



AHPMUN

September 25-26



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO)

Specialized Committee



KNOWLEDGE • INTEGRITY • COMPASSION

AHPMUN September 25th and 26th

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from Secretariat	4
Letter from Chair	5
Letter from CoChair/Crisis Manager	6
Confrence/Committee Policies	7
Topic A	
Introduction	8
Background	9
Current Situation	10-11
Issues to Consider	11-12
Possible Solutions	13
Questions to Consider	14
Works Cited	15
Topic B	
Introduction	16
Background	17
Current Situation	18
Issues to Consider	19
Possible Solutions	20
Questions to Consider	21
Works Cited	22
Delegation List/Position Dossier	23



Letter From the Secretariat

Letter From the Secretariat

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of the entire Secretariat, we are thrilled to welcome you to the twelfth session of AHPMUN! This year, we've worked harder than ever to make AHPMUN bigger and better than any conference before it, and we cannot wait to share it with you.

As the executive team—Arina Petrushina, Jonathan Schwartz, and Mason Cohen—alongside our dedicated faculty advisor, Mr. Mark Gruskin, we've poured countless hours into building two days of challenging debate, meaningful collaboration, and global problem-solving that you'll remember long after the gavel falls.

Model UN isn't just an extracurricular for us — it's genuinely our favorite part of high school, and that passion is exactly why we've pushed so hard to make this year's conference the best one yet. Every detail, from committee topics to logistics, was built with you in mind.

At AHPMUN, we hold every delegate to a high standard of **integrity, respect, and diplomacy**. Please remember that **plagiarism and prewritten material are strictly prohibited**. Your work should be your own, and your words should reflect thoughtful research and genuine engagement with your committee's topics.

Respectful and constructive debate is expected at all times — our goal is to foster a space where ideas can be challenged, but people are never disrespected.

Position papers are required to be eligible for awards, and should be submitted on time. That said, we want to stress that awards aren't the heart of this conference. What matters most is that you grow as delegates, thinkers, and global citizens. We cannot wait to see the energy, enthusiasm, and creativity you bring to this year's conference. Whether you're a first-time delegate or a seasoned veteran, AHPMUN XII is for you, and we hope it becomes a true highlight of your MUN journey.

See you soon!

Sincerely,

Arina Petrushina, Jonathan Schwartz, and Mason Cohen

AHPMUN XII Executive Team

Mr. Mark Gruskin

Faculty Advisor





Letter From the Chair

NATO

Hello everyone! My name is Lucas Gavrilesco. I'm a senior at American Heritage, and I'm extremely excited to be chairing the NATO committee alongside David and Aryav. This will be my third year competing with the Heritage MUN team, and I currently serve as the Undersecretary General of Logistics for the travel team as well as the USG of Specialized Committees for AHPMUN. MUN has truly been one of my favorite activities throughout high school, and I'm so grateful for all the people I've met and experiences I've been able to have through it. Aside from Model UN, I'm very involved in my school's HOSA chapter and Pre-Med Society. I hope to be a doctor and one day work in hospital management. In my free time, I enjoy playing pickleball with friends, watching sports and TV, and playing the piano.

My goal as chair is to make sure debate remains respectful, fair, fast-paced, and productive while making sure delegates have the opportunity to be creative and take risks. I also always appreciate when delegates include some funny, but appropriate, hooks in their speeches. Let your personality shine! Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions—we have all been in your shoes countless times and we are more than happy to help! Good luck!!!! pl1005052@ahschool.com

Hello Delegates, My name is David Gonzalez. I'm a senior at American Heritage, and I could not be more excited to serve as your chair for the NATO committee and to witness some fantastic debate. I joined the Model UN Team last year, and it has quickly become one of my favorite activities. From my experience in MUN, I've learned that it's not just about winning awards, but about meeting new people and making friends with similar goals and mindsets. I couldn't be happier to be chairing alongside my fellow teammates, who I can now proudly call my friends thanks to MUN. On a more serious note, Model UN—and especially this committee—will expose you to geopolitical issues, public speaking, diplomacy, and leadership skills that are hard to find elsewhere. Outside of Model UN, I also compete in Moot Court and aspire to become a lawyer someday. I have a passion for architecture and hope to major in Architecture in 2027. In my free time, you'll likely find me playing pickleball, fishing, or watching hockey (feel free to ask for my Stanley Cup predictions!). I am extremely eager to see how this committee unfolds and how each of you will perform as delegates. I'm confident that you will bring sophisticated ideas, deliver substantive speeches, and demonstrate an admirable level of diplomacy throughout the conference. (Please feel free to ask me or any of the chairs any questions as we have all been in your shoes). GOOD LUCK!!!

