

medineWS

workshop issue 17th



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The MEDINEWS team:



From the left: Phaedra Charalambous, Olivia Polykarpou, Panos Milios, Irene Daphne Neophytou, Alexis Falekos, Olympia Maria Koutentaki, Rafaela Diamantidou.

Editor:

Olympia Maria Koutentaki

Booklet Design:

Berzan Özejder



Dear readers,

Welcome to the 17th annual MEDIMUN workshop! After a challenging year due to COVID-19, it is with great pleasure that I can finally welcome you to the first MEDIMUN event after a global pandemic! This historical moment marks the return to a basic degree of normality, and I can tell you MEDIMUN is returning stronger than ever. Despite the hardships, with the help of the vaccines and PCR tests, we can once again enjoy the full experience of this community. You will benefit from gaining specialized knowledge on important global issues and getting to argue your opinions with other passionate delegates, leading to meaningful debates and the formation of strong friendships. I hope that you make the best of everything this community of talented and diverse individuals has to offer.

Welcoming this year's theme on global governance, which is especially relevant since countries' responses to different global crises this past year were inadequate due to the lack of collaboration between them, the MEDINEWS members aspire to help you gain a better understanding of the important issues discussed in the different GAs and committees. By reading this paper you will enhance your knowledge on topics like the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and the Soviet-Afghan war, the significance of a global mental health action plan, the disarmament of nuclear weapons, the question of statelessness and many more. Our goal is to encourage the delegates to actively participate in their community and take initiative concerning local governing issues through this paper. Moreover, be sure to read the Humans of MEDIMUN section to find out the funniest answers to the most irrelevant questions, presented to you by none other than your fellow delegates and chairs!

This year I am also very excited to welcome the two newly formed special committees, the Group of 20 and the Special Conference on International Crime, which will focus on the importance of alliances and communication between world leaders. We look forward to hearing their fruitful debates!

Lastly, we must not forget to thank all those who are making this MEDIMUN workshop such a unique and wonderful experience for all of us. So, thank you to all the organizers for working hard behind the scenes and the participants that are here to make this workshop unforgettable.

Now go be the change you want to see in the world! Happy debating everyone!

Your Editor,
Olympia Maria Koutentaki

Chair Interviews

Thea Eleftheriou

What made you interested in taking part in medimun this year and why did you choose this specific committee?

What made me interested in taking part in this year's MEDIMUN is simple. I had to revisit the high and enthusiasm that MEDIMUN gives you. Only this year, from the different perspective of chair. I chose GA1 since it was my first MUN committee and it would be a fun full circle moment. Also, we're gonna debate nuclear weapons, how could you not wanna chair that?

What's your favorite thing to do to pass your time and why?

My favourite pass times are watching Modern Family on repeat and taking care of my plants. I love it because it takes me out of myself for a little while and relaxes me. Highly recommend both hobbies.

If you were to eat only one food for the rest of your life what would that be?

An odd answer but, poke bowls. All day, everyday. They're so versatile and colourful. You'll always have your veggies too.

Theoklis Kouyialis

What made you interested in taking part in medimun this year and why did you choose this specific committee?

Last year was my first year doing MEDIMUN and even though I had never participated in any similar programs (EYP/THIMUN) I found the concept extremely fun and interesting. The debates were obviously the best part and as an added bonus I also managed to make many friends in in my committee, many of which I still talk to on occasion. The only downside was that the entire conference took place online. So I really wanted to experience the entire process again, just at a more personal level, as it was supposed to be in the first place. GA1 was my first choice and I decided to pick it because the subject of international security is something that greatly interests me and I feel like I already have a great deal of background knowledge on it.

What's your favorite thing to do to pass your time and why?

Although my school studies this year have left me with little free time, when I get a free moment I love to read books. Specifically I'm a fan of fiction. I feel like it allows me to unwind after a long day and prevents me from burning out when things get very stressful, especially if I can manage to do it outside.

If you were to eat only one food for the rest of your life what would that be?

This is actually the most difficult of all three questions. Although not really a food (or really sustainable in the long run), chocolate chip ice cream is something I couldn't really do without.

Total global nuclear disarmament

According to the United Nations, total global nuclear disarmament is a vital step towards the goal of maintaining global security and achieving worldwide peace. This topic has been under discussion for a long time, since the UN's General Assembly of 1946, when this concept was first addressed. It has also been declared a highly prioritized issue by the first Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament, which took place in 1978. However, the amount of nuclear weapons worldwide is expected to continue to rise in the future due to ongoing competition between superpowers, who are generously funding such projects. Governments also constantly develop more advanced technologies in this field to overcome their rivals, as the possession of nuclear weapons is being regarded as a matter of national security.

