**GREECE**

**Tufts University Seminar**

**The Future of Europe**

**2015-2016**

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**Briefing Paper on Greece:**

**A. Introduction**

We are Greece. We are known as the backbone of Western Civilization and a nation-state that has one of the longest histories of any country in the world. Greece is considered the birthplace of Western literature, philosophy and drama, political science, significant mathematical and scientific principles as well as the Olympic games. In the fourth century BC, just after the unification of Greece, Alexander the Great conquered most of the ancient world, spreading Grecian culture and science. Ancient Greece later became part of the Roman Empire, and then the Byzantine Empire. The creation of the Greek Orthodox Church allowed the shaping of Modern Greek identity and influence into the Orthodox World. Greece became a nation state in 1830, after becoming independent from the Ottoman Empire. Due to Greece’s rich history, it currently has 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, which is some of the most in the world.

Greece is the largest economy in the Balkans, and has a larger economy than all of the other Balkan countries combined, thus making it the most important regional investor. Out of the seven European countries recognized as potential candidates for European Membership, all seven are Balkan countries. Notably, one of these countries is Turkey, which attains the most geographical influence over Syria out of all the European countries due to its geographical proximity by sharing a border. Almost every week, Greek banks open up a new branch somewhere in the Balkans. Greece is also the largest marine merchant in the world, allowing for the greatest capacity of goods being transferred by sea than any other country. Therefore, Greece has significant economic and political influence within this area and for the future of Europe.

**B. Key Points to Address**

1. Greek Debt Crisis
2. Refugee Crisis
3. European Debt Crisis
4. Syrian Civil War
5. Democratic Deficit of the European Union
6. Future Members of the European Union
7. Energy Distribution of Greece and the European Union
8. Annexation of Crimea by The Russian Federation, and the threat of Russia
9. China and its influence

**C. Background of Greece**

Greek demographics and its modern society have had unprecedented changes over the past decades. Greece's total population in 2011 was 10,815,197. The birth rate has significantly decreased from 14.5 per 1,000 inhabitants in 1981 to 9.5 per 1,000 inhabitants in 2003. Due to a declining fertility rate, the median age has been boosted, which is a distinct trend all over Europe. Marriage rates have also declined by 71 per 1,000 inhabitants in 1981 to 51 in 2004. In addition, the divorce rate has increased over 25% from 1991 to 2004. As a result, the average Greek family is older and smaller than the previous generations.

It is estimated that 97% of Greek citizens identify as Eastern Orthodox and just over 1% of the population identify as Islamic. In 2015, there were 856,723 arrivals of refugees by sea in Greece, which is almost five times as numerous as 2014. Syrians represent almost 45% of the total refugees in Greece, and around 8% of the arrivals applied for asylum in Greece.

Greece’s economy is known for its size and influence, and more recently for its debt crisis. In 2013, Greece ranked 43rd largest in the world in terms of gross domestic product (GDP), at $242 billion, and ranked 52nd largest in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) at $284 billion. Of the 27 European member states’ economies, Greece’s economy is the 15th largest. Greece is classified as a developed country that is high on the Human Development Index and has high living standards. Its economy can be split into three major sectors that generate national economic output: 85% services, 12% industry, and 3% agriculture.

Greece considers tourism to be one of its most important industries. Accordingly, the United Nations World Tourism Organization has released figures indicating that Greece is the 7th most visited country in the European Union and 16th in the world in 2009. 14.9 million international tourists visited in the same year. Another tremendous aspect of Greece’s economy is its merchant shipping, which accounts for 16.2% of the world’s total capacity, which in fact makes Greece the largest marine merchant in the world. Lastly, within the EU, Greece is considered an important producer of agriculture (including fisheries).

There have been five sovereign debt crises in the Eurozone, and Greek Debt Crisis being the first. Collectively, they have become known as the European Debt Crisis. The Great Recession, a lack of confidence in foreign investors, and structural flaws and weakness in the Greek economy triggered the Greek Debt Crisis. Foreign and domestic investors in the Greek economy grew skeptical and fearful about Greece’s ability to meet its debt obligations on time, especially once it was discovered that the government had been misreporting information and data about debt levels and deficits. Investors lost confidence, which resulted in much wider bond yield spreads and an increased cost of insurance on credit default swaps compared to other Eurozone nations. Greece had the largest sovereign debt default in history. On June 30, 2015, Greece became the first developed country that was unable to make an International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan repayment; the government’s debts of exceeded €323 billion.

One of the most important areas of Grecian culture and history is its mythology. The gods of the ancient Greece, the stories of mythical heroes, ancient Greek epics--such as *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*--as well as other forms of art and literature make up what is referred to as Greek mythology. Greek mythology is not just meant to serve as a religious function. It helps to explain the origins of the world and its purpose, and the Earth’s relation to planets in the solar system to stars in the universe.

The Dodekatheon were the prominent gods of the ancient Grecian religion who live on Mount Olympus. The king of the gods, Zeus, is the most well known god in Greek mythology. The Dodekatheon, or the Twelve Gods, also consisted of Hera, Poseidon, Demeter, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Aphrodite, Hephaestus, Hermes, and either Hestia or Dionysus. In addition to these twelve gods, Greeks also believed in nymphs and several other mythical creatures. Greek mythology was the stepping-stone to Roman mythology and philosophy.

**D. Issues (two to three pages for each committee)**

**Committee on Governance**

What type of government does your country currently have?

* We have a Unitary Parliamentary Constitutional Republic.
  + The President of the Republic is elected by the parliament, a unicameral 300-member elective body.
  + The Prime Minister represents the majority party and is the highest ranking government official.
  + There are administrative divisions, which have geographical divide the country to allow different areas to have certain laws and regulations.
  + Greece has a multiparty system, enabling the possibility of a coalition government.

How has it changed, or not, since the end of World War II?

* Towards the end and after World War II a civil war broke out in Greece.
  + Militant parties under the control of the Communist Party of Greece began fighting with non-Communist groups.
  + The Greek Governmental Army (backed by Britain and the United States) began fighting the Democratic Army of Greece, (backed by Communist Party of Greece). As a result, the Greek governmental army took control enabling the exiled government to regain control.
* Greece had a military junta from 1967 to 1974.
  + A right-winded group established control in a coup d’état.
  + Political parties were dissolved and civil liberties were suspended.
* 1973-1974 the junta was overthrown and the New Democracy party (ND) established control through elections.
  + The government effectively established a republic
* In 1981 Greece became the tenth member of the European Community (Now the European Union).
* Greece was a two party system until 2012 (New Democracy and the Panhellenic Socialist Movement).

What are the major political parties in your country and what are their views on the key issues being discussed at this conference?

* The major political parties in Greece are New Democracy (ND), the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA), the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), and Golden Dawn.
* New Democracy (ND) is a center-right party.
  + They want lower taxes and to have better protection of pensions and wages from further cuts.
  + They are in favor of keeping the Euro, remaining in the EU, and going forward with the bailout funds and the austerity measures.
* The Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) is a left-wing party that currently holds the majority of parliament.
  + The president is Alexis Tsipras, the current Prime Minister of Greece.
  + The party supports the Euro as their currency but is in favor of reforms.
  + The party is not in favor of a Grexit from the EU or the Eurozone.
* The Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) is a center left-party.
  + They lost most of their support during the Greek Debt Crisis began, when they were in power.
* The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) is a far-left party.
  + They are not in favor of the bailout programs and the austerity measures.
  + They want Greece to leave the Eurozone and the EU.
* The Golden Dawn is a far-right party.
  + They are violently anti-immigrant, and opposed to the EU and bailout programs.

How would you describe the political and social rights citizens have in your country?

* All citizens are equal before the law.
* All citizens are entitled to human, European, and international rights.
* They also must abide by Greek, European, and international law.
* All citizens have freedom of speech, of religion, and of privacy.

How would you describe the political and social rights non-citizens have in your country?

* Illegal immigrants in Greece do not have many rights at all.
  + They are confined to detention where they are provided with basic necessities such as food, water, shelter, and basic healthcare, which are only attained if they are in need of protection.
  + Immigrants have 18 months to apply for asylum, or they will be deported.
* EU citizens in Greece:
  + All EU citizens in Greece must abide by EU law and Greek law.
  + All EU citizens in Greece are entitled to EU rights.
  + EU citizens are not entitled to all Greece rights, such as the right to vote in national elections.

What are the major political points of contention in your country?