pl217983@ahschool.com



Letter From the Co-Chair

NATO

Hello everyone! My name is Aryav Thakur, and I am very excited to be co-chairing the NATO Specialized Committee at AHPMUN. Model UN has become one of my favorite parts of being at American Heritage because of the people I have met and the experiences I have had through the team. Whether this is your first conference or you have competed before, I hope to make NATO an exciting and welcoming committee for everyone. Outside of Model UN, I am involved in HOSA and debate, and I am interested in medicine and scientific research. When I am not busy with school, I enjoy playing pickleball, trying new restaurants, watching Family Guy, and rewatching Minions and The Croods more often than I should. I am looking forward to meeting all of you at AHPMUN. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions! pl1004059@ahschool.com

Committee Staff

Lucas Gavrilesco, Chair

David Gonzalez, Chair

Aryav Thakur, Co-Chair



Conference & Committee Policies

Conference Policies:

AHPMUN is committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive, and professional environment in which all delegates can participate confidently, develop their skills, and enjoy the conference experience. Every participant is expected to treat fellow delegates, chairs, members of the Secretariat, staff, and guests with respect and courtesy throughout the conference.

Delegates are expected to engage in debate in a diplomatic and constructive manner. Delegates must respect differing opinions and any form of bullying, harassment, discrimination, intimidation, or any personal attack will not be tolerated at AHPMUN. Professional conduct and respectful language should be maintained at all times, both during formal committee sessions and in informal interactions.

All participants must follow these conference rules, committee procedures, and any other instructions given by the Secretariat or committee chairs. Behaviour that disrupts committee proceedings or negatively affects the experience of any other participants will not be tolerated.

By attending AHPMUN, all delegates agree to uphold these standards and contribute to a respectful, collaborative, and enjoyable conference for everyone.

Thank you, and we look forward to a wonderful conference!

NATO Committee Policies:

- The NATO committee will operate following standard Model UN General Assembly parliamentary procedure.
- To open the conference, delegates will give opening speeches advocating for a certain topic to be selected. Delegates will then vote on a topic to address throughout the weekend.
- Delegates will work in groups called blocs to write resolution papers addressing the chosen topic.
- Delegates may have to respond to a crisis update with a shorter directive, but the objective of the committee will remain to write an all-encompassing resolution paper.
- This background guide serves to give delegates a baseline understanding of the topics to be discussed, but delegates are both allowed and encouraged to perform their own research to enhance their knowledge of both the topics at hand at their country's stance.



Topic A: The Future of European Security:

NATO's Role in the Russia–Ukraine War

Introduction

NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was built on a single promise: an attack on one member is an attack on all. For most of its history, that promise was tested only in theory. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 changed that. It is the largest land war in Europe since 1945, and it has forced NATO to confront questions the alliance had not seriously faced since the Cold War: how far collective defense extends, what obligations exist to a partner that is not a member, and how to support a war effort without becoming a direct party in it.

Ukraine is not a NATO member, so Article 5 does not apply to it. Yet NATO states, individually and through Alliance-adjacent coordination, have supplied the weapons, training, intelligence, and financing that have kept Ukraine's defense intact. At the 2026 Ankara Summit, Allies pledged seventy billion euros in military assistance for Ukraine for the year alone, with a commitment to sustain a similar levels into 2027 (NATO, "Ankara Summit Declaration" 2026). At the same time, members states are negotiating what postwar security guarantees for Ukraine should look like, whether through eventual membership, a coalition of bilateral commitments, or some hybrid arrangement that falls short of Article 5 (NPR 2026).

