



Research Guide for the Human Rights Committee **@OBSMUN 2022**

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Human Rights

The Human Rights Committee was established in 2006 and is described as “the body of independent experts that monitors the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by its State parties.” It is responsible for monitoring civil and political rights. It has carried this out by encouraging universal peace and equality with innumerable – not only innovative but also traditional – ways. During OBSMUN 2022, the human rights committee will be addressing *The right to end-of-life palliative care and a dignified death and protecting the rights of the trapped migrants in the Belarus-Poland border.*

Purpose of this guide

This research guide was compiled by the Secretariat and Chairs of the OBSMUN. OBSMUN aims to provide delegates with the opportunity to further develop their research skills that will help them in their academics. Thus, these research guides do not cover the whole breadth of the issues at hand. Instead, they are designed to provide a basis from which delegates can undertake their own research into the topics, with the aim of developing clauses from their independent research.

1 - The right to end-of-life palliative care and access to a dignified death

Everyone has the right to receive medical treatment and be taken care of until they pass away. However, according to the World Health Organisation, only 14% of people who need palliative assistance receive it. Some hospitals, especially in rural areas, may not have the resources to provide this care to those who need it. Patients and/or their families may object to receiving it because they may feel that talking about death may make it come sooner, or that palliative care can only be offered when all efforts to cure or control have failed.

The European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights states "Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected and protected". This is the basis of euthanasia - giving people the option to die in a painless way since the patient, although still biologically alive, is or will be in a vegetative state and feels that will put them in a state they do not want to be in. Euthanasia can be classified into 3 main categories - Voluntary Euthanasia (conducted when the patient gives consent), Non-voluntary Euthanasia (conducted when consent is unavailable) and Involuntary Consent (conducted against the will of the patient).

Delegates should be familiar with the following terms:

- **Palliative Care** - care for the terminally ill and their families, especially that provided by an organized health service
- **Euthanasia** - the painless killing of a patient suffering from an incurable and painful disease or in an irreversible coma
- **Vegetative** - a person who is alive but comatose and without apparent brain activity or responsiveness

Useful Treaties and Organisations

- **Worldwide Palliative Care Alliance** - a British organisation focusing on the global development of palliative care and advancement of pain relief
- **Dignitas** - a Swiss non-profit providing assisted/accompanied suicide to those members of the organization who suffer from a terminal illness and/or severe physical and/or mental illnesses
- **World Federation of Right to Die Societies** - an international federation of associations that promote access to voluntary euthanasia
- **My Death, My Decision** - an organisation that campaigns for the legalisation of assisted dying in England and Wales

Past Resolutions

Palliative Care and Standards on the Rights of Older People: Recommendations for New Legal Instruments - <https://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/documents/PalliativeCareandStandardsOntheRightsofOlderPersons.pdf>

Possible Perspectives From Which to Formulate Solutions

Although palliative care is agreed to be a right everyone has, many countries have different (and often conflicting) views on euthanasia. It is important for every delegate to know what their country's law states, and what the population's view on it is. Many religions do not agree with euthanasia, so highly religious countries generally are against it.

Delegates may argue that if a patient is suffering then it is better for the patient to die than to continue in pain. Moreover, in countries

where some forms of euthanasia are legalised, it seems to be an unproblematic issue and has no large consequences.

However, some may argue that taking someone's life (whatever the circumstances) is unethical and against the idea that the state must preserve the life of any citizen as much as possible. Many religions also condemn it, as human life is being destroyed.

2 - The issue of the human rights of trapped migrants in the Belarus-Poland border

Due to ongoing tensions between Belarus and the European Union (EU), the Belarus government incentivised immigrants coming from the middle east to cross the border and get into EU territory. Those arriving in Belarus were given advice on where to cross the border as well as cutters and axes to trespass the fences. Most migrants desired to get to Germany, and this was a much safer trip than trying to reach Greece by boat. This sudden influx of immigrants angered the Polish government, causing Poland, Latvia and Lithuania to accuse Belarus of hybrid warfare. Physical walls are being built in the borders of these three nations, and EU officers and patrols are being sent to prevent further illegal immigration

This has caused some stir amongst human rights organisations, as the immigrants are not being provided with food, water and adequate shelter. Some have placed the blame on Belarus, as they were the ones who created this wave of migrants and their patrol was being violent and treating the migrants inhumanly. Others have criticised the EU for its lack of support and rejecting the migrants, but Belarus has repeatedly refused to accept Poland's humanitarian aid. The lack of willingness to give in by either side has created a humanitarian crisis that needs to be solved quickly.

Delegates should be familiar with the following terms:

- **Migrant Crisis** - the intense difficulty, trouble, or dangerous situation in the receiving state due to the movements of large groups of immigrants escaping from the conditions which negatively affected their situation at the country of origin
- **Hybrid Warfare** - a type of warfare that employs political warfare and blends conventional warfare, irregular warfare and cyberwarfare instead of traditional military action as a way to avoid attribution and retribution
- **Humanitarian Aid** - material and logistic assistance to people who need help. It is usually short-term help

Useful Treaties and Organisations

- **Human Rights Watch** - an international non-governmental organization, headquartered in New York City, that conducts research and advocacy on human rights
- **European Court of Human Rights** - an international court of the Council of Europe that interprets the European Convention on Human Rights and ensures that States respect the rights and guarantees set out in the Convention
- **European Convention on Human Rights** - a document which protects the human rights of people in countries that belong to the Council of Europe
- **Agreement between Poland and Belarus** - treaty made between the two countries in 1992 to ensure peace and prosperity between them

Past Resolutions

Human Rights Council; 23rd session; 2013/6; Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development - https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_HRC_RES_23_20.pdf

Possible Perspectives From Which to Formulate Solutions

In this case, it is very important to see what your country's position is. An ally with the EU should side with sanctioning Belarus, and vice versa. For example, EU allies can argue that Belarus helped immigrants get across and are trying to pass on the migrant crisis onto the EU's hands. Moreover, they could also condemn the violence used by the Belarus patrol and their lack of willingness to prevent further trouble.

From the perspective of a Belarus ally, it could be argued that the EU is not collaborating and is causing this accumulation of immigrants at the border. They can criticise Poland's effort in creating a wall at the border and how they treat the immigrants.

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