* The major political points of contention in Greece are:
  + The management of refugees and immigrants:
    - Border control on immigrants trying to enter and leave Greece.
    - Distribution on humanitarian aid and management of refugee camps inside Greece.
  + Whether or not to remain a member of the Eurozone or European Union.
  + Acceptable austerity measures and bailout programs.
  + How to decrease debt and attract foreign investors and aid.

What is your role in Europe/in the European Union?

* Greece is a “permanent” member of the European Union.
* They have equal say and representation in Brussels.
* Due to a lack of cooperation to distribute the refugees piling up in Greece, we have become a “storage place” for immigrants.

Has that changed since you joined?

* Greece is the only European country to actually have their GDP per person decrease because of the economic integration through EU membership.
* Although on paper Greece has the same representation in Brussels, once more countries began to join, and Greece’s economy weakened, their political and economic influence over the Union has decreased since Greece joined the EU.

How would you define a democratic deficit?

* A democratic deficit is when a government fails to represent its people, lacks integrity and democratic principles, such as equality, transparency, and human rights, and does not act in favor of its people’s wants, needs, and beliefs.

Do you think there is a democratic deficit within the EU’s structure?

* Yes, due to recent polls, the major in seven major European countries do not feel like they are represented in the EU.
  + 80% of Greeks feel this way.
* The EU mentions they “[suffer] from a lack of democracy and seem inaccessible to the ordinary citizen because their method of operating is so complex."
* Overall the EU has seriously decreased in voter turnout; in 2009 only 43% of European citizens voted in the parliamentary elections.

What political party will you be representing at the conference?

* We will be representing The Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA).

**Committee on Cross-Border Issues**

Briefly describe the most important cross-border issues your country or organization is concerned with.

* Greece’s main concern today regarding cross-border issues is the migrant crisis. We are a “hot-spot” for migrants from Syria and the Middle East to enter Europe, mainly through Turkey by land or by sea.
* We have had more than 800,000 migrants land on our soil in 2014 alone, a number far more than we can accommodate. We cannot become a “holding pen” for all refugees coming to Europe.

What is your country or organization’s stance on the Schengen zone?

* According to the Dublin regulation, immigrants must be fingerprinted and registered within the first EU country they set foot in. The EU accuses us of not fingerprinting and registering migrants properly and not securing our external borders with adequate means. As a result, there are threats to suspend us from the Schengen zone.
* We do not think this is a valid accusation, because geographically we are spread out among many small islands along a long coastline. With the surge in number of migrants arriving on these islands, it is impossible for us to keep up. We are not alone; Germany, who is financially better off than we are, is also struggling incoming migrants, so we should not be the only ones at fault.
* Migrants currently arriving on our soil have the goal of reaching other member states, such as Germany, where they can have access to higher living standards. Suspending us from the Schengen agreement would cause them to lose the opportunity to move elsewhere once in Greece.
* We are strongly committed to the Schengen agreement, as we view free movement as a vital pillar of the European project.

Do you agree or disagree that there needs to be a securitization of borders?

* There should be a securitization of external borders to limit the number of migrants coming into Europe, such as securing our border with Turkey.
* More secure external borders will help us limit the numbers as much as possible, only allowing those who really need refuge to enter (eg. Syrians and political asylum seekers).
* All EU member states are currently dealing with the migrant crisis. However, southern countries, such as Greece and Italy, are facing the brunt of the issue. The problem has only grown worse after Merkel declared open arm policies for arriving migrants. What the EU should do is come up with a joint solution to secure external borders, not only for numerical reasons but also to reduce terrorist threats.
* Government spokeswoman Olga Gerovassili: Greece "is doing everything it can to respect its obligations, and we expect everyone else to do the same."
* Prime Minister Tsipras: Greece is "setting an example of humanity to the world" by taking responsibility. We, however, cannot do it alone.

Is corruption a prevalent issue in your country? What policies are currently in place to tackle those issues and what areas can be improved upon?

* Because of our country’s history and a less developed market economy based on clienteles instead of free competition, we have suffered from various forms corruption and cronyism.
* In order to promote and improve structural reforms, our government is now working with the IMF and EU to privatize 50 billion euros worth of state assets, such as Port Piraeus, electricity plants and water utilities.
* Doing so will deregulate the market, introduce competition and reduce cronyism and corruption.

Is your country or organization in a vulnerable geographic or strategic position in regard to cross-border issues such as migration?

