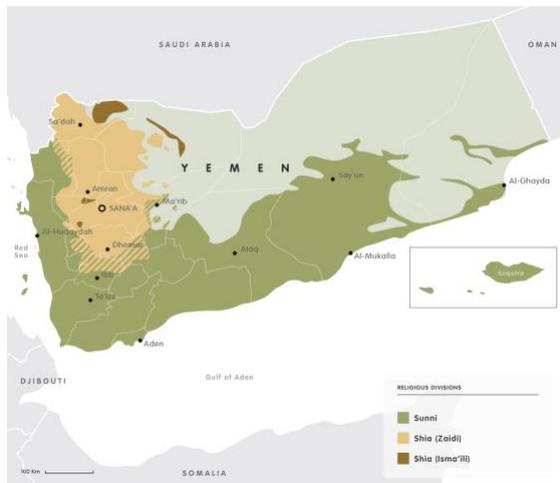
concentrated in the top two thousand. The House of Saud has been involved in ruling since 1744, and has developed into the Third Saudi State, from 1902-present. In 2006 it was decreed that future Saudi kings are to be elected by a committee of Saudi princes, as opposed to by heritage.

Conflicts

Jamal Khashoggi was a Saudi dissident and political writer and editor, who had columns in the Washington Post and was known for his liberal political views, challenging the Saudi regime and authority. He entered the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul, Turkey on the 2nd October 2018 to collect documents for his upcoming marriage, however never left the building again. After a few weeks, the Saudi [government admitted to his premeditated murder and consequent dismemberment inside the consulate](#), with the CIA concluding that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, often referred to as MbS, had ordered his assassination. The reasons for his murder are thought to stem from his outspoken opposition to the Saudi led coalition in Yemen, as well as his political views published in the Washington Post. The Saudi Crown Prince attempted to cover up his murder, and [investigations](#) concluded that there was no other way of viewing his death than an extrajudicial killing for which the State is responsible. His death highlighted the blasé attitude of the Kingdom and their disregard for the lives of its citizens, as well as MbS' desire to hold onto power and silence those that threaten his rule. Issues arise for the EU on their approach to Saudi Arabia when considering their stance supporting freedom of the press, the Member States' independent trading relations with the Kingdom and the breach of human rights committed in the killing by Saudi Arabia. The official [statement](#) of the EU condemned the murder and reaffirmed their support of journalists, with individual Member States taking individual action regarding Saudi Arabia, such as Germany, Finland and Denmark [ceasing](#) arms trading within a month of his death.

The Yemeni Crisis has been ongoing since 2015 and is leading the country towards a widespread [famine](#), called the largest humanitarian crisis currently. Nowadays, the main conflict is between the Houthi rebels, who instigated the conflict by forcing president Abdo Rabbu Mansour Hadi to flee in 2015, their allies, and the internationally recognised government of Ma'in Abdulmalek. Saudi Arabia launched a Saudi-led coalition in 2015 with the intent to end the conflict, with all members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (excluding Oman), Egypt and Sudan, and backing from the USA and the UK. The coalition provide military aid to the government. The Saudi-led forces have been accused, by the UN, of widespread and systematic violations of IHL and two separate occasions, referring to the ongoing conflict in Yemen. Analysts have even claimed that '[the Royal Saudi Air Force cannot](#)

[operate without American and British support](#)', implicating both countries in the arms sales and their role in the Yemeni crisis. The UN has warned that cuts may result in them not being able to aid Yemen as much as they need, with up to [22 aid programmes threatened](#).



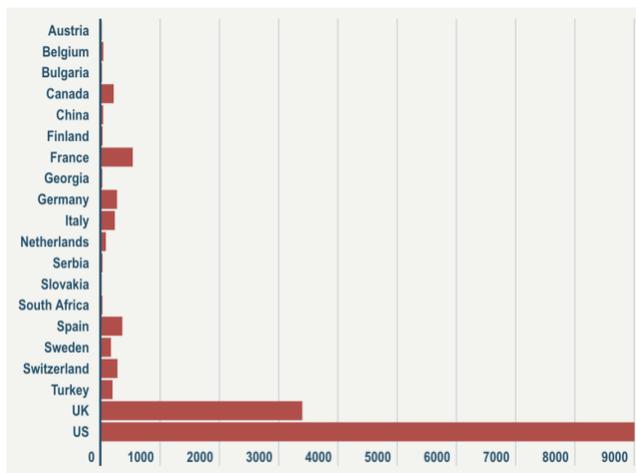
Legality of arms sales

The UK has been [condemned](#) by the United Nations for selling arms illegally [thrice](#), with sales estimated to exceed £5.3bn since 2015. The [government](#) has admitted to the [sales](#), and has blamed lack of [communication](#) between 'government departments', as mentioned in Liz Truss's apology speech in September 2019, however this has sparked outrage as it could be seen as collusion between governments and the UK actively contributing to loss of civilian life. The European Parliament has said that arms sales should be halted to Saudi Arabia

following reports of the Yemen crisis, however it is the individual government's discretion as to how they act and approve arms sales.

Corruption within Saudi Arabia

The Saudi government has been accused of holding people hostage in the [Ritz-Carlton](#) in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, which then sparked social media outrage and the boycotting of the Ritz hotels. This was carried out by Crown Prince MbS, in an attempt to



Source: SIPRI

reduce rivalry and consolidate his power within the Kingdom. Those held hostage were influential and important characters in Saudi Arabia, such as princesses or billionaires. The Kingdom has garnered a reputation for their behaviour towards dissidents, with the Crown Prince often being accused of corruption, however concrete evidence to substantiate this varies due to the control of the press by the state.

Measures in Place

- The European Commission, which makes proposals for European laws, attempted to [blacklist](#) Saudi Arabia in February 2019 for money laundering, however this was then blocked by 27 of the 28 Member States. This sets the precedent that Member States will be reluctant to act against Saudi Arabia.
- Germany suspended arms sales, and has recently [extended](#) this ban yet again until March 2020.
- CAAT prompted a [judicial review](#) into the UK's sales of arms to the Kingdom, which resulted in them being condemned as illegally approved.

- The European Parliament [common position 2008](#) shows 8 criteria set out to prevent situations such as those with Saudi Arabia arising, and has been built on in [February 2019](#) with a focus on the Kingdom.

Summary

Taking into account the actions of Saudi Arabia, and the death of Jamal Khashoggi alongside the Yemeni crisis, the EU is troubled by Saudi Arabia. How should they act in order to quell the human rights questions raised by international organisations and activists without dictating to Member States how they should behave and who they should trade with? The death of Jamal Khashoggi in 2018 sparked international outrage for the blatant manner in which he was executed, and the actions of the Saudi Crown Prince in particular in consolidating his authority has brought him much attention, particularly from charities such as Amnesty International. The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen has aided the Yemeni government however this has then gone on to provoke needless death of civilians, widely reported in a disapproving manner by the media. The future for the Kingdom looks to be more of the same, as the Crown Prince shows little remorse for how he has acted, and controversies not unlike those of Jamal continuing to take place. Ultimately, this topic asks us to consider the implications of the Kingdom's actions, and the approach the EU should take towards them, considering the jurisdiction of the EU and the interests of Member States.

Links to Further Research

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/jamal-khashoggi-what-the-arab-world-needs-most-is-free-expression/2018/10/17/adfc8c44-d21d-11e8-8c22-fa2ef74bd6d6_story.html

- Last article written by Jamal Khashoggi, useful to gauge his character, political opinions and reasons he was a controversial figure

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/b006t14n/panorama>

- 30-minute documentary on the details of Jamal's murder and the involvement of Saudi Arabia

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/03/saudi-arabia-in-ten-brutal-facts/>

(Is this too brutal to include?? I was thinking it would get them interested but it's also from 2015 and rather savage)

<https://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/policy-brief/2019/you-never-listen-me-european-saudi-relationship-after>

<https://geopoliticalfutures.com/whats-going-saudi-arabia/>

<https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgroundunder/2019/legal-challenges-eu-member-states-arms-exports-saudi-arabia-current-status-and-potential>



Committee on Human Rights (DROI)

Bearing in mind the recent tensions at the Bialystok Pride March in Poland, sexual and gender minorities in Europe run the risk of discrimination and harassment on a daily basis. How should the EU protect the rights of sexual and gender minorities in its Member States?

Chaired by: *Eduards Brūns (LV) & Markéta Stuchlíková (CZ)*

Introduction

The past decade has been crucial for the LGBTQ+ community and their recognition; since 2010 gay marriage has been made legal in 10 Member States, making it a total of [17 European jurisdictions](#). [The Pride movement](#) has had a great impact on the societies beliefs and established larger overall acceptance of the people and their rights. Nevertheless, there are still parts of our society where openly discriminating against and being hostile towards **individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender identity is still often culturally accepted.**

[The 2012 EU LGBT survey](#) showed that 47% of all respondents have been **personally discriminated or harassed due to their sexual orientation** and had received threats or were attacked because they were perceived as a part of the LGBTQ+ community. However, respondents **rarely reported any of the occurrences** because of the lack of trust in respective authorities and their corresponding actions. 56% of respondents felt like the offense wasn't serious enough to report it and 20% felt ashamed and wanted to keep it a secret.

Despite homosexuality being legal in all Member States and discrimination prohibited on any ground including sexual orientation within the [2009 Charter of Fundamental Rights](#), the [recent events in Bialystok](#) proved that it is not enough. [The Law and Justice Party \(PiS\)](#) in Poland has launched a campaign for the upcoming parliamentary elections stating that the LGBTQ+ community is a threat to the Polish culture, referring to the community as the '[new plague](#).'

Key Concepts

- [Discrimination](#) – unfair or unequal treatment of an individual or group based on race, gender, sexual orientation etc.
- [Homophobia](#) – fear, hatred, discomfort, or mistrust of people who are gay, lesbian or bisexual.
- [Hate crime](#) – violence and offences motivated by an individual’s race, disability, sexual orientation etc.
- [Sexual and gender minorities](#) – A sexual minority refers to individuals whose sexual orientations are marginalized, like LGBTQ+ identities. Gender minorities are groups of individuals whose sexual identity differ from the majority in the society.
- [LGBTQ+](#) – an umbrella acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer people.

Actors and Stakeholders

- [ILGA Europe](#) - the European department of International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association advocates for LGBTI rights and functions as an umbrella organisations for many LGBTI NGOs
- [European Agency for Fundamental Rights](#) (FRA) - offers proficiency, help and advisory to the EU or Member States in implementing law or fundamental rights affairs.
- [EP LGBTI Intergroup](#) - consists of members of the European Parliament and deliberates matters concerning the current state of the European law regarding the LGBTQ+ individuals.
- [Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe](#) - focuses on bringing democracy, stability and peace through political discussion, prepares reports on LGBTQ+ situation and argue for equal rights.
- LGBTQ+ community - gathers all sexual and gender and bodily minorities, members are often victims of discrimination and harassment because of them openly expressing their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Conflicts

Although many European nations are continuously moving towards acceptance and equal rights, discrimination and hate towards the LGBTQ+ community is still present. **LGBTQ+ people face discrimination and harassment in many ways and the majority of these never get reported.** According to a [2012 survey](#) by the FRA, almost half of the respondents felt discriminated against in the year preceding the study, and 90% of them did not report

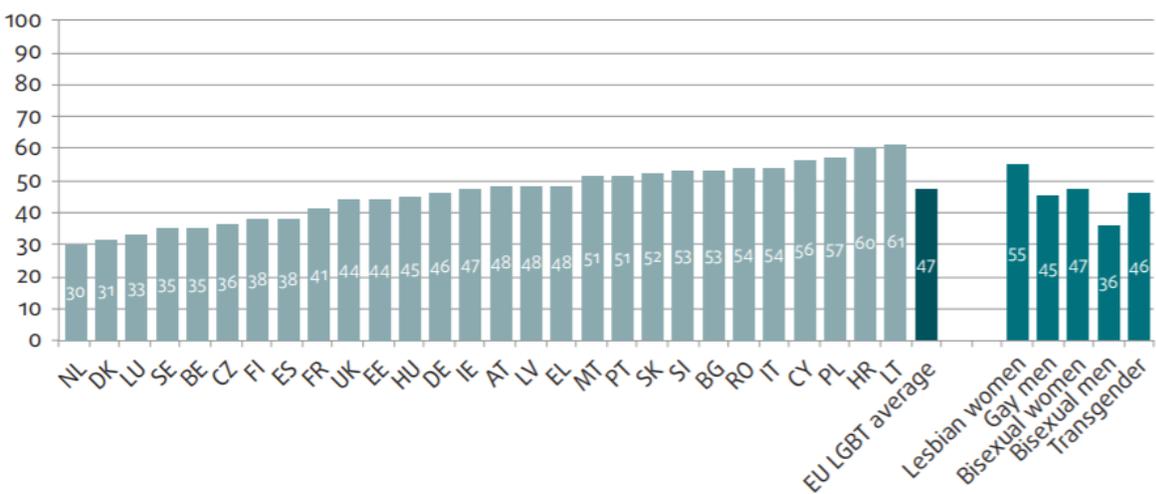
anything whatsoever. As reported by 2015 Eurobarometer, [60% of respondents](#) found **discrimination on grounds of being LGBTI to be widespread.**

Those numbers are alarming all alone, but combined with the recent [Bialystok Pride March incident](#) and an anti-LGBTI rhetoric familiar to many European politicians, it becomes conspicuous how urging and severe of an issue it really is.

When it comes to hate speech, discrimination and harassment, the amount rife is unfitting of the EU's beliefs and the fundamental rights of its citizens. The same insufficiency goes for EU's legislation as well. As it states in the [European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights](#), sexual minorities are **protected against discrimination**, however **only in the workplace. Moreover, the current legislation fails to define or even use a mention of "gender identity" and therefore cannot protect transgender and intersex rights.** Regarding other areas of life such as school and public spaces, they are not shielded by any EU law whatsoever.

Education on LGBTQ+ issues in schools is quite insufficient and although the European Parliament has proposed Member States to include LGBTQ+ education in their school curricula, the trend is for the majority of these states to stay ambivalent on educating the youth about sexual and gender minorities.

Figure 2: Respondents who felt discriminated against or harassed on the grounds of sexual orientation in the last 12 months, by country and by LGBT group (%)



Question: C2. In the last 12 months, in the country where you live, have you personally felt discriminated against or harassed on the basis of one or more of the following grounds? - Answer : C. Sexual orientation.

Base: All EU LGBT survey respondents.

Source: FRA, EU LGBT survey, 2012

https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-eu-lgbt-survey-main-results_tk3113640enc_1.pdf

Measures in place

[Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) of the European Union prohibits any form of discrimination based on reasons including but not limited to sexual orientation. However, there is no mention of discrimination on the grounds of gender identity.

The [Horizontal Directive](#) is an anti-discrimination directive first proposed by the European Commission in 2008. Its aim is to protect the citizens against discrimination not only in the workplace, but across a much broader spectrum of settings. It has not been passed ever since its proposal.

National law is decided by the Member State itself. It can protect citizens from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity - it varies country to country and can only apply to some areas of life. In some member states such as [France](#) or [Spain](#) same-sex marriage is legal, others like [Estonia](#) or Czech Republic recognise same-sex unions in some form, and in the rest such as [Poland](#) or Latvia same-sex unions are outlawed. In some countries like [Denmark](#) or Ireland joint adoption by same-sex couples is legal.

The [Employment Framework Directive](#) protects the rights of the members of the LGBTQ+ community in employment, yet the document does not mention gender identity..

The term 'spouse' has officially been [recognised](#) by the European Court of Justice as inclusive for same-sex couples, thus same-sex couples need to be treated equally to different-sex couples when it comes to freedom of movement rights.

[“We all share the same dreams”](#) is a campaign by the European Commission launched in 2016 aiming to raise awareness and increase LGBTQ+ acceptance in the EU.

Summary

Europe is becoming more understanding of the LGBTQ+ movement day by day but it is far from perfect. **People experience discrimination, hate speech and even violent attacks on a daily basis**, Bialystok Pride March was just one of many incidents. Most of the hate crimes slip under the radar and never get reported.

The EU has made progress in this area by adopting documents such as [Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) and [Employment Framework Directive](#) concentrating on the prevention of discrimination, hate crime and violence is still present. The results of LGBT survey have shown a disturbing number of people experiencing harassment, discrimination and violence in different areas of life, particularly concerning for the EU with some of its main principles being equal treatment and respect for everyone.

[Multiple organisations and movements](#) are creating campaigns to help people understand and comprehend the severeness of the issues of LGBTQ+ rights but the proposal of including LGBTQ+ education in their curricula has not been widely accepted. The question remains – **what can be done to make the EU a safe and fair environment for all its citizens?**

Useful Links:

- [Article 'The struggle for LGBT equality: Pride meets prejudice in Poland' by the Guardian](#)
- [European countries ranked by their effort in human rights](#)
- [The EU LGBT survey results \(2012\)](#)
- [An insight in LGBTI rights](#)
- [Video from Bialystok Pride March](#)
- [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- [List of organisations which promote LGBTQ+ and Human Rights in general](#)

Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI)

Bearing in mind the European Parliament's 2019 resolution on the use of cannabis for medicinal purposes, what further steps should the EU and Member States take to ensure the accessibility of medicinal cannabis for those who need it whilst remaining aware of the possible effects of cannabis upon its recreational usage?

Chaired by: Alžběta Vítková (CZ)

1. Introduction

Cannabis is now used in medicine as **an alternative to common medication**. The usage varies from treating chronic pain, multiple sclerosis, Crohn's disease or Parkinson's disease, to rising appetite and curing nausea. It has been [scientifically proven](#) that marijuana is impossible to fatally overdose on, it is far less addictive than most of the regularly used opiates, and causes less harm to one's kidneys. A [recent study](#) of the effects of cannabis on Crohn's disease patients showed that 65 percent of the participants, whose 8-week treatment consisted of cannabis oil, met "strict criteria for clinical remission" of Crohn's disease.

These positive results do not, unfortunately, mean that the usage of medical cannabis is completely hazardless. First of all, both the positive and negative effects of cannabis on the human body **are highly understudied**. A large marijuana consumption can also lead to [developing psychosis and several mental disorders, such as depression](#), especially in early age. [Scientists sometimes consider cannabis to even be one of the triggers of schizophrenia](#). Moreover, excessive long-term usage of cannabis can lead to [cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome](#), causing symptoms such as vomiting and severe pain.

The usage of cannabis in medicine is a fairly new concept, as just 70 years ago [the United Nations](#) categorised it as a drug with no medical use. During the past few years, several developments in regards to the legalisation of medical cannabis have taken place in European states. **Medical cannabis is now fully legal in more than ten Member States, and about ten more allow cannabis-based medicine to be used**. However, respective governments of the Member States have different approaches towards the issue. For example, [Germany decided to legalise marijuana in medicine in March 2017](#). Within a year from this change in legislation, health insurance companies received approximately 13000

applications for reimbursement for the use of medical cannabis. This step was monitored by other states' governments and, surprisingly, caused countries such as Portugal or Denmark to follow suit. Moreover, in February 2019, **the European Parliament encouraged the Member States to legalise medical cannabis** in a [new resolution](#) on the use of cannabis for medicinal purposes.

2. Key Terms

- **Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)** is one of the two main chemical substances of cannabis. It is the psychoactive compound of marijuana that affects how a human brain functions.
- **Cannabidiol (CBD)** is the second chemical substance of cannabis. It has been the centre of attention recently due to its potential in medicine while intoxicating the brain very little and having been proven to be easily digestible. As of now, there is no comprehensive framework within the EU concerning the pure cannabidiol.
- **Medical cannabis** is what doctors in most of the Member States may prescribe to patients. Medical cannabis can be [inhaled](#) while smoking or vaporising, or even eaten. The THC content of medical cannabis lies between 0.1 and 5%.
- **Cannabis-based medicine** is medicine containing a certain amount of CBD. It is usually used in the form of [oral spray or capsules](#). The first cannabis-based medicines to gain market-approval, Epidiolex and Sativex, were produced by [GW PHarmaceutics](#).
- **Recreational marijuana** is a psychoactive drug used to intentionally change one's state of consciousness. This type of cannabis has a large THC content and is used for its effects. Recreational marijuana is illegal in most European countries, yet the penalties for its possession vary, and many countries have even tried to incorporate a legal marijuana supply, such as the famous coffee houses in the Netherlands, or the [partial decriminalisation](#) measures in the Czech Republic.
- **Technical Hemp** has the clearest legislation of all cannabis types. In the EU, it is fully legal to be used in fabric production or food industry. Its THC content is no higher than 0.2%.

3. Actors & Stakeholders

- **Member States** have the **exclusive competence** to regulate their legislation regarding the use of cannabis. Each state can also carry out research regarding the further use of CBD and THC as well as their effects on the human brain and body. Each Member State has an exclusive responsibility with regards to penalties for drug use offences, such as the possession of recreational marijuana.

- **European citizens** are directly involved actors. They stand as the consumers participating in the use and distribution of cannabis. Their votes in European Parliament election or their respective government election might affect the future of the use of medical cannabis.
- **European Monitoring Centre for Drug and Addiction** (EMCDDA) is an agency of the EU. Its number one mission is providing the Member States with information regarding drug usage, drug abuse, and health complications. To make this happen, they have conducted various research projects on the usage of medical cannabis and its possible health hazards.
- **European Medicines Agency** (EMA) is currently conducting several research projects on the effects of cannabis on various illnesses, including glioma and epilepsy.
- **GW Pharmaceuticals** is a British pharmaceutical company known for its cannabinoid-based medicines. Its products include **Epidiolex**, the first cannabis-based epilepsy treatment, as well as **Sativex**, the multiple sclerosis medicine derived from the cannabis plant, which was the first cannabis derivative to gain market approval.
- **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime** framed the [1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs](#). According to this document, the cultivation, supply, and possession of cannabis should be allowed only for medical and scientific purposes. The Article 28 of the 1961 Convention permits countries to cultivate the cannabis plant for the production of cannabis or cannabis resin under a system of control that is the same for opium poppy. It also encourages countries to adopt measures in order to deter their citizens from its use, with most countries making the possession of the drug punishable by imprisonment.
- **Non-EU countries** also have a large impact on the world-wide perception of marijuana and its representation in media. For example, Canada recently fully legalised the use of cannabis for both medical and recreational usage. Moreover, Switzerland currently only allows the use of one cannabis-based medicine, Epidiolex. However, the [Swiss government now aims to legalise cannabis for medical purposes](#).

4. Conflicts

Despite the recent resolution of the European Commission, usage of cannabis in medicine still faces many obstacles. First of all, [few doctors are actually willing to prescribe medical cannabis to their patients](#), as many healthcare professionals remain worried about the lack of conclusive evidence and clinical trials regarding the medicinal use of cannabis. With research results on the possible health hazards of medical cannabis remaining contradictory, a significant number of **doctors refuse to undergo the risks caused by this uncertainty**. As a result, people suffering from various illnesses **are often relied on unsafe and uncontrolled marijuana available in the black market**. If they decide to use marijuana purchased in an illegal way, they might face various penalties for its illegal possession.

Moreover, clinical trials have found that [only 5% of the epilepsy patients](#) that received cannabis-based treatment became seizure-free while using medical cannabis. On the other hand, some patients partaking in the study had to drop out as they felt no improvement or were experiencing side effects.

Furthermore, the **legislation regarding medical cannabis varies from country to country**, as there is currently no harmonised, EU-wide legislation on the issue. Whilst many Member States only allow cannabis-based medicine, some of them allow doctors to prescribe raw medical cannabis. Patients suffering from the very same symptoms have different opportunities of treatment in each Member State. It is also an exclusive authority of each Member state to set penalties for recreational cannabis possession.

Lastly, **the social stigma surrounding marijuana consumption is still relevant in most of the EU**, and is holding back the potential further studies to a better understanding of the positive and negative effects of cannabis. This stigma is further supported by [how cannabis is represented not only in media](#), but also by public authorities. For example, the [1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs](#) by UN classifies cannabis in the same group of drugs with, for example, heroin.

5. Measures in Place

In February 2019, the [European Parliament passed a new resolution](#), which supports the usage of cannabis in medicine and calls upon the Member States to legalise it for medical purposes. However, **legislation regarding the usage of medical cannabis varies greatly between Member States**. Some Member States, such as the [Czech Republic](#) or

[Greece](#), have fully legalised medical marijuana, while other Member States, including France or Slovenia have only allowed the usage of cannabis-based medicine, such as the aforementioned Sativex and Epidiolex developed by GW Pharmaceuticals. Moreover, in countries like [Finland](#) only a very limited number of patients are allowed to purchase cannabis-based medicine, as getting a prescription requires that specialists, rather than a general practitioner, must recommend it.

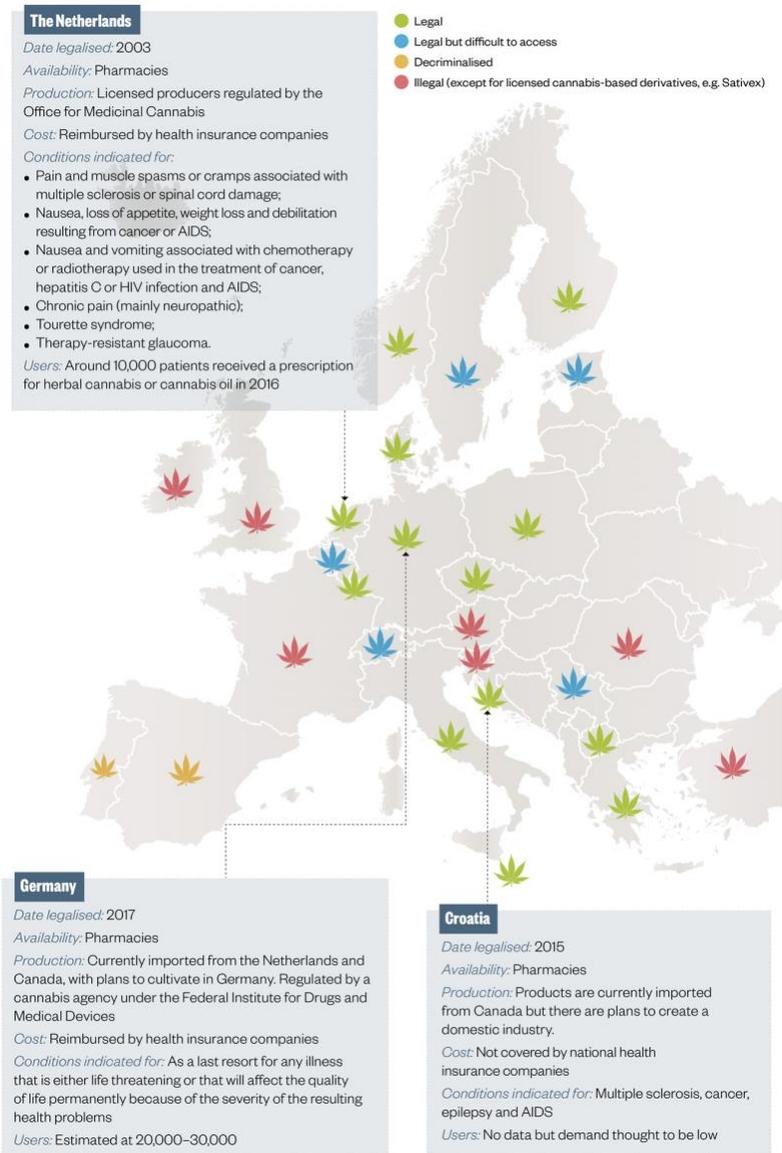
[The World Health Organisation \(WHO\) has recently encouraged the UN to reclassify cannabis in the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. The WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence \(ECDD\) recommended that cannabis should no longer be classified as a drug with particularly dangerous properties, distinguishing it from substances like heroin.](#)

In June 2018, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the usage of Epidiolex, the cannabis-based medicine produced by GW Pharmaceuticals. It was the very first cannabis-based medicine for epilepsy to earn this approval.

Recreational marijuana is prohibited in all Member States. Each Member State has a full authority in penalties for its possession. There are, however, experiments in

Source: [Pharmaceutical Journal](#)

Legislation in some Member States, for example the Netherlands, Spain or the Czech Republic. In the Netherlands, [it is possible to](#)



[legally buy and smoke marijuana](#) in earmarked places, the so-called coffeeshops. [Possession and even growth of small amount of recreational cannabis for personal use has been decriminalised in Czech Republic.](#) It is, however, illegal to distribute any amount of marijuana to others or smoke it in public places.

6. Summary

[Cannabis has been legalised for medical purposes in most of the EU.](#) **However, its effects on the human body are highly understudied.** Scientists suspect cannabis to be connected to the development of various [mental health illnesses](#), but the studies remain inconclusive. Moreover, **many doctors are uncertain about prescribing medical cannabis to their patients due to lack of research and evidence.** As a result, patients are either dependant on other opiates, which might not be as efficient or safe, or have to procure cannabis in an illegal way on the black market. This kind of unsupervised usage of cannabis might lead to multiple health hazards, as scientists believe its consumption might trigger various psychoses. **Moreover, the legislation regarding medical cannabis varies in each Member State.** While some countries only allow cannabis-based medicine such as Epidiolex and Sativex, some states allow the patients to smoke, vaporise or even eat the medical cannabis.

Should the **EU form a comprehensive legislation** to harmonise the differences in legislation among the Member States? What further steps can the EU take to help those in need to **benefit from medical cannabis**, while also keeping in mind the lack of information, the social stigma and possible drug abuse? Could cannabis be the future of gastrointestinal disease medicine? And, finally, how can we **minimise the negative effects** of cannabis on the human body while there is still a **lack of research** of how closely connected these diseases are to marijuana consumption?

7. Links to further research

- [The European Parliament's Resolution form February 2019](#)
- [A summation of multiple researches of cannabis effects on human body](#)
- [The cannabis policy by EMCDDA](#)
- [A TED Talk by the American physician David Casarett](#)
- [An article about the effects of CBD](#)

Infographics source <https://straininsider.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Cannabis-in-the-EU-Infographic-1.png>

Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM)

Despite prior EU action in the form of the 2014 Istanbul Convention, violence against women remains widespread in Europe, with one in three women reporting some form of physical or sexual abuse. What further actions can Member States and the EU take to put an end to violence against women?

Chaired by *Julia Eriksson & Susanna Lehtonen*

Introduction

The majority of violence against women is predominantly perpetrated by men and can be understood as [gender-based violence](#), meaning violence directed against a person because of their gender. Gender-based violence is based on hierarchical and unequal structural power relations rooted in culture-related [gender norms](#), shaping beliefs about what is typical behavior for different genders. In general the male gender is associated with male dominance, aggression, sexual entitlement, toughness and power over others. A gender norm contributing to violence against women and girls can for example be that females should submit to male authority and that if needed, physical and sexual force may be used by men to ensure that.

The historical power imbalance between women and men has existed for centuries, but has only recently been addressed by society. Domestic violence was considered a private matter and has only since the 1990s could be seen as a fundamental rights concern where State Parties have an obligation to provide care and safety to victims. The 1992 United Nations Committee on the [Elimination of Discrimination against Women](#) established a definition of gender-based violence, however the first internationally agreed definition was introduced in 1993 as part of the the [United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women](#). At the UN’s 4th World Conference on Women, the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), the definition of violence against women was broadened to incorporate violence in a variety of contexts and environments.

Also the [Council of Europe undertook a series of initiatives](#): In 2002 the Council of Europe Recommendation on the protection of women against violence was adopted by the member states. In 2010 the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and

domestic violence was adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers and it was signed in 2011 during 121st session of the Committee of Ministers in Istanbul.

The EU makes reference to the definitions developed by the UN and the Council of Europe and has not adopted any own definition of violence against women or enacted specific legislation incorporating the full range of women's experiences of violence.

Remaining a largely [under-reported and relatively under-researched topic](#), at the EU and member states level, different stakeholders called for comprehensive data on violence against women. Only in the presence of robust data the needs and experiences of victims can be appropriately met.

An [EU-wide survey](#) presented by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights responds to the request for data from the European Parliament in 2009, which was repeated by the Council of the European Union in its 2010 Conclusion on the eradication of violence against women in the EU.

According to the survey implemented across the 28 Member States of the European Union, one in three women experience physical or sexual violence at least once since the age of 15. One in 10 women has experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 15, and one in 20 has been raped. Just over one in five women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence from either a current or previous partner, and just over one in 10 women indicates that they have experienced some form of sexual violence by an adult before they were 15 years old.

As a widespread abuse that affects many women's lives, a broad-range of incidents are consistently under-reported to the authorities. [Only 14% of women affected reported their most serious incident of intimate partner violence to the police, and 13% of their most serious incident of non-partner violence to the police.](#)

Feelings of shame, embarrassment and guilt are linked to physical violence, leading victims not to report. [Moreover the attrition rate for rape remains high.](#) The conviction of rapists in comparison to the number of reported cases is low, since many criminal justice systems have difficulty bringing the offenders to account. This is due to systems not encouraging victims to report, making it hard to record and prosecute rate.

Further offenses are important to take into account, such as sexual harassment, a concern that according to the survey is as common as 1 in 2 women being sexually harassed in EU-28.

Although this data has been available since 2014, the #metoo movement against sexual harassment and sexual assault, starting in 2017, was groundbreaking. It has made obvious that [leadership and culture needs to be changed](#) in order to end the universal phenomenon of sexual harassment against women.

Connected to physical violence against women is psychological violence. Psychological violence can be different forms of controlling behavior, economic violence, abusive behavior and blackmailing with children. Also stalking is often manifested as a form of psychological violence, undermining the victim's sense of safety. The correlation shown in the FRA study suggests that psychological violence should be considered as a warning sign to physical violence.

Key Terms

Fundamental human rights: rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. One of the main objectives of the European Union is to ensure its citizens these rights.

Gender-based violence: violence directed against a person because of their gender - , a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality.

Gender mainstreaming: the integration tergration of gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination.

Female genital mutilation (FGM): partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

Honour crime: a crime where the motivation of the perpetrator is linked to a perceived 'loss of honour' caused by the victim's actions. Victims of honour crimes usually belong to the same family or community as the perpetrator, and are usually, but not exclusively, women. Honour crimes are popularly associated with Islam, although they also occur in Hindu, Sikh, Druze, Christian and Jewish communities. An example of an honour crime occurred in 2010, when the 17-year-old Laura Wilson was killed by her Pakistani ex-boyfriend because she refused to keep their relationship a secret.

Actors & Stakeholders

The victims, being the ones violated and affected by the consequences of the crime they are in a vulnerable position and in need of professional care. Victims decide whether to report or not and therefore impact the conviction of the perpetrators.

The perpetrators, being the source of the issue and often having mistreated and violated victims more than one single time.

Member States are responsible for the safeguarding of victims and the conviction of the violators. **The legal system** in Member States is fundamental to fulfilling the role of protecting victims. Violence against wWomen needs to be recorded and acted upon. Until recently, now there have been major differences between Member States when it comes to the recording of violence against wWomen. In the FRA study, it can be seen that since the mid-1990s the rate for police recording incidents of rape rape has increased in some countries in comparison with other Member States, where the legal measures are insufficient

The European Commission proposed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), which was consented by **the European Parliament**.

The Presidency of the Council of the European Union, currently held by Finland, has set as a priority to strengthen the rule of law and defend international human rights institutions, and to ensure citizens of the European Union receive equal rights. [Finland's Presidency](#) highlights the importance of a gender equality strategy combining specific actions and mainstreaming.

Presidencies of the Council of the European Union, such as the **European Commission** and the **European Parliament** called for EU-wide data on the violence against women. This request was fulfilled by **the EU agency for fundamental rights**, an EU body collecting and analysing data on fundamental rights.

The European Institute for Gender Equality is an EU agency raising the issue of gender equality higher on the EU's agenda, including the area of violence against women.

The Council of Europe acts as a leading role in combating violence against women. It has enabled the ratification of the most far-reaching international treaty on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, signed by 47 European states.

The United Nations (UN) plays a major role in [operating towards destroying the root of violence against women and girls](#). Besides providing a fund to end violence against women, the UN is realising several projects with partners, such as the Spotlight initiative together with the EU, and is offering multiple programmes and service packages.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is a UN body of expert dedicated monitoring the implementation of the Convention of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Multiple **non-governmental Organisations** are engaged in ending the violence against women and girls on a national or a Europe-wide basis, to name a few, Amnesty International, Womankind Worldwide and, the International Alliance for women. More than twenty-five European civil society networks have joined the [European Coalition to end violence against women and girls](#).

Conflicts

Violence against women is an extensive human rights abuse, opposing multiple articles of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, such as

- the right of human dignity (Article 1)
 - the right to the integrity of the person (Article 3)
- in case of gender-based violence that disproportionately affects women
- the principle of non-discrimination including on the ground of sex (Article 21)
 - the right to equality between women and men (Article 23)
- and
- the right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial (Article 47)

Nevertheless, to fully prosecute violence against women and to ensure women's rights is difficult, due to underreporting.

Violence against women is rooted in social inequalities between men and women.

Gender inequality and discrimination, although a larger issue in some Member States

compared to others, remains as the core issue for gender-based violence. In some countries, traditional and religious values are used to justify the unequal power relations between men and women. Furthermore, a lack of economic independence impacts women's place in society, and hence their vulnerability.

The scale of the problem is not fully known. The most comprehensive [survey](#) on the issue was published by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in 2014, but reliable and comparable data on the issue of violence against women is still lacking at a both national and a European level due to [lack of statistics in the cases filed, court proceedings and convictions](#) among other reasons. Furthermore, the survey published by the FRA neglects women which have experienced rarer forms of violence, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), and 'honour' crimes, [which have become a more significant issue within the EU due to increased migration](#). This lack of data makes it difficult to develop efficient strategies to combat the issue at hand. Other obstacles in obtaining comparable data are the differences in data collection at a national level as well as a lack of a common definition of violence against women at a European level. Currently there are [three relevant definitions of violence against women at the international level](#): one in the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, one in the Council of Europe's Recommendation Rec(2002)5 and one in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Each of the European Member States either refer to one of these main definitions, have an overall definition of violence or have a more narrow definition referring to specific forms of violence.

A vast majority of women do not report their experiences to authorities. The current statistics show low numbers of cases of violence being reported to the police (around 14%). This is mostly due to feelings of shame and guilt women tend to experience after having encountered violence. Furthermore, varying public attitudes towards violence against women discourage women from reporting their experiences. In the aforementioned survey conducted by the FRA the highest percentages (around 45%) of reported cases of physical and/or sexual violence were found in Northern Europe, while the percentages in Southern and Eastern Europe remained fairly low, only accounting to around 15-30% of the cases. [Generally more educated societies where there is a higher awareness of gender issues tend to report intimate partner violence more often than societies where aggression against women is tolerated, or even accepted.](#)

Cyber violence against young women is a growing issue, but has not yet been legislated against on an EU level. As access to the internet is increasingly viewed as a human right and as social media platforms are widely used, it is crucial to provide a safe digital public space

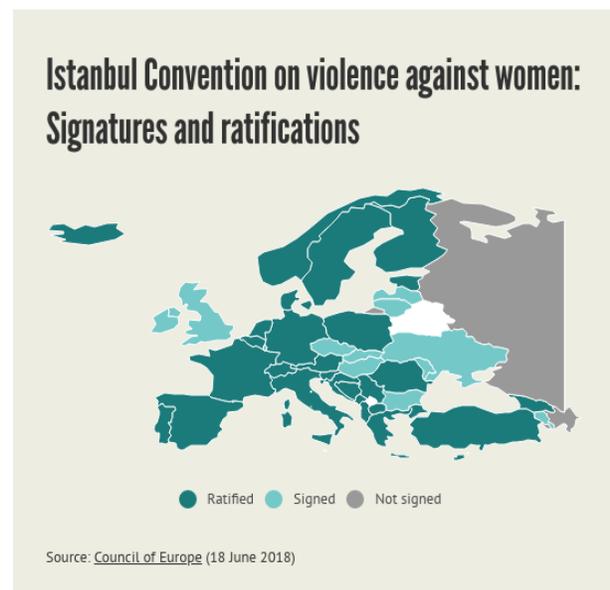
for everyone, including women and girls. Nevertheless, [one in ten women in Europe have experienced some kind of cyber violence since the age of 15. Various forms of cyber violence include, but are not limited to](#) cyber stalking, non-consensual pornography, gender-based slurs, hate speech and harassment, rape threats and death threats as well as electronically facilitated trafficking. Although the scope of the problem is not fully understood, it is clear that existing forms of violence against women are reinforced through social media, and new tools are subsequently created to threaten women. However, there is currently [no specific instrument focusing on cyber violence and hate speech online against women at EU level](#). Instead, there are certain EU directives which briefly cover this form of violence.

Measures in Place

Legislative measures

[The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#), also known as the Istanbul Convention, aims to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women. It was adopted by the Council of Europe in 2011, and entered into force in 2014. The convention aims to combat the issue by preventing violence, protecting victims and prosecuting the perpetrators by criminalizing both physical and psychological forms of violence, including forced marriage. It is considered as the most comprehensive international treaty on fighting violence against women. [Its main objectives include:](#)

- Protecting victims from violence
- Increasing awareness of violence against women and its consequences through education
- Ensuring support and advice for women experiencing violence by improving the skills of professionals working in the field
- Supporting NGOs and the media
- Giving the victims more rights in criminal proceedings



Source: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/text-of-the-convention>

- Improving the reporting of the incidents.

