

Working Agenda

Meetings of the Head of Governments/ State and Foreign Ministers

February 26-27, 2015

Contents:

- I. Preliminary Address
- II. Meeting of the Heads of Government/State – Freedom, Security, and Justice: Refugee and Asylum Crisis in Europe
 - a. Reforming the Dublin regulations on the processing of and provisions for asylum seekers
 - b. Create a quota system promoting collective responsibility for refugees across member states
- III. Meeting of Foreign Ministers – TTIP: Regulatory Protection and Sustainable Development
 - a. Create a court system to ensure implementation and enforcement of new policies and disputes
 - b. Remove all tariffs and quotas to promote trade
- IV. Concluding remarks

I. Preliminary Address

The last several months have witnessed new challenges for our European project. With the influx of millions of refugees into our member states following the civil war in Syria the European Union has been faced with a growing list of important questions. We have demonstrated our willingness to accept such asylum seekers though we need to create new policies and institutions to better handle the problem. The EU is also slowly recovering from the recent financial crisis and needs to find new ways to spur growth, increase investments, and create new jobs. Working alongside the European Parliament and the European Commission, the Dutch Presidency and the Presidency of the European Council seeks to find new approaches in addressing the **Refugee Crisis** while also promoting a free trade and

investment regime with the United States during **TTIP** negotiations. The goal of the summit is to promote cooperation across member states in the handling of this humanitarian crisis, as well as to promote transatlantic cooperation in a manner that is both environmentally sustainable and economically advantageous.

The EU cannot stand by idle as millions seek refuge from the civil war in Syria and the spread of ISIL throughout portions of the Middle East. With the number of refugees continuing to grow, the EU must put forth a concerted and uniform effort to combat the smuggling of refugees in the Mediterranean, and ensure that Europe's responsibilities are met in a collective manner. Additionally, the EU must continue to play a large role in global economics. As the largest trading bloc and economy in the world, the EU is in a privileged economic position that allows us to both influence world trade rules and project our values abroad. Together with the US, we have the opportunity to promote higher health and safety standards, as well as promote the use of green technology.

During this summit, we strive to create a stronger, more unified, response to the ongoing refugee crisis and create a greater trade union with the United States. The Presidency believes that a united Europe can face any challenge it is presented with. The current crisis presents us with the opportunity to make the necessary reforms that allow us to carry on as an ever greater Union.

I. Meeting of the Heads of Government/State –

Freedom, Security, and Justice: Refugee and Asylum Crisis in Europe

Background

As the civil war in Syria and the strife in ISIL controlled territory countries the plight of refugees will only worsen in what is the world's largest humanitarian crisis since World War

II. So far the European Commission and Member States have mobilized over €4.4 billion for relief and recovery assistance to refugees. The destruction of regional health infrastructure and the increasing shortages of medical personnel, and medicine has left many without access to basic medical care. What medical facilities still exist are threatened by bombing attacks coming from both aerial assaults and ground forces, resulting in fatalities and the destruction of facilities.

The United Nations office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) has estimated that roughly 6.5 million people have been internally displaced, the EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) has additionally estimated that there are roughly 13.5 million people within Syria alone in need of humanitarian assistance. The Presidency proposes that the EU needs to do more than send money and supplies, we must move forward in a united manner with our acceptance of refugees that does not place the burden of responsibility on any one member-state.

a. Reforming the Dublin Regulation

The current parameters of the Dublin regulations are inadequate for the crisis facing Europe today. Having already passed through several iterations, the regulation currently requires refugees to apply for asylum in the first country they enter. Such a policy leads to an unequal distribution of asylum applications across member states and thus requiring some states to allocate resources they do not have in order to meet regulations set forth by the agreement. Furthermore, it has become clear that refugees do not always choose to seek asylum in the nearest member state geographically, but in those member states where they think they will be treated better.