About 13 080 nuclear weapons exist globally today seeing as, although the UN is addressing the idea of disarmament frequently, no such weapons have actually been physically destroyed through the years. Also, no official negotiations are currently taking place, yet various awareness campaigns have been organized up to now. The number of 13 080 is quite unsettling, considering the destruction a single atomic bomb can cause. Nuclear weapons haven't been used in warfare since the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by America in 1945 and their effects were highly devastating. Just two bombs were enough to kill approximately 200 000 people, while thousands were also injured or infected by radiation. The cities were both almost completely destroyed and left in ruins.

This is a tragic and alarming event which presents the extent of the power of these technologies and how many casualties they can cause.

In the subsequent years of this devastating attack against Japan, nuclear bombs have never been used in warfare, although there have been about 2000 testings performed in uninhabitable areas. Now they are simply produced and stored by the countries who can afford them, solely as an exercise of power against other nations. No government plans on using these weapons for any reason, since the consequences would be catastrophic for the whole world, yet globally about \$75 billion is spent annually on the development of nuclear technologies. Additionally we have the world's best scientists and researchers constantly working on these projects and not producing any beneficial work for the evolution and betterment of the human race. Therefore, this raises the question if all the fuss is worth it at the end of the day.

According to Antonio Guterres, secretary-general of the UN, all the production of nuclear weapons is a massive waste of money, precious time and scientific knowledge. He stated that all of these could be focused on solving serious problems such as climate change, poverty and more recently the COVID-19 crisis. Guterres then concluded by saying that 'now is the time to lift this cloud for good, eliminate nuclear weapons from our world, and usher in a new era of dialogue, trust and peace for all people'. This summarizes how in our days the existence of nuclear weapons is essentially pointless, as they are not only worthless to mankind, but they instead cause a major distraction from our actual problems which need immediate attention and also create a threat of ending human life on an enormous scale if for whatever reason they are used. Therefore, total global nuclear disarmament is a necessary measure that needs to be gradually put into action to resolve tensions between countries and encourage worldwide peace. These kinds of weapons never had any real use, apart from spreading fear, and as an effect they delayed the evolution of the human race, so it's only logical that governments should finally get rid of them and move on.



Hiroshima after it was demolished by atomic bombs.

GA2 by Olympia Maria Koutentaki

Chair interviews

Stelios Charalambides

How do you think MEDIMUN relates to the current problems Cyprus is facing?

One of the biggest problems our country is facing in modern times is the lack of development of critical thinking in all ages. Even our brightest students spend hours memorising information and analysing topics, rarely being allowed to actually use their critical thinking on matters. MEDIMUN is exactly the kind of conference that puts students in the position where they have to use their critical thinking and research skills to argue their way to the top.

If you could only buy one piece of clothing for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Various types of hats. #Ihavemydadshair. No, seriously, an FC Barcelona jersey with the number 10.



Georgios Nicolaou

How do you think MEDIMUN relates to the current problems Cyprus is facing?

Medimun is a forum for discussion – a place that fosters fruitful debate, giving the ability to students from across the island and even across the divide to come together and share their views and opinions on complex matters. In MEDIMUN, delegates need to work together – they need to put aside their differences and find ways to compromise and cooperate to solve real-life issues. In a world and on an island where with each passing day we feel more and more divided, MEDIMUN sets a leading example of how working together and listening to the people around us can help us achieve even our wildest ambitions.

If you could buy one piece of clothing for the rest of your life what would it be?

Actually, this question is very suitable to me because I recently discovered this magical thing called cargo pants. I'm probably one of the most unstylish people ever but when I throw on a pair of cargo pants everything changes AND they go with literally all other clothes. I will shamelessly say they're the only thing I've been wearing since I bought them. This sounds like a cargo pants ad and I'm not mad about it. Anyway, a small message to my delegates: You know what to buy me if you want that beautiful title of best delegate...

Reversing the effects of deforestation due to wildfires

Deforestation is defined as the "permanent removal of standing forests" by The United States Environmental Protection Agency. Put simply, its when forests are lost forever, either because they were cut down or because they were burned, and the land was unable to recover due to excessive damage or human intervention. It can happen wherever there is dense vegetation, and affects a greater number of people than you might think due to its wide range of harmful consequences. So, what are the causes of deforestation and why has it become more frequent in recent years? What are the effects it has on the environment and the people and, most importantly, is there a way to reverse them?

It is crucial to understand that even though wildfires are not responsible for the majority of deforestation (cattle ranching takes that spot as it accounts for 80% of deforestation), they may be the most dangerous cause. Not only do they burn the land thus making it harder for trees to regrow and irreversibly harming nature, but they are also detrimental to humans. They cause massive amounts of air pollution, leading to eye and respiratory tract irritation and in even more serious cases asthma, heart failure and even death. However, where wildfires really shine is their effect on climate change. When forests burn, they release large quantities of gases like carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere which are greenhouse gases that have an important impact from things as grand as global warming to changes in the local weather. The concerning part is that this year there were 400 000 more wildfires than in 2018, meaning that the risk of fire is increasing globally. Moreover, in 50% of wildfires it is unknown how they started, making it even harder to find and tackle the root problem. We know that changes in the climate which lead to droughts and hot weather act as catalysts for the start of a wildfire, and since wildfires trigger changes in the climate we find ourselves trapped in a never ending loop.