The convention additionally requires the signatories to modify their legislation and provide services to women who have experienced some form of violence. Furthermore, the convention requires Member States to monitor their achievements in fulfilling the requirements of the convention.

Despite all EU Member States already having signed the treaty, as of November 2018, [7 Member States have not yet ratified the convention](#). The debates on its ratification mostly revolve around [the use of the word “gender”](#) in the convention, as it challenges the traditional views of gender roles in Eastern Europe. For example, Bulgaria and Slovakia declared the convention unconstitutional based on the fact that the convention supports a ‘gender ideology’. Article 3c of the convention states the following definition for gender: “the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men”. [The Constitutional Court of Bulgaria interprets that](#) in the article and therefore in the convention the word ‘gender’ means an individual’s choice of social roles which are disconnected from the individual’s biological sex attributed at birth. Hence the Court argued that the convention distances itself from the ‘biological understanding of sexes’ and tries to impose an ideology which disagrees with the country’s constitution, which defines social roles as biologically determined, i.e. connected to sex.

[The Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council](#) establishes the minimum standards of the rights, support and protection of the victims of crime. The directive has a specific clause calling for Member States to combat all forms of violence against women, as well as tackling its causes. Furthermore, the directive aims at ensuring specialised support for women and children that have become victims of different forms of violence, by for example providing access to shelters for domestic violence victims, as well as emergency support for those who have suffered from sexual abuse.

Campaigns

[The White Ribbon Campaign](#), which started in 1991 in Canada, aims at combating gender inequality, which has been identified as one of the core issues causing violence against women. The campaign encourages men to wear a white ribbon to declare to never commit, excuse or remain silent about men’s violence against women.

The Women's March is a women-led movement which encourages activists to engage in their local communities to advocate for women's rights through various events. A major event organised by the Women's March is the march, also known as the #WomensWave, which took place in January 2019 on the streets of Washington D.C. as well as other cities in the world. Additionally, the movement has published a Women's Agenda, which is a declaration of actions that should be taken to protect and defend women's rights.

Other measures

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) Observatory on Violence Against Women, established in 1997, is a structure which aims to identify the issues surrounding violence against women and monitoring the progress of preventing it. The structure is composed of a group of women from 30 European countries and five women's organisations, mainly consisting of professionals, women's rights defenders and NGO activists. The work in the observatory revolves around the policies established by the EWL in their Charter of Principles, EWL Factsheet on Violence Against Women and the EWL position paper on "Towards a Europe Free from All Forms of Male Violence Against Women".

Research conducted by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in 2017 and 2018 to improve the collection of comparable administrative data on violence against women in the EU had the following outcomes:

- Specific indicators on intimate partner violence were developed to be used by the police and justice sectors
- Factsheets on the importance of administrative data collection, challenges and recommendations to improve the process were developed
- A factsheet for each of the member states on the administrative data collection process and data availability, as well as country-specific recommendations on the specific actions to be taken to improve the administrative data collection process on intimate partner violence
- A set of recommendations on the quality, availability and reliability of the data were developed with the aim of supporting administrative data collection on intimate partner violence
- A standardised tool for collection of administrative data to be used by the Member States.

Summary

Far too many women are Women are on a large scale victims to gender-based violence based on the historical power imbalance that has only recently been addressed by society. Although violence against women is a recognised violation of human rights by the European Union, Member States are not always able to ensure women's rights with their legal systems facing difficulties prosecuting violence against women.

The data that has been collected so far indicates a high numbers of victims, such as 1 in 3 women experiencing physical or sexual violence since the age of 15, 1 in 2 being sexually harassed and 1 in 20 subjected to rape. Simultaneously the study shows that incidents are consistently under-reported to the authorities.

In general, there remains a lack of data on the EU and Member States level.

The most comprehensive international legislation on fighting violence against women signed by all Member States of the Council of Europe is the Istanbul Convention, aiming to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women. As of November 2018, 7 member states have not yet ratified the convention, debating the use of the word "gender" in the convention.

The Institutions of the European Union call upon Member States to combat all forms of violence against women and to tackle its causes. The directive aims at ensuring specialised support for women and children that have become victims of different forms of violence.

International Campaigns such as the #metoo movement, the White Ribbon campaign and the Women's March movement are raising awareness to the issue.

Expert Committees of the European Union and the United Nations as well as non-governmental Organizations are monitoring progresses around the issue and working actively to prevent violence against women.

Links to further research

- Eurobarometer factsheets published by the European Commission in 2016 from the Say NO! Campaign. They contain useful statistics on the current views of European citizens on rape, domestic violence and general violence against women.
 - <https://ec.europa.eu/justice/saynostopvaw/downloads/materials/pdf/5.pdf>
 - <https://ec.europa.eu/justice/saynostopvaw/downloads/materials/pdf/4.pdf>
 - <https://ec.europa.eu/justice/saynostopvaw/downloads/materials/pdf/6.pdf>
- A report published by the UN Broadband Commission for Digital Development in 2015 highlights important statistics on cyber violence against women and girls in Europe, and defines what ‘cyber’ actually means. We recommend reading through the executive summary and the ‘what the numbers tells us’ parts of the document.
 - https://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/cyber_violence_gender%20report.pdf?v=1&d=20150924T154259&v=1&d=20150924T154259
- Debate on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention.
 - <https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/search?q=istanbul%20convention>
- The Spotlight Initiative – an initiative launched by the European Union and United Nations to combat violence against women and girls, with the aim of achieving Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
 - <https://www.un.org/en/spotlight-initiative/index.shtml>

Committee on International Trade (INTA)



With the EU's position as the world's largest provider of foreign investment, and with several of its trade partners failing in human and labour rights standards, how can the EU ensure the protection of the aforementioned rights in its foreign investment policies?

Chaired by: Nika Aghajani (SE) & Margarida Conceição (PT)

Introduction

Within the European Union, a set of shared values unite all Member States. These fundamental values demand [respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law](#). Not only are they fundamental in outlining a common vision within the EU but also when cooperating with countries beyond our borders. As an outward-oriented economy, the EU actively engages with countries all around the world to negotiate [mutually-beneficial trade agreements](#). Committed to high social, labour, and environmental standards, the EU has included [Trade and Sustainable Development \(TSD\) chapters](#) in all its modern agreements.

Despite these efforts, human and labour rights protections in many of the bloc's trading partners are substandard. From collapsing factories, like that of the [Rana Plaza tragedy](#), to [modern day slavery](#) maintaining a firm grip on the lives of **40.3 million people**, the working conditions we consider to be the bare minimum are still not a reality for all workers.

As the [largest provider of foreign investment](#), the EU has a position of great economic, social, and ethical power. However, with great power comes great responsibility, and the EU must **uphold the same values it was founded upon** in all its foreign trade relations. After all, the Union itself is an example that it is possible to overcome a bad era, such as the times of the Industrial Revolution, in which economic interests were always the priority, and flourish into a society concerned about the wellbeing of workers, fairness, and true freedom.

With involvement in international trade being one of the [key factors of development](#), and with [developing countries' participation in world trade still lagging](#), the EU must take further efforts to better **integrate developing countries into the world trade system**. This includes

establishing beneficial and power-balanced trade relations with those countries, which allows both parties to enter new markets, while diversifying and stimulating the world trade system at the same time. But it also includes **speaking up on issues** in those country's industries and pressuring their governments to act on them. It is crucial to recognise the existing problems and violations of human and labour rights, such as exposition to physical violence at work and constraints on free speech, just to name a few, in order to solve them.

Key Concepts

- **Decent Work** is the concrete implementation of the values present in human and labour rights. It involves work opportunities that offer secure employment with productive tasks, fair income, safe workplaces, social protection for families, personal development and social integration, freedom of speech, a chance to participate in decisions that affect them, and equality of opportunity and treatment.



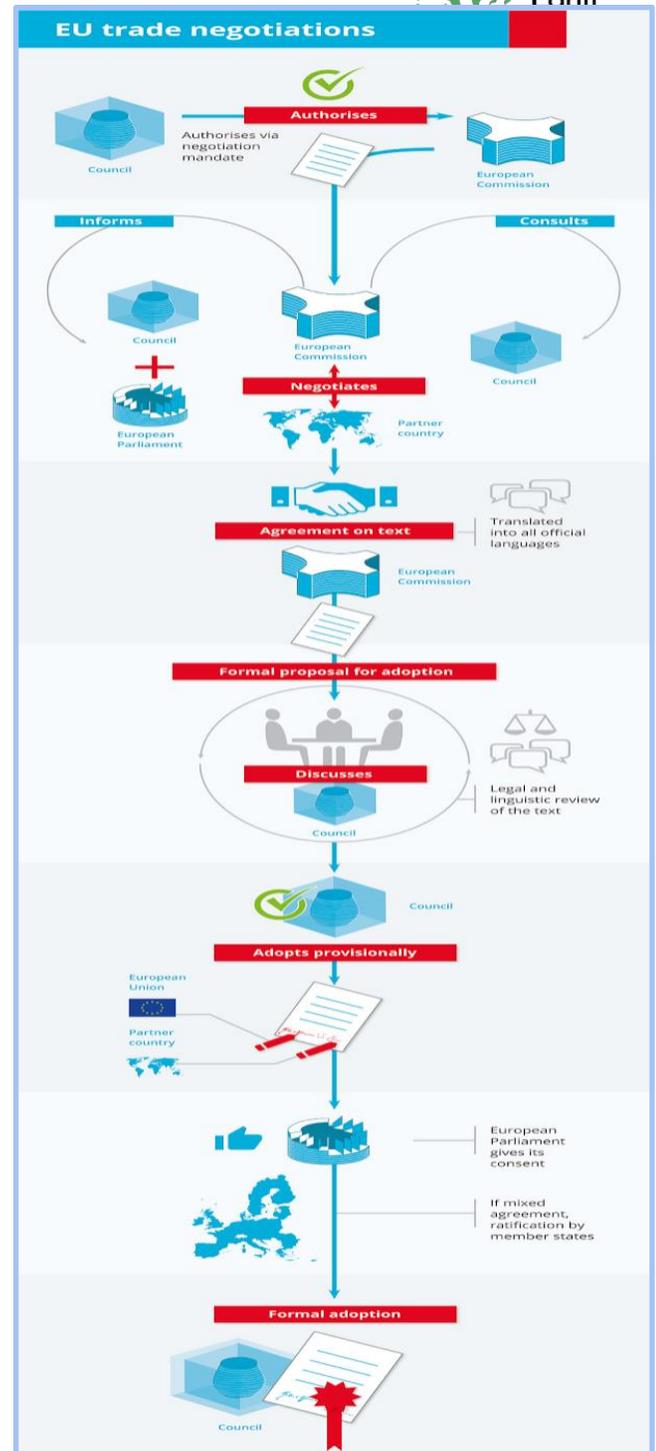
[Infographics Source](#)

- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** encompasses all cross-border investments made by an individual or organisation resident in one economy in an enterprise operating in another economy.