* There is a proposal of closing the Greek-Macedonian border, which would prevent migrants from moving through Greece to get to European mainland.
* We are concerned that a large number of trapped migrants in our country can destabilize us further socially, politically and economically.
* Although the EU has relocation schemes that aim to evenly spread migrants among member states, the intake of migrants among many member states has proven to be much slower than the number of migrants arriving in Europe.

Is your country or organization in a vulnerable geographic or strategic position in regard to cross-border issues such as climate change or energy?

* Greece is an active participant in world climate change discussions and, we support EU leadership for this issue.
* Climate change, especially in the Mediterranean region, will have negative effects on our country, including rising temperatures, sea levels and soot emissions. These changes in our environment can hurt and damage our national heritage sites, an important aspect that attracts many tourists from around Europe and the world. Increased temperature would also make the peak tourist months of July and August a lot warmer and less popular.
* Our geo-economic location puts us between many major energy producers in the Caspian Sea, Middle East and North African regions.
* We also lie on transport routes between the east and the west, and our initiatives and ventures in gas and oil place us in the center of Southeast Europe’s energy bloc.
* Three new projects, the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline, the Interconnector Turkey-Greece-Italy (ITGI), and the South Stream natural gas pipeline are making us a gas and oil supply channel to nearby regions in Europe and North America.
* We are currently planning to upgrade and improve electricity interconnectedness with bordering nations, which will strengthen our cross-border relations.
* We have established, along with the EU, policies and priorities to harness renewable electricity, an important aspect of our nation’s energy production.
* Overall, we are a strategic hub for energy trade between the east and west, but long-term climate change can disturb our tourist industry as well as our strength in energy distribution.

What is your vision of Europe and its boundaries?

* Greece is the only Balkan country that is a member of the EU. We want to set a precedent for other Balkan nations to join the EU. Extending the European message of integration to volatile areas such as the Balkans can only enhance world peace and prosperity.
* We envision tighter and stricter border controls along European Union borders. This would mean closing or tightening our sea and land borders with Turkey to prevent more Syrians from entering our country. It would also mean stricter border policies with countries such as Lebanon, where many Syrian refugees live and are also trying to get into Greece.

Is your country an EU candidate or member state?

* Greece is an EU member state.

**Committee on Economics**

What is the current state of your economy?

* In the last 5 years there have been 3 bailouts deals between Greece and Troika (combination of the European Commission, European Central Bank & The International Monetary Fund).
* Greece used the loans given to them to pay back debt instead of putting it back into the economy.
* Greece’s debt to GDP ratio is 175.1%, highest in Europe and the EU by over 40%.
  + EU debt to GDP ratio is 87.4%.
* Unemployment rate in Greece was 25.6% as of March 2015.

Were you affected by the Greek economic crisis?

* We are Greece, thus we are affected more by this crisis than any other country.

What do you think caused the economic crisis?

* After 1st round of austerity measures were implemented in March 2010, Greece ultimately lost access to the international financial markets.
* After 1st bailout was in May 2010 from Troika, Greek Government signed Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies (spending cuts, steep taxes) in an effort to reduce public deficit below 3%.
  + Demand for goods and services fell, and businesses went bankrupt.
* Another reason was Greece’s accession into the EU, when its economy was not on strong enough or structured well enough to share its currency with other Eurozone countries.
* Once Greece started using the currency of the Euro, it effectively gave up its ability to inflate its debt away by not being able to reprint its own currency.
* The economy tanked. Everyone was paying so much in taxes while having decreased wages; money was not going back into the economy.

Is the EU based on monetary policy, political policy or both?

* The EU is based both on monetary policy and political policy and represents a unique form of cooperation among sovereign countries.
* The EU’s monetary policy (EMU) is based upon policies, which seek to converge the economies of its member states. After a member state achieves all levels of integration, it is then allowed to adopt the euro as its official currency. (Not all member states have sought to adopt the euro; some countries are EU members but not Eurozone members).
* However, the EU’s monetary policy does not extend to the exertion of uniform fiscal policies for each nation participating in the Eurozone.
* The EU’s political policies are controlled by its member nations.

Do you perceive the European debt crisis as a challenge to the future of the euro, or even further, to European unity?