On a more practical level, deforestation resulting from any cause has catastrophic effects on the environments, some of which being loss of habitat for the 70% of animal and plant species which live in forests, increased greenhouse gases due to the lack of absorption of CO2 by trees, soil erosion and flooding. Seeing the severity of the problem, world leaders attending COP26 promised to end deforestation by 2030. Their pledge contains more than 19 billion dollars which will be used to fund developing countries and restore their forests, tackle wildfires and support indigenous communities (specifically in the Amazon) which were most affected by deforestation. However, a similar scheme which was launched in 2014 tried to achieve the same ambitious goal but fell flat on its face. Is the reversal of the effects of deforestation even possible? Only time will tell. In the meantime, governments and citizens have to do their best to minimize the damage they inflict on the environment.

To conclude, I would like to urge everyone to start caring. And what I mean by that is start acting. Plant a tree and help in a reforestation plan, use less paper and eat less meat. Every action counts towards a better, healthier planet. Stay green folks!



A forest on fire

Chair interviews

Danae Demetriade

What inspired you to start participating in MEDIMUN and why did you decide to become a chair?

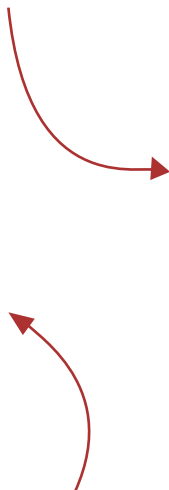
I have always been passionate with debating and current affairs and MEDIMUN seemed like the perfect place where I could talk for hours without annoying people. Being a chair seemed like a new challenge for me and a way to expand my abilities and explore other positions in the MUN universe.

Which of the 3 topics in your GA is your favorite and why?

My favorite topic is definitely the third one, "abolishing modern day slavery", as it is intriguing and disturbing that even in the 21st century people are experiencing the harsh effects of limitations in their freedom and human rights.

If you were stranded in a deserted island and could only have one object with you, what would it be?

A coffee maker. 100%. So, I could stay awake and I find a way to leave.



Maria Efthymiadou

What inspired you to start participating in MEDIMUN and why did you decide to become a chair?

I started participating in MEDIMUN through school because I always had a passion for debate (although back then I called it arguing) and simply decided to take a go at it. Once I learnt how to argue diplomatically as an MUN delegate rather than a teen pushing her case to her parents, I felt like applying for chair was the next step.

Which of the 3 topics in your GA is your favorite and why?

My favorite topic would have to be the abolition of modern slavery. Having researched it extensively, I feel like it's such an overlooked issue that's happening right under people's noses, going by unnoticed simply because the definition of it isn't clear to most. It has further perpetuated that ignorance is bliss, seeing as when one hears slavery they automatically think of the slave trade, whereas the topic has so many more aspects that no one has looked into. More precisely, it's a topic that pushes people to think beyond the mold they've been immersed in their whole life and use their own reasoning to determine what slavery is and what it isn't by simply following the laws of human nature and empathy, values that people have been moving away from slowly but surely.

If you were stranded in a deserted island and could only have one object with you, what would it be?

I'd probably choose to have a genie with me. That way I can have whatever I want whenever I want it. Plus, I'm one of those obnoxious people who would ask for extra wishes as one of their wishes.

A global mental health action plan

The question of whether a mental health action plan should be launched is a question that has been asked for over a decade now.

The answer? An anthemic, emphatic yes.

The idea was first coming into prominence during a world health assembly in 2013. The plan was approved and had the main goal of responding and attending to the needs of the people who are facing a number of mental problems. The committee recognized that there has been a concerning, statistical rise in the number of mental health cases as the obstacle of declining well-being and mental disorders only seems to be growing. According to the world health organization the plan seems to have been successful, which has led to an extension of the program until 2030. It has already helped reduce the number of premature deaths in multiple countries and believes it can reduce each countries' suicide rates by 10%. Poor mental health is the leading cause of suicide as over 700 thousand people take their own lives every single year mostly due to mental disorders. Another target of the plan is that most countries will have established a policy about mental health that applies international and regional human rights instruments. This will help set a legal precedent against declining mental health, effectively strengthening the way the government handles health issues. Additionally, the plan is also looking to increase information and create safe social settings where people can treat their issues. Overall, the organization is looking to build a safe environment that people can use to receive care and communicate with health professionals. Despite the initial vision of a world in which mental health problems are valued and promoted for discussions not coming into fruition just yet, there has been imminent progress being made and the plan is set to continue improving human rights and the quality of life until 2030.