This committee will not attempt to resolve the war itself when addressing the topic. Delegates instead represent NATO's decision-making body, and must decide what the Alliance should do next: how much further to extend military and financial support, how to manage the risk of direct confrontation with a nuclear-armed Russia, how to handle Ukraine's membership aspirations, and how to design a security architecture for Europe that can outlast this war. These are not abstract questions. Instead, they involve trade-offs between deterrence and escalation, between solidarity with Ukraine and the cohesion of the Alliance itself, and between the interests of frontline states in Eastern Europe and members further from the fighting. Delegates should come prepared to negotiate seriously, because NATO's decisions here will shape the security order in Europe for generations to come.



NATO: BACKGROUND TOPIC A

NATO was founded in 1949 by the United States, Canada, and ten Western European states as a collective defense pact against Soviet expansion, built around Article 5's mutual defense guarantee (NATO 2026). For four decades the Alliance's central task was deterring a Soviet attack on Western Europe. The Cold War's end did not end NATO; instead, the Alliance expanded eastward through the 1990s and 2000s, eventually including former Warsaw Pact states, and, in 2004, three former Soviet republics in the Baltics. Moscow viewed this enlargement as a broken promise and a direct threat, a grievance it has cited repeatedly to justify its actions toward Ukraine.

The turning point came at NATO's 2008 Bucharest Summit, where the Alliance declared that Ukraine and Georgia "will become" members without setting a timeline or offering a Membership Action Plan. That ambiguity satisfied no one: it simultaneously alarmed Russia while leaving Ukraine without Article 5 protections. Months later, Russia invaded Georgia, and in 2014, after Ukraine's pro-Russian president was ousted, Russia annexed Crimea and backed separatist forces in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine. This launched a low-intensity war that persisted for eight years despite the Minsk agreements meant to end it.

On February 24, 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion aimed at toppling Ukraine's government. The assault on Kyiv may have failed, but Russian forces seized large areas of southern and eastern Ukraine. NATO did not deploy troops to fight, but the Alliance and its individual members became Ukraine's primary source of weapons, ammunition, training, and intelligence while coordinating sweeping sanctions against Russia. Finland and Sweden abandoned decades of neutrality to join NATO in 2023 and 2024, doubling the Alliance's border with Russia. Over the years that have followed, the war has settled into a grinding contest of attrition, with front lines shifting slowly and at enormous cost to both sides.



NATO: CURRENT SITUATION TOPIC A

As of mid-2026, the war is in its fifth year with no ceasefire in place. Russia controls roughly 18 to 20 percent of Ukraine's internationally recognized territory, an area larger than Portugal. This includes Crimea, nearly all of Luhansk, most of Donetsk, and large sections of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson (Ukraine War Analytics 2026; LegalClarity 2026). The front lines runs about 1,000 kilometers from north of Kharkiv down through Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia to the Dniro River in Kherson (please reference a map as you read this to better understand). The line has moved slowly for over a year now, with Russia making small territorial gains, on the level of a few dozen square miles a month at the cost of heavy personnel loss (Russia Matters casualty estimates alone on the Russian side have topped a million).

Diplomatically, 2026 has been the most active year of negotiation since the invasion began. In January, national security advisers from Ukraine's Western allies met in Kyiv and Paris to work out the shape of postwar security guarantees, with U.S. Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and the European Union both represented at the table (Yahoo News 2026). By January 6, the U.S. ambassador to NATO said allies were "on the cusp" of finalizing a framework built around a roughly fifty country "Coalition of the willing" that would commit to defending Ukraine's front-line forces with air, land, and sea support after any ceasefire, separate from NATO's article 5 (Bacall 2026). France's president described the plan as multilayered international defense guarantees, though many of the operational details remain unresolved (NPR 2026).

That momentum carried into July, when NATO held its annual summit in Ankara. Leaders reaffirmed Article 5 and their 2025 defense-spending pledges, noting that European Allies and Canada have increased core defense investment by more than 139 billion U.S. dollars since committing to reach 5 percent of GDP by 2035 (NATO, "Overview" 2026). The summit's most concrete outcome for Ukraine was the seventy-billion-euro assistance pledge for 2026, financed almost entirely by European Allies and Canada rather than the United States, alongside each commitment to sustain similar support in 2026. U.S. President Donald Trump, who met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, expressed optimism about the prospects for a peace deal.

