



UNHCR

The UN Refugee Agency



I. About Chairs

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

My name is Alina Fleischmann, and I'm honored to serve as your Head Chair for GMUNC 2025. I'm currently a student at Gunn High School, and this will be my tenth MUN conference! Over the years, MUN has become a huge part of my life—from New York to Hawaii and now my third GMUNC, I've not only gained valuable experience and met amazing people but also found a community that feels like a second family.

I'm especially passionate about human rights and environmental policy, with committees like UNHCR and UNEP always sparking my interest. What I love most about MUN, though, is the space it creates for connection, empowerment, and (to me the most important part) diplomacy.

Outside of MUN, I'm interested in science—particularly neurodevelopment, neurodiversity, and mental health advocacy. And when I'm not deep in my clinical research, I'm probably reading, baking, or spending time with my cats, Mia and Max.

It's a privilege to chair again this year, and I look forward to fostering a welcoming, thoughtful, and solutions-focused committee. Whether this is your first conference or your tenth, I hope you feel empowered and engaged every step of the way. Best of luck with your position papers—I can't wait to meet you all this October!

Warmly, **Alina Fleischmann**



Dear esteemed Delegates,

My name is Alex Himmelbauer, and I am excited to be your co-chair for this specialized committee! Currently, I am a Junior(not as I write this) at Gunn High School. This is my second year with MUN, and I am lucky to be able to co-chair this committee. I hope to continue to participate in MUN for many years to come!

Here is some info about me: Besides intense engineering, math grinding, and MUN, some of my interests outside of academics include rock climbing, tennis, and reading semi-decent dystopian novels.

I hope that this committee will run smoothly. I can't wait to meet all the delegations and learn about and experience all of your incredible resolutions. Throughout my MUN experience, I have made many friends and got to know a lot of different people, and I hope you will too. Now that we are introduced, you should now go write an amazing position paper.

Good luck and happy writing, **Alex Himmelbauer**

II. Foreword

Welcome to the Gunn Model United Nations Conference XII and the UNHCR German refugee crisis committee. Having previously head chaired GMUNC, I am honored to be a part of this conference again and excited for another memorable year.

This committee will tackle the ongoing refugee crisis in Germany. As asylum applications surge, delegates must find effective ways to integrate refugees without overwhelming local communities or violating Germany's strict asylum laws. *Your challenge (if you chose to accept it): solve the current crisis—and respond to new ones as they unfold in committee!* Since this is a specialized committee, crisis updates and directive writing will occur but crisis notes and crisis arcs will not be applicable.

Position papers are due on October 3 to be considered for a research award, with the final deadline on October 10 for general awards (all awards except research awards). If you do not submit a position paper by this date (10/10), you will **NOT** be eligible for any committee awards. In addition we will not tolerate any use of AI, if a sufficient detection of AI is found you will be disqualified from **ALL** awards. Please send position papers in **PDF format** (we will not accept sharing of google docs or any other methods) and committee-specific inquiries to the committee email address: **gmunc.xii.unhcr@gmail.com**

Additionally, all delegates are required to complete contact and medical forms to participate in the conference. Please confirm with your delegation that the required documents have been submitted.

I wish you the best with writing your position papers and look forward to seeing everyone on October 11, 2025 for GMUNC XII.

Alina Fleischmann
Head Chair

III. About Committee

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), is dedicated to protecting people forced to flee their homes due to conflict, persecution, and violence. Since 1950, it has led global efforts to ensure that displaced and stateless people can access safety, legal protection, and the chance to rebuild their lives. (1) UNHCR responds rapidly to emergencies, delivering life-saving aid within days and deploying expert teams to protect basic rights. Beyond emergency relief, the agency works with over 100 countries to strengthen asylum systems and find long-term solutions—whether that means voluntary return, resettlement, or integration. Above all, UNHCR puts displaced people at the center of its work, treating them not just as beneficiaries, but as partners in shaping their futures. (2)

