

EUROPEAN UNION



DIRECTOR
Linda Yan

CHAIR
Cora Cole

AD
Claire Charvet





TABLE OF CONTENTS

DIRECTOR'S LETTER	2
COMMITTEE OVERVIEW	3
TOPIC A Protection of the Freedom of the Press	4
TOPIC INTRODUCTION	4
HISTORY	4
PAST UN ACTION	6
CURRENT SITUATION	7
CASE STUDIES	9
BLOC POSITIONS	13
GUIDING QUESTIONS	14
FURTHER RESEARCH	15
TOPIC B Balancing Tourism and Preservation of Historic Sites	16
TOPIC INTRODUCTION	16
HISTORY	17
PAST UN ACTION	19
CURRENT SITUATION	20
CASE STUDIES	22
BLOC POSITIONS	26
GUIDING QUESTIONS	27
FURTHER RESEARCH	27
CITATIONS	28
TOPIC A	28
TOPIC B	28



DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Pacific Model United Nations 2019 and the European Union (EU)! My name is Linda Yan and I am deeply honored to serve as your director for this conference. I am a junior at Bellevue High School and have been doing MUN since my freshman year. I am joined respectively, by my amazing chair and assistant director, Cora Cole and Claire Charvet, who are both juniors at Bainbridge High School and Juanita High School.

In the past year alone, the EU has experienced incredible shifts in both its structure and power from Brexit to the Yellow Vest Movement. Since the time of the writing of this background guide, we will undoubtedly have witnessed even more changes. Although there are many relevant and interesting topics that this committee could pursue, we have decided to focus on the matters of: *Balancing Tourism and Preservation of Historic Sites* as well as the *Preservation of the Freedom of Press*.

Presently, tourism constitutes one of the biggest economic activities in the European Union. Although it has been prosperous and successful, this industry also often puts at risk the very monuments it seeks to promote. For example, overtourism is an especially prominent issue in Venice where cruise ships have polluted its famed canals and caused the erosion of the underwater supports of its historic buildings.

Another pressing issue facing the EU is the decline of freedom of expression. With the increase of authoritarian governments within member-states as well as the recent arrests of multiple journalists, this fundamental right appears to be greatly threatened. Current actions regarding this topic are not only integral to the present but also set an important precedent for future generations.

In this background guide that we have created, delegates will be able to gain a fundamental understanding of the basics surrounding the topics of debate, as well as questions to keep in mind during the process of researching. This background guide will by no means be the limitations of debate, so delegates are encouraged to pursue their own research outside of the background guide. Please do not hesitate to contact the dais if you have any questions, comments or concerns. Good luck with your research and I cannot wait to see you all on conference day!

Best,

Linda Yan

Director | European Union

Pacific Model United Nations 2019



COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

Welcome to PACMUN 2019's European Union. Though the European Union is only an observer state in the United Nations, the EU is a powerful force in global peacekeeping. The EU consists of 28 nations located in Europe, all of which are also members of the United Nations, though at the time of writing one-member state, the United Kingdom, is in the process of leaving. Officially created in 1993, the EU has evolved from the European Economic Community, which was founded in 1958, and has since grown far beyond its original goal of economic betterment. Today, the European Union works to promote peace throughout Europe, respect and encourage cultures within its borders, support further scientific discoveries, maintain a stable and competitive economic market between nations, and to promote the well-being of all its citizens.

It is imperative that delegates work together in coming to a resolution but are reminded that it is necessary that each delegate must not stray from the policies and views of their respective countries.

Position papers are required by delegates wishing to be considered for awards. Each topic should be thoroughly explored, but there is a one-page limit per topic. Citations need to be included but will not be counted as a part of this page limit. Delegates are encouraged to write position papers in order to be better prepared for debate. The backgrounder is intended to assist delegates and to serve as a starting point for their research. Position papers typically include the nation's position on each of the topics, past and current UN action on these topics as well as what the nation is doing about them, and possible resolutions for the topics. For more information on any other requirements, delegates should reference the Resources page under the PACMUN website.

Position papers should be turned in to the committee email address, eu@pacificmun.com, no later than the time listed on the website, unless an extension has been granted by the dais.



TOPIC A

Protection of the Freedom of the Press

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The freedom of expression has been historically one of the most debated topics. With the onset of the digital age and the rise of increasingly authoritarian leaders in the EU, the question of what falls under this right has become more relevant than ever. From the expansion of federal power over the media to the arrests of journalists criticizing the government, the citizens of the EU have watched with alarm as the freedom of expression, a right supposedly safeguarded by the UN charter, became increasingly limited and infringed upon. With an increase of violent political movements and hate crimes in recent years throughout Europe, such as France's Yellow Vest Movement, member states have imposed inherently restrictive legislation. Although these policies were created with the goal of maintaining public order and easing tensions, many have voiced their concerns that this would be achieved at the cost of the threatening of civil rights. In addition, the roles and rights of the media in such tumultuous times, both state and privately owned, has once again become ambiguous. This topic presents an opportunity for the in-depth exploration of what constitutes as the freedom of expression in the 21st century, as well as what the role of governments and the EU should be in regard to it in this new era. The ultimate goal of the European community should be not just be to safeguard the freedom of expression, but to create a contract between the state and citizen for the common good.

HISTORY

The freedom of expression is a concept that can be seen in many significant early human rights documents such as the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which, adopted after the French Revolution, is still in effect today.

The interpretation of this concept has also been debated just as long. Today, with the increase of protests and movements both internationally and within the EU, this topic has become more relevant than ever.