* Yes, a huge component of the EU was Economic integration - as the euro crisis continues, this is a threat to the basis that the system was founded upon,
* As we and other countries fall deeper into economic crisis, it is the EU and economic integration that is blamed for the ongoing crisis.
* Economic instability will lead each nation to reconsider whether or not it is advantageous to continue within the EU.
* Such instances have occurred with the threat of countries, such as our own and Britain, threatening to leave the EU.
* Without the cooperation of nations, the EU will painfully crumble.

Is the euro crisis only a byproduct of Europe’s much larger cohesion issues, what some call a “half-built house”?

* The Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) adopted in the 1990’s comprised an extensive (though still incomplete) monetary union, with the euro and the European Central Bank (ECB).
* However, it included virtually no economic union: no fiscal union, no economic governance institutions, and no meaningful coordination of structural economic policies.
* The Euro crisis is a byproduct of the cohesion issues within the EU, with their imperfect blend of implementing a monetary policy but allowing each member nation to control its own tax system.

What do you think the future of the euro should be?

* Integration has come too far to reverse the progress made by the Eurozone. It would be economically devastating for all countries using the Euro.
* We believe that the Euro should continue and be strong.
* In order to obtain stability in the Euro, the EU needs to implement more monetary policies in order to create uniformity across the nations of the EU.
  + If this occurs, it would encourage competition and monetary stability.
  + This could entice member nations to join the Eurozone who are not currently within it.

Should countries be allowed or encouraged to exit the euro?

* No, this will defeat a major purpose of the EU and its economic unity.
* It will hurt cross border trade because businesses will need to constantly change their currency.
* The countries most likely to leave the Eurozone are the ones with the strongest economy. If they left, the Euro will be seriously devalued.

What policies would be best for your country?

* Policies that would encourage the implementation of more foreign investments into the Greek economy and into other EU countries (further economic integration).
* Policies allowing for more aid from the EU to jumpstart the Greek economy.
* Policies promoting Greek businesses, services, goods, and products.
* Economic policies to attract Greeks back to Greece who have left the country.
* Strengthening social safety net.
* Stop tax evasion.
* Reform welfare.

What do you think about austerity measures?

* Austerity measures induce governments in financial trouble to have certain restrictions on their transactions.
* They are important in preventing government corruption and controlling their expenditures.
* The harsh austerity measures will not help the debt crisis in Greece.
* When austerity measure are in place in Greece, the economy contracts since people no longer have enough money to put back into the economy and slows down circulation of capital, which is an important trait in a thriving economy.
* There needs to be more cash flow within the economy, not less; austerity reduces this flow.
  + It is projected that Greece will still be in significant debt by 2030 if there is not more foreign aid and investments.
  + Struggling economies cannot be righted with a few bailout programs and extremely harsh austerity measures. There needs to be more aid coming into Greece.

**Committee on Security**

What are the major security concerns facing your country and Europe?

* The biggest security concern facing Greece and Europe is the Migrant Crisis. Greece has become a hub for migrants looking to reach wealthier Northern European countries such as Germany and France. Greece is also on high terror due to the recent attacks on Pairs and because of the amount of undocumented immigrants in the country.
* The economic crisis is also a security concern. The Greek police and military are struggling to maintain security amongst the citizens, migrants, and terrorists due to substantial budget cuts.

How have recent events - e.g. Russian intervention in Ukraine, terrorist attacks on Paris - affected your perception of security priorities?

* The recent terror attacks in Paris have raised alarm for Greece. Due to its close proximity to the Middle East, it is imperative that Greece is on high alert for any terror threats.
* Although Greece has not been involved with the Russian intervention of Ukraine, Greece supports NATO and any NATO-backed effort to punish Russia for intervening in Ukraine and would contribute to NATO Response teams.
* Approximately 850,000 migrants and refugees arrived in Greece last year. Since the beginning of 2016, another 44,000 have reached the Greek islands. Greece is currently overwhelmed with the amount of migrants coming in and needs greater EU and NATO support.

What military or security alliances and organizations are you a part of if any, and what is your role within these?

* Greece is a member of NATO and the OSCE. The country’s strategic location on the Mediterranean makes it an important ally. Greece regularly contributes to NATO efforts, recently on the Libya campaign. Greece has military bases used by NATO and the United States has an air base on the island of Crete. Greece is encouraging the divided nations in the Balkans to join NATO. Greece is actively participating in ISAF (operations in Afghanistan) and KFOR (in Kosovo) and contributes to the NATO Response Force.
* Greece has one of the highest military budgets of any NATO member, partly due to its proximity to Turkey and the Middle East.