IV. Introduction

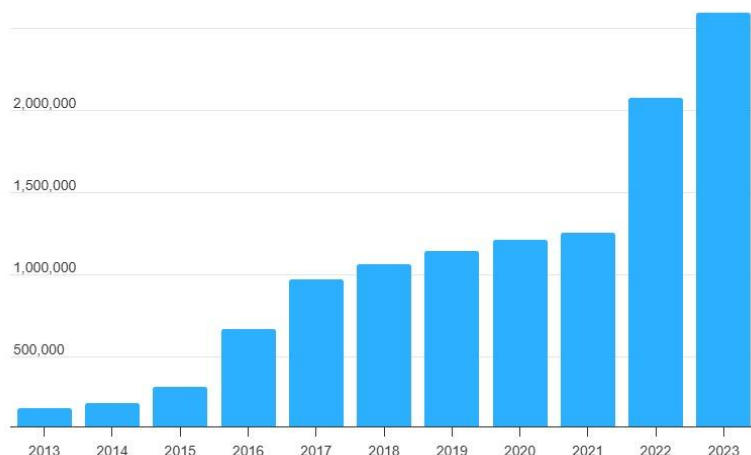


Immigration Protests at the Reichstags Building

(Image: Tens of thousands gathered across cities like Hamburg, Munich, and Leipzig on February 2, 2025, to protest center-right leader Friedrich Merz's proposed migration policies, which gained support from the far-right AfD. Demonstrators accused Merz of violating Germany's postwar political consensus by cooperating with nationalist parties.

Photo by Kirsten Grieshaber / AP) (3)

The German refugee crisis refers to the sharp increase in asylum seekers entering Germany in 2015 and 2016, when over one million refugees arrived—making it one of the largest population movements in Europe since World War II (4)(5). Which can be seen in the graph below:



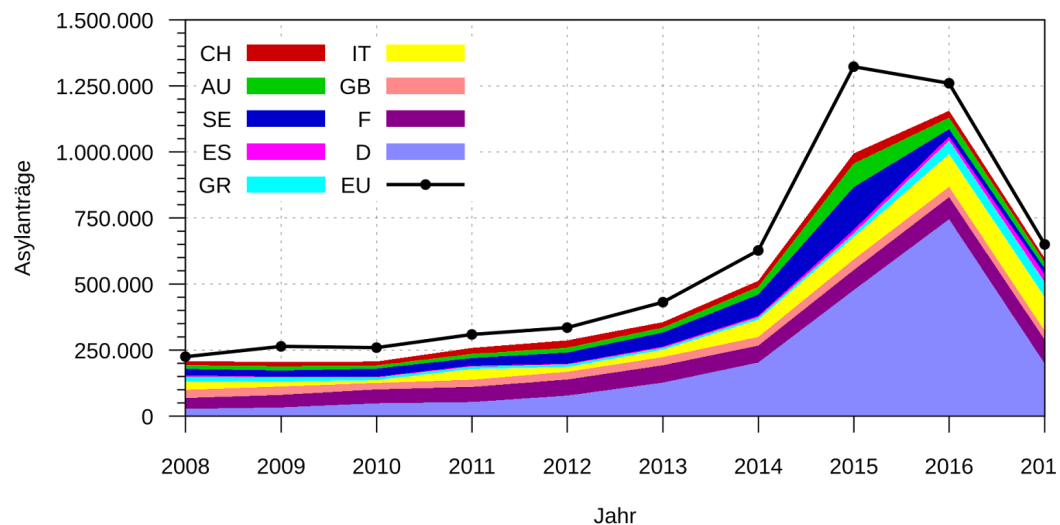
Between 2015 and 2023, the number of refugees granted asylum in Germany rose nearly tenfold, from just over 300,000 to more than 2.5 million. While the refugee surge was a European-wide issue, Germany accepted the vast majority of newcomers, making it the epicenter of the crisis (6).

This unprecedented migration was driven by a convergence of global events. The aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis (7), prolonged instability from U.S.-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the Arab Spring uprisings (8) all contributed to regional chaos and widespread displacement—particularly in Syria. The Assad regime's violent crackdown on protests led to a brutal civil war, resulting in severe humanitarian conditions, and mass migration. Due to their proximity to the European Union, many refugees fled to EU border nations, quickly overwhelming local systems (9). And while the dramatic increase of refugees was a European phenomenon, Germany absorbed the vast majority of them:

(Graph is in german. The y-axis says: "asylum seekers" and x-axis says: "year".)

(Red/ CH= Switzerland
Green/ AU= Austria
Dark Blue/ SE = Sweden
Hot Pink/ ES = Spain
Light Blue/ GR = Greece
Yellow/ IT= Italy
Coral/ GB = Great Britain
magenta/ F = France
Purple/ D = Germany)

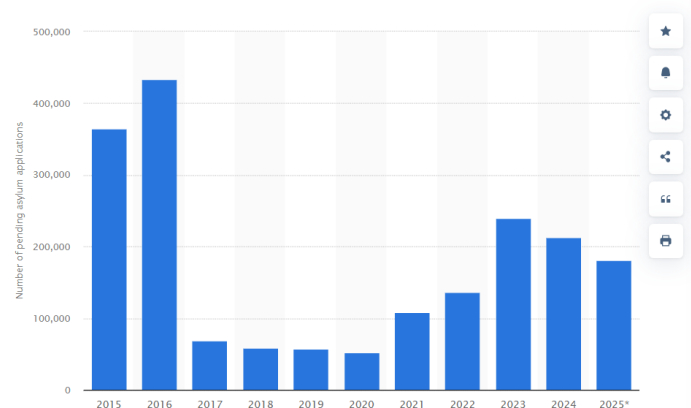
(10)



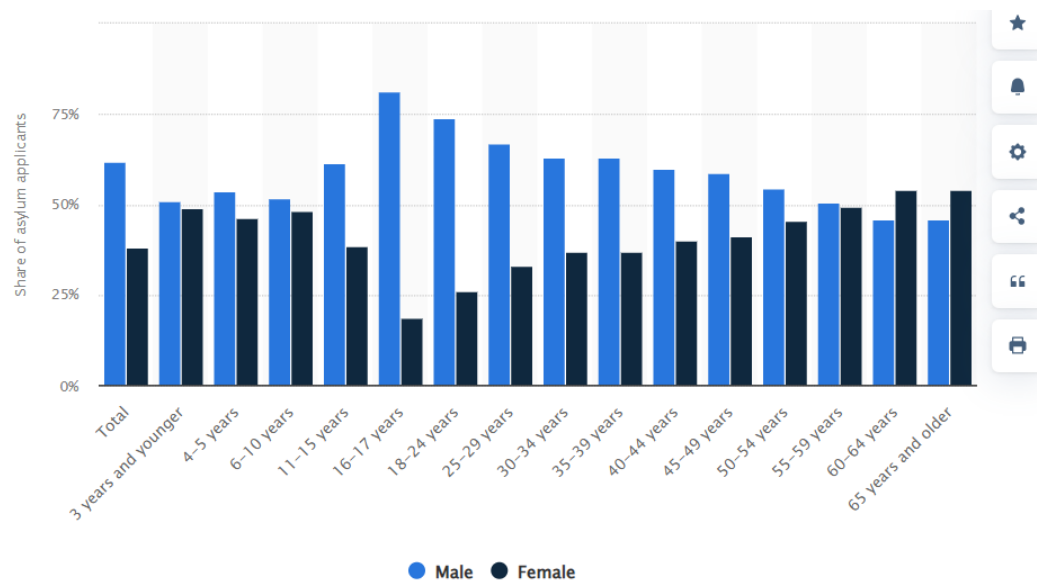
Under the EU's

Dublin-II Regulation (established in 2003 and updated in 2013), asylum seekers are required to apply for asylum in the first EU member state they enter (11). This law assigns responsibility for processing asylum claims to that initial country of entry, aiming to prevent multiple applications across different states and ensure orderly asylum procedures within the EU (12). But the sheer volume of arrivals made this system unmanageable, pushing many refugees deeper into Europe. As traditional asylum countries like France and the UK reduced their intake, Germany became the primary destination—attracted by its strong economy, social services, and reputation for tolerance and humanitarianism (13). The crisis culminated in Chancellor Angela Merkel's iconic "[Wir schaffen das](#)" ("We can do this") speech in August 2015, a statement that came to symbolize both Germany's openness and the significant challenges of integration (14) (15).

However, After peaking in fall 2015 and the subsequent closure of the Balkan routes and ratification of the EU-Turkey agreement, the number of asylum seekers dropped back to 2014 levels in 2017- as seen in the graph to the right (16).



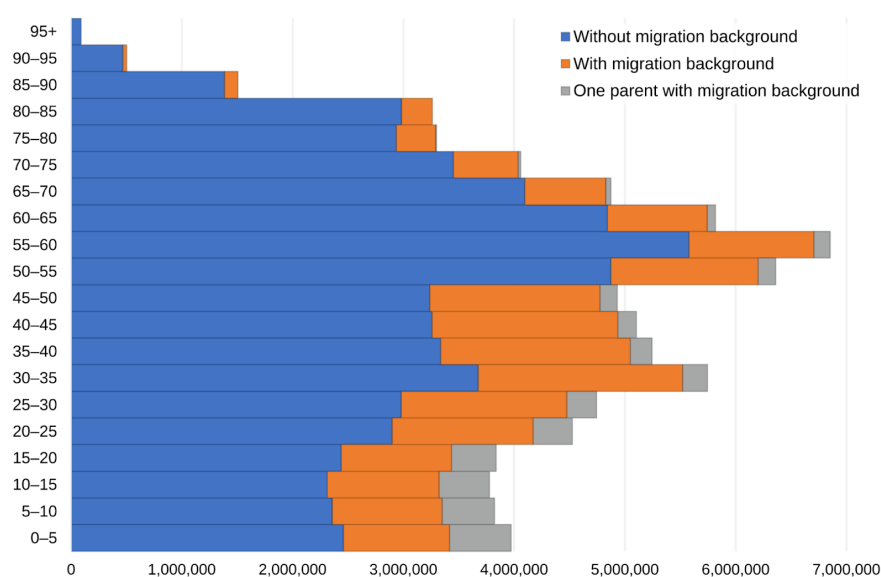
In terms of demographics- most of the refugees came from Syria, Afghanistan, and Turkey, and are predominantly Muslim (17). Germany does not collect ethnic or racial data, but ancestry and origin suggest a high proportion of Middle Eastern and South Asian backgrounds. Around 66% of the arrivals were male (18), with a notable gender imbalance among younger age groups (16–24). In fact, almost all age demographics of asylum seekers had a majority of males. (19) This demographic makeup has influenced both integration policies and public debate, making the refugee crisis not only a humanitarian issue, but also a cultural and political one that continues to shape Germany today. See graphic below:



Age Range of Asylum Applicants (19)

And migrants now constitute a significant fraction of the overall population in Germany:

Age structure by migration background – 2021



V. Historical Context

Germany's 2015–16 refugee crisis did not emerge overnight; it was the product of seven decades of policy, memory, and geopolitics colliding with a perfect storm of wars and economic shocks. After World War II, Germans adopted a strong moral duty (21), summarized in the motto “never again”, to protect the displaced, and for decades, asylum numbers remained manageable. Germany's remembrance culture (22), centered on Holocaust commemoration and the pledge that mass displacement must never be tolerated again, underpinned generous asylum laws from the 1950s to the 1990s (23).

‘Never again is now’: 1938 Nazi pogrom anniversary marked in Germany



(Image: On November 9, 2023, Germany marked the 85th anniversary of the 1938 Nazi pogroms with solemn ceremonies at the rebuilt Beth Zion synagogue in Berlin—recently attacked again. Holocaust survivor Margot Friedländer, 102, and Chancellor Olaf Scholz joined others to condemn rising antisemitism and reaffirm Germany's commitment to “Never Again.”) (Photo by John MacDougall/AFP/Getty Images; Reporting by Kate Connolly, *The Guardian*)(24)

The 1990 Dublin II Regulation (updated to Dublin III in 2013) (25) required refugees to apply in the first EU country where they entered, unintentionally overloading border states like Greece and Italy while shielding Germany from large numbers—until 2015.

A combination of global catalysts triggered a massive migration wave. The 2008–09 financial crisis (7) deepened instability across the Middle East and North Africa. Prolonged U.S.-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan produced persistent refugee flows, and the Arab Spring (8)—especially Syria's civil war beginning in 2011—displaced over six million Syrians. By 2015, the EU's border and asylum systems collapsed under migration pressure, and waves of migrants moved north through the Balkan route. As the EU's border and asylum systems crumbled under the weight of unprecedented migration flows, pressure mounted on Germany to act. Faced with humanitarian urgency and overwhelmed neighboring states, Germany abandoned standard EU border protocols. On August 31, 2015, Chancellor Angela Merkel made a defining decision: she

suspended enforcement of the Dublin Regulation and declared "[Wir schaffen das](#)" ("We can do this"), signaling Germany's willingness to accept the influx of refugees (14) (15). This statement not only opened the country's borders to over one million people but also marked a historic shift in European asylum policy—placing Germany at the moral and logistical center of the crisis.

Surveys showed that most Germans initially welcomed the refugee (26), and over half volunteered in some form as part of the broader "Willkommenskultur" (27). But the strain of such rapid influx soon fueled political backlash. In 2016, Germany and the EU implemented new controls: the Balkan route was closed, the EU-Turkey deal (28) was brokered to contain irregular arrivals in Turkey in exchange for financial aid, and the Integration Act imposed new requirements for language, training, and distribution of asylum seekers. Family reunification was partially frozen, harsher deportation laws were implemented, and border controls were debated amid growing public skepticism—over 60% of Germans supported a cap on refugee intake (29).

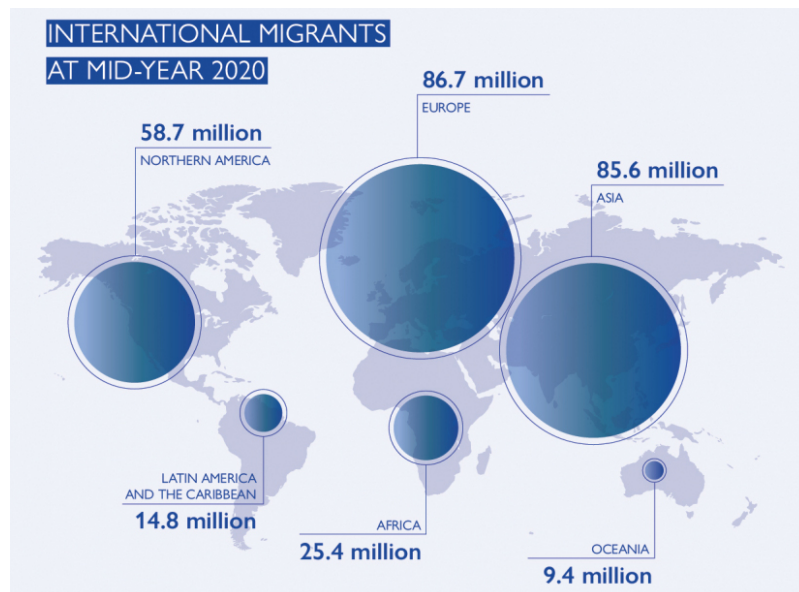


(Image: "Refugees Are Welcome Here" – Protesters in Dresden, Germany, march in solidarity with asylum seekers on August 29, 2015, following a wave of anti-migrant demonstrations. Organized by the Anti-Nazi Alliance, the rally drew thousands to oppose xenophobia in the heart of Pegida territory. Photo: Zentralbild/dpa/Corbis) (30)

These shifts coincided with the rapid rise of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), which entered several state parliaments in 2016 on an anti-refugee platform. By 2023, the number of recognized refugees in Germany had climbed to over 2.5 million (31), with top countries of origin including Syria, Afghanistan, and Turkey. About two-thirds of those arriving in 2015–16 were male, especially among the 16–24 age group—a demographic reality that was often politicized in debates over integration and security (32).