Under Article 11 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which was consolidated in 2000, “Everyone has the right to freedom of expression...the freedom and pluralism of the media shall be respected.” However, in the twenty-first century, this right has become increasingly infringed upon by governments within the EU. With the exception of two EU member states, all European nations scored lower on *Reporters Without Borders’* Press Freedom Index in 2016 than in 2013. Though many have good intentions, for example, the Public Order Act 1986 of the United Kingdom, which criminalizes the “expressions of racial hatred,” misleading speech is not best countered or combatted with forced silence. EU legislation, which has primacy over the laws of member states, have also become more and more restrictive. For instance, the 2008 Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia obligates the criminalization of hate speech by all member states.

One of the fields with the most alarming declines in the freedom of expression has been journalism, as shown through the inherent increase in the censorship of both state owned and private news sources. With the rise of right-wing politics with EU politics, media sources have becoming increasingly criminalized for their criticism of governments and coverage of un-nationalistic events. For instance, Poland, whose government since 2015 has been largely controlled by the national-conservative PiS (Law and Justice Party), has seen the alarming of the increase in the role of the government in the media in an effort to control political discourse through examples ranging from the threatening of journalists with legal action to limiting access to government officials.

With the advent of digital communication and media, this field has become even more controversial. As digitization continues to rise, the ease of which a few individuals could broadcast to the masses and influence culture and society has greatly advanced, but the reverse, the limiting and regulation of such forms of communication, has also expanded. Perhaps the most notable piece of recent legislation regarding this topic has been the Code of Conduct, a contract signed between Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter, and YouTube and the European Commission.

This document obligates these corporations to “review the majority of valid notifications for removal of illegal hate speech in less than 24 hours and remove or disable access to such content, if necessary.” Similar to the laws mentioned earlier, this one too has good intentions, but the definition of “illegal hate speech” remains in an ambiguous grey area. Thus, the debate of the freedom of expression has become a paramount one throughout both the world and Europe.

PAST UN ACTION

Since its inception, the UN has crafted numerous pieces of legislation aiming to protect the freedom of speech globally in addition to the rights of journalists and media workers.

The most important document put forth by the UN is the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution 217A of 1948, or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Its preamble states: “human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech” in addition to the contents of Article 19: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” Most UN members have adhered to this principle, and all members of the EU remain in the upper half of freedom of the press scoring by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), a French NGO. Since then, the UN has made many steps in upholding this right.

The United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, published in 2016, has six pillars in its plan for securing journalism safety: raising awareness, monitoring and reporting, academic research, setting standards and policy making, capacity building, and coalition building. UNESCO hopes through these measures freedom of the press will increase worldwide. As part of their campaign to raise global awareness, three holidays have been established regarding journalism: 03 May, World Press Freedom Day; 28 September, International day for Universal Access to Information; and 02 November, International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. UNESCO also encourages the policies of

individual regional committees, including the European Union, to consider legislation supporting media freedom. UNESCO also trains independent investigative teams meant to investigate crimes against journalists in attempts to hold governments accountable for their actions or lack thereof. Finally, UNESCO believes that “universality is key” and states need to work together to solve the issue by encouraging each other to take action through policy making and advocacy.

The EU has also included a segment within its Charter of Fundamental Rights (CFR) on freedom of the press. Article 11 of this reads: “Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers” and “The freedom and pluralism of the media shall be respected.” This charter is legally-binding to member states and serves to complement the GA’s resolution.

In 2014 the EU published another piece of legislation, “EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline.” Parts of these guidelines reemphasized the EU’s official position regarding freedom of speech, declaring that it shall “publicly condemn” mistreatment or death of journalists and others exercising Article 11 of the CFR. It also recognized the importance of freedom and protection online in the current age. This is an important addition not covered in previous, older documents, as online censorship and internet blackouts are quickly becoming a more pervasive issue with more journalists turning to the Web to report.

Though extreme cases of the oppression of free speech and of the press have become a rarity within the EU, complete protection of this right has yet to be achieved in any member state.

CURRENT SITUATION

Today, all member states continue to express support for Article 11 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. However, many countries, especially those with populist leaders with affiliation with extremist parties, appear to have begun a troubling path towards illiberalism in recent years. For example, in 2018 Poland, currently considered one of the most illiberal EU states, passed legislation

condemning any suggestion that the Polish were involved in the Holocaust. But even countries that have traditionally been deemed as democratic and liberal have also become a part of this concerning trend. In 2018, Denmark became the fifth country to ban the wearing of burqas and niqabs in public, following the trend of nationalist party ideology that is currently sweeping Europe.

While the majority of passed legislation restricting the press and speech appear to have good intentions, many critics fear unintended, yet dangerous, ripple effects of censoring or regulating “hate speech”. This is demonstrated in the controversial provision that was passed in 2014 that criminalized “apology for terrorism” in France. Since then, the French police have been actively prosecuting individuals for this crime, which included making anti-Semitic and racist comments. In 2018 alone, they intervened in over 2,300 cases (in contrast to 1,850 in 2016) which led to 232 convictions. Since the passage of this law similar measures have been proposed in other countries including Belgium and the Netherlands. While words should not be in any circumstance trivialized, critics have pointed out that it can generate an environment where people are wary of expressing unpopular views or challenging prevalent ideas. Many EU citizens have expressed concern over the censoring of such opinions, however hateful, for in the future other opinions may also become restricted.

In addition, within the EU, especially in nations currently ruled by right wing political parties, many human rights abuses have occurred against journalists. Alarming signals of the repression of the freedom of the press can be seen across almost all member states, with the amount of journalist prosecutions and murders having skyrocketed. The press freedom index, an indicator of the level of free speech in the country created by Reporters Without Borders, has also decreased in nearly every member state. Political blackmail of journalists has furthermore become more prevalent, especially with the integration of many private media sources into the government domain.

In the past decade the EU has repeatedly condemned the restriction of freedom of expression within member states but has failed to formulate an effective plan to combat it. It has called for platforms that increase the protection and safety of journalism and journalists. Many EU citizens have also expressed concern over

new copyright and internet privacy laws, citing the possibility for online censorship. In March of 2019, tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets of Germany to march against a new EU Copyright Directive. An entire online platform, Save the Internet, was created and a Change.org petition garnered over 5 million signatures. Unfortunately, the initiative failed, and the directive came into force June 7th, 2019. Member states now have until 2021 to implement the legislation, which, once in place, will require many big online corporations such as YouTube and Facebook to censor their content, often with AI algorithms, which in the past have proven to often be quite faulty and inconsistent.

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1: SLOVAKIA

From 2017-2019, Slovakia dropped 18 points on the World Press Freedom Index. On February 21st, 2018, Ján Kuciak, a Slovak investigative journalist, was murdered. Among other things, Kuciak was investigating corruption in the Slovak government and its connection to the Italian mafia. He, along with his fiancé Martina Kušnírová, were shot and killed while in their Bratislava apartment. His murder exposed the depth of the Slovak government's corruption and sent shockwaves through the nation, but even after his death, press freedom in Slovakia has not had a drastic increase in freedom.

Kuciak's death shook Slovakia and prompted massive protests that led to the resignation of Prime Minister Robert Fico and his entire cabinet, though his party (the Smer-SD) remains in power. Right before he was killed, Kuciak revealed that the Italian mafia had been working with the Slovak government to embezzle EU funds, and that high-ranking officials were working closely with the crime group.

Despite his resignation from Prime Minister, Fico has continued to attack Slovak media and reporting. The country has been left wondering how independent the press is of the government, and Kuciak's murder brought back questions of previous incidents in which Slovak journalists have gone missing. Beta Balogová wrote in the Slovak Spectator: "Moreover, MP Robert Fico is talking now, in the year

of the murder of a journalist, about the tyranny of the media and media lynching. That is the lesson he is spreading. From the first days following the murder he tried to separate it from the atmosphere in society. He often talks about the murder of two young people, instead of the murder of a journalist, to stress that there is almost no difference between this and other violent tragedies. We need to investigate it and life moves on. He makes the tragedy a technocratic affair, and mythologises power.”

Government officials being openly disdainful of the press sets a dangerous precedent. If crime organizations who are targeting journalism think that the government is against the press as well, they might feel that there won't be as much investigation into crimes they commit against journalists. The fact that former Prime Minister Robert Fico attempted to minimize the death of Kuciak shows that Slovakia might have been headed in a dangerous direction.

Although Slovakia is only ranked 35 on the World Press Freedom Index, it dropped 8 points from 2018-2019, and journalists throughout the country are coming forward and saying that they don't feel safe. Slovakia is struggling to maintain some semblance of press freedom in the year following the Kuciak murder, and Slovaks are continuing to pressure their government to ensure journalist safety and press freedom.

The new Slovak president, Zuzana Čaputová, campaigned for press freedom, and has expressed discontent with the way the press was being treated under the former President and Prime Minister, but the country has a long way to go before journalists can report completely freely. A right of reply bill that forces the media to publish politicians' responses to articles that have alleged false information has recently passed in the Slovak government, leaving journalists and citizens alike wondering if soon they will be unable to trust anything in the media. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has called on President Čaputová to veto the bill, but whether or not she will remains to be seen. Even over a year after Kuciak's murder, Slovak journalists are still fighting for their freedom, and with members of the Slovak Parliament waging a war against the media, Slovaks will have to create substantive changes in order to secure press rights and freedom.

The situation in Slovakia is still unfolding, and how the government handles the press and how the Kuciak murder investigation plays out will help set the stage for press freedom in the rest of Europe.

CASE STUDY 2: MALTA

Currently, Malta has the third worst freedom of the press in EU as ranked by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), a French NGO that monitors freedom of the press worldwide. The rankings are determined on a scale where scores of zero are the best. Malta scores 29.74, 77th worldwide and surpassed in the EU only by Hungary and Bulgaria. In comparison, the lowest score of the EU, Finland's 7.90, ranks second worldwide. The last two years in particular have seen a significant decline, contributing factors of which include government harassment of journalists, bipartisan attacks upon media, and the government ownership of many other media outlets.

The decline of Maltese freedom of the press in recent years can most notably be emphasized by the mostly uninvestigated death of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia in October of 2017. Caruana Galizia was a well-known and generally feared Maltese anti-corruption journalist. She ran a widely read political blog called the "Running Commentary" in which she worked to expose political corruption and hold various politicians accountable, particularly members of Malta's left-leaning Labour Party. Topics she covered included tax evasion, Malta's "golden passport" scheme, and money laundering among others. Prior to her murder, Caruana Galizia reported various threats made against her over the years including the slitting of her dog's throat, attempted arson of her home, the freezing of her bank account, and various cases of harassment, some instances even government sanctioned, a scenario that only intensified when the Labour Party came to power in the federal government in 2013. The Labour Party owns many major news stations and other forms of media and has the tendency not to report on any corruption discoveries within the government in order to preserve their image. Tax evasion is also a frequently avoided topic.

One of the most famous revelations made by Caruana Galizia, however, was her investigation into the Panama Papers following their release in 2016. Through research into the documents, Caruana Galizia linked Prime Minister Joseph Muscat of the Labour Party and his wife, as well as two of his political allies, Konrad Mizzi and Keith Schembri, to possible offshore wealth. Muscat and his wife denied these allegations and an investigation formally ending in July of 2018 concluded that Muscat and his wife were not connected to the Panama Papers as Caruana Galizia had claimed. Mizzi and Schembri, however, were. Muscat called for an early election immediately following Caruana Galizia's assertion and was re-elected to his position of Prime Minister in early 2017.

Caruana Galizia was killed by a car bomb minutes away from her home on October 16th, 2017 at the age of 53. The government alone has since launched an investigation concerning her death, an act resulting in an outcry of disapproval due to the Labour Party's previously unmasked contempt for Caruana Galizia and her critical writings. Three men, Alfred Degiorgio, George Degiorgio, and Vincent Muscat, have been charged with her murder, all of whom plead not guilty, but it is currently unclear if the men were hired to kill Caruana Galizia by the government. Despite calls from both Caruana Galizia's family and politicians in other nations, Malta has not approved a public, independent investigation into her death. With only the slow-going governmental investigation occurring, members who Caruana Galizia repeatedly accused of corruption and was hated by are the only ones officially looking into the circumstances surrounding her death.

Though Malta officially insists it is a government of reform and is working towards improving its freedom of the press but has been largely unsuccessful in its endeavor. An amendment has been made intended to assist sued newspapers but has angered some foreign courts and has therefore not been highly effective. The Maltese government remains on an authoritarian trend and controls much of the media. As backlash against the media has had an uptake across the continent, other member states should exercise caution in any regulations meant to intimidate or restrict journalism and news to ensure that the integrity of press freedom remains.

BLOC POSITIONS

Countries Below Their 2018 Press Freedom Index Score: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia

Countries in this bloc have had issues with press freedom in recent years, either with organized crime groups targeting journalists, or corrupt governments attempting to cover up events. Journalists in these countries are under more of a threat than they would be if they reported in other EU member states, and the governments of this bloc have either attempted to cover up situations involving dead or missing journalists, or have corrupt officials threatening reporters or committing fraudulent acts. In this bloc, news outlets have been bought out to promote a specific political agenda and censored in order to prevent any unwanted information from reaching consumers. Politicians in these countries have expressed an open dislike for the press, many resorting to name calling and accusations, and parts of their governments threatening reporters if they wrote about corruption. Especially notable countries are the Czech Republic and Poland. In both countries, public media is largely controlled or influenced by the government and censorship of government criticism is strong. The majority of journalist deaths have also occurred in the eastern European countries with those reporting on government corruption, with the brutal murder of Maltese investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galize having attracted the most attention.

With the rise of conservative populist leaders and parties in the countries of this bloc, more and more restrictive legislation has been passed. For instance, in many of these countries, including Greece and Italy, it is considered a crime to insult the president.

Countries at or Above Their 2018 Score on the Press Freedom Index: Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom



Countries in this bloc, though not without their own press difficulties, are working to improve or maintain the amount of press freedom in their country. The 2019 Press Freedom Index put these countries at or above their 2018 ranking, and stated that in these countries, governments and policies are supportive of journalists and press freedom. Although the press freedom situation in these countries is not perfect, they strive for complete press freedom and journalist safety.

Additionally, in most cases, the government does not censor the media, and the public is free to gather information from whatever sources they wish. Many of these countries, however, especially in recent years have started prohibiting religious hate speech and racist speech targeted at minorities, including Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France.

Countries like Croatia, Latvia, and Lithuania, on the other hand, though in 2019 are at or above the Press Freedom Index score they received in 2018, have continuing problems with press harassment and government meddling in the media. Politicians interfering in press affairs has been a continual problem in these countries, and although the government is working to secure press safety, individual connections between politicians and the press has provided more issues for the media.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. In what ways has your country's government protected or restricted freedom of the press?
2. Have the citizens in your country protested government or third-party press restriction? If so, has the government responded to these protests?
3. Does the government have the right to censor the press? If so, under what circumstances?



4. Does freedom of the press fall under the category of freedom of speech? If so, does restricting the freedom of the press therefore infringe on people's right to free speech?
5. How should the European Union (EU) respond to countries that have violated the terms regarding freedom of the press outlined in the EU's Constitution?
6. Does the EU, a body that strongly advocates for freedom of speech and the press, have a duty to encourage nations around the globe to uphold free speech?
7. In what ways should the members of the European Union react to rising instances of suppression of press freedom?

FURTHER RESEARCH

[HTTPS://WWW.JUSTSECURITY.ORG/57118/FRANCES-CREEPING-TERRORISM-LAWS-RESTRICTING-FREE-SPEECH/](https://www.justsecurity.org/57118/frances-creeping-terrorism-laws-restricting-free-speech/)

Article exploring “apology for terrorism” laws in France and other European countries and whether it encroaches upon freedom of speech.

[HTTPS://WWW.CNBC.COM/2019/03/25/PROTESTERS-IN-GERMANY-SAY-NEW-EU-LAW-WILL-ENABLE-ONLINE-CENSORSHIP.HTML](https://www.cnbc.com/2019/03/25/protesters-in-germany-say-new-eu-law-will-enable-online-censorship.html)

Information on the EU Copyright Directive passed earlier this year and free speech concerns surrounding it.

[HTTPS://WWW.UN.ORG/EN/UNIVERSAL-DECLARATION-HUMAN-RIGHTS/INDEX.HTML](https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html)

UN Declaration of Human Rights (General Assembly Resolution 217A). Article 19 is on freedom of speech.