- **Trade Agreements** are treaties in which two or more countries agree on terms that help them trade with each other, by defining a set of rules and punishments to be implemented if those rules are violated. They usually focus on aspects like taxes and tariffs and have the goal of achieving preferential or free trade.
- **Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD)** chapters are included in trade agreements to ensure that production and consumption patterns are organised in a way that is ecologically and socially sustainable for societies and countries.
- **EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP)** allows a variety of arrangements for developing countries to gain additional EU single market access through partial or full removal of customs duties.
 - **GSP+** is an additional incentive that slashes these same tariffs to 0% should countries ratify and put into practice the UN and ILO conventions on human rights, labour rights, environmental protection, and good governance.
 - **Everything but Arms (EBA) agreement** provides the least developed countries with duty-free, quota-free access to the EU single market for all products except arms and ammunition.
- **The Trade Barriers Regulation (TBR)** is an instrument that aims to help EU businesses in overcoming trade barriers and thereby develop their activities overseas. The TBR is specifically designed to remove obstacles to trade in foreign countries, and tackle unfair practices that harm the EU's internal market.
- **Dispute Settlement Mechanisms** are an objective means of settling disagreements between States or between investors and States on government measures and practices.

Actors & Stakeholders

- The **European Commission** is responsible for proposing legislation, implementing decisions and acting as a guardian of EU treaties. It is also the EU institution responsible for negotiating trade agreements and implementing the EU's trade and investment policies. [Infographics source](#)
- **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** is a UN specialised agency that promotes decent work through setting international labour standards. It has a unique structure that gives an equal voice to workers, employers and governments.
- **World Trade Organisation (WTO)** is a global organisation that manages and supervises the rules of trade between nations. Moreover, the WTO acts as a forum for creating new trade agreements, settling disputes and supporting developing countries.
- **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** is an international economic organisation that focuses on establishing international norms and finding evidence-based solutions to a range of social, economic, and environmental challenges. Its main goal is to stimulate economic progress and world trade.



- **Civil Society Organisations** are voluntary entities formed by people that are separate from State and market., They can range from community-based organisations to non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Civil Society Organisations usually work closely with local communities and therefore have a crucial role in development cooperation.
- **Multinational Corporations (MNCs)** have production of goods or services in at least one country other than their home country. This type of company usually operates in offices and/or factories in different countries, under the coordination of a centralised head office. Considering the economic power of these enterprises, they are constantly accused of ignoring their social responsibility and of lacking ethical standards by influencing governments for their own benefit, exploiting developing countries, and causing unemployment in their home countries.

Conflicts

Despite the agreements that ensure human and labour rights, violations occur in partner countries to this day. Evidently, there is a lack of enforcement on multiple levels: on behalf of the EU, international organisations, countries in question, and companies. A prominent example is **South Korea** where a number of labour rights activists have been imprisoned (most notably, [the case of Han Sang-Gyun](#)). Moreover, the European Commission has sought consultations for [South Korea's failure in respecting the labour-standard obligations](#) present in their Free-Trade Agreement (FTA) and has [warned of sending an expert panel](#) should the situation not improve. In the troublesome case of **Cambodia**, the EU has been prompted to start a procedure that might end the Everything but Arms (EBA) arrangement with the country. Even though the EU has a huge economic importance in Cambodia's exports, constant violations of workers' rights despite [ambassador warnings](#) have left cancellation as "[a measure of last resort](#)" according to Cecilia Malmström, the European Commissioner for Trade.

The concern of enforcement is not limited to current partner countries but is equally important for future partners. With EU trade deals underway with **Saudi Arabia and other West Asian countries**, the [Kafala System](#) becomes a great concern. This system calls for the immigration status of a migrant worker to be legally bound to their individual employer or sponsor during the period of their contract. The employer is legally put in a power position and obtains a huge control over their employees, increasing the risk for the abuse of workers and their rights.

Furthermore, at present, the systems in place do not have adequate measures to deal with TBR concerns, as only trade-related factors can be used to establish whether the complaining industry has shown that it is injured by the third country's violation of its international obligations. This excludes the [possibility of EU companies denouncing violations of human and labour rights](#), even when the EU's trade agreements cite binding commitments to core labour standards set out by the ILO.

However, the main inherent issue seems to be the fact that developing countries often have economic incentives to keep their labour rights to a minimum in order to keep their workforce as cheap as possible and, consequently, attract foreign investors. This phenomenon is known as the [“race to the bottom”](#) in which governments intentionally deregulate their business environment and reduce tax rates, as companies (especially MNCs) will often dislocate to that country in order to reduce their production costs. In a world characterised by increased global competition, there is clearly a predominance of the quest for profit over the commitment to sustainable development, at the expense of human and labour rights.

Measures in Place

The EU has taken an active role in the improvement of labour and human rights standards in its partnering countries, in many cases through direct cooperation with governments and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to introduce frameworks and initiatives:

- The [conventions of the International Labour Organisation \(ILO\)](#) are “legally binding international treaties that may be ratified by member states”. They cover a wide range of social and labour issues and set out fundamental principles and rights. The fundamental conventions call for the freedom of association and right to collective bargaining, elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, effective abolition of child labour and ending of discrimination in the workplace.
- The [EU External Investment Plan \(EIP\)](#) aims to increase investment in partner countries in Africa and the European Neighbourhood. It has a particular focus on decent job creation, as it wishes to boost sustainable investments in order to improve economic and social development. The EIP mobilises finance through the European Fund for Sustainable Development, provides technical assistance and develops a favourable investment climate and business environment.

- The [EU Aid for Trade Strategy](#), adopted in October 2007 as part of the WTO's Aid for Trade Initiative, has the objective of reducing the effect of developing countries' internal constraints, which stop them from taking advantage of the benefits of international trade. It seeks to help them integrate better into the international trading system and enjoy the poverty-reducing benefits of economic openness and enhanced trade efficiency.
- The **Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) chapters**, present in the EU trade agreements, contain binding commitments to the ILO's conventions, frameworks for implementing these conventions with the help of civil society organisations, as well as dispute-settlement mechanisms in the case of violations - all to ensure that standards are not lowered to earn a profit or attract trade through low costs. Therefore, trading partners entering into agreements with the EU are expected to ratify and implement these conventions. This includes developing countries that seek to benefit from the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) and the Everything but Arms (EBA) agreement.
- In the case of a country not respecting an obligation under a trade agreement, EU companies can file a complaint to the EU Commission under the **EU Trade Barriers Regulation (TBR)**. A commission investigation is launched and several actions can follow against the State in question. A system like this allows private parties to take part in the enforcement of commitments made in trade agreements through EU level procedures first, as opposed to directly triggering the more burdensome dispute-settlement mechanism.
- The European Commission is aware of the difficulties when it comes to the enforcement of labour rights laws. In February 2018, after a debate involving EU institutions, EU Member States and the civil society, a [non-paper](#) was published with a plan consisting of **15 concrete points for action** to make the implementation of trade and sustainable development chapters more effective and to improve their enforcement.
- Moreover, the EU continues to designate EU teams to review the labour rights situations in respective partner countries and **assess GSP eligibility**. For example, one is expected to be conducted [in Bangladesh in October 2019](#).

- The **Bangladesh Sustainability Compact** aims to provide a legal framework for labour rights, health, and safety standards in clothing factories and work towards their enforcement. Launched in 2013, the Compact was a response to the Rana Plaza tragedy. Since it took effect, **235 new inspectors** have been recruited to ensure safety conditions in industrial buildings, nearly **350 trade unions** have been created, and **220 Workers Welfare Associations** registered with the rights to collective bargaining.
- The **Initiative to Promote Fundamental Labour Rights and Practices in Myanmar** was established in 2015 with the aim to promote fundamental rights for workers, create business opportunities, and help attract long-term trade and investment.

Summary

As a global society, we have come a long way on the path to **standardising basic human rights** and ensuring that they be met in practice day-to-day through good working conditions. The fight, however, is far from won. Whereas before there was a **lack of awareness and legislation** to tackle issues concerning human and labour rights, the main problems nowadays are the ones of **enforcement**. In fact, despite an apparent acceptance of the need for change by most countries, there is a lack of actual measures put into practice. Besides, **economic interests** still play a huge role in what is and is not done about human and labour rights. There is, currently, a lack of balance in the global economy and in the international trading system, as more social justice needs to be implemented. There is a need for the creation of more **incentives** that will make companies want to **invest in the protection of human and labour rights**, in order to counterbalance the ones that encourage them to sacrifice them. Nevertheless, the developing countries can not rely on the EU for those necessary reforms to be made. A way must be found to **change the mentality of the governments** in those countries, so that they become the first ones who want to alter the current state of their societies.

What can the EU do to reinforce (and, in some cases, build) respect for human rights and labour rights so that good working conditions can exist? Why are the ILO's Conventions not ratified in certain countries? How can the EU incentivise governments and companies alike to balance their economic interests with creating and maintaining decent work?

Looking forward into the future, it is clear that the commitments to human and labour rights can not simply remain as words written on a piece of paper – they need to be acted upon.

Links to Further Research

- More about the ILO: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---normes/documents/publication/wcms_672549.pdf
- Cooperation between the EU and ILO: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---exrel/documents/publication/wcms_350516.pdf
- Government Implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/government-action-platform>
- UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (set of guidelines for States and companies to prevent, address and remedy human rights abuses): https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf
- More about modern day slavery: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36416751> (article), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59KGc6UyjAw> (video- victim testimony)

Committee on Regional Development (REGI)

All across Europe, cities are experiencing a rise in gentrification, the process by which lower-income neighbourhoods are redeveloped by new investment to the point of unaffordability for the area's original tenants. How can the EU encourage continued and sustainable urban development while protecting the livelihood and diversity of its inhabitants?