NATO: CURRENT SITUATION TOPIC A

Even so, a settlement remains elusive: Russia has continued major strikes on Kyiv and other cities through July, including one of its largest ballistic missile barrages of the war, and has shown no public willingness to withdraw from occupied territory. Ukrainian officials have said they hope 2026 will be the “year of peace,” but as one negotiator put it, the hardest parts of any deal are still ahead. NATO enters the second half of 2026 supporting Ukraine at record financial levels while simultaneously negotiating the shape of a security architecture that would need to hold regardless of how or when the fighting ends.

NATO: ISSUES TO CONSIDER TOPIC A

- Membership versus guarantees short of Article 5. NATO’s open-door policy formally commits it to eventual Ukrainian membership, but full membership during active hostilities would obligate every member to Ukraine’s defense immediately, a step several Allies have resisted. Delegates must weigh a phased or conditional membership path against alternative guarantee structures, such as the Coalition of the Willing model under discussion since early 2026, that offer protection without triggering Article 5.
- Escalation risk. Russia has repeatedly invoked its nuclear arsenal in response to Western support for Ukraine. Any decision to deploy NATO troops on Ukrainian soil, establish no-fly zones, or authorize strikes deep into Russian territory raises the risk of direct NATO-Russia confrontation. Delegates must weigh the deterrence against the danger of more war.
- Burden-sharing and defense-industrial capacity. Allies committed at their 2025 summit to reach 5% of GDP in defense-related investment by 2035, and have already increased core defense spending by more than \$139 billion since that pledge (NATO, “Overview” 2026). Sustaining seventy-billion-euro annual assistance packages for Ukraine while rearming Europe’s own militaries strains defense industrial bases and depends on uneven political will across member states.

NATO: ISSUES TO CONSIDER TOPIC A

- Territorial and sovereignty questions. With Russia controlling close to a fifth of Ukraine's internationally recognized territory, any settlement will force a reckoning between Ukraine's legal right to its full territory and the practical reality on the front line, a tension NATO cannot resolve on Ukraine's behalf but must account for in designing postwar guarantees.
- Political durability of western support. Public and political appetite for indefinite military aid varies across member states and has shifted with changes in national leadership, most visibly in shifting U.S. posture toward the war. NATO must consider how to make its commitments credible over years, not news cycles.
- Reconstruction and long-term deterrence architecture. Even a negotiated end to active fighting would leave NATO with the task of deterring renewed aggression, supporting Ukraine's reconstruction, and integrating Ukraine's battle-hardened defense sector into a broader European security framework.

NATO: POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TOPIC A

Delegates should consider solutions across a spectrum from immediate accession to long-term deterrence without membership. One option is a conditional or phased membership pathway, in which Ukraine receives a Membership Action Plan with clear, verifiable benchmarks tied to the end of active hostilities rather than an open-ended promise like the one made at Bucharest in 2008. This would preserve NATO's open-door principle while avoiding the immediate mutual-defense obligations that full wartime membership would trigger.

A second option builds on the security-guarantee framework already under discussion among Allies: a standing multinational force, drawn from a coalition of NATO and partner states, prepared to provide air, land, and sea support to Ukraine's own forces after a ceasefire, without extending Article 5 itself (NPR 2026). This model lets frontline-committed states like the United Kingdom, France, and Poland lead while allowing more cautious members to contribute in supporting roles.

A third approach emphasizes deterrence through NATO's eastern flank rather than inside Ukraine: reinforced multinational battlegroups in the Baltic states, Poland, and Romania, expanded joint exercises, and accelerated integration of Finnish and Swedish forces into Alliance command structures. This option reduces the risk of direct NATO-Russia contact while signaling that further aggression against any NATO member would carry severe cost.

Delegates might also propose expanding defense-industrial cooperation, including joint production agreements that draw on Ukraine's wartime experience in drone and electronic-warfare technology, to sustain both Ukraine's defense and NATO's own rearmament under the 5 percent GDP target. Finally, any resolution should consider a parallel diplomatic track, coordinated with the European Union and the United Nations, addressing sanctions relief, prisoner exchanges, and verification mechanisms tied to a durable ceasefire, so that military guarantees are paired with a credible path to a negotiated peace rather than a frozen, indefinite conflict.

NATO: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER TOPIC A

As delegates prepare, they should research these questions in depth and be ready to defend their position on each:

- Should NATO offer Ukraine a concrete membership timeline before the war ends, or does that create more risk than it deters?
- What security guarantees, short of Article 5 membership, would be credible enough to deter renewed Russian aggression after a ceasefire?
- How should NATO balance continued military support for Ukraine against the risk of direct confrontation with a nuclear-armed Russia?
- What obligations, if any, do individual member states have toward Ukraine that differ from NATO'S obligations as an alliance?
- How should the burden of funding Ukraine's defense and reconstruction be divided among members states with different economics and threat perceptions?
- What role should NATO's eastern-flank member states, such as Poland and the Baltics, play in shaping Alliance policy given their direct exposure to Russian aggression?
- Can NATO design a settlement framework that Ukraine, Russia, and all thirty-two members states would accept, or is lasting peace incompatible with NATO's current posture?
- How should NATO'S 2008 Bucharest pledge and its aftermath inform how the Alliance communicates commitments to aspiring members going forward?

NATO TOPIC A WORKS CITED

Al Jazeera. "Mapping Russian Attacks and Territorial Gains Across Ukraine." Al Jazeera, 24 Feb. 2026, www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/2/24/mapping-russian-attacks-and-territorial-gains-across-ukraine.

Al Jazeera. "NATO Pledges 70 Billion Euros for Ukraine as Trump Praises Peace 'Progress.'" Al Jazeera, 8 July 2026, www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/7/8/nato-pledges-70-billion-euros-for-ukraine-as-trump-praises-peace-progress.

Bacall, Max. "NATO Ambassador Says Ukraine Peace Deal Could Be 'On the Cusp' as Nations Near Finalization of Security Pact." Fox News, 6 Jan. 2026, www.foxnews.com/media/nato-ambassador-says-ukraine-peace-deal-could-on-cusp-nations-near-finalization-security-pact.

Foreign Policy. "Ukraine's U.S. Ambassador on Zelensky's NATO Summit Priorities." Foreign Policy, 6 July 2026, foreignpolicy.com/2026/07/06/nato-summit-ankara-ukraine-zelensky-russia-war/.

LegalClarity. "How Much of Ukraine Does Russia Control Today?" LegalClarity, 15 Apr. 2026, legalclarity.org/how-much-of-ukraine-does-russia-control/.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "The Ankara Summit Declaration." NATO, 8 July 2026, www.nato.int/en/about-us/official-texts-and-resources/official-texts/2026/07/08/the-ankara-summit-declaration.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "Overview — 2026 NATO Summit in Ankara." NATO, July 2026, www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/events/2026/07/overview---2026-nato-summit-in-ankara-.

NPR. "Ukraine Allies Agree to Security Guarantees in Peace Plan." NPR, 6 Jan. 2026, www.npr.org/2026/01/06/g-s1-104730/progress-ukraine-talks-paris-uncertain.

Russia Matters. "The Russia-Ukraine War Report Card, July 15, 2026." Russia Matters, 15 July 2026, www.russiamatters.org/news/russia-ukraine-war-report-card/russia-ukraine-war-report-card-july-15-2026.

Ukraine War Analytics. "Ukraine Territorial Control — Data & Maps 2026." Ukraine War Analytics, 26 Feb. 2026, ukraine-war-analytics.com/regions/territory.html.

Yahoo News. "Security Advisers from Ukraine's Western Allies Join Talks in Kiev." Yahoo News, www.yahoo.com/news/articles/security-advisers-ukraines-western-allies-202524800.html.



NATO TOPIC B: ADDRESSING THE MIGRANT CRISIS IN THE AEGEAN SEA

Introduction

The Aegean Sea separates two NATO allies, Greece and Turkey, by only a few miles of water in places, and for more than a decade that narrow strait has been one of the world's most closely watched migration routes. Hundreds of thousands of people fleeing war, persecution, and poverty in Syria, Afghanistan, and elsewhere have crossed it—often in flimsy inflatable boats operated by smuggling networks that treat human lives as mere cargo. The result has been a recurring humanitarian emergency, thousands of deaths at sea, and a source of persistent friction between two member states whose broader relationships is already strained by disputes over island sovereignty and maritime boundaries.

NATO first stepped directly into the crisis in February 2016, when Germany, Greece, and Turkey requested that the Alliance help stem the smuggling operations feeding the crossings (NATO, “Aegean Sea Fact Sheet” 2016). NATO's Standing Maritime Group 2 was deployed within 48 hours to conduct surveillance and share real-time information with the Greek and Turkish coast guards and with the European Union's border agency. That mission remains one of the few instances of NATO taking on a direct operational role in migration management rather than leaving it entirely to the EU and member states.

A decade later, the picture has shifted again. While arrivals on the Aegean route may have fallen slightly through 2026, driven partly by the collapse of the Assad regime in Syria in December 2024 and a resulting wave of voluntary returns (GAR 2025; GreekReporter 2026). Nonetheless, the underlying drivers of the crisis, instability on NATO's southern periphery; the profitability of human trafficking; and unresolved tension between Greece and Turkey on how to manage their shared maritime borders, have not disappeared. This committee must now decide what role, if any, NATO should play in a crisis that sits at the intersection of humanitarian obligation, border security, and inter-allied relations.



NATO BACKGROUND TOPIC B

The Aegean migration route became a central artery of Europe's 2015 refugee crisis, when nearly one million people, most fleeing Syria's civil war, crossed from the Turkish coast to nearby Greek islands such as Lesbos, Chios, and Kos (IRC 2026). Smuggling networks charged desperate families for spots on overcrowded boats, and more than 3,500 people died attempting the crossing that year alone. Even today, we often hear news reports of capsized vessels in the Aegean filled with immigrants hoping to reach Europe. Indeed, the scale of the crisis overwhelmed Greece's capacity to process arrivals and strained the EU's Schengen system, and migrants moved onward through the Balkans to Germany and other northern states.

Two major frameworks emerged in response. First, on February 11, 2016, NATO defence ministers agreed to deploy Standing Maritime Group 2 to the Aegean at the joint request of Germany, Greece, and Turkey. NATO ships conducted reconnaissance in Greek and Turkish territorial waters and international waters alike, feeding intelligence to national coast guards and Frontex to help authorities intercept smuggling boats and prosecute traffickers (NATO, "Assistance for the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the Aegean Sea" 2026). Second, on March 18, 2016, the European Union and Turkey signed a statement under which migrants arriving irregularly on the Greek islands could be returned to Turkey, with the EU resettling one Syrian refugee directly from Turkey for every Syrian returned.

Both frameworks produced results but fell short of their stated goals. Arrivals dropped after 2016, but the "one-for-one" return mechanism seldom functioned in practice as fewer than 2,300 people were ever returned from Greece to Turkey under the deal (Turkish Minute 2026). Turkey, which today still hosts close to four million refugees including roughly three million Syrians, has periodically accused the EU of failing to deliver the funding and political concessions it was promised, and in 2020 briefly opened its border to pressure Europe during a dispute linked to the war in Syria, encouraging thousands of migrants toward Greece's land border at Evros. Relations between Athens and Ankara over the Aegean have long been complicated by unresolved disputes over the sovereignty and territorial waters of small islands of islets, a rivalry between two NATO members that predates the migration crisis.



NATO CURRENT SITUATION TOPIC B

The most significant recent shift in the Aegean's migration picture is not a policy change but an external event: the fall of the Assad government in Syria. In the time since, more than 100,000 Syrians are estimated to have returned home from Turkey and elsewhere, and while it remains uncertain how permanent this trend will be, it has already begun to reshape the pressures that drive the issue.

