Background Guide
European Union
NVMUN 2025

Director's Letter

Dear delegates,

My name is Max Chong, and I am honoured to serve as your Director for the European Union at NVMUN 2025. Your Chairs, Isabel Jiang and Juliet Mabasa, have also been working tirelessly to create a smooth conference experience. On behalf of the dais team, we wish you the warmest welcome to the European Union.

As a sophomore at Vancouver College, I still distinctly remember my first conference three years ago, having been peer-pressured by countless classmates, walking into the committee room with no idea what lay on the other side. It was from then onwards that I have been entranced with the fast-paced diplomacy and complex engagements of MUN that fostered countless memories from weekends filled with debate and discussion.

Regionalized Agencies are among the most fulfilling committees within a MUN conference, addressing pressing issues through paced debate and collaboration. To all new delegates, I personally encourage each of you to take the risk and engage yourself into the world of MUN. Understand that everyone around you, from the experienced delegates to your dais team, has all been in your position of hesitation. To any experienced delegates, take the opportunity to help others and as well as challenge yourself.

At this iteration of NVMUN, the EU will be discussing the topic of Balancing Migration Policy and Human Rights in the Face of Climate Displacement. Please utilize this background guide to gain a basic understanding of the topics. However, it is also highly advised for delegates to conduct their own research to deepen their knowledge in preparation for the conference.

If you have any inquiries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the dias team at *eu@nvmun.org*. With regards from the rest of the dias, we wish you the best in your preparations and look forward to meeting you soon.

Sincerely,

Max Chong
European Union Director, NVMUN 2025

Table of Contents

Topic: Balancing Migration Policy and Human Rights in the Face of Climate Displacement

Committee Overview

The European Union (EU) is a regional political and economic organization made up of 27 European countries committed to freedom, peace, and prosperity. Its origins lie in post-World War II Europe, as continental leaders sought to prevent further conflict through economic cooperation. In 1951, six countries formed the European Coal and Steel Community, followed by the 1957 Treaty of Rome, which birthed the European Economic Community (EEC).[1] Over the next two decades, the Community expanded in both scope and membership, culminating in the formal creation of the European Union with the 1993 Maastricht Treaty.[2]

The EU's development as an international leader has been shaped by key milestones, including the introduction of the Euro in 1999, the 2004 expansion that introduced several new Eastern European members, and the more recent challenges of Brexit, migration crises, and climate change. Today, the EU represents one of the most highly regarded examples of regional integration, with shared policies on trade, the environment, justice, and foreign affairs.[3]

The EU operates through a multi-faceted system of intergovernmental institutions, including the European Commission, European Parliament, and European Council.[4] While it promotes common policies and values, such as democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, member states maintain considerable national sovereignty, making democracy and consensus a central feature of EU politics.

The EU as an institution values objective and varied stances on issues such as climate action, migration, digital governance, economic stability, and foreign policy. The EU's institutional framework, legal basis, and historical evolution makes it a global leader on the international stage.[5]

---

1. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/treaty-establishing-the-european-coal-and-steel-community-ecsc-treaty.html
2. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/3/what-is-the-european-union
3. https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/search-all-eu-institutions-and-bodies/european-commission_en
4. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/what-is-the-council/
5. Ibid.

Topic Overview

The European Union currently stands at the crossroads of environmental degradation and human mobility, as climate change accelerates displacement globally. Crises such as rising sea levels, severe drought, and extreme weather are forcing vulnerable peoples from all over the globe to migrate in search of safety and a better place to live. In contrast to the more traditional definition of displacement and migration, climate displacement challenges existing refugee infrastructure, as those fleeing extreme climate circumstances are not currently recognized as refugees under most refugee regulatory acts, such as the 1951 UN Refugee Convention.[6]

According to the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees, nearly 32 million people were displaced globally by extreme-weather related events in 2022 alone, a significant increase from levels measured just under 25 years ago.[7] Not only is Climate Change itself a direct threat, it also magnifies the impact of other factors that can contribute to displacement such as poverty, loss of livelihood, and tensions relating to dwindling resources, ultimately creating conditions that can lead to conflict and more serious humanitarian issues.

As an international power committed to fundamental human rights, the EU faces a multi-faceted responsibility; the management of border security and migration flow while also upholding humane humanitarian values. Balancing these priorities is especially challenging in the face of growing anti-immigration sentiment and political divisions within the Union as a whole. The EU must discuss this issue by formulating policies that both take into account the vulnerabilities of climate-affected individuals and the overall opinion of Union members. In this context, the EU's response can set a global precedent for how developed nations respond to climate-induced migration, therefore strengthening the EU's place as a global standard-setter in migration policy that respects human dignity while managing practical realities.

---

6. https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/overview/1951-refugee-convention
7. https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/climate-change-and-displacement-myths-and-facts

Timeline of Events

[September 3, 1953] - European Convention on Human Rights
Almost immediately after the establishment of the Council of Europe, the European Convention on Human Rights was written to provide a legally binding framework for protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms for all individuals within its member states. As such, it was the first continent-wide document detailing the rights of all humans, including the right to liberty of movement.[8]

[January 28, 1999] - Resolution on Environment, Security, and Foreign Policy
The European Union first recognized that the threats to the environment and the flow of refugees are new and serious threats to security, and form a cause-and-effect relationship. It stated that environmental objectives must be implemented in their long-term defence and action plans.[9]

[October 16, 1999] - Tampere Programme
The first common EU Asylum and Migration Policy was drafted, calling for the development of "information campaigns on the actual possibilities for legal immigration." Addressing migration flows, the EU promoted the return of refugees and asylum seekers to their original countries through the cooperation of Member States.[10]

[2015] - European Migration Crisis
A record of more than 1 million migrants, over 50% from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, reached Europe, seeking security and a better future. Most arrived by sea to the shores of Italy and Greece. With the largest inflow of people in European history, the European asylum system was put to the test.[11]

[April 23 - May 13, 2015] - European Agenda on Migration
An updated asylum system was created in the European Agenda on Migration in order to address the challenges deriving from the 2015 European migration crisis. It proposed mandatory quotas for the relocation of asylum seekers to Member states, which were based on GDP, population size, and unemployment.[12]

[December 19, 2018] - Global Compact for Migration
With most EU Member States as signatories, the Global Compact for Migration invited the countries to address the vulnerabilities of persons affected by natural disasters, specifically by forming a coherent approach to providing humanitarian assistance and encouraging self-reliance. Climate is cited as a potential reason for migration.[13]

[December 11, 2019] - European Green Deal Initiative

Despite prior debate, the European Commission finally recognized climate displacement as a cause of migration and the influx of refugees. The EU Solidarity Fund and EU Civil Protection Mechanism also was created to support countries in Europe when struck by climate-related emergencies.[14]

[June 20, 2022] - European Commission Staff Working Document

The European Commission Staff Working Document first acknowledged challenges of addressing displacement and outlined future initiatives. These included an emphasis on building substantial EU humanitarian and development support to partner with countries affected and to invest in national research.[15]

[May 8, 2023] - Annual Report on Migration and Asylum
The European Migration Network's report on Displacement and Migration Related to Climate Change linked extreme weather events to the displacement of approximately 20 million people annually. It also highlighted the absence of specific national legislation on climate-related migration and displacement caused by climate change.[16]

[September 11, 2025] - Push for Stronger Migration Controls
European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen urged for more efficient returns of rejected asylum seekers, and pledged to triple funding for migration and border management in the next EU budget. EU migration trends shift as border crossings decrease by 23%, but environmental refugees still remain a highly volatile topic.[17]

---

8. https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/swd_2022_225_climate_mainstreaming_architecture_2021-2027.pdf
9. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52023JC0019
10. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/tam_en.htm
11. https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/over-one-million-sea-arrivals-reach-europe-2015
12. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_15_5596
13. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-05/EMN_Inform_climate_related_migration_final_May2023_090523.pdf
14. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/migration-mobility-forced-displacement_en
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. https://commission.europa.eu/news-and-media/news/migration-commission-proposes-new-european-approach-returns-2025-03-11_en

Historical Background

The Fundamental Base of EU Migration Law

The European Union's modern refugee infrastructure was built around post-World War II displacement and the creation of the Union itself. The 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention,[18] set the foundational legal definition of a refugee as someone fleeing persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.[19] Climate change and environmental factors like drought, floods, or sea-level rise were not considered valid grounds for refugee status at the time.

The European Union, especially through departments and agreements such as the Pact on Migration and Asylum, recently updated in 2024,[20] modeled its protection regulations closely on basic international standards. In turn, European asylum law has ended up focused on refugees from war-torn states or oppressive regimes, rather than accounting for those fleeing climate-related disasters. This continues to create a legal and humanitarian gap; while the number of climate-related displacements rises globally, those severely affected find themselves outside the basis of protection in Europe.[21] Migration frameworks evolved mostly to manage political asylum seekers and conflict refugees rather than climate migrants, whose situations are often regarded as socioeconomic or even an environmental inconvenience rather than humanitarian.

The Issue of Climate Change Enters

Discussion behind the crossing of climate change and migration began to surface in academic and advocacy reports in the mid-2000s. Scholars coined the term "climate refugee," though it legally remains unofficial.[22] Reports made by international agencies such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the International Organization for Migration emphasized that climate change and subsequent environmental degradation would become one of the most significant drivers of displacement in the 21st century.[23] However, legal and institutional recognition in the EU continues to fall behind.

---

18. Ibid.
19. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/asylum-eu_en
20. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en
21. https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-protect/refugees
22. https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/env_degra dation/compendium_climate_change.pdf
23. https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/climate-change-and-displacement

While some EU member states and agencies began funding research and humanitarian projects that acknowledged climate-related displacement, there was no coordinated and unified governmental response. Climate displaced migrants remain categorized as irregular migrants unless they also meet other legal refugee criteria under existing regulations.[24]

Furthermore, the EU began adopting policies that prioritized border security especially after the 2015 migration crisis. As the political climate grows more populist about migration and refugees, the idea of expanding legal protections to include climate-displaced people will almost certainly cause political discourse. Efforts to reform the 1951 Definition of a Refugee or introduce broader humanitarian protections are constantly shot down due to concerns about rising migrant numbers and political backlash within member states.[25]

The 2015 Migration Crisis in the European Union

The 2015 European migrant crisis marked a turning point in EU migration policy, shedding light on both its limitations and its lack of preparedness. Over 1 million people entered the EU in a single year, primarily fleeing conflict and instability in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan.[26] Although most of these migrants were not climate-displaced, the crisis highlighted the EU's divided and verbose asylum procedures and the burden placed on frontline members like Greece and Italy. The past Dublin Regulations, which assigned responsibility for asylum processing based on the country of first entry, proved to be an inequitable system during periods of high demand.[27]

This crisis sparked a multitude of restrictive migration measures, including externalization of asylum processing[28], stricter border controls, and increased deportations.[29] At the same time, the political climates in many EU states became increasingly hostile toward migrants. Even at this current moment, even as global awareness of climate displacement grew, the political appetite for expanding protection regulations remains small. Climate migrants who were not legally recognized and often arrived in irregular migration flows, were particularly vulnerable to being excluded from asylum processes during this crisis. Despite mounting evidence that environmental factors were playing a growing role in displacement globally, EU policy reforms remained focused on controlling migration rather than adapting to new drivers like climate change.

---

24. https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/environmental-migration
25. https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/202402E
26. https://www.icmpd.org/blog/2015/2015-in-review-how-europe-reacted-to-the-refugee-crisis
27. https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5596_en.htm
28. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/asylum-eu/country-responsible-asylum-application-dublin-regulation_en
29. Ibid.

Modern Developments and Recognizing Climate-related Refugees

Over the last five years, the EU has taken some steps towards acknowledging the role of climate change in displacement and migration. Agencies like the European Union Agency for Asylum have published reports taking into account that climate-related disasters continue to become a significant factor in migration flows.[30] The European Migration Network as well, released a 2023 report on general refugee displacement due to climate change,[31] which highlighted the absence of legal pathways for climate displaced persons within the EU and proposed policy considerations for future action.

Despite these reports, no legal framework has emerged at the EU governance level specifically addressing climate displacement. The New Pact on Migration and Asylum, finalized in 2024, [32] focuses on operational efficiency and border management, but makes no solution for recognizing or even protecting individuals displaced by environmental issues. Outside of the EU, some member states have begun experimenting with including environmental degradation as part of a broader vulnerability assessment in asylum cases,[33] but these are individual national policies, not EU-wide standards. Moreover, attempts to expand refugee criteria or create a legal "climate refugee" status have faced resistance, particularly from countries concerned about setting precedents that could open the door to large numbers of new arrivals.

As climate change accelerates, this gap between humanitarian and legal recognition presents a growing challenge for the EU, both politically and strategically.

Past UN/Committee Involvement

European Union Internal Committees and Core Refugee Institutions

Within the European Union, a number of institutions have played important roles in shaping migration, asylum, and refugee policy, especially in relation to human rights. The European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, is an example of one such body. It is responsible for issues including asylum, migration, border security and ensures that EU migration and asylum policy are consistent with human rights obligations.[34]

---

30. https://euaa.europa.eu/news-events/asylum-report-2025-significant-shifts-asylum-related-migration-europe
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl2616/files/2018-07/gmp34.pdf
34. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/supporting-analyses/latest-documents

Another key actor is the European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, also known as DG HOME. This institution leads on legislative and policy proposals in

migration, asylum, border management and internal security, often with human rights safeguards as part of the proposals.[35]

Recently, the EU has developed the Pact on Migration and Asylum, intended to overhaul the EU's system for migration and asylum. Under this Pact, a set of new rules was adopted on June 11th, 2024.[36] These include reforms to screening, asylum procedures, solidarity mechanisms among member states, among others.[37] These reforms are intended to make processes more effective while maintaining rights protections.

Parliamentary and EU Government Assemblies

The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, PACE, has been active through its formal Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons. That committee has produced reports and resolutions touching on human rights protections. For example, it has emphasized fair asylum procedures, protection of refugees in mass displacement, the rights of unaccompanied minors, and more.[38]

For example, in May 2024, PACE released a report titled "Saving migrants' lives at sea and protecting their human rights." These reports often emphasize procedural guarantees, non-refoulement, and ensuring that countries under strain receive solidarity and international support. Climate change is mentioned very sparsely within this report.[39]

Another body, the Council of Europe entirely, through its Committee on Migration Issues, has issued communications and statements about the human rights implications of how migrants are housed, border practices, and asylum seekers' rights.[40]

---

35. https://commission.europa.eu/about/departments-and-executive-agencies/migration-and-home-affairs_en
36. Ibid.
37. https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-forced-displacement/forced-displacement_en
38. https://www.coe.int/en/web/migration-and-refugees/-/pace-migration-committee-calls-for-an-end-to-collective-expulsions-welcomes-creation-of-division-on-migration-and-refugees-and
39. https://rm.coe.int/committee-on-migration-refugees-and-displaced-persons-report-saving-mi/1680b5419f
40. https://www.coe.int/en/web/migration-and-refugees/-/migration-committee-approves-three-groundbreaking-reports-ahead-of-pace-plenary

Current Situation

Climate-related Displacement in the European Union

Europe is already experiencing displacement internally from climate-related hazards, with the numbers rising year over year. According to reports made by the European Environment Agency and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, in the past 15 years across the EU, nearly 500,000 people were internally displaced by wildfires, over 317,000 by floods, and around 106,000 due to storms. The countries most affected in terms of sheer numbers include Greece, Spain, and France.[41]

Beyond current displacement numbers, further projections show that under high global warming scenarios, millions more are likely to face drought and other climate-related dangers. Wildfires, forest fires, and heavy storms were among the environmental events causing the most internal displacement in Europe.[42] In 2023 alone wildfires and storms caused nearly 200,000 displacements, with the number of climate caused wildfires and/or storms slated to rise over the next few decades.[43]

Thus, while many people displaced by climate hazards within Europe are not necessarily crossing borders, they are facing displacement of homes, livelihoods, and often basic services. The trend is nothing but upward, with climate impacts increasing in frequency and severity, and pushing more people into the state of vulnerability.

Policy Support and Legal Reform

While climate-induced displacement is an acknowledged issue by many different international institutions, international and EU legal policy currently provide very limited protection for people displaced explicitly by climate change. As mentioned previously, the 1951 Refugee Convention does not recognize the definition of a climate refugee.[44] At the EU level, there is no binding legal status for people forced across international borders by environmental disasters. Existing asylum and migration regulations are premised mainly on persecution, conflict, or human rights violations. Current migrants must fall under these categories to be legally considered a refugee.[45]

---

41. https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/observatory/evidence/maps-and-charts/internal-displacement-due-to-extreme-weather
42. https://phys.org/news/2024-03-europe-rapidly-climate.html
43. https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/environmental-migration
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.

The European Migration Network's recent information has explored displacement and migration related to disasters, climate change and environmental degradation, noting that over 20 million people globally are displaced annually by extreme weather or environmental events.[46] But that does not translate into a clear pathway of protection, asylum, or status for those displaced by such causes under EU law.

However, the EU has made considerable progress and is evolving the definition of the refugee, with the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum aims to strengthen migration, asylum, border management, and integration, along with external cooperation with third world countries to address root causes of forced displacement. However, even with the Pact in place, full and comprehensive implementation is ongoing with gaps remaining, especially in recognizing environmental or climate displacement explicitly.

General Immigration Infrastructure and Monetary Frameworks

Even though many climate-displaced persons remain internal or in neighbouring regions, such as Africa, asylum pressures still intersect with climate displacement, especially through countries of origin or transit systems facing environmental pressure.

Recent data shows a sharp 38% decline in irregular migration into the EU, with roughly 239,000 irregular border crossings, the lowest level since 2021.[47] Important parts of that shift are due to enhanced cooperation with neighbouring countries, crackdowns on smuggling and trafficking networks, and pressure on countries of departure. There remains, however, increases along some routes along the Mediterranean, with persons from regions such as North Africa affected by environmental pressures.[48]

Legally, the EU's approach to forced and irregular migration involves multiple lines of defense, with border control, cooperation with origin or transit countries, and strengthened asylum regulations and policies, being a top priority.

Also, EU funding and adaptation policy have recognized climate change risks, particularly with changes in investments into stronger infrastructure. The World Bank and European Commission report that disasters in Europe cost over 77 billion Euros in 2023 alone, and projections suggest that continued inaction could lead to losses of up to 7% of combined EU GDP year over year, in worst-case scenarios.[49]

---

46. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/new-emn-inform-explores-displacement-and-migration-related-disasters-climate-change-and-2023-05-08_en?prefLang=fr
47. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-sees-38-drop-irregular-border-crossings-2024-2025-01-24_en
48. https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/irregular-migration-into-eu-drops-sharply-2024-eu-border-agency-says-2025-01-14/
49. https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2024/05/15/europe-urgently-needs-to-increase-its-disaster-and-climate-resilience

Member states differ in capacity and willingness to accept arrivals, enforce deportments, or share burdens. New legal policies are being designed to more evenly distribute responsibilities among member states.

Human Rights Challenges and Vulnerable Populations

The human rights dimension of climate displacement in Europe is no doubt a critical facet of migration, but unfortunately remains under-addressed in many new policies. People displaced by floods, storms, wildfires, or drought within their country of origin often lose their homes, face food and water insecurity, and lack access to proper health or education. There is also the issue of "chain vulnerability" when environmental degradation compounds other stressors like corruption, poor governance, or conflict.[50]

Those who try to flee environmental pressures, either through regular or irregular routes, often confront legal hurdles, dangerous transit routes, and often deplorable treatment. With no formal status for asylum seekers facing climate displacement, many must resort to seeking asylum under political or conflict grounds, which continues to be significantly more difficult to apply to.[51]

Furthermore, border enforcement and control poses risks to humanitarian rights, especially if migrants are from climate-stressed areas and fleeing overlapping crises such as conflict. Policy regarding asylum procedures, due process, protection against deportation, and support during relocation are uneven across EU states. Humanitarian reports indicate that growing legislative restrictions in some countries may worsen vulnerabilities on migrants.[52]

Finally, vulnerable groups such as children, women, persons with disabilities are more severely affected. UNESCO's regional record for South-Eastern Europe notes barriers to public services for climate-displaced persons, including disrupted access to schooling and healthcare.[53]

---

50. Ibid.
51. https://www.cfr.org/article/europes-migration-dilemma
52. https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/climate-change-displacement-and-right-education-south-eastern-europe-regional-synthesis

Potential Solutions

Strengthening and Creating Legal Protections for Climate-Displaced Persons

The most pressing hole in addressing climate-related displacement is the absence of any clear legal frameworks and policies that recognizes and protects those who are forced to relocate due to climate-related disasters. The 1951 Refugee Convention, as mentioned previously, does not consider climate change or environmental decline as valid reasons for legal refugee status.[53] As a result, individuals fleeing rising sea levels, wildfires, or other extreme weather events often fall through the legal system. A potential solution for the European Union is to expand its current asylum and migration laws to include those displaced by climate change. This could involve developing legal definitions of the "climate-displaced person" and integrating them into the EU's New Pact on Migration and Asylum.[54] This move would provide climate migrants with clear rights, proper protection procedures, and access to the same rights as any other refugee.

The EU currently already has legal instruments that may be tweaked to serve this purpose. For example, the Temporary Protection Directive, a policy originally designed for mass influxes of people fleeing conflict, could be legislatively expanded to cover people displaced by extreme climate events, such as floods or wildfires.[55] While this would mark a significant step forward in protecting refugee rights as a whole, it is likely to face political resistance within Parliament.[56] Many member states are reluctant to expand asylum policy and legislation in fear of more migration or being overburdened. Additionally, it is difficult to draw a distinctive legal line between climate, economic, or politically motivated migration, especially when a multitude of factors can contribute to a person's displacement. Nevertheless, clarifying legal protections would help the EU act in a more coordinated and humanitarian manner during climate-induced crises.

---

53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/understanding-europes-turn-on-migration/
56. Ibid.

Preventing Climate-Induced Migration from the Source

Another key solution comes from reducing climate-related displacement before it occurs, by investing in newer, resilient, and disaster-prepared infrastructure within vulnerable countries. Much of climate-related migration originates in regions where infrastructure, economies, and governance systems are too weak to manage environmental shocks like droughts, floods, or extreme heat. By supporting sustainable development and climate resilience in origin and transit countries, the EU can help reduce the drivers of forced migration.[57] This would involve financial and technical support for resilient agricultural equipment, early warning systems, water security, renewable energy, and reforestation. Programs that diversify local economies and improve public safety can also enhance different communities' ability to withstand climate disasters.

The EU already emphasizes such external cooperation through its migration policy in regards to countries in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia.[58] These partnerships could be further expanded to specifically target climate vulnerability in these states. For instance, integrating climate risk assessments into monetary aid could ensure that EU funds directly reduce future displacement. However, the impact of these efforts is not directly immediate. Building any resilience takes time, and many regions already face strong climate stressors.[59] There is also the challenge of ensuring transparency and effectiveness in how funds are used in partner countries, especially where governance is weak or corrupt.

Expanding Legal Migration Channels and Ensuring Burden-Sharing

To uphold humanitarian values while maintaining safe control over migration flows, the European Union can expand safe and legal pathways for those displaced by climate change. Legal migration options, such as resettlement programs, humanitarian admission, and family reunification, may help reduce the need for people to undertake dangerous or irregular journeys. The EU's recently adopted Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework provides a foundation for scaling up such initiatives.[60] Establishing quotas for climate-displaced persons or humanitarian corridors following extreme weather events could make migration safer, while also reducing the pressure on frontline intake states.

---

57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-resettlement/resettlement-and-humanitarian-admission_en

At the same time, burden-sharing among EU member states is crucial to ensure that countries like Italy, Spain, and Greece in the Mediterranean are not left to manage most of the arrivals alone.[61] The previously mentioned EU New Pact on Migration and Asylum proposes mechanisms for solidarity and fair distribution of responsibility across the Union.[62] This may involve relocation schemes, financial aid, among other forms of support.[63] However, this solution also faces challenges. Some member states may lack the capacity or political popularity to accept more migrants, especially given the current political climate in Europe.[64] Public resistance, concerns about integration, and general politics can all slow down the success of these frameworks. Nonetheless, structured and rights-based migration channels can help balance national sovereignty with the EU's obligations under international human rights law.

Bloc Positions

Nations on Progressive and Equitable Protection of Migrants

These nations generally adopt a progressive and rights-based approach to climate displacement, advocating for strong legal protections for those forced to move due to climate-related disasters. This bloc may include the countries of Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, France, and Ireland. They support expanding the EU's asylum framework to explicitly include climate-displaced persons. Members of this bloc also believe the European Union has both a moral and legal responsibility to protect vulnerable populations displaced by the effects of climate change, such as rising sea levels, drought, wildfires, or other forms of extreme weather.[65]

This bloc advocates for creating new legal pathways into Europe, including humanitarian visas and climate-related asylum procedures, and supports integrating climate displacement into the EU's broader asylum and migration framework. They also stress the importance of fair asylum procedures and climate readiness support in countries of origin to address root causes. These nations typically align with civil society and international human rights bodies, calling for an EU-wide response that safeguards dignity, legality, and proportionality in migration management.[66]

---

61. Ibid.
62. https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/partner/article/breaking-the-deadlock-on-eu-migration-policy
63. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_2101
64. Ibid.
65. https://www.unhcr.org/rs/en/news/unhcr-calls-eu-ensure-new-chapter-refugee-protection
66. Ibid.

States in Solidarity with the Front Line on Immigration

Countries such as Italy, Spain, Greece, and Malta form a bloc shaped by their geographical location on the EU's external borders and their role as both entry points for irregular migration and frontline responders to humanitarian crises in vulnerable areas such as Africa. These states acknowledge the exponentially growing impact of climate change on migration, particularly from regions such as North Africa, and advocate for an EU-wide approach that balances responsibility-sharing with border security.[67] While they support the protection of human rights, humane reception conditions, and policies such as relocation or financial aid, they also emphasize the need for efficient border management, returns of inadmissible asylum claims, and greater support from the EU to manage inflows.

These countries strongly favor equitable burden-sharing across the EU. They back mandatory relocation quotas and other solidarity mechanisms that ensure that frontline states are not overwhelmed by irregular or sudden arrivals. For them, the EU must lead by example on the international stage through balancing migration governance with human rights and climate justice.[68]

Discussion Questions

1. How is the EU currently defining "refugee," "displaced person," and "climate-displaced person"? What gaps of rights exist for those displaced by climate degradation?
2. If climate-displaced persons arrive in the EU, what rights should they be subject to, including access to work, housing, health, or legal protection?
3. To what extent should members that contribute most to greenhouse gas emissions bear responsibility for displacement caused by climate change?
4. How can EU Members balance concerns about border security and migration control?

---

67. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/649344/EPRS_BRI(2020)649344_EN.pdf
68. Ibid.

Further Resources

1. "1.4. Climate-induced displacement" - European Union Agency for Asylum: https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2023/14-climate-induced-displacement
2. "Migration, Mobility & Forced Displacement" - European Union External Action: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/migration-mobility-forced-displacement_en
3. "Forced displacement" - European Commission: https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-forced-displacement/forced-displacement_en
4. "The 1951 Refugee Convention" - UNHCR: https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/overview/1951-refugee-convention

Bibliography

"1.4. Climate-Induced Displacement." *European Union Agency for Asylum,* euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2023/14-climate-induced-displacement.

"Asylum Report 2025: Significant Shifts in Asylum-Related Migration in Europe." *European Union Agency for Asylum*, 2025, euaa.europa.eu/news-events/asylum-report-2025-significant-shifts-asylum-related-migration-europe.

Clayton, Jonathan, and Hereward Holland. "Over One Million Sea Arrivals Reach Europe in 2015." *UNHCR*, 30 Dec. 2015, www.unhcr.org/news/stories/over-one-million-sea-arrivals-reach-europe-2015.

"Climate Change and Migration: The State of International Refugee and Human Rights Law." *Parl.ca*, 2024, lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/202402E.

"Climate Change, Displacement and the Right to Education: South-Eastern." *Unesco.org*, 2023, www.unesco.org/en/articles/climate-change-displacement-and-right-education-south-eastern-europe-regional-synthesis. Accessed 21 Sept. 2025.

Climate Mainstreaming Architecture in the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework. commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/swd_2022_225_climate_mainstreaming_architecture_2021-2027.pdf.

Council of Europe. "Migration Committee Approves Three Groundbreaking Reports ahead of PACE Plenary." *Division on Migration and Refugees*, Council of Europe, 17 June 2024,

www.coe.int/en/web/migration-and-refugees/-/migration-committee-approves-three-grou
ndbreaking-reports-ahead-of-pace-plenary. Accessed 21 Sept. 2025.

"PACE Migration Committee Welcomes Creation of Division on Migration and Refugees."
Division on Migration and Refugees, Council of Europe, 12 Mar. 2025,
www.coe.int/en/web/migration-and-refugees/-/pace-migration-committee-calls-for-an-en
d-to-collective-expulsions-welcomes-creation-of-division-on-migration-and-refugees-and
. Accessed 21 Sept. 2025.

"EU Sees 38% Drop in Irregular Border Crossings in 2024." *Migration and Home Affairs*, 24
Jan. 2025,
home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-sees-38-drop-irregular-border-crossings-2024-2025-0
1-24_en.

EUR-Lex. "EUR-Lex - Xy0022 - EN - EUR-Lex." *Eur-Lex.europa.eu*, 11 Dec. 2017,
eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/treaty-establishing-the-european-coal-and-s
teel-community-ecsc-treaty.html.

European Commission. "Asylum in the EU." *Migration and Home Affairs*, 2024,
home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/asylum-eu_en.

"Country Responsible for Asylum Application (Dublin Regulation)." *Migration and Home
Affairs*, 2020,
home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/asylum-eu/country-responsible-
asylum-application-dublin-regulation_en.

"Pact on Migration and Asylum." *European Commission*, 21 May 2024,
home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en.

*European Migration Network Inform Displacement and Migration Related to Disasters, Climate
Change and Environmental Degradation European Migration Network*. 2023,
home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-05/EMN_Inform_climate_related_migration
_final_May2023_090523.pdf.

European Union. "European Commission – What It Does | European Union."
European-Union.europa.eu, 2024,
european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/search-all-eu-in
stitutions-and-bodies/european-commission_en.

"Forced Displacement - European Commission." *International-Partnerships.ec.europa.eu*, international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-forced-displacement/force d-displacement_en.

"IMMC.JOIN%282023%2919%20final.ENG.xhtml.1_EN_ACT_part1_v8.Docx." *Europa.eu*, 2023, eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52023JC0019. Accessed 21 Sept. 2025.

"Internal Displacement due to Extreme Weather." *Europa.eu*, 4 June 2025, climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/observatory/evidence/maps-and-charts/internal-displacem ent-due-to-extreme-weather. Accessed 21 Sept. 2025.

IOM. "ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION | Environmental Migration Portal." *Iom.int*, environmentalmigration.iom.int/environmental-migration.

"Latest Documents | Supporting Analyses | LIBE | Committees | European Parliament." *Europa.eu*, 2024, www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/supporting-analyses/latest-documents. Accessed 21 Sept. 2025.

"Mergers: Commission Opens In-Depth Investigation into the Proposed Transaction between Orange and MasMovil." *European Commission - European Commission*, 2025, ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_2101. Accessed 21 Sept. 2025.

Middleton, Darren. *GLOBAL MIGRATION PERSPECTIVES Why Asylum Seekers Seek Refuge in Particular Destination Countries: An Exploration of Key Determinants*. 2005, www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl2616/files/2018-07/gmp34.pdf.

"Migration & Asylum: Breaking the Deadlock on EU Migration Policy." *The Parliament Magazine*, 20 July 2021, www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/partner/article/breaking-the-deadlock-on-eu-migration-p olicy.

"Migration and Home Affairs." *European Commission*, 28 Nov. 2024, commission.europa.eu/about/departments-and-executive-agencies/migration-and-home-af fairs_en.

Migration Climate MIGRATION, CLIMATE CHANGE and the ENVIRONMENT COMPENDIUM of IOM'S ACTIVITIES In.

www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/env_degradation/compendium_climate_change.pdf.

Migration Data Portal. "Environmental Migration." *Migration Data Portal*, 2021, www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/environmental-migration.

"Migration, Mobility & Forced Displacement." *EEAS*, 2024, www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/migration-mobility-forced-displacement_en.

"Migration: Commission Proposes New European Approach to Returns." *European Commission*, 11 Mar. 2025, commission.europa.eu/news-and-media/news/migration-commission-proposes-new-european-approach-returns-2025-03-11_en.

"New EMN Inform Explores Displacement and Migration Related to Disasters, Climate Change and Environmental Degradation." *Migration and Home Affairs*, 8 May 2023, home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/new-emn-inform-explores-displacement-and-migration-related-disasters-climate-change-and-2023-05-08_en?prefLang=fr. Accessed 21 Sept. 2025.

Pisco, Paulo. "Saving Migrants' Lives at Sea and Protecting Their Human Rights." *Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons*, Council of Europe, 22 Jan. 2024, rm.coe.int/committee-on-migration-refugees-and-displaced-persons-report-saving-mi/1680b5419f.

"Press Corner." *European Commission - European Commission*, 2020, ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_15_5596.

Radjenovic, Anja. *BRIEFING EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service*. 2020, www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/649344/EPRS_BRI(2020)649344_EN.pdf.

"Refugee Crisis: European Commission Takes Decisive Action." *European Commission - European Commission*, 2025, europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5596_en.htm. Accessed 21 Sept. 2025.

"Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission." *Migration and Home Affairs*, 2021, home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-resettlement/resettlement-and-humanitarian-admission_en.

Reuters Staff. "Irregular Migration into EU Drops Sharply in 2024, EU Border Agency Says."
    Reuters, 14 Jan. 2025,
    www.reuters.com/world/europe/irregular-migration-into-eu-drops-sharply-2024-eu-borde
    r-agency-says-2025-01-14/.

Robinson, Kali, and Diana Roy. "Europe's Migration Dilemma." *Council on Foreign Relations*,
    31 May 2024, www.cfr.org/article/europes-migration-dilemma.

Roehse, Sophie, and Tara Varma. "Understanding Europe's Turn on Migration." *Brookings*, 24
    Oct. 2024, www.brookings.edu/articles/understanding-europes-turn-on-migration/.

Siegfried, Kristy. "Climate Change and Displacement: The Myths and the Facts." *UNHCR*, 15
    Nov. 2023,
    www.unhcr.org/news/stories/climate-change-and-displacement-myths-and-facts.

"Tampere European Council 15-16.10.1999: Conclusions of the Presidency - European Council
    Tampere 15-16.10.1999: Conclusions of the Presidency." *Www.europarl.europa.eu*, 1999,
    www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/tam_en.htm.

"The Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties | Fact Sheets on the European Union | European
    Parliament." *Europa.eu*, 31 Mar. 2025,
    www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/3/what-is-the-european-union. Accessed 21
    Sept. 2025.

UNHCR. "Climate Change and Displacement." *UNHCR*, 2024,
    www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/climate-change-and-displacement.

"Refugees." *UNHCR*, 2024, www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-protect/refugees.

"The 1951 Refugee Convention." *UNHCR*,
    www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/overview/1951-refugee-convention.

"UNHCR Calls for EU to Ensure a New Chapter for Refugee Protection | UNHCR Serbia."
    UNHCR Serbia, 2021,
    www.unhcr.org/rs/en/news/unhcr-calls-eu-ensure-new-chapter-refugee-protection.
    Accessed 21 Sept. 2025.

Wageningen University. "Europe Is Not Prepared for Rapidly Growing Climate Risks,
    Researchers Say." *Phys.org*, 11 Mar. 2024,
    phys.org/news/2024-03-europe-rapidly-climate.html. Accessed 21 Sept. 2025.

Wagner, Martin. "2015 in Review: How Europe Reacted to the Refugee Crisis - ICMPD."
Www.icmpd.org, 21 Dec. 2015,
www.icmpd.org/blog/2015/2015-in-review-how-europe-reacted-to-the-refugee-crisis.

"What Is the Council?" *Www.consilium.europa.eu*,
www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/what-is-the-council/.

World Bank Group. "Europe Urgently Needs to Increase Its Disaster and Climate Resilience."
World Bank, World Bank Group, 15 May 2024,
www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2024/05/15/europe-urgently-needs-to-increase
-its-disaster-and-climate-resilience.