Ultimately, Germany's refugee crisis was shaped by decades of historical memory, structural EU policy gaps, and rapidly evolving geopolitical realities. It continues to influence asylum debates and the balance between humanitarian responsibility and political feasibility in Europe today.

VI. Past UN Action



(Image: Number of foreign migrants per continent, totaled)

As the amount of people living in foreign countries increases year over year, the UN has created resolutions to address the wide-scale migration. UN action on the matter had existed since the very conception of it; the UN preceded over the formation of an independent Jewish state: Israel. Focusing on immigration specifically, a few important resolutions have been realized. (33)

First, shortly after the formation of the UN, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was drafted. Contained within was article 13; 1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State, and 2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country. The second section of article 13 contributed to the basis for asylum laws in many UN member states. While not technically an action, the UDHR was instrumental and acted as a moral commitment for western policy makers.

In 1951, a framework for the legal meaning of a refugee was written. The 1951 Refugee Convention (34), it and its subsequent 1967 Protocol created standardized protections for refugees. It outlined a basic set of rights for every refugee, and is an internationally binding treaty, meaning any country that agreed to the terms would face scrutiny and prosecution if shown to defy its statutes. The extension, (1967 Protocol) expanded the scope of the treaty. It removed geographical and time requirements for legal refugee status, as the paper was originally meant to apply to persons displaced by the events of WW2, and only to people within Europe. The expansion now allowed for global refugee claims, and now applied to after 1951. The protocol caused the treaty to apply to many more countries, and hence, many more countries around the globe signed on.

Lastly, a more recent resolution concerning refugee rights was The New York Declaration (2016). This resolution explored larger scale movements of refugees, and reaffirmed the rights of refugees established in the 1951 Refugee Convention(34) by signatories 65 years earlier.

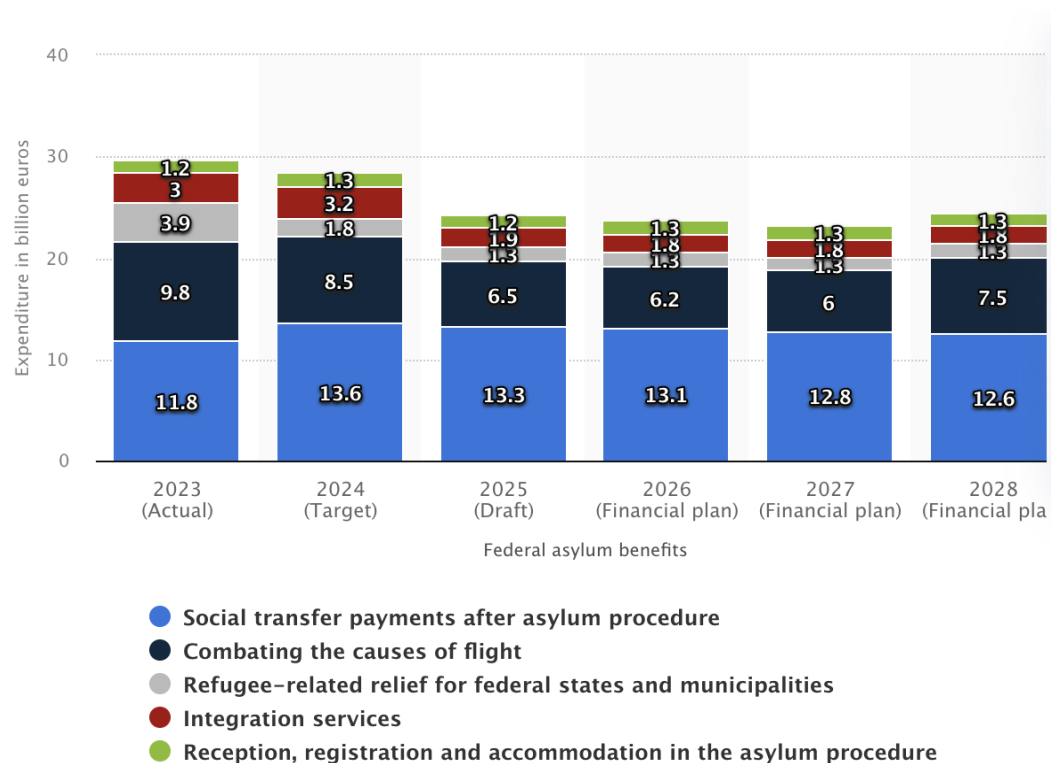
Essentially, the UN established a comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF), which intends to relieve pressure on host countries, improve refugee self sufficiency, enhance third world options for refugees, and improve the origin countries to allow for safe and successful return. In summary, this resolution reaffirmed human rights of refugees, and compelled UN member states to cooperate with each other to help those with significant immigration crises.

