

Challenges of Modern Society

Mass migration

One of the biggest **challenges** Europe faces today is **mass immigration**. Firstly, one has to **distinguish** between **refugees** or **asylum seekers** and **economic migrants**. Refugees **flee** their **homeland** because of wars, conflicts or **persecution**. Racial and religious intolerance in their **country of origin** often force them to move to other countries to ensure the **safety** of their families and escape **genocide**. It is a matter of **survival**. Economic migrants leave their home **in search of** a better life or because there are no job perspectives where they come from. They might migrate **voluntarily**, but indirectly the destruction of their **local economy** as a result of globalisation leaves them no other choice.

The journey to Europe can prove to be risky. **Human trafficking** has become one of the fastest-growing businesses of organised crime. Many migrants use their **life earnings to pay off** people **smugglers**. Such trust can prove to be costly since there is no guarantee if one can trust these traffickers or if one ever reaches the desired destination. In addition, migrants are also **lured** by false promises of jobs in other countries. However, on their arrival the traffickers might take away the documents of the immigrants to force them into prostitution or to make them work in sweatshops. Many desperate migrants have already died trying **to cross the Mediterranean**. If they make it to Europe, there is a chance that their **application** for asylum is **declined** or that they **end up in living tent villages** before they are sent back home.

Keywords

challenge	- Herausforderung
mass immigration	- Massenimmigration
to distinguish	- unterscheiden
refugee	- Flüchtling
asylum seeker	- Asylbewerber
economic migrant	- Wirtschaftsflüchtling
to flee	- fliehen
homeland	- Heimatland
persecution	- Verfolgung
country of origin	- Herkunftsland
safety	- Sicherheit
genocide	- Völkermord
survival	- Überleben
in search of	- auf der Suche nach
voluntarily	- freiwillig
local economy	- lokaler Wirtschaftssektor
human trafficking	- Menschenhandel
life earnings	- Erspartes
to pay somebody off	- jemanden auszahlen
smugglers	- Schmuggler
to lure	- locken
to cross	- überqueren
the Mediterranean	- das Mittelmeer
application	- Antrag
to decline	- ablehnen
to end up in	- in etwas enden
tent village	- Zeltdorf

Immigration policies

Immigration is a very sensitive **issue** in politics. In general, the European Union wants to **maintain** the image of a united, humane and civilised collective whose **duty** it is to support asylum seekers as well as economic migrants and to **facilitate** the **integration** of immigrants into the respective societies. Since the Schengen Treaty **got rid of** tight **border controls** between EU member states, the age of **restrictive** immigration policies and set immigration **quotas** has theoretically passed.

However, with the latest wave of immigration, the unity of the EU is **put to the test**. Some member states have decided to close their borders and refuse to take in any refugees, thus breaking with the **values** and agreements of the EU. **Xenophobia**, **prejudice** and racism cause tensions in the communities and immigrants are easily targeted as the **scapegoats** for all domestic problems, such as unemployment and terrorism. All these fears are **exploited** by extreme right parties for their political agenda.

There seems to be no political **consensus** as to how one can deal with the current immigration crisis. Critics point out that by taking action against traffickers, **reinforcing** the naval fleet in the Mediterranean and by **initiating** Turkey to **keep migrants at bay**, the EU ignores **the root of the problem**. Rather than tackling the inhumane conditions that lead refugees to flee, the EU's policies seem make sure that refugees can no longer escape these conditions. The UK's decision to handpick their refugees from **hot zones** and fly them to Britain reinforces this image. Is this policy an act of kindness to spare immigrants the dangerous journey to Europe or is it a message to discourage people from trying to get to the UK? Finally, if they do manage to arrive in the EU and **apply for asylum**, the **processing procedure** is often delayed because of bureaucracy and **overstrained** local councils.

Keywords

policy	- politische Richtlinie
issue	- Angelegenheit
to maintain	- aufrechterhalten
duty	- Pflicht
to facilitate	- erleichtern
integration	- Integration
to get rid of	- etwas beseitigen
border control	- Grenzkontrolle
restrictive	- einschränkend
quota	- Quote
to put sth to the test	- auf die Probe stellen
values	- Werte
xenophobia	- Fremdenfeindlichkeit
prejudice	- Vorurteil
scapegoat	- Sündenbock
to exploit	- ausnutzen
consensus	- Übereinstimmung
to reinforce	- verstärken
to initiate	- anregen
to keep at bay	- fernhalten
the root of the problem	- die Wurzel des Problems
hot zones	- Krisengebiet
to apply for asylum	- Asyl beantragen
processing procedