

Model European Union Conference

27.8./ 29.8.2016

Introduction

Since 2015 Europe and the European Union are facing one of the most severe crisis of their history. According to the UNHCR, in 2015 60 million people were fleeing their home country to seek a life without hunger, war or poverty. Many people were picturing their future in Europe. But the over extension of the European countries was striking. Refugees would keep dying on the Mediterranean sea and the political atmosphere in lots of countrys has shifted in a disturbingly xenophobic way by establishing anti European parties, who are based on fear and an alleged need for national pride and sovereignty. Especially this recent development foreshadowed the intense disagreements on whether those problems shall be solved on a national or a supranational level.

Our topic?

The European Commission handed in the following for the European Council to debate on:
„Proposal for a Regulation on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010”

But what is the European Union Agency for Asylum?

The European Union is working towards a Common European Asylum System. The agency shall support its implementation and make sure, that individual asylum cases are dealt in a coherent way by all member states.

What is new?

The proposal is mainly about expanding the agencies competences in an extent, in which they are able to effectively support, asses and monitor member states in their efforts.



General statements

Before the delegates of 21 EU countries started to debate on specific articles and clauses of the proposal, everyone gave the others a short insight on their general attitude towards a supranational organization, to which they would have to transfer an enormous amount of power and sovereignty, in case the proposal passes the European Council.

What was striking in the first place - the radical positions seemed to dominate the introduction.

Countries such as **Hungary, Poland, Croatia** or the **Czech republic** seemed deeply concerned about giving up administration power and sovereignty. Although they all emphasized their will to help, the general undertone often spoke for itself.



Hungary: „We are strongly against any kind of distribution key. No one shall come to our country if it is not due to their free will!”

Specifically to mention in this context is of course the **United Kingdom**. After the EU referendum last week, they are situated in an “in between status”. Since their people just made clear, that they fear overwhelming EU institutions, who take away most of their national power, it was predictable, that the Kingdom would argue quite similar as the countries mentioned before.

The exact opposite position was taken by **Italy** and **Greece**.

Due to their geographic position and the **Dublin regulation**, they are extremely impacted by the current crisis and had to contribute far more, than other member states had to. Because of that, they argued for an extensive transfer of national power in order to force other member states, to take more responsibility.



What is the Dublin Regulation?

The Dublin regulation controls, which member state is responsible for an asylum application. The refugee has to seek for asylum in the member state, in which he or she entered the EU. Most of the time, this applies to Italy, Greece or other EU member states, which are located at its border.

Greece: We need a distribution key!

Discussion

Those two political camps were as well striking in the following discussions regarding single aspects of the proposal.

While debating over general tasks, such as assessment, monitoring and relocation aid, one wants to provide the agency with more, the other one with less competence.

Immediately after an amendment of the Finnish delegation, who pressed for an agency, which would only work „ **on demand**“ of the member states, failed, the Greek delegation would come up with an amendment proposing concrete sanctions regarding those states, who „ (...) **repeatedly fail to execute the agencies requirements**“. This amendment passed.



The conflict does not stop at coffee break: a heated up discussion between the United Kingdom and Italy.

One last uproar

After two days of fruitful and productive discussions, which thematized clauses about general information exchange within the EU member states, the extent to which asylum seekers information such as religion or the criminal background shall be recorded, the question whether or whether not the agency shall be able to cooperate with third countries on its own or to what outrage the agency shall asses the member states implementations – the council was just one step away from implementing the proposal.

Right before the presidency announced the final vote, the UK, supported by Hungary, Croatia, Poland and other delegations made one last attempt to stop the proposal from passing in order to blackmail the council on adding and changing certain clauses, which have been outvoted before. But in the last run the Czech Republic upset their plan. The delegate voted „ yes“ and the proposal passed!