We need to come together as a union in a way that promotes a more equitable response to the refugee crisis. The EU must ensure that refugees will be treated equally regardless of which member state they apply for asylum within. Additionally, the increasing costs associated with caring for the refugees need to be shared across member states and not be placed upon a select

few border states. Several court cases have been brought against member states due to their not following their duties set forth in the Dublin agreement, we must ensure that those fleeing oppression abroad do not face poor conditions, ill treatment, or have their families separated upon coming to Europe.

b. Creating a Collective Quota System

Greece and Italy alone have already received over 160,000 asylum seekers, and there are more on their way. This Presidency believes we need to follow Chancellor Merkel's charge to create a quota system in order to ensure an equal distribution of refugees across EU member states. While the UK would receive an opt out allowance as it is not part of the Schengen agreement, we believe that all member states need to take part in such a quota system. It is imperative that the refugees are not all concentrated in just a few member states. The refugee crisis is a tough and sensitive issue for many which has led to diverging responses to the crisis. This divergence has undermined our ability to effectively address the crisis, and has also witnessed violations of the rights of the refugees. The creation of a quota system should come in tandem with the requisite policy changes that will allow for the equal treatment of refugees under the law across member states as well as the humane treatment of refugees once they are settled.

II. Meeting of Foreign Ministers – Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Background

Following the global financial crisis, the EU has struggled to achieve meaningful growth rates, and significantly reduce unemployment figures which still remain worryingly high in some member states. The creation of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the US will serve to bolster our economic growth, bring in new investments, and create new jobs in Europe and abroad. The presidency is pushing for two key components to be included

in the TTIP negotiations with the US, first the creation of a **court system** that ensures the equal enforcement and implementation of policies across states. This will ensure that all disputes will be handled in an objective manner. Second, all **tariffs and quotas** should be reduced to zero. Tariffs and quotas only serve to hinder growth through the creation of economic and bureaucratic barriers to entry as well as through their distortionary effects on the market system. The EU and the US will greatly benefit from TTIP – closer economic cooperation will not only lead to greater growth in both constituencies but also increase our ability to promote sustainable growth and regulatory oversight internationally.

a. Investment Court System

The creation of an investment court system as a part of the TTIP would work to promote the uniform implementation of new regulations in both the EU and the US. Henceforth the EU and US would work together in creating uniform safety and production standards that will lead to more sustainable forms of economic growth. The EU benefits from being the largest economy and trading bloc in the world. Our market weight allows us to set competitive standards that other states must abide by in order to continue to trade with us. This normative power is meaningful in that we can work to enforce an international trade regime that promotes not just welfare of the economy but also the welfare of the environment. Indeed, greater economic growth cannot and should not leave the environment by the wayside. Both the US and the EU have the ability and responsibility to aid small business in their use of new technology that allows them to do more with less. One of the main responsibilities of such a court system would be to act as an independent arbiter of disputes between states and businesses, acting in a manner that enforces regulatory standards across states.

b. Removing Tariffs and Quotas

An important component of any trade regime is the tax system therein embedded. By removing tariffs and quotas between the US and EU, the Presidency believes that we can best facilitate economic growth and entrepreneurship. Tariffs and other trade barriers only work to protect domestic industries from their foreign counterparts in a way that distorts true value of goods in the market place. The EU has already removed all barriers of this type and should remove all such barriers between itself and the US. While some state subsidies will continue to exist, such as the Common Agricultural Policy in the EU, we must work to phase out such systems in order to facilitate competition and cooperation in the market place. This will not only work to boost growth domestically and within the US, it will also boost growth internationally as more states are able to trade with us at a lower cost.

III. Concluding remarks

Europe must look ahead in its foreign policy. The crisis in Syria and its neighboring states will not be forgotten, we must play a proactive role in facing it and make sure that the rights and dignity of those at risk are upheld. The EU must come together and create a uniform response to our acceptance of refugees. We cannot let differences in opinion lead to an inability to cooperate on such an important issue as this. Additionally, TTIP will be a great opportunity for us to put forth a meaningful program of sustainable growth that will not just benefit ourselves, but others as well. Economic growth is a must, but so is sustainable governance.

The strength of Europe stems not just from our institutions, but also from our people, ideas, beliefs, and our drive; everything is possible and achievable when we put our minds to it. The Dutch presidency is honored to be working with the rest of the EU on these important issues and greatly looks forward to the upcoming discussions at the summit.