

CRISIS COMMITTEE APPLICATION QUESTIONS 2014

**Ukraine in Turmoil**

1. What is your past Model UN experience?
2. What interests you about the Ukrainian crisis?
3. What are some of the major factors that influence Ukraine’s relationship with both the West and with Russia?
4. The annexation of Crimea—justifiable or a crime? Why? Be concise, be specific.
5. I have previously attended the Paris Model United Nations Conference in 2013, representing the delegation of Libya in a special conference dedicated to the promotion of LGBT rights. I also attended the Anatolia College MUN in Thessaloniki, Greece in spring of 2014. I participated in the Historical Crisis Committee, taking the role of the British Secretary for Defense John Nott during the Falklands War. There, I received a third best delegate award.
6. I am of mixed cultural heritage. Both Greek and Russian. My position has given me unique perspective in the conflict as I have come to be exposed to both sides. I get to experience both the Russian view through watching Russian media and conversing with friends and family, but also observe the conflict from the perspective of the western world by residing in a western country (Greece). Europe, and especially Greece, benefits a lot from trade and diplomatic relations with Russia. Same can be said for Russia and its relationship with the EU and the west. Both sides seem quick to condemn the other, tending to portray the situation in a largely black and white manner. I believe that the personal connection I have to both sides gives me at least some immunity to bias and impartiality. If not that, then at least a more complete understanding of the situation. I care deeply about the future of both Russia and my home in Europe, and I believe that this future is being decided right now, in Ukraine.
7. Ukraine is a fairy large country by European standards, with lots of resources and a very strategic position. It happens to be located right in between two major geopolitical world powers; that of Russia and the EU. It is natural that both powers would want such a strategically important country to be in their sphere of immediate influence. Russia, as one of the up and coming ‘BRICS’, and with a dynamic, growing economy, seeks to monopolize Europe’s hungry energy market. Russia’s vast; rich in fossil fuel lands generate a very large part of Russia’s GDP and big European economies is the most lucrative ‘target audience’. Ukraine is practically the passage point for the network of Russian pipelines that supply Europe with valuable oil and gas. Controlling this chokepoint means controlling the entire supply and thus allows Russia to potentially control prices and ensure its rise into global politico-economical prominence. Ukraine can benefit from closer ties with Russia by receiving many benefits such cheap gas. But, on the other hand, this will mean that the very pro-west Ukrainian might have to conform to a political system and set of relations that do not conform at all to their ideals. As far as the European Union is concerned, a west-aligned Ukraine has its own advantages. A Ukraine that’s a member of not only the EU but also the Eurozone will bring a newly-opened developing market of almost 50 million people, right onto the doorstep of few of the most globally prominent western countries such as France and Germany. It will become magnet of foreign European investment as it is currently has a very high future development potential. Europe will also gain valuable ports in the black sea and some good industrial infrastructure in the country’s south-east. It should also be mentioned that Ukraine, due to its geographic position on the western edge of the Great Eurasian Steppe, is a very fertile land and has acted as the breadbasket of the Russian Empire for centuries. Access to all this agricultural land may be a huge opportunity for the development of Ukrainian agribusiness as well as a chance to counter the ever increasing food prices in Europe. Politically, the Ukrainian people will also be given the opportunity to formulate a government in accordance to their own beliefs and convictions which, at the moment, seem largely pro-EU.
8. The annexation of Crimea is a morally ambiguous subject. The peninsula has been inhabited by ethnic Russians for a very long time and was considered to be a Russian core province during the days of the Tsarist Empire. The general consensus seems to be that at least a narrow majority wish to be part of Russia. Nevertheless there are several agreements and articles of international law that have been breached in the process. The supposed referendum was conducted under very questionable circumstances. Moreover, by annexing Crimea, Russia broke a law that it itself had established. Upon the breakup of the Soviet Union, it was agreed that Ukraine would be guaranteed sovereignty over Ukraine by Russia, if it decommissions its nuclear arsenal. Ukraine has gotten rid of its nuclear weapons and upheld its own end of the bargain. But we see that Russia has nevertheless broken the guarantee and violated Ukrainian sovereign territory, which the Russian government itself gave away lawfully and not so long ago. Despite all these legal matters though, the (apparent at least) will of the people cannot be ignored and thus, the matter of the annexation remains very ambiguous. At the same time, though, Russia’s secretiveness around the entire process, as well as its lack of cooperation, tend to place Russia in a disadvantaged position in terms of international trust.