In particular, how do you feel about the efforts of NATO, and of the OSCE, and of the role played by the USA in European security?

* Greece has been a strong and committed member of NATO and the OSCE. We believe NATO and the United States have provided security for Greece and Europe. With the incoming migrant crisis, we would like a stronger NATO and OSCE presence in the Mediterranean Sea to help regulate and handle the migrant crisis.

Who are you dependent upon for either acquiring your energy or buying your energy?

* Greece imports most of its energy as crude oil and natural gas.
* Greece produces little of its own energy. Greece is looking to use its supply offshore oil. The offshore oil is located in the [Ionian Sea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ionian_Sea) as well as the [Libyan Sea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libyan_Sea), within the [exclusively Greek economic zone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exclusive_economic_zone) south of [Crete](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crete).
* The Greek government is favorably considering a Russian-backed natural gas pipeline, which would send 47 billion cubic meters of natural gas through Greece
* Greece’s energy policy includes the construction of oil, natural gas pipelines within international frameworks; an increased use of domestically produced energy and lowering dependence, increases usage of clean and renewable sources of energy.
* 61% of Greece’s energy is imported with Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Libya and Egypt being the main importers. 39% of Greece’s energy is produced domestically. Greece is increasing its usage of renewable energy sources like it promised the EU.
* Greece is working on current and cooperative projects such as:
  + The Trans Adriatic Pipeline (originating in Azerbaijan off the Caspian Sea).

### Interconnector Greece-Bulgaria (IGB), a natural gas pipeline between the two countries.

### Eurasia Interconnector, which is a 600kV HVDC interconnection between Israel and Greece, passing through Cyprus and Crete.

* Greece is also looking for better ways connect their islands together and to the mainland.
* Russia paid 2 billion in order to create a pipeline to Western Europe running through Greece.

Has energy been a source of cooperation or coercion for your country?

* There has been competition between Turkey and Greece over securing resources in the region in the Aegean Sea. The Turkish involvement in nearby Cyprus has caused some tension with Greece.
* Greece is a crossroads between Europe and Asia. With Greece’s plan to work on long-term projects such as utilizing new renewable energy sources, installing the TAP gas pipeline, and continued oil exploration, it means Greece is key player in European energy formulation.
* Greece provides a keen investment opportunity due to its location and supply of renewable energy for future use.
* It imports crude oil mostly from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Libya and Egypt and exports refined oil to Turkey, Italy, Gibraltar, Spain, Bulgaria, and Macedonia. Most of its natural gas comes from Russia.

**Committee on Migration**

Please outline your concerns with regard to the current migration crisis in Europe and your country’s priorities.

* The migration crisis has economically and socially hit Greece the hardest.
* Greece has become a refuge for immigrants coming from Africa and the Middle East due to its geographical location, but the vast number of refugees has become too much to manage and finance.
* The EU accused us of having an insufficient system for asylum. This accusation is unfair, considering we lack the economic resources for a reformed system.
* Our concerns are that the EU has set regulations that Greece is completely unable to meet. The EU has also failed on multiple occasions to implement a European refugee relocation program.

What are your country’s historical view of migration and its impact?

* Immigration into Greece grew when a small number of Asians, Africans, and Poles arrived in search of work in the 1980s.
* In 1989, as a result of the collapse of the Central and Eastern European countries, the influx of migrants increased dramatically.

What are the obstacles to and implications of integrating immigrants into European societies?

* Greece is one of the first entering points for refugee migrants, which heavily contributed to Greece’s transformation into a receiving country.
* The Greece lacks the resources and money for its own society; therefore we cannot afford to support these refugees for an indefinite amount of time.
* There has also been political backlash against the refugees accelerated by xenophobia and speeches made by high-ranking officials saying refugees cannot be support in Greece at this time.

Do EU policies regarding asylum seekers need to be reformed to ensure that member states are sharing the burden of integrating migrants?

* EU has accused us of not doing enough to combat the crisis and reform our policies on asylum seekers. In the past, the E.U. had put too much pressure on us; the Dublin regulation states the first EU country that a migrant arrives in must take responsibility for that migrant. In addition, we lacked sufficient financial resources to manage such a large inflow of people.
* We currently limit the detention of migrants who have entered the country illegally to 18 months, and after their detention, if they do not apply for asylum, they should be repatriated to their countries of origin.
* We were met with an underwhelming response when we requested that the EU's border force the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (Frontex) to help us boost controls.

What is the current migration flow within your country?

* More than 850,000 migrants and refugees arrived in Greece last year. Since the beginning of 2016, another 44,000 reached the Greek islands.
* In keeping with EU demands, we have recently begun to register asylum seekers by opening new reception centers.

How has your country’s native population traditionally interacted with immigrant populations?

* There is tension between Greece’s native population and immigrant caused by xenophobia and because of the economic strain supporting immigrants has on an already weakened economy.
* The Greek people know they cannot be supported financially with such an overwhelming presence of foreigners in our borders, creating strained relations between Greek natives and immigrants.

Describe your expectations and commitment to policies regarding refugees and migration control.

* Recently, we have announced to the EU that we will not sign off on any final agreements regarding migration and Britain’s referendum unless Greece is assured that the EU will not close its borders on Greece.
* We should not be alone in carrying the burden of this crisis; other EU countries must take on the burden as well.

**Committee on Foreign Policy**

Does your country conduct foreign policy within the framework of the EU, independently, or a combination of both? What are some examples of this?

* Greece supports the strengthening of a credible foreign policy for the EU and the development of a unified European identity in foreign relations.
  + Greece takes part in the Common Foreign and Security Policy initiatives.
  + Greece develops neighborly relations with surrounding regions such as the Middle East and the Western Balkans.
* Foreign policy is also discussed in the Hellenic Parliament.
  + The Parliament focuses mainly on Greece’s national interests.
  + The principles and values of Greek foreign policy are monitored and developed in the Parliament.
* Greece also participates in multilateral diplomacy by conducting foreign policy through international organizations.
  + Greek is a member of the UN, NATO, U.N.E.S.C.O, and OSCE.

What is the stance of your country on the development of a joint-EU foreign policy?

* Greece aims to strengthen the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (FRONTEX).
  + Greece supports an efficient administration of EU external borders.
  + Greece would like all of the EU member states to contribute to Frontex objectives and operations by combining their resources.
  + Greece is seeking increased Frontex participation to counter the unprecedented illegal migration issues they are facing.

Does your country have a voice in current EU foreign policy decisions?

* The Hellenic Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs represents Greece in making EU foreign policy decisions.
  + Greece works actively in all of the EU’s institutions towards further integration of the EU.
* The Union for the Mediterranean is the EU’s new institution aimed at cooperating with the Mediterranean.
  + Greece supported this framework and assumed the position of Deputy Secretary General for Energy in its Secretariat.
* Greece holds a vital role in the EU’s European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)
  + We consistently urge our Mediterranean partners to increase their efforts towards democratic reform and economic success.
  + We are currently participating in a debate on reforming the ENP.
  + Because of our cultural ties to countries of North Africa and the Middle East, we make sure conditions are understood and communication is present between countries.

Do you agree with current EU policies regarding Ukraine and Russia?

* The EU condemns Russia’s annexation of Crimea.
  + The EU has imposed restrictive measures against Russia.
  + The EU assists Ukraine in securing a democratic government for its future.
* Greece agrees with the EU policies regarding Ukraine and Russia.
  + We support the independence of Ukraine and the protection of its sovereignty.
  + We support a political solution, rather than a militant/violent one.
  + We aim to implement the Minsk agreement as soon as possible.
  + The measures and regulations decided upon within the EU to counter Russia are being executed by Greece.
  + We are in constant communication with Moscow.
  + We also care deeply about the Greek population in Ukraine that is suffering because of the crisis.

Did you agree with the EU decision to intervene in Libya?

* During the EU’s 2011 military intervention in Libya, we decided to support the EU’s decision to encourage democracy in Libya.
  + We spent 1 million euros daily.
  + We contributed a frigate and a search-and-rescue helicopter.
* We are involved in the Libyan intervention because of national self-interest
  + We are interested in increasing our credibility in international relations.
* During the 2011 revolution, we helped Libya politically and humanitarianly.
  + Our medical institutions treated 5,000 injured Libyans.
  + We assisted Libya in areas of construction, tourism, transport, and exporting.

Do you think the EU should work closely with the US on foreign policy issue or be more independent? Why or why not?

* Yes, the EU and its institutions have been responsible for financially supporting Greece on certain accounts.

What is your relationship with the US?

* We have a healthy relationship with the US. We share a common western culture, similar democratic principles, and have been allies in WW1, WW2, the Cold War, and the Korean War.
* The US is Greece’s largest foreign investor.
* There is a Greek embassy in Washington, D.C. and a U.S. embassy in Athens.
* The US can be beneficial to Greece by acting as an honest broker and credit guarantor in case the EU balks.

**Committee on Identity & Integration**

How did the Second World War and its aftermath influence your country?

* Following World War II, in the 1953 London Agreement, Greece and 20 other nations effectively lowered large part of Germany’s loans and restructured the rest. This helped reinvigorate the German economy. It is ironic that Germany is now among the countries resisting our requests for debt relief.

How has historical memory influenced your country’s political discourse?

* In the aftermath of World War II, Greece was ruled by a coalition of vested interests. The civil war was the result of a highly polarized struggle between left and right that started in 1943. After the final victory of the western-allied government forces led to our membership in NATO, and helped to define the ideological balance of power in the Aegean Sea for the entire Cold War. The civil war foreign involvement left us with an intensely anti-communist security establishment, which would lead to a legacy of political polarization for our nation.
* The US aid we received, which in other countries in Europe went towards economic development, went straight to strengthening our military as a defense against the communist threat.

Have certain events prompted a revision of your country’s core values and/or ideological pillars?

* The migrant crisis, combined with the debt crisis has threatened our national sovereignty. In particular, the bailout package offered by the EU has fed to the nationalist-populist backlash. This social unrest has brought forth public disillusionment with our parliamentary democracy, allowing populist parties on the left and right into the political mainstream. Established parties have lost authority and violent extremist groups, like the Golden Dawn, have undermined our democratic institutions.

What minority populations live in your country?

* We have a Muslim minority in our population and we have taken a number of positive measures to assist their integration into civil society. We recognize that a part of our Muslim minority in Western Thrace is of Turkish descent. To give these minorities a greater sense of representation, we treat Turkey as a kin state to oversee the interests of the minority through the Turkish Consulate General.

How has that changed since World War II?

* Following World War II, we were the main contributors to migration to the industrialized nations of Northern Europe. This was largely connected with the consequences of a 1946-1949 civil war and the 1967-1974 period of military junta rule that followed. However, the oil crises of 1973 and 1980 led to a sharp fall in the demand for labor, which in turn led northern states to introduce restrictive immigration policies. A return migration to Greece soon followed.

What rights do minority populations living within your borders have?

* We have ensured that our minority populations have many rights. All known religions are allowed to worship freely and have constitutional recognition. Our implementation of the Lausanne Treaty defines the rights of the Muslim communities in Western Thrace, both Turkish and Pomak, on the basis of religion instead of ethnicity.

What rights do non-citizens living within your borders have?

* Non-citizens, or unregistered immigrants, have the opportunity to acquire a "white card" temporary residence permit. This, in turn, gave them time to submit the complementary documents necessary to acquire a "green card" work and residence permit.

Is the goal of your policies to integrate new populations into your country, eg assimilation or multiculturalism?

* The goal of our policies is to make the working and living conditions of new populations favorable so that they are able to integrate into Greek society in a meaningful way.

Have your policies been effective?

* Our policies have been largely effective, reflecting a largely homogenous society.

Are there ethnic divisions in your country and are these contentious?

* Our only source of disagreement lies in Northern Greece. We find that there cannot be a Macedonian ethnicity, since there has never been an independent Macedonian nation-state. Therefore, we choose to accept the group of citizens that identify as Macedonians, as Greeks. While we look to resolve this issue in the future, currently, this disagreement does not pose any serious threat of ethnic divisions within Greece.

Does your country emphasize political/individual or social/cultural rights?

* As a nation, we emphasize the importance of individual rights. This is seen in both the large size of our laissez-faire, family-based economy. We have created an economic atmosphere for a flexible labor pool, independent of trade union practices and legislation.

Is your country facing any secessionist movements?

* We have no secessionist movements.

Have your policies changed with the current migrant crisis?

* We have adjusted some of our policies as a result of the current migrant crisis. In addition to a plan that would grant citizenship to second-generation migrants born and raised in Greece, our new immigration ministry has recently proposed shutting down immigrant detention centers.