Chaired by: Aleksandra Gazikalović (RS) & Henri Kaarakainen (FI)

1. Introduction

The following phenomenon is familiar in various cities all across Europe: What first is regarded as an affordable, perhaps run-down neighbourhood in a central location within an urban area eventually starts to tickle the interests of investors, leading to a set of new developments making the region more appealing to wealthy citizens. As a consequence, the surging housing prices force the original tenants of the neighbourhood to move out to find more affordable housing somewhere else.

This problematic circle of events is known as **gentrification** and can be witnessed in many European cities. Montmartre is situated in Paris' 18th arrondissement, being nowadays a highly attractive neighbourhood for bohemian citizens. The average price per square metre in this district [has increased](#) from 1840 EUR in 1999 to 7810 EUR in 2016. The trend is similar in cities such as London, Barcelona as well as various other urban areas within the European Union.

Unarguably, gentrification comes with positive effects too – it primarily began as the “urban renaissance” a couple of decades ago, creating a safer and more modern environment in cities to live and work. During the renovation of the neighbourhoods, investors and businesses are welcomed to these areas, as are the wealthier upper class seeking upscale housing. For example, in the UK gentrification served well in remodeling the brownfields in post-industrial neighbourhoods to seem more appealing, providing them with greenery and urban architecture, i.e. furnishing the areas with bike lanes, renovated parks and street markets.

However, gentrification is proved to have negative consequences as well. Cities are made **less affordable** for the locals, mostly lower-income families and individual residents. As a result of that, **social segregation** occurs, separating the poorer populace from the wealthier, making them move to neighbourhoods they can now afford to live in.

Gentrification affects the most cities which lack social housing and other affordable forms of housing. As lower-income citizens cannot afford housing in central locations where the prices are determined entirely by supply and demand, they are forced to move to the outskirts of the city. However, a total lack of affordable housing may also lead to a situation where poorer families and individuals are forced to move to an entirely different city in search of social housing opportunities.

2. Key Terms

- **Gentrification** - The renewal and rebuilding of deteriorating neighbourhoods accompanying the influx of affluent or middle-class residents often displacing poorer residents.
- **Segregation** - The separation or isolation of a race, class, or ethnic group by enforced or voluntary residence in a restricted area, by barriers to social intercourse, by separate educational facilities, or by other discriminatory means.
- **Brownfield land** - Also known as previously developed land (PDL), it is defined as land and which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.
- **Greenfield land** - Opposed to brownfield land, greenfield land is undeveloped land in a city or rural area either used for agriculture or landscape design, or left to evolve naturally. These areas of land are usually agricultural or amenity properties being considered for urban development.
- **Social housing** - Affordable rental housing which is meant for families and individuals with low income and who are in need of secure housing.

- **Sustainable urban development** - Sustainable urban development seeks to create cities and towns that improve the long-term health of the planet's human and ecological systems by protecting and restoring natural ecosystems in urban areas, creating community environments that nurture human potential, using land and resources wisely and facilitating human lifestyles that contribute to global sustainability.

3. Actors & Stakeholders

- **Original tenants** - Citizens living in these areas are the ones most affected by gentrification. They are priced out of their homes, forced to move from their old neighborhoods and find affordable housing elsewhere. A good case in point of such tenants are the people behind the [Focus E15 Campaign](#): a hostel which provides accommodation for young homeless people is being forced to move away from London due to cuts to housing benefits. The initiative seeks to put an end to the process of 'social cleansing' within the city.
- **Local authorities** - Such authorities influence the local housing development and establish local zoning laws, issue permits and invest in projects. Some of them profit from the influx of the wealthier people, since they are able to be financially beneficial, therefore support fostering processes aligning gentrification. More affluent residents contribute more income tax to city funds, and appreciating home values cause higher property taxes. These increased tax revenues allow the local government to increase investment in infrastructure, public transportation, public schools, law enforcement, and other citizen services.
In order to attract investors, local authorities organise various events and open deluxe spaces in the respective neighborhoods.
- **Member States** - Each EU member state gets to decide upon the housing policies on its own, as these regulations are established on a national level.
- **EU** - Although housing and housing rights as such are not formally the European Union competence, there are still several tools at EU level which relate in one way or another to the right to housing. By following the [Anti-discrimination legislation](#) and [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#), the EU can impact housing in Member States. It can launch projects such as [Europe 2020 strategy](#) for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, as it's in its interest to improve life standards for all residents.

- **European Commission** - Within the partnership of the [Urban Agenda for the EU on housing](#), EU Member States and cities, the European Commission and stakeholders work together to foster affordable housing of good quality. It offers various programmes and funding opportunities, such as [European Fund for Strategic Investments \(EFSI\)](#) and [Urban Innovative Actions \(UIA\)](#).
- **European Investment Bank** - The European Investment Bank works on a range of Urban Agenda-related initiatives to share knowledge with local and regional decision-makers to improve access to funds and help them use existing funds more effectively. The EIB can support individual urban projects by offering loans such as [Equity Fund Investment](#) into an urban development, infrastructure fund or brownfield fund, Framework Loan via a [financial intermediary](#) for financing smaller municipalities or [Framework Loan made directly to a city](#). The EIB Advisory support is offered through initiatives such as the [European Investment Advisory Hub](#), [JASPERS](#) and other advisory instruments benefitting cities including [ELENA](#), [EPEC](#) and [fi-compass](#).
- **Landlords** - It is in their natural interest to add value to what they own by transforming them into more attractive properties for wealthier citizens, resulting in unaffordable prices for original tenants, yet also, bigger profits.
- **NGOs** - Non-governmental organisations play a key role in promoting affordable housing within the regional level. Only one example of these is [Housing Europe](#), an umbrella organisation gathering national associations in an attempt to make housing affordable for Europeans.

4. Conflicts

As a phenomenon, gentrification clearly affects stakeholders with drastically different interests. Compromising between these ambitions is mainly a question of how to balance between commercial and public objectives.

The target of investors and landlords is to accumulate as much profit as possible for their investments. It can be seen as lucrative for landlords to promote new developments within an urban district, as it likely leads to a growing reputation of the area and thus attracts citizens willing to invest more in apartments in a given neighbourhood. Moreover, in such areas tourism rates are expected to rise and the tourists are seen as potential investors as well. This respectively creates an incentive for other economically active agents, such as companies, to

offer better services for people who can afford them. Many buildings are renovated and sold to private companies that later evict the former residents and transform them into short-time rentals such as [Airbnb apartments or hotels](#). In Amsterdam, although the so-called “[Airbnb effect](#)” is contributing to gentrification as it drives up real estate prices that are already searing in Amsterdam. People are prepared to pay more for a flat when they can make extra money by renting it out. That way, apartments that are continuously rented out to tourists are lost to people who want to actually live in the city centre. In the most popular neighbourhoods, as many as [one in six homeowners rent out a room or flat on Airbnb](#).

Some positive aspects that this process can be seen to entail include improvement of living standards, better public safety and thus a fall in crime rates, as well as renovation of public spaces, for instance community parks, town squares or public schools.

However, public interests cannot be ignored. It is clear that growing gentrification leads to displacement of the poor through surging house prices or by directly selling social housing property to the private sector, as it [occurred in London beginning from 2013](#). This displacement further leads to urban inequality and segregation, thus creating neighbourhoods of poorer people, promoting ghettoisation and clustering people based on their income. This combined with strengthening dissatisfaction may result in [higher crime rates](#). Poverty and social exclusion is reinforced through a cycle of deprivation as poverty and social exclusion are often passed from one generation to another, promoting developments which lead to ever strengthening class society. In these neighbourhoods, [homelessness is also expected to rise](#).

Gentrification concerns not only original inhabitants, but also small business owners. Growing rents lead to negative effects such as destruction of regional economy and neighbourhood authenticity as small businesses such as bookshops, taverns and other local facilities which are not part of big retail chains are forced to close down. Also, preserving the neighbourhood’s original character can be seen as a cultural value in itself and renovating historical neighbourhoods without keeping its authenticity goes against it.

For instance, in September 2019, British Network rail [sold thousands of railway arches](#) to a pair of investors as part of a £1.46bn property deal. When 5,261 properties were auctioned in order to bring “major improvements for passengers” and “reduce the need for taxpayers to fund the railway”, certain worries arose about the possibility of new owners imposing unaffordable rents. The most concerned were various independent shops, craft breweries and other small local businesses which contributed to the uniqueness of the neighbourhood. In May 2009, it was published that [the property rents could increase by 54% over the next three to four years](#).

Also, during [Sulukule Urban Regeneration Project](#) carried out between 2005-2010, an Istanbul neighbourhood from the Byzantine time has been revitalized, but also gentrified. The district identity was practically lost - gentrification projects in this historical neighbourhood were implied without consideration of the area's cultural heritage.

Finally, there is a need to understand the aspirations of local authorities. It is likely that it is in their interest to find a stable balance between commercial and public interests in order to preserve the economic activity of the city while still being able to take care of the less fortunate inhabitants.

Cities in Western Member States are often found to be among the least inclusive. Especially metropolitan areas that are known for attracting significant capital inflows and characterised by their high standards of living, yet meanwhile they struggle to cope with social problems resulting from relatively high shares of people living at risk of poverty and [high unemployment rates](#). A visible consequence of this is homelessness and the inability to provide emergency accommodation. In Paris, of those who requested for shelter due to heavy weather conditions in November 2017, [only 25%](#) were able to find contemporary accommodation for one or a couple of nights.

Currently, there is a clear lack of social housing systems in EU Member States. Some positive examples can be found in European cities such as Vienna and Helsinki, but how could these and other tried and tested practices spread across the Union?

5. Measures in Place

- **Local social housing systems** - Government-subsidised housing rented out by the municipality or nonprofit housing associations, such as examples in [Vienna](#).
- **Inclusionary Zoning** - Making sure that different 'social classes' are mixed up within the urban area through **thoughtful and deliberate city planning**. Such measures are implemented within [Helsinki's city strategy](#).
- **Projects supported by the European Investment Bank** - The EIB provided nearly EUR 150 billion for investments in urban infrastructure and services between 2011 and 2017 and [is extending support for projects](#) with higher risk under the European Fund for Strategic Investments, part of the Investment Plan for Europe.