[HTTPS://UNDOCS.ORG/A/RES/68/163](https://undocs.org/A/RES/68/163)

UN General Assembly Resolution 68/163: The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity.



[HTTPS://EUR-LEX.EUROPA.EU/LEGAL-CONTENT/EN/TXT/?URI=CELEX:12012P/TXT](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/txt/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT)

EU Charter of Fundamental Human Rights. Article 11 details freedom of expression and information.

TOPIC B

Balancing Tourism and Preservation of Historic Sites

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

As the global population exceeds 7 billion and travel becomes more and more accessible, historical sites are being damaged by a constant stream of tourists. Countries with prominent historical sites are struggling between preserving sites and maintaining a steady stream of tourist-based income, but as tourism continues to expand, iconic locations such as Venice, Paris, and Vienna, are being increasingly damaged. UNESCO has even threatened several locations with the removal of their World Heritage Site designation due to damage, and locals are becoming frustrated with the lack of action from many of their governments. The European Union has some of the most history-rich locations in the world, and tourism generates a huge amount of money for many of its member states, but its costs could be ultimately be greater than its benefits. How much of their history are governments willing to risk in order to maintain a steady stream of tourist money? How much of their economy are they willing to risk in order to preserve their history? As more and more sites are declared damaged, the members of the European Union have to decide what they want to prioritize, and the prices they will ultimately pay. In the coming years, the EU will be at the forefront of the global debate about the prevention of tourist-based damage in some of the world's oldest buildings and most historic locations.

HISTORY

Tourism in some shape has been prevalent for centuries; the earliest record of which is a travel guide written by Pausanias for those travelling to Greece in 170 A.D. Tourism was still relatively uncommon until the 18th century, however. Originally an activity reserved only for the rich and well-to-do, the practice of tourism has since exploded since the introduction of charter planes and affordable package deals in the 1950s, with approximately 1.4 billion tourists annually. This “mass tourism”, as it has become known as, is a relatively new phenomenon. Often credited with the restabilization of Europe following the 2008 recession, the same crowds that were once welcomed are now slowly destroying Europe’s heritage.

As global relations and transportation between many nations has improved, the tourist industry has skyrocketed. For many countries, tourism is an integral component of their economy. Tourism is responsible for 12 billion jobs in Europe from hotels and cruise ships to tour guides and traveler-targeted shops. However, with the mass influx of tourists in some places, damages are being inflicted on treasured historical sites as they struggle to accommodate the number of tourists. Tourism is vital to the European Union as a whole with 10% of its GDP based upon it. Individual member states of the EU also rely heavily on tourism as a part of their economy. 27.1% of Malta’s economy, for example, rests on profits reaped from tourism. Cyprus follows close behind with 21.9% dependence. These nations, along with the rest of the EU, can’t afford to lose their main tourist attractions but also lose profits every time those same sites are closed off for repairs or preservation purposes.

Tourism to all places has seen a sharp uptake, but the majority seem to be flocking to Europe. The UN estimates that 51% of international tourists in 2017 were headed to Europe, compared to 43% in 2016. Once quiet towns are now crowded with hundreds, if not thousands of tourists, much to the dismay of many locals. Even with seasonal destinations, this can prove challenging. Historical sites tourists are drawn to become difficult to maintain as they are worn down by the crowds, and closing them down can have adverse side effects. While tourism can aid restoration efforts, the right balance between economic gain and undesirable impacts can be



elusive. Managers know that a tourist attraction must be periodically renewed or renovated in order to remain appealing to tourists. In the case of World Heritage sites, they are also aware that they are under an international obligation to maintain or restore the site's original values. Failure to do so risks World Heritage Site status removal.

Last summer, for example, Venice, Italy was forced to bar sections of the city from tourists in an attempt to curb the flow of hundreds of tourists. Venice has seen a rapid decline in its permanent resident in recent years, with its population dropping from 175,000 to just 55,000 in recent years. At the peak of the season, tourists practically outnumber residents, with 55,000 visiting Venice daily. This action was met with mixed results by locals, who appreciated the effort but disagreed with the closing of Venice from outsiders.

The start of 2018 marked a pivotal moment involving tourists for Greece, too. On January 1st of last year, Greek hotels had to implement a so-called "tourist tax" for overnight visitors under the jurisdiction of the federal government. This tax is nightly and specific prices, ranging from €0.50--€4.00, are determined by the category of the hotel. Former Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras backed the tax suggesting that the money it brings in could be a component in resolving Greece's ongoing debt-crisis. Many others, hotel managers and owners specifically, worry that this tax may have an adverse effect and instead discourage tourists too much. 19.7% of Greece's GDP rests on tourism, so a balance needs to be struck with the number of incoming tourists.

In 2009, Germany's Dresden Elbe Valley was removed from UNESCO's World Heritage Site list after only five years of World Heritage status. In 2007, construction for a four-lane bridge was approved, which landed the site on the "World Heritage Sites in Danger" list. When construction of the bridge was well under-way, however, UNESCO removed the site's World Heritage status.

The Maritime Mercantile City of Liverpool, England could face a similar situation as it landed itself on the World Heritage Sites in Danger list in 2012 due to a proposed project titled "Liverpool Waters", which would separate the six sections of the World Heritage site. Though the construction project is not yet underway, UNESCO has made it clear that doing so could result in the site being delisted.

As our world becomes more interconnected, the odds of halting the recent trends of mass tourism seem slim. In the meantime, countries are facing hazardous repercussions from tourists as they struggle to protect their environment as well as the sites and monuments that drew tourists there in the first place.