The action plans longevity has also opened the window to a lot of further interpretation. Specifically, there have been many inferences and suggestions being made in order to improve the action, creating even stronger roots for the future. One such idea is the promotion of more responsible media reporting in when it comes to suicide. Reporters have often been insensitive in matters of suicide and mental health, especially towards suicides of highly profiled individuals. Such behaviors must end, with the media member using their platforms to promote insightful discussions instead of hurtful comments. Another inference being made is the decriminalization of suicide. If it is no longer considered an illegal crime then the stigma around it will be reduced and it may be discussed more openly, which in turn allows for more voices to be heard. Another recommendation that has been proposed is the banishment of highly hazardous pesticides. Pharmaceuticals such as these are cheap and easy to access, making them a quick way for low-income households to use. Thus, banning them to the general public is a cost-effective way to reduce suicide rates. A study by the "The Lancet" stands proof that banning such pesticides actually has a direct effect on suicides. With a plan that has spanned so many years a requirement for additional improvements is much needed, not only now but in the future as well.

Mental health is a subject that as a society we are too scared to address and start a conversation about. Its an uncomfortable topic as it deals with a lot of personal, internalized issues and puts people at a place of vulnerability that as a society we have tried to avoid for centuries. However, with the concerning rise in not only mental diagnosis but in suicide rates as well, it is more important now than ever to start discussing and work together in creating an effective plan inspired by the one the world health organization has created to deal with these haunting issues.

Covid-19 had a significant negative impact on mental health



GA4 by Olivia Polykarpou

Chair Interviews

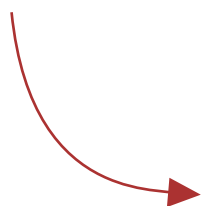
Lara Wilks

What made you want to participate in MEDIMUN?

THE SHINING CV!.. no i'm just kidding. MEDIMUN is a way for me to help myself and others at the same time; I want to be the most fun chair for first time MUN'ers in order to give them the full experience and encourage them to continue, while also pushing myself out of my boundaries and embodying new leadership positions. Being a delegate at MEDIMUN taught me so much, and I want to give back to the program :)

If you were an animal, what animal would you be?

A bit unconventional but a seahorse (there's no seahorse emoji WHAT)! Anyway, they're just so small, cute and they bounce around in water with their seahorse friends and that's my mental state. Also, female seahorses don't give birth, it's the males that shoot the babies out like mini cannons (seahorse birth video recommended to watch) which is very special and amusing! I mean who wouldn't love bouncing around among colorful coral reefs (let's assume we haven't polluted the ocean 😊)



Faisal Alaidy

What made you want to participate in MEDIMUN?

I joined MEDIMUN cause of my love for heated debate and quick-witted comedy. It definitely helped having great chairs in my first year as a delegate too!

If you were an animal, what animal would you be?

I would be a chipmunk that teams up with Dave Seville in order to make a mark in the industry.

The question of reinforcing action on ending statelessness

If you ask any person what their nationality is, chances are they will reply within seconds. In an ideal world, this would be the case for everyone. However, millions of people are stateless. But what does that mean? The answer is pretty simple: any person who is not considered to be a national by any State, under the operation of its laws. In even simpler terms, it's someone who doesn't have a nationality. Although it's a "hidden" problem, it's believed that more than ten million people are stateless worldwide.

In order to start considering ways to end this problem, we should first understand how it's created. Firstly, some countries' nationality laws, which determine under what conditions someone can be considered a citizen, contain some gaps - so some people are excluded. For example, some countries require nationality based on descent from a national. Therefore, children who are parentless and have no ancestors we know of cannot be considered a citizen of any country. Similarly, children whose parents are also stateless have no other choice but be stateless too. Additionally, people who don't live in the country they were born in could be in high risk, as some countries do not allow nationality only based on birth.

As anyone living in the 21st century could imagine, statelessness is often caused by discrimination. One form of discrimination is against women, as the laws of 27 countries do not allow women to pass on their nationality to their children. Discrimination in nationality laws against certain ethnicities, religions and genders is also very common. In situations of displacement, statelessness is also a problem, such as the Syrian crisis: gender discrimination in the country's nationality law and lack of civil documentation amongst people who have been displaced contribute to an increased number of stateless people. Lastly, some may even lose their nationality because they lived abroad for too long, or due to changes in law with criteria that are discriminatory.

But what are the consequences of statelessness? Considering the fact that these people belong nowhere, they can't enjoy the rights that the rest of the world can. First of all, they don't have any legal protection. This vulnerability leads to many cases of sexual violence and human trafficking, as well as other abuses. In addition, they don't have rights of movement, property, education, healthcare or employment and they also aren't allowed to vote. There are many real stories which show the seriousness of the situation: 22-year-old Kavita is a stateless woman living in Malaysia, with one dream- to become an art teacher. Even though she was offered a job, she was unable to take it, due to the law. Kavita didn't choose to be stateless, as her father died and her mother left her, causing her to be in this situation. So, if it's not her fault, then why should she be suffering? Unfortunately, this is just one of the many cases, as more than 70,000 stateless children are born every year, just in the 20 countries with the highest stateless population.