- [Gentrification 2.0 project](#) - a project funded by European Union's Horizon 2020 research, which goals include assisting policy makers and other practitioners by analysing and exploring specific practices that impact on neighbourhood change and gentrification, as well as discover specific potentials and capacities for neighborhood improvement.
- [Europe 2020 strategy](#) - a strategy proposed by the European Commission for advancement of the economy of the European Union. It aims at "smart, sustainable, inclusive growth" with greater coordination of national and European policy.
- [The Urban Agenda for the EU](#) - a partnership between the EU, Member States and other stakeholders for urban areas that aim to stimulate growth, liveability and innovation in European Cities
- **Milieuschutz initiative** - [Milieuschutz](#) is a German law the aim of which is to prevent housing districts from becoming too expensive. Areas which are at risk of becoming gentrified are protected by imposing restrictions to what landlords are allowed to do in order to increase the prices of their property.

6. Summary

Gentrification is a phenomenon that affects the majority of urban areas within the European Union. The term can be regarded as two-folded: gentrification is said to make cities more modern and safer, yet it also has major negative effects on the development of the cities through growing urban inequality and segregation. This may lead to disadvantages in other fields, including economic growth.

As we have already discovered, consequences caused by gentrification can be witnessed all across the EU. For instance, the centre of the Portuguese city of Porto has experienced rents rising by [88 percent in five years](#) due to heavily expanding tourism, influx of foreign investments and other developments accelerating gentrification. On the other hand, many initiatives have already been welcomed in order to tackle the negative effects of the phenomenon. Examples of these include protective regulation in Germany as well as successful social housing practices in Vienna, Austria.

With gentrification being inevitable, the key question is how to reap the benefits of urban development while saving the authenticity and character of the particular area. How should the EU position itself in order to tackle the side effects of urban development, given that the phenomenon itself can be regarded as very local? What could the EU do in order to decrease social segregation in cities?

7. Links to further research and resources

- *Gentrification explained* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0zAvlmzDFc>
- *What we don't understand about gentrification* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqogaDX48nl>
- *Gentrification in Porto: will the city turn into a hotel?* - <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/can-europe-make-it/gentrification-in-porto-will-city-turn-into-hotel/>
- *The Guardian. Gentrification is a global problem. It's time we found a better solution* - <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/sep/29/gentrification-global-problem-better-solution-oliver-wainwright>
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Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN)

The rise of low-cost flights and the liberalisation of visa policies has led to mass tourism overcrowding many European cities and landmarks to the point of unsustainability. What steps can the EU and Member States take to protect these historic sites for future generations without sacrificing their economic importance?

Chaired by: *Oğuzhan İp (TR) & Stella Miettinen (FI)*

One step forward, ten queues back? Europe's aim to maintain itself as a competitive and attractive tourist destination has been a work in progress since the 90s. What was once a marked opportunity for Member States to showcase their most impressive tourist attractions and destinations, as a means to economically develop, has now increasingly given rise to an unsustainable influx of human traffic, which threatens the future of the entire tourism sector. With over [800 million holiday-makers visiting EU countries last year](#), cities and landmarks around Europe have become inundated by travellers who hope to experience the cultures around them, often with little regard to leave behind a sustainable footprint. Aside from causing [10 hour queues in the centre of Paris](#) to [Instagram influencers trampling giant poppy fields in order to post aesthetic pictures](#), tourist sectors increasingly displace both local residents to make way for tourist oriented habitation, and dilute cultural traditions into meaningless gimmicks for the sake of visitor spectacles. Meanwhile, measures and attempts to adjust to these surges of congestion have often been limited to small business ventures and pushes to promote the likes of Green Tourism¹ which remain largely unable to cope with the rapid changes. For an industry measured by its ability to increase visitors, the EU's stance has remained firm: Eco-tourism must integrate sustainably viable methods of holidaymaking and cultural respect, whilst allowing Member States to reap the economic benefits of hosting such visitors. With the current population of travellers set to reach 1 billion by 2028 (link to

¹ <http://www.greentourism.eu/>

come), the current mass tourism crisis will only continue to worsen if not tackled immediately.



Key Concepts

Overtourism: The problem which is caused by overcrowding and congestion due to the excess of tourists. When the cities overburden their population capacity with overtourism, destruction begins.

Mass Tourism: One of the forms of tourism which is preferred mostly by people as it is the cheapest way to go to holiday. In mass tourism, thousands of people go to same place at the same time.

Historic Site: Politically, economic, military and cultural places officially preserved by laws as they are all seen as world heritages.

Sustainability: The ability to exist constantly while producing the necessities for both yourself and generations to come by aiming for a circular planet economy, healthy and safe people, and general prosperity.

Ecotourism: The tourism perspective which prioritises sustainability by creating an environmentalist society, committing local capacity buildings and increasing environmental awareness about sustainable tourism in order to unify conservation among people.

Cultural dilution: The process in which cultural practices or traditions are repeated to the point of insignificance (usually only as a tourist spectacle), or otherwise loses meaning from its commercialization.

Actors:

UNESCO: This specialised agency of the United Nations is based on promoting global cooperation for education, human rights, sciences and **culture**. UNESCO's main goal is to

ensure sustainable development, the decrease of poverty and global peace. The agency which is a member state of United Nations Development Organisation also has goals about securing world's cultural and natural heritages, which directly concerns the main issue.

United Nations World Tourism Organisation: The organisation is founded as a United Nations specialised agency in order to promote universally responsible, accessible and sustainable tourism. The organisation takes on a leadership role in the issue of tourism, making tourism the driver of economic growth, increasing the knowledge and promoting the tourism policies worldwide.

Cruise industry: As the cruise ship industry gets bigger day by day, it causes a boom in tourist population and pollution, especially in ports where too many people begin to visit and make them busy. Port cities like [Venice](#) where local people began to protest cruise ships, receive the bulk of this type of tourism. The industry also brings about some incidents like [Costa Concordia](#), the running aground of a cruise ship in Genoa, Italy, confirming it is not only a basic environmental problem.

Airbnb: The platform which was firstly based on a basic phone application which used by both local people and tourists in order to ensure cheap house renting in catalyzed way. Therefore, the application led to an increase of rental costs and conflicts between tourists and local people. The catalysing system of house renting ensures cheap accomodations for tourists and effect tourism as cheap flight system do. Therefore even in some countries banned homeowners from renting out their flats, like [Germany in Berlin](#).

Low-cost airlines: The company is known as the most popular airlines with the low-cost flight tickets which leads mass tourism. The carbon emission which is caused by planes became a matter of debate in Europe general and led to protests by environmentalist non-governmental organisations in order to make people aware of the damage to the nature caused by low-cost flights. Also catalysing the access to the flights makes tourist population

up and causes overcrowding in cities as the tickets are affordable for everyone. The company still continues its low-cost flight program and gets bigger day by day.

Directorate-General Migration and Home Affairs: HOME is a directorate general which deals with visa policies and immigration throughout Europe. Overpopulation and mass tourism caused by eased visa policies directly concerns mentioned issues in Europe general

Key Conflicts:

The focus on increasing the sustainability of the European tourism industry can be portrayed as hindering economic growth. Such a goal acts against the adopted stance of the **Sustainable tourism** undertaken by the EU, however, which promotes smaller scale, and environmentally less taxing, tourism when visiting other countries. Despite the EU's official goal being to [promote economic development in the EU](#), Member States do not have equal economic capabilities to reach these goals. Member States with weaker economies will probably be hesitant to invest capital into setting up sustainable businesses or practices when they already have issues regarding their financial states.

With tourism within, and into, Europe increasing at an average pace of [8% per annum](#), the already overwhelming presence of human traffic to popular destinations remains a core issue in over-tourism due to its degradation of the environment, increased traffic congestion, and overcrowding. This is due to many long, and short-term holiday and travel methods which focus specifically on green tourism are underdeveloped, under-promoted, or simply unable to cope with the strain of increased crowds against businesses which push popular location holidays and deals.

Nonetheless, attempts to funnel and divert heavy congestion from sights such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris through measures such as [off-peak times](#), hiring more staff, and increasing

queuing capacities. In addition, pushing for local holidays over foreign trips have set the pace for future development.

However, the last 50 years have seen an unprecedented increase in highly consumerist holidaying which focus on staying in tourist-dense areas of a country, usually in the capital, and these vacations usually coincide with unsustainable consumption of foods, leisure, and tours which generate a lot of waste and cause environmental degradation. Despite Jobs catered solely to the foreign tourism sector continue to increase in order to cater for this demand, the historic sites and locations often remain physically inundated and unable to accommodate enough people safely by means of travel, or accommodation.

Likewise, issues raised around the dilution of cultural history and traditions continue to plague the EUs intended vision of an integrated and culturally sensitive hub, as more culturally depictive jobs catered to the tourism sector can simultaneously expose foreigners to enjoy the respective culture, or erode and exploit traditions or spectacles purely for monetary gain through tourist exposure. Furthermore, such a focus on cultural “experiences” can mean a disintegration of previously present local communities which already face increasing expenses living and competition from the rise of travel services such as Airbnb which prioritise housing to travelers over local buyers.

Previous Measures:

[Istanbul Declaration on Tourism and Culture \(for the Benefit of All\)](#): The declaration which published in December 2018 by United Nations World Tourism Organisation aimed to raise awareness about tourism among the member states and shape their cities into sustainable and cultural cities by proposing collaborations between tourism organisations and local authorities and also local observatories for data analysis with the declared

decisions. The declaration contributes directly to 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals.

2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals: The agenda, which is a part of a United Nations resolution, has 17 goals for universal sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals include the issues of poverty, health, climate change, **sustainable cities**, inequality, clean waters, global peace and justice and ensuring the partnership between member states. By 2030, agenda also aims to ensure sustainable tourism worldwide. The agenda is supported by [United Nations Sustainable Development Group](#) which has 36 United Nations funds, agencies, programs and departments who helps for sustainable development in general.

Summary:

Sustainable tourism has been one of the most important agendas as it directly concerns our cities, houses and even the water that we consume everyday. Exacerbated by transportation facilities and developing technology which lack satisfactory levels of sustainable reforms, human traffic, cultural dilution, unnecessary overcrowding, environmental pollution and economic conflicts between locals and tourists plague the EU. Despite movements toward sustainable tourism being aided by NGOs and specialised agencies, awareness and effects remains low. Cruise industries and low-cost flights that we enjoy as we like travelling which generates carbon emissions worldwide, the worldwide applications' effects like Airbnb which became a crisis for local people and, the risk of destruction of historic sites which are all world heritage sites should be one of the first agendas to be realised. The sustainable future is looking for innovative ideas of the youth who will build and shape the world. ***So, how can we re-route our tourism sector from the fast-lane to the future?***

Further Research

- <https://www.cnn.com/travel/amp/overtourism-cruise-industry/index.html>

- <https://fortune.com/2019/05/19/europe-vacation-overtourism/amp/>
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