PAST UN ACTION

In the past few decades the EU has created programs, policies, and legislation designed to regulate and optimize its tourism sector. However, as of the present the EU has not developed any explicit legislation regarding tourism versus the preservation of historic sites.

For example, in 2010, the European Commission adopted *Europe, the world's No. 1 tourist destination -- a new political framework for tourism in Europe*, a communication that set the agenda for new strategies and action plans regarding tourism in the EU. The resolution aimed to prioritize stimulating competitiveness in the European tourism sector and maximizing the potential of EU financial policies for developing tourism while promoting responsible development and consolidating the image of member states as a collection of sustainable, high-quality destinations.

A rolling plan for this communication, the Tourism Action Framework, was created alongside it and was updated in 2013. The plan aimed to identify, incentivize, diversify, and promote transnational thematic tourism products and services. Examples of the proposed actions included increasing cycling tourism, the organization of Carrefours d'Europes (mini-fairs that focus on cultural tourism and are placed at the crossroads of cultural routes), as well as the creation of European Tourism Days in various member states. The majority of such attempts have proven to be successful in redirecting tourism flow and increasing global awareness about the fragility of historic sites. For instance, the Netherlands has adopted the strategy of promoting and developing lesser-known gems of the country and has seen success in increasing their tourist numbers by up to 54 percent.

Another similar, but narrower, policy response has been the 2014 *A European Strategy for more growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism*. This communication proposed joint responses to address current challenges facing

tourism on the European Coastline. It also aimed to attract more skilled personnel rather than seasonal laborers and to address sustainability issues regarding vulnerable coastal habitats in the area.

Due to the EU's passiveness in this field, many member states have taken it upon themselves to create new policies to tackle this pervasive issue. The most common responses have included increasing the participation of locals when managing the destination and planning surrounding it, implementing visitor taxes, and campaigning for the deseasonalization of the tourist flux. For example, in 2018 Amsterdam began tightening its tourism measures by imposing day trip taxes onto river and ocean cruise passenger, placing restrictions onto the renting of Airbnb's, and increasing taxes on hotel rooms. Mallorca, Spain, on the other hand, has taken to promoting its winter attraction in an attempt to redistribute the tourism flow more evenly throughout the year. As the awareness of over tourism has not become very prevalent nor mainstream until the last decade or so, much of these measures are still in their exploratory and experimental phases.

CURRENT SITUATION

Overtourism is currently a multi-faceted issue within the EU. As of 2018, 538 million tourists contributed about 782 billion euros to Europe's GDP and directly created an estimated 14.4 million jobs. These numbers are only expected to rise. However, the majority of these visitors are concentrated in a couple of cities, with overtourism being the most prominent in cities that harbor UNESCO WHS sites such as Venice, Italy; Amsterdam, Netherlands; Barcelona, Spain; and Santorini, Greece. This has led to the overuse of both the natural and historic environment of those sites, creating erosion and pollution problems as well as increasing the demand for fresh water and electricity.

With the advancement of travel technology comes also the increase of people determined to transverse a city in a day. This decreases the direct economic benefits for local residents as the tourists interact inherently less with local brick and mortar businesses such as boutiques and hotels.

Socio-cultural and socio-economic problems have also been reported in recent years. The most concerning ones include the decrease in and marginalization from public services for permanent residents as well as the rising cost of food and beverages for locals. In the May of 2019, reception employees at the Louvre held a one-day strike to raise awareness for their inability to handle the growing, and increasingly aggressive, crowds at the museum. Interestingly, overtourism also creates a paradox for visitors by frequently giving the perception of the commercialization of the nation and crowdedness, which has led to many journalists lamenting about the victimization of these said cultural heritage sites. In addition, over-visited areas often also experience a loss of cultural identity and diminished authenticity due to the different behaviors and values of tourists that often lead to the modification of traditions. As duly noted by the minister of tourism for Ireland, “we’re the victims of our own success.”

In recent years, the EU has begun to take note of this problem and its Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies is currently partnering with the HOTREC (Hospitality Europe) in attempts to come up with solutions. Recommendations, such as developing new destination experiences for tourists, creating uniform traffic regulation, and creating economic policies that would create socio-economic benefits for residents, have been made by the EU, but no concrete legislation has yet to be passed. Many NGOs have also sprung up in an attempt to curb the influx of tourists such as Save Venice Inc. which organizes special events annually to raise funds for the conservation of Venetian culture and architecture

Individual member states have furthermore come up with unique strategies to tackle the problem at hand. For example, the city of Venice installed an ‘entry fee’ of 10 euros in 2018 for its 15 million annual day visitors in hopes of increasing revenue for local boutiques and hotels as in past years over half of these visitors provided no direct income for the city. Catalonia, on the other hand, attempted starting in 2017 to alter the pace of its growing tourism sector by prohibiting the opening of new hotels in Barcelona’s city center in order to reclaim some of the city for locals, and to prevent the further destruction of social structures in the area.

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1: VENICE, ITALY

Deemed “La Serenissima,” or *the serene one*, Venice, Italy, has been a popular destination for hundreds of years. From the 1200s to the 1900s, the city has been praised for its intricate framework of canals and delicate architecture. Now, however, as tourism skyrockets, Venice has been desperately battling the collapse of their city and with it, their history.

Although it may seem like limiting tourism is an easy solution to Venice’s people problem, tourism brings in a huge amount of money for not only Venice, but the entire country of Italy. In 2017, overseas tourists spent €40 billion in Italy, and Venice’s tourist spending went up over 19 percent. The city’s main source of revenue comes from the millions of tourists that visit the city in the summer, but as the number of visitors continues to increase, the damage to the historic and cultural hub is a growing concern to locals and the international community alike. The Mayor of Venice, Luigi Brugnaro, has threatened to request that Venice be put on the United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) “blacklist,” a list of places whose World Heritage Site status is being threatened due to damage.