The UN's extensive history of action on refugee crises is ever relevant today. To resolve the current German refugee crisis, delegates need to reflect on previous action to reach a resolution that promotes peace and works effectively.

VII. Current Situation

Germany is once again facing a refugee crisis of significant proportions, marked by both logistical strain and escalating political and social consequences. Following the initial 2015–2016 wave, a renewed surge in refugee arrivals after 2023 has overwhelmed Germany's existing infrastructure and intensified public debate (35). In 2023 alone, the German federal government spent approximately €29.7 billion on refugee-related efforts—including €11.8 billion in social transfer payments, alongside substantial investments in integration measures and efforts to address the root causes of displacement. This level of expenditure now exceeds what the state allocates to traditional (36) social welfare for German citizens, reflecting a growing tension over resource distribution. Social welfare payments to German citizens, on the other hand, while substantial, have seen a decline in recent years, with €22.1B disbursed in 2019 (37), and as seen in the graph below a In 2023, Germany spent €29.7B on refugees, including €11.8B in social transfers.

Graph : (In 2023, Germany spent €29.7B on refugees, including €11.8B in social transfers. Costs are expected to drop to €23.2B by 2027, then rise slightly in 2028. Source: Statista, Jan 13, 202) (38)



One of the most pressing subissues is housing. Refugees placed in subsidized accommodations are competing with low- and middle-income German residents for limited housing availability, deepening the crisis in an already overstressed real estate market (39). In the realm of education, refugee students—often lacking fluency in German—are integrated into mainstream classrooms. This has placed additional burdens on teachers, led to cultural clashes, and contributed to declining academic standards in some public schools (40). Socially, the arrival of large numbers of refugees, many of whom come from culturally conservative or orthodox Muslim backgrounds, has challenged Germany's liberal societal values and sparked debates about integration, gender norms, and religious tolerance (41).

The short-term effects of this crisis are visible (42) in stretched public services, increased social friction, and rising dissatisfaction among both native Germans and migrants. But it is the long-term effects that raise the most concern. Economically, Germany finds itself at a crossroads: its industrial base is eroding in the face of global digital competition, particularly from the U.S., while increasing portions of its stagnant GDP are being funneled into supporting a growing refugee population instead of spurring innovation or economic revitalization (43). Social tensions continue to rise as more citizens struggle to maintain their standard of living and perceive refugees as a threat to their economic security and cultural identity.

Politically, these tensions have significantly strengthened extremist parties (44)—most notably the far-right "Alternative für Deutschland" (AfD), often associated with neo-Nazi ideology (45). In the February 2025 Bundestag elections, the AfD surged to 20.4% of the popular vote, becoming the second-largest party in parliament and marking the largest increase in support of any party since 2021 (an increase of 10.4%). This sharp rise reflects deepening divide within German society and poses a serious challenge to the country's democratic stability.