That shift shows up clearly in this year's numbers. Greek government data released in May 2026 showed undocumented sea arrivals fell by more than 40% in the first five months of the year compared to the same period in 2026, with the steepest decline on the Eastern Aegean route running from the Turkish mainland to the Greek islands, down 63%, to just over 3,000 arrivals. Greek authorities credit intensified coast guard patrols, expanded surveillance, and closer coordination with Turkey, and note that reported trafficking has seemingly fallen as well.

At the same time, the EU-Turkey deal itself passed its tenth anniversary in March 2026 with a mixed legacy. The European Commission continues to describe it as a success in reducing irregular migration, while human rights organizations argue it has entrenched a system of containment on the Greek islands, weakened asylum protections, and left Turkey shouldering a disproportionate share of the humanitarian burden without receiving the funding it was promised. The Commission's current priorities under the arrangement have shifted to include support for the voluntary, safe, and orderly return of Syrians to Syria, alongside continued border management assistance and aid to refugees still in Turkey.

The broader regional environment is also more volatile than it has been in years. Escalation surrounding Iran and instability in the wider Middle East have turned Eastern Mediterranean shipping lanes into a source of persistent nervousness, and commentary has noted that when the region grows tense, Greece and Turkey are more likely to view their shared maritime space through the lens of national rivalry rather than joint management. The committee inherits a moment where numbers are down but underlying vulnerabilities, a fragile bilateral relationship, an unresolved refugee population in Turkey, and instability beyond NATO's borders remain firmly in place.



NATO ISSUES TO CONSIDER TOPIC B

- The scope of NATO's mandate. NATO is a military alliance, not a humanitarian or migration agency, yet its 2016 actions set a precedent for direct involvement in managing migration flows. Delegates must decide whether NATO should expand, maintain, or wind down this kind of role, and what legal and political limits should govern any future deployments.
- Greek-Turkish relations. Any NATO action in the Aegean must navigate the reality that Greece and Turkey, both NATO members, have unresolved disputes over island sovereignty and maritime boundaries. NATO surveillance activity that one ally sees as impartial support, the other may view through the lens of broader rivalry, so operational decisions cannot be separated from Alliance cohesion.
- Human trafficking and the smuggling economy. The crisis is sustained by ongoing criminal networks that profit from human desperation. Surveillance and interdiction address the symptom but not the underlying cause; delegates should consider whether NATO should take more of a role in prosecuting traffickers rather than just addressing the migrants themselves.
- Durability of the current decline. The recent drop in arrivals is tied in part to the fall of the Assad government, an external and potentially reversible development. NATO must consider how to plan for a scenario in which returns to Syria stall, reverse, or are joined by new displacement from elsewhere in the region, which is experiencing a period of particular volatility.
- Balancing security and humanitarian obligations. Framing migration primarily as a security or trafficking problem risks overlooking that many crossing the Aegean are refugees with legitimate claims to protection under international law. Delegates should weigh how NATO's involvement, if any, can support border security without undermining humanitarian and legal obligations that fall primarily on Greece, Turkey, and the EU.



NATO TOPIC B POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

One option is to formalize and modestly expand NATO's original Standing Maritime Group role, focusing it explicitly on intelligence-sharing with Frontex and national coast guards to disrupt smuggling networks, rather than any function resembling border enforcement itself. This would build on a model both Greece and Turkey have already accepted rather than creating a new, more contested mandate.

A second option centers on trilateral confidence-building between Greece, Turkey, and NATO's broader membership, using the Alliance's convening power to keep migration cooperation insulated from the two countries' separate disputes over island sovereignty. NATO could support technical, non-political working channels for coast guard coordination and search-and-rescue cooperation that continue functioning even when bilateral relations sour over other issues.

A third approach addresses the root instability driving migration rather than only the crossing itself, encouraging member states to coordinate more closely with the EU, the UN, and Syria's transitional authorities to support conditions for safe and voluntary returns, so that the recent decline in Aegean crossings is reinforced rather than reversed. This could include support for reconstruction assistance and monitoring of return conditions, delivered through humanitarian and development channels rather than a NATO military mission.

Finally, delegates might propose a standing early-warning framework, in which NATO's surveillance assets already active in the Eastern Mediterranean feed data not only to Frontex but to a joint Greek-Turkish coordination cell, so that any future surge in crossings, whether from renewed Syrian displacement or another source, triggers a coordinated response rather than a repeat of the unilateral border actions seen in 2020.



NATO TOPIC B QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Should NATO expand its 2016 Aegean maritime mission, maintain it, or wind it down?
- How can NATO support migration management cooperation between Greece and Turkey without becoming entangled in their broader disputes over island sovereignty and maritime boundaries?”
- What obligations, if any, does NATO have toward migrants and refugees crossing the Aegean, given that the Alliance is a military and security organization rather than a humanitarian one?
- How dependent should European migration policy be on continued cooperation from Turkey, and what are the risks of that dependence?
- If the recent decline in Syrian displacement reverses, what mechanisms should already be in place to respond before a crisis re-escalates?
- What is the appropriate division of responsibility between NATO, the European Union, Frontex, and individual member states in managing this crisis going forward?
- How should NATO weigh border security and anti-trafficking objectives against the legal and humanitarian rights of individuals seeking asylum?

NATO TOPIC B WORKS CITED

Athens News (en.rua.gr). "Migration Flows from Turkey to Greece Fell by 63%."

Athens News, 27 May 2026, en.rua.gr/2026/05/27/migration-flows-from-turkey-to-greece-fell-by-63.

GAR (Göç Araştırmaları Derneği). "The EU-Turkey Deal after Nine Years: Between Controversy and Shifting Paradigms." *GAR*, 18 Mar. 2025,

gocarastirmalaridernegi.org/en/yayinlar-en/gar-blog-en/3709-the-eu-turkey-deal-after-nine-years-between-controversy-and-shifting-paradigms.

GreekReporter. "Greece Reports Sharp Drop in Migrant Sea Arrivals in 2026."

GreekReporter, 28 May 2026, greekreporter.com/2026/05/28/greece-reports-sharp-drop-in-migrant-sea-arrivals-in-2026/.

InfoMigrants. "EU-Turkey Migration Deal: A Mixed Record Ten Years On."

InfoMigrants, 27 Mar. 2026, www.infomigrants.net/en/post/70592/euturkey-migration-deal-a-mixed-record-ten-years-on.

International Rescue Committee. "What Is the EU-Turkey Deal?" *IRC in the EU*, 2026, www.rescue.org/eu/article/what-eu-turkey-deal.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "Assistance for the Refugee and Migrant

Crisis in the Aegean Sea." *NATO*, www.nato.int/en/what-we-do/operations-and-missions/assistance-for-the-refugee-and-migrant-crisis-in-the-aegean-sea.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "NATO's Deployment in the Aegean Sea." Fact Sheet, NATO, June 2016,

www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_06/20160610_1606-factsheet-aegean-sea.pdf.

The Irish Times. "The Other NATO Island Crisis: Greece, Turkey and the Aegean Fault Line." *The Irish Times*, 17 Feb. 2026,

www.irishtimes.com/world/europe/2026/02/17/greece-heeds-greenland-stand-off-as-timely-reminder-of-trouble-with-turkey/.

Turkish Minute. "EU-Turkey Migrant Deal Fueled Suffering, Rule of Law

Breakdown, Rights Groups Say on 10th Anniversary." *Turkish Minute*, 18 Mar.

2026, www.turkishminute.com/2026/03/18/eu-turkey-migrant-deal-fueled-suffering-rule-of-law-breakdown-rights-groups-say-on-10th-anniversary/.

ECA Maastricht. "Flashback on the Migration Crisis: Recap on the Migration Crisis in the Aegean Sea." *ECA Maastricht*, 11 Dec. 2023,

ecamaastricht.org/blueandyellow-zoomingin/flashback-on-the-migration-crisis-recap-on-the-migration-crisis-in-the-aegean-sea.



NATO

Delegation List/Position Dossier

- Albania
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Canada
- Croatia
- Czechia
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Montenegro
- The Netherlands
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Turkey
- United Kingdom
- United States of America