But despite the increased tourist spending, Venetians continued to be displeased with how tourism affected their city. In July of 2017, over 2,000 inhabitants of Venice marched in the streets of the city in order to express their displeasure with how the tourist situation was being handled. Unlike most Italian cities, whose populations are growing, the number of locals living in Venice has been shrinking. Many Venetians cite locals’ displeasure with tourists and are worried that soon there won’t be any Venetians left in Venice.

However, despite the fact that locals expressed their displeasure with increased tourism years ago, the government of Venice has been struggling to find balance between preserving their city and maintaining or increasing revenue generated by tourism. In 2018, 502 cruise ships dropped off tourists in Venice, each one damaging the delicate canals of the city a little more. In June of 2019, a 65,000-ton cruise ship crashed into the docks, injuring four people and disrupting passerby.



As a result, the Venetian government has been debating banning cruise ships over a certain size, or simply rerouting a percentage of boats to nearby ports outside the city. However, despite renewed protests from Venetians calling for a cruise ship ban, the city has made no actual law prohibiting ships from docking in Venice. Danilo Toninelli, Italy's Transport and Infrastructure Minister, has said that the city needs to find a balance between protecting the city and the environment and continuing cruise tourism.

Instead of limiting the number of tourists able to enter the city on a given day, the government of Venice implemented a €3 to €10 (depending on the season) tax for daytime tourists. The money collected from the new tax is going towards city upkeep and repair, and the city hopes that the tax money is enough to prevent or repair any damages that are caused by excessive tourism.

For years Venice has been struggling with damages related to overtourism, and the city has been desperately grappling for a way to mitigate the tourism-induced harm. The actions of the Italian government and the city of Venice will dictate the way Europe and the rest of the world responds to overtourism in historical sites, and how we travel as we reach the mid 21st century. Europe will see the affect limiting or taxing tourists will have on Venice and decide whether they will do the same. Will governments choose to regulate tourism, or possibly let their historical sites crumble?

CASE STUDY 2: BARCELONA, SPAIN

Overtourism has become an increasingly prominent issue worldwide as more people take to the skies as their preferred mode of travel. With the majority of arrivals landing in Europe, the continent has struggled to keep up with the sudden influx of travelers. The already crowded city of Barcelona, Spain has had some struggles with mass tourism in particular. Barcelona is the most visited city in Spain and the fourth in Europe, with 32 million visitors flooding its streets annually--twenty times the number of permanent residents.

Following the 2008 market crash, Spain pounced upon the opportunity to improve its economy through tourism and companies such as Airbnb and



HomeAway, granting thousands of licenses for tourist flats and apartments. Currently 14.6% of Spain's GDP rests on profits from tourism, or \$191,406,000,000 USD. Barcelona can hardly afford to stop tourism altogether, yet citizens feel if something is not done to curb the flow of tourists, the city may be doomed.

The city of Barcelona is home to an impressive nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites; the Balau de La Musica Catalana and Hospital De La Santa Creu i de Stan Pau by Lluís Doménich i Montaner and the remaining seven by Antoni Gaudí: Park Guell, Palau Guell, Casa Milà, Casa Batlló, Casa Vicens, La Sagrada Familia, and the Crypt of the Colònia Güell. These sites in particular are a magnet for tourists, becoming so crowded in the peak of the season that they become nearly impossible to access for tourists and locals alike.

Barcelona natives worry that their Catalan culture may be threatened by the tourism industry as local businesses are forced to shut down in the face of chain-corporations. This also makes it increasingly difficult to access everyday commodities as shops useful to locals, such as dry cleaners, grocery stores, or butchers, are replaced by shops targeted to tourists.

The overflow of tourists has gotten so severe that some locals have begun to retaliate violently. Anti-tourist graffiti lines public buildings and walls reading things like "tourists are terrorists", and "you are not welcome" among many others. Arran, a pro-Catalan independence and socialist youth group relating to the Popular Unity Candidacy Party (CUP), particularly feels negatively about the invasion of tourists. In 2018, as part of an anti-mass tourism demonstration, two Arran members boarded a tour bus and went to the top level before releasing smoke bombs and hanging a banner reading "Stop mass tourism is Catalan countries." Similar events occurred on two other buses in other cities according to an Arran Facebook post following the demonstration. Other incidences include the storming of restaurants and vandalism of bikes and rental cars intended for tourists.

This resentment felt by Arran and many others throughout the city is not without cause. Residents complain of loud, intoxicated tourists without regard to locals. Additionally, the issue of tourists collapsing drunk and urinating in the streets has been a recent development that has irritated many residents. The housing



market has also been driven up as apartment owners find they can profit more from short-term rentals to tourists rather than permanent tenants.

Though companies such as Airbnb are frequently cited as main grievance, few of the 32 million annual tourists actually utilize this option. Roughly 72% of these were only day-trip tourists and therefore did not need sleeping accommodations. 25% used hotels. In fact, only 1.5 million Barcelona tourists used Airbnb. Of course, this number is still quite high to residents and has led Mayor Ada Colou to prohibit the building of any more hotels and the granting of licenses to approve more Airbnb residences. In another effort to bring the tourist problem under control, Catalonia has issued a tourist tax, which is higher in Barcelona than in other parts of Catalonia. The tax ranges from 0.65€ a night to 2.25€ depending on the accommodation. The tax is intended both to discourage tourists from visiting and to accumulate money that can be put towards solving the issue. However, the most recent changes to this measure went into effect in 2017 and has overall been less effective than officials had hoped. A more successful law formulated in early 2017 banned the opening of any new hotel within city limits, including construction projects already underway. Though together these measures have helped some in recent years, the number of tourists is still going up. Officials are currently debating whether restrictions on airports or cruise ships may be beneficial. But as most Barcelona tourists are day-trippers, many of the proposed solutions are so far ineffective to the larger problem.