Image: (German Election 2025: CDU Leads- Friedrich Merz's CDU secures the most votes, aiming to swiftly form a new government.) (46)

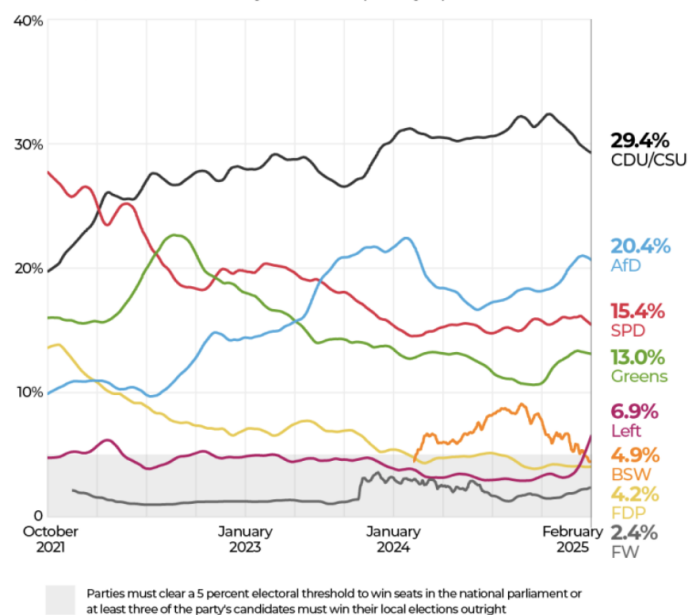
This political shift is destabilizing Germany's traditional party coalitions and hampering moderate policy and governance. Alarming, the rise in polarization and scapegoating of migrants echoes patterns seen in Germany's Weimar Republic—a historical parallel that serves as a sobering reminder of how economic hardship and social division can erode democratic institutions.

In summary, what began as a humanitarian challenge has evolved into a complex national crisis—testing Germany's infrastructure, values, and political resilience.

GERMANY ELECTIONS 2025

Poll tracker: February 22

On February 23, Germany will hold snap federal elections after the collapse of Chancellor Olaf Scholz's SPD-led three-party coalition with FDP and Greens. The CDU/CSU alliance currently leads in the polls by 9 points over the AfD.



VIII. Possible solutions/ Questions to Consider:

When considering potential areas for solutions, delegates should think broadly but strategically. One major area is welfare and resource management—how can refugee support systems be made more efficient and transparent while still ensuring that people’s dignity and basic needs are met? Another area to explore is EU border and asylum reform, focusing on how member states can better coordinate border control, asylum processing, and share responsibilities more fairly.

Delegates should also examine legal pathways and processing, including expanding safe and legal migration routes and improving the speed and consistency of asylum decisions to reduce uncertainty and pressure on host systems. Addressing the root causes of forced migration is equally important—through targeted international aid, development efforts, and diplomatic engagement, it may be possible to reduce displacement at its source.

Finally, integration and social cohesion must be prioritized. Consider how access to education, language services, and inclusive public messaging can support long-term stability, mutual respect, and a stronger sense of community.

These are broad starting points, and in committee, we encourage you to research further and propose clear, concrete, and actionable solutions grounded in evidence and feasibility.

IX. Goals for Committee

- Find immediate response to German border crisis
- Find solution to supporting the current refugees in Germany (housing, food, education, economy)
- Address incoming refugees crisis
- Rebuild refugee laws with EU and build better regulations
- **RESPOND TO CRISIS UPDATES!**

X. Committee Members

1. Syria
2. Afghanistan
3. Turkey
4. Iraq
5. Greece
6. Italy
7. Austria
8. Hungary
9. Serbia
10. North Macedonia
11. Bosnia and Herzegovina
12. France
13. United Kingdom
14. Sweden
15. Poland
16. Belgium

17. Netherlands
18. Spain
19. Lebanon
20. Jordan
21. Iran
22. Egypt
23. Bulgaria
24. Croatia
25. Czech Republic

Important Note:

Germany will **not** be an active member of this committee and the position will not be filled by a delegate (though Germany will be a part of crisis updates and the backroom).

Countries are ranked by relevance and importance, with higher-ranked roles more likely to be assigned. Not all positions may be filled, and priority goes to filling lower numbers (ex: 3 prioritized over 16).

Remember, success depends on how delegates use their positions, not just the power of the country itself! (A lower number does not mean more likely to get an award)

XI. References

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