It is therefore made clear that we should all work together to end this problem. One action that is currently being taken by the UNHCR, is the establishment of the #IBelong Campaign and the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness 2014 - 2024, that requires States to take 10 main actions to reach this goal. Some of these include the removal of gender discrimination from nationality law, as well as ensuring birth registration. Something that can be done personally is spreading awareness, in order to remove the stigma around it. For example, we could start a social media campaign, to help stateless people raise their voice and help them feel valued. When they were asked to describe themselves, they answered with the words: "invisible," "alien," living in a shadow," like a street dog" and "worthless." So, it's in our hands to help these people feel worthy and important. Lastly, what you can do to help is sign the UNHCR's open letter and become a part of their campaign. Together, we can all make a difference!

Security Council by **Rafaela Diamantidou**

Chair Interviews

Maria Thanassa

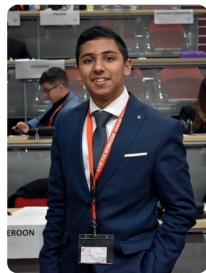
What inspired you to start participating in Medimun and then become a chair?
 I always knew I wanted to study law, and Medimun is the best place to test your public speaking skills, and to be part of a formal conference that discusses solutions to real life problems. For me Medimun had a vital, role in solidifying what I want to study at university, and it was a medium for me to improve in terms of communication skills, organisation, and time-management. I decided to become a chair, because after two years of being a delegate I felt very confident in my ability to lead a committee and my knowledge of procedural matters. Although it requires a lot of hard work, I grew to love being part of Medimun and it is an extremely rewarding experience.

How do you manage to balance both school and the responsibilities you have as a chair? What would you advise someone who is interested to become a chair but is anxious about time management?

Finding a good balance between school and chair duties can be hard, and we all struggle a bit at first, but the sooner you decide to create a plan to allocate the work the less stressful it will be. If you want to become a chair, then it has to be something you love, and if it is something you love, then you can always find a way to dedicate enough time to it.

If you could live in a historical era which would it be and why?

As a woman, I don't think there really is a better time to be alive. I would love to be alive in the Early Modern Era to experience the Renaissance and contribute to the huge developments in science, philosophy, and politics, but the thought of being burned at stake for being a witch is not exactly appealing. Now we live at a time of greater gender equality than ever before, and technological advancements have made our lives so much easier. Yes, I would love roam around the streets wearing 17th century gowns and riding horses, but I would never choose to live in any other time other than now.



Tanay Tandon

What inspired you to start participating in Medimun and then become a chair?
 I was always into public speaking and loved having the spotlight as a kid so participating in MEDIMUN was a no brainer. Chairing on the other hand was derived from just how much I enjoyed MUN and the fact that I wanted to dive as deep as possible into it.

How do you manage to balance both school and the responsibilities you have as a chair? What would you advise someone who is interested to become a chair but is anxious about time management?

Don't be anxious - homework is temporary, MEDIMUN is forever.

If you could live in a historical era which would it be and why?

Given the extra melanin in my skin, it's really not a bad time to be around. But I wouldn't mind being transported to ancient Macedonia as Alexander the Great seems like a cool guy to hangout with.

The deteriorating situation in Afghanistan

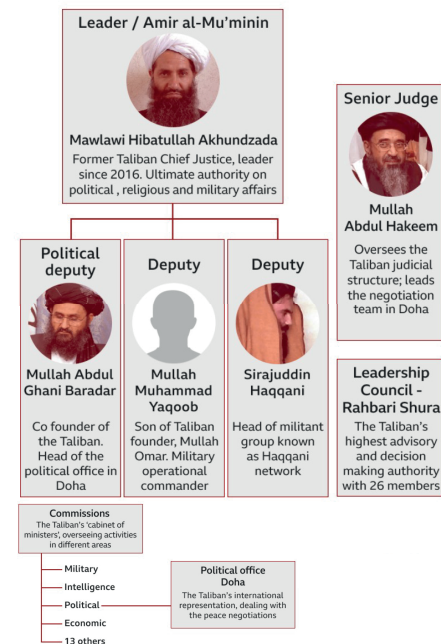
It is true that most Afghans can't remember a time of peace. Disastrously, after 20 years of war, the Taliban has swept to victory in Afghanistan. American diplomats and development officials are being evacuated from Kabul and thousands of Afghans are attempting to flee. The evacuation crisis precipitated by the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, following the rapid withdrawal of American troops, broadened the division between Pakistan and the United States. There is not much hope left for peace in Afghanistan due to constant fighting within and outside their borders. Although the U.S. officially left the region, major forces are still based in Afghanistan and a military presence will remain there until a peace accord is signed between all warring factions. The United States has been involved in numerous cease-fires with the Taliban throughout Afghanistan's history, but they have failed to hold, partially because of problems within Afghanistan's government and army. In this case however, many analysts believe that Pakistan may be trying to use this opportunity to push the Taliban toward its demands for complete control over Afghanistan's security system. However, it remains unclear whether the Pakistani government will continue to support the Taliban once the "surge" is complete.

According to an article written by Elisabeth Braw in Time magazine: "Almost 16 years after 9/11, Afghanistan remains at war and it has no end in sight." The conflict began on October 7, 2001 after the September 11 attacks. It was to be a joint effort between Taliban forces and Al-Qaeda fighters who were responsible for those attacks on New York City and Washington D.C. it has lost support among Afghans because of America's inconsistent policies towards Afghanistan. Despite these comments, the war in Afghanistan continues to have significant civilian casualties and widespread destruction.

For example, a Research by Brown University estimates losses in the Afghan security forces at 69,000. More than 3,500 soldiers have died since 2001 - about two-thirds of them Americans. More than 20,000 US soldiers have been injured. According to the UN, Afghanistan has the third-largest displaced population in the world. Since 2012, some five million people have fled and not been able to return home, either displaced within Afghanistan or taking refuge in neighbouring countries. The UN has highlighted reports of restrictions on women. Also, UN Human Rights High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet said on Tuesday that women's rights were a "fundamental red line".

Role of the security council: The U.N. Security Council approved a resolution saying that Afghanistan's new Taliban rulers need to set up a government that has "the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and endorses human rights. The resolution also extends the current mandate of the U.N. political mission for six months and states that its 15 members will be watching closely what the Taliban do going forward. The statement reflects widespread disappointment over the recently announced interim Taliban government that left out women and minorities. As a result, the Taliban have promised a more moderate form of Islamic rule than during their previous rule. But many Afghan women are skeptical about the rights gained over the last two decades. The Security Council resolution, initiated by Norway and Estonia, delays a decision on a new mandate for the U.N. mission in Afghanistan, known as UNAMA, until March next year.

Taliban leadership structure



The Taliban, emerged in the early 1990s in northern Pakistan following the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

The promise made by the Taliban was to restore peace and security and enforce their own version of Islam.

The Taliban also introduced punishments such as public executions and amputations for those found guilty of theft. Men were required to grow beards and women had to wear the all-covering burka.

The Taliban also banned television, music and cinema, and disapproved of girls aged 10 and over going to school. They were accused of various human rights and cultural abuses.

Historical Security Council

by **Phaedra Charalambous**

Chair Interviews

Eleni Protopapa

Why did you choose to join Medimun and why did you choose the Historical Security Council as your committee?

I chose to join MEDIMUN because I have always enjoyed challenging myself, researching, and meeting new people that share similar interests to mine. Having attended MEDIMUN in-person 2 years ago as part of MediNews, an experience that I thoroughly enjoyed, I am particularly excited to chair my first in-person conference. I chose the Historical Security Council as my committee because history is my favourite school subject and something that I wish to pursue in the future. Furthermore, I quickly got hooked with the HSC second topic, The Soviet-Aghan War, and had a great time being a delegate in HSC during MEDIMUN XVI. Finally, I enjoy navigating the unpredictable nature and observing the shenanigans often associated with the Security Council.

If you were a famous singer, what would your stage name be?

Probably the nickname that only 5 people in my life so far have the right to call me by, Leni.

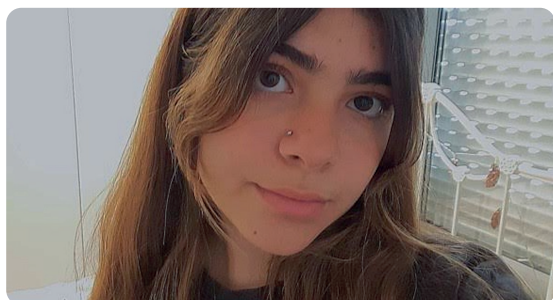
Evie Bridger

Why did you choose to join Medimun and why did you choose the Historical Security Council as your committee?

I chose to join Medimun because I've always loved to argue and debate on various worldly topics, so the idea of watching and participating in debates with incredibly well versed, passionate delegates really excited me. I chose the Historical Security Council because I participated in the committee last year and I loved the historical element, being fully immersed in the selected year and being able to change certain aspects and events of the past was fascinating, forcing you to think outside the box. So I can't wait to see the innovative ideas this year!!

If you were a famous singer, what would your stage name be?

I wish I had enough musical talent to be a famous singer, and enough creativity to think of a brilliant stage name but if I had to chose one it would be B.V. Solely because my nickname is Bevie and the letters could act as an acronym for Best vocals.



Soviet-Afghan War (1979 – 1989)

The Soviet war in Afghanistan was said to be a defining moment of the beginning of the end of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Background information:

The USSR was the world's largest communist country between 1922 and 1991. From the 1950s, the Soviet Union has worked hard in order to establish close relations with its bordering nation, Afghanistan, for political reasons, which eventually led to the two nations signing a "friendship treaty" in 1978. This all began in April 1978, members of the Afghan Communist Party killed the president at the time named Sardar Mohammed Daoud and Nur Mohammed Taraki, which was head of the Communist Party, took over the Afghanistan leadership and instantly announced a one-party rule in the country. The then centrist Afghan government became a left-wing one and power was shared between two political parties, the People's (Khalq) Party and the Banner (Parcham) Party.

The Afghan communist party was pro-soviet but very unpopular in Afghanistan, so the Soviet Union, to show support, signed the treaty in December 1978, which guaranteed 20 years of "cooperation and friendship". The union provided only military and economic aid from afar until Taraki ended up getting assassinated by members of his party because they were displeased with his ruling methods, in September 1979. The forceful take-over of Afghanistan caused devoted Muslims and anti-communist citizens to fight against this, and these uprisings were dealt with extreme violence, including purges. The groups against the party were collectively called "mujahideen". These people were Muslims that fought on behalf of their faith but were separated politically into a lot of groups and their rebellious actions remained uncoordinated throughout the whole war. This was the beginning of the civil war in Afghanistan against two main politically different groups, that resulted to the Soviet Union invading Afghanistan in December 1979.

The Soviet's aim was to strengthen the communist party, which became harder, since, the United States, which was USSR's opponent in the Cold War, was actually helping the opposition group, providing them with whatever aid they needed. The mujahideen and Soviet Union were in a tie. The opposition group was able to avoid the soviet attacks, cause mass destruction and eventually were able to neutralize soviet air power with the assistance of the United States. At this point, it looked like the mujahideen were not getting defeated. The group began to strengthen not only due to important war machinery shipped from Pakistan, US and global supporters but some Muslims even traveled to join the opposition. Despite all the efforts by the Soviet Union in 1988, it signed an accord with the 3 countries: US, Pakistan and Afghanistan and consented to withdraw its troops, which was completed on February 15, 1989.

When the Soviets attempted to eliminate the mujahideen's civilian support, they resolved on bombing and depopulating rural areas which caused about 4.3 million Afghans to seek asylum in Iran and Pakistan, by 1982. About one million civilians were killed, as well as 90,000 Mujahideen fighters and 18,000 Afghan troops and many more were left scarred mentally and physically. 15,000 soviet soldiers died and others were severely injured. The USSR never managed to come back from the public relations and financial losses, which definitely contributed to the fall of the Soviet Union. The really scary part to know is that after the USSR withdrew its troops, the civil war raged and the US and Europe abandoned Afghanistan, leaving it to Pakistan, which set the stage for Taliban's takeover of the country in 1996 and the uprise of Osama Bin Laden, the founder of al-Qaeda, a group that is classified as a terrorist organization.

The USSR was also affected by its failure since they lost billions and billions of dollars invested in the war and not to the USSR's own benefits. Afghanistan is often described as the Soviet Union's Vietnam, "an expensive, embarrassing war with little hope of victory, where they were beaten by local guerrilla forces".



Afghan firefighters carry the body of a young girl killed in a powerful bomb blast planted by the Soviets

G20 by Irene Daphne Neophytou

Chair Interviews

Antonia Theodora Michael

What's your favourite part of medimun?

I can't just pick one part, so favourite parts of MEDIMUN have to be two things, one academic and one social. MEDIMUN has been one of the experiences that have pushed me to aspire to have a career and Law and International Relations in the future. It has allowed me to work in an environment that is a small scale of what I want to pursue, and so I hold all my MEDIMUN experiences to a high standard. On a social level, MEDIMUN has gifted me many friends and experiences that I hold close to my heart. The friends and experiences I've gained with MEDIMUN are unforgettable.

Which fictional character do you relate with the most and why?

Maeve Wiley from the Netflix original TV Show *S*x Education*. She's dynamic and driven, but can also be described as charming, something I also relate to (even though my friends will describe me as more of an Aimee)



Alexandra Demetriou

What's your favourite part of MEDIMUN?

Having been involved both in EYP and MEDIMUN since 2018, I have never seen a committee whose format, structure, and composition is so unique, thus I was greatly intrigued by the possibility of chairing it. Plus I couldn't pass on the opportunity to be able to tell politicians like Erdogan, Kim Jong-un and Boris Johnson to stop talking.

What 3 famous people, living or dead, would you want at your fantasy dinner party?

Hitler, Stalin, and Gandhi; they definitely have a lot to learn from each other

Taiwan, China, US: A Policy Triangle

Taiwan was first home to indigenous people, then colonized by the Dutch and briefly the Spanish, before China's Qin dynasty held it for about 200 years. Then, in 1895 China lost Taiwan to Japan, imposing Japanese cultural values ruling it rigorously. After WWII, two key things happened: First, the allies put Taiwan back under Chinese control and second, the civil war that was taking place in China between the nationalist government and the communists, ended. Chiang Kai-Shek, nationalist leader, was a ruthless authoritarian, and under his control, thousands were brutally punished if what they did could be slightly interpreted as opposition to the government. After the communists won in the civil war, Chung Kai-shek fled to Taiwan, along with 2 million soldiers and refugees, setting up a Chinese government in exile, meaning that China technically had two governments at the time. One in China and one in Taiwan. Western countries were very showing support of the second one, even nicknaming Taiwan "Free China", because they saw it as a vital bulwark against communism.

In the last century, Taiwan was a grim place, but after the death of Chung in 1975, the nationalists began let loose, ending martial law in the late 1980s. This eventually brought full democratization. Now, Taiwan is established as a developed and wealthy country and yet, no one is allowed to call it one, which brings the big unresolved issue of Taiwanese sovereignty. China sees claiming Taiwan as a major point of national pride, with Xi Jinping calling reunification a part of his vision for the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation". Most countries have no official diplomatic relations with Taiwan, because China won't have diplomatic relations with anyone who does.

By the end of the 1970s, most countries have switched their recognition of China's official government from the one on Taiwan, known as the Republic of China, to the communist one on the mainland, the People's Republic of China. Today, 15 countries still diplomatically recognize Taiwan. As for America, they spent the past half century walking a diplomatic tightrope with the policy known as "strategic ambiguity", which lets the US maintain functional relations with Taiwan and still have a formal relationship with China. It's an approach that began in the 1970s and it consists of carefully worded statements, declaring that they view Taiwan's status as undetermined. This policy can seem absurd, but the uncertainty is the key, especially when it comes to defense. In 1979, Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act, committing the US to assist Taiwan in maintaining its self-defense capability, but the US failed in upholding their commitment, which promised to defend Taiwan from a Chinese invasion. Instead, it mentions, "any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means would be of grave concern to the US".

The question is: what does Taiwan want for itself? Even that is not easy answer. Taiwan involves a variety cultures, languages, and political viewpoints. Polls have consistently shown that when Taiwanese people are asked about independence from, or unification with China, 15% want unification with China as soon as possible, and about 6% want independence as soon as possible, but the vast majority are in favour of sticking with the status quo.

The entire world has been dissecting the solution to this problem for half a century now. Ambiguity is inherently annoying, but could it be that keeping the current, strange, ambiguous status quo is the best option here? One thing that's for sure is that Taiwan is not a weapon against the Red Scare, but is 23 million people, who deserve to decide their own future, in any way that they deem fit.



Chair interviews

Mara Rotaru

What is the most important topic you have ever discussed in MEDIMUN?

I think that the topic of euthanasia stands out as the most important topic that I have ever debated. I think the ethics that we associate with mortality and death indirectly shapes the way we view life and even politics. So, this topic addressed issues that were larger than they seemed.

If you were a pop star, what would your stage name be?

My stage name would be One-Way Trip to Mars.



Cross-border crimes and how to combat them

We all know that crime is bad. Crime causes harm to the individual that then has to face punishment, the people that get caught up in the crime and the government that has to deal with the law breakers. But do you know what is worse than a crime? A cross-border crime. This is because, as the name suggests, these crimes can transgress borders and cause harm to multiple countries simultaneously. So, what exactly are they and what is the best way to combat them?

Firstly, cross-border crimes include smuggling of stolen vehicles, drugs, firearms, tobacco products, mineral oils and alcohol or trafficking of hazardous materials. The term could also refer to environmental crimes such as wildlife trafficking. At first glance, these offences may not seem as severe as, let's say, murder and serial killers in a country.

Trafficking of products may result in fatalities and the maltreatment of animals is certainly horrible, but overall someone could argue that there are more important issues to solve within a specific country. However, the true horror of these transnational crimes lie in human trafficking. It is usually referred to as modern day slavery and with good reason: victims may be forced to become sex slaves, child soldiers or forced labor workers. People from all ethnical and religious backgrounds are deceived daily in every part of the world, entering the human market where they are exploited endlessly until they die.

And this is not something that solely concerns third world countries. In fact, the number 1 country for human trafficking is one of the most developed in the world: the United States of America. And since anyone can become a victim of fraud and be transported to a country where they can't leave (due to lack of knowledge/ lack of a valid passport/ being short on money/ being threatened) it is important to understand that this is a global problem that concerns everyone and needs to be solved as soon as possible.

But how exactly can human trafficking and cross-border crimes in general be solved? There is no clear-cut answer. These are multi-dimensional problems that primarily require the cooperation between different countries, since they usually occur at the borders. EUROPOL, which is the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, has launched the EU Strategy on eradicating human trafficking 2012-2016 which identifies five key ways to do this:

- identify, protect and assist victims of trafficking;
- step up the prevention of trafficking in human beings;
- pursue the prosecution of traffickers more robustly;
- enhance coordination and cooperation among key actors, including at the level of policy;
- increasing knowledge of, and producing effective responses to, all forms of human trafficking.

To conclude, even though human trafficking has deep-rooted causes like poverty which cannot be solved immediately, every person that helps counts. We must all educate ourselves concerning human trafficking to make sure we never become victims ourselves and help fight it however we can through volunteering, donating money to survivors and spreading awareness. Remember, that person could be you, so be kind!

A depiction of how human trafficking can feel and look like imprisonment.



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