Most living in Barcelona recognize the importance of tourism to their city and its economy. However, the sheer number of tourists has simply become too great for the city to effectively accommodate everyone. Long-term residents believe it is time for a change before they are overrun by the practices of mass tourism and their city becomes a tourist trap.

BLOC POSITIONS

Higher GDP Dependency on Tourism, 10%-27%: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

Countries in this bloc receive some of the highest number of tourists in the world. Tourism-related GDP dependency ranges from Sweden's 9.4% to the 27.1% of Malta. Despite the economic benefits resulting from tourism, most nations in this bloc are strong advocates for restricting tourism in their countries. With the exceptions of Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Sweden, most wish either to reduce its number of annual tourists or to coordinate a better system for managing the large numbers and striking a balance between tourists, locals, and the country's environment and infrastructure. Countries typically have a higher number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites within its borders, such as is the case for Italy, Spain, and France, which have fifty-five, forty-eight, and forty-five respectively, but is not a hard rule as Malta is one of four nations in the bloc with less than five.

Lower GDP Dependency on Tourism, 1%-9%: Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia

Countries in this bloc have a lower GDP dependence on tourism in comparison to the other half of the EU; ranging only from 1% dependency in Latvia to Austria's 8.8%. Though the percentages of some are still relatively high in comparison with the rest of the world, even nations with percentages in the upper half still fare better than in balancing their tourism sector than the rest of the EU. After viewing many of the negative impacts felt by other European nations in the opposite bloc, most countries have limited interest in greatly expanding their tourism sector. They recognize the importance of curbing mass tourism in other member states but are reluctant to redirect these tourists to their own nations.



Generally, nations in this bloc have significantly less UNESCO World Heritage Sites than other members of the European Union, with half having less than ten.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. To what extent should it be the role of the government to help protect cultures within their borders threatened by tourism?
2. What impact has globalization had on the tourism industry and historical sites in Europe?
3. What is the involvement of federal versus local governments regarding sites?
4. What effect do environmental conditions have on traditional tourism sites?
5. How does the media play a role in determining which areas suffer most from overtourism?
6. How should nations react when faced with violence against tourism?

FURTHER RESEARCH

[HTTPS://WWW.HOTREC.EU](https://www.hotrec.eu)

The Confederation of National Associations of Hotels, Restaurants, Cafés and Similar Establishments in the European Union and European Economic Area website. It focuses on tourism hospitality within 31 European countries.

[HTTPS://WWW.GOOGLE.COM/URL?SA=T&SOURCE=WEB&RCT=J&URL=HTTP://WWW.EUROPARL.EUROP
A.EU/REGDATA/ETUDES/STUD/2018/629184/IPOL_STU\(2018\)629184_EN.PDF&VED=2AHUKEWJ_S
T_HWOJJAHWXHZQIHUA8BWIQFJAAEQIBXAB&USG=AOVVAVW2WSRSHGEIAUHTTRBG5EEPJ](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://www.europarl.europa.eu/regdata/etudes/stud/2018/629184/IPOL_STU(2018)629184_EN.PDF&ved=2AHUKEWJ_S_T_HWOJJAHWXHZQIHUA8BWIQFJAAEQIBXAB&usg=AOVVAVW2WSRSHGEIAUHTTRBG5EEPJ)

EU Parliament study focusing on the causes and effects of mass tourism in the EU.



[HTTPS://EC.EUROPA.EU/GROWTH/SECTORS/TOURISM/POLICY-OVERVIEW_EN](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/policy-overview_en)

European Commission's website with article focusing on the EU's tourism policy.

[HTTPS://EUR-LEX.EUROPA.EU/LEGAL-CONTENT/EN/TXT/?URI=COM%3A2014%3A86%3AFIN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/txt/?uri=COM%3A2014%3A86%3AFIN)

EU document detailing growth in coastal and maritime tourism

[HTTPS://TIME.COM/5349533/EUROPE-AGAINST-TOURISTS/](https://time.com/5349533/europe-against-tourists/)

Article describing actions some European countries are taking in attempts to manage tourism

[HTTP://WHC.UNESCO.ORG/EN/LIST/](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/)

UNESCO's website with a list of their World Heritage Sites and further information on each.

CITATIONS

Topic A

- <https://www.justsecurity.org/57118/frances-creeping-terrorism-laws-restricting-free-speech>
- <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/03/25/protesters-in-germany-say-new-eu-law-will-enable-online-censorship.html>
- <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>
- <https://undocs.org/A/RES/68/163>
- <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>

Topic B

- <https://www.politico.eu/newsletter/politico-eu-influence/>
- <https://www.ceps.eu/research-areas/europe-world>
- <https://www.ceps.eu/publications/eastern-partnership-10-road-hell-paved-good-intentions>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/gallery/2012/may/30/destinations-under-threat-tourism-in-pictures>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/apr/30/sinking-city-how-venice-is-managing-europes-worst-tourism-crisis>
- <https://ethicaltraveler.org/2017/11/overtourism-at-unesco-world-heritage-sites/>
- <http://whc.unesco.org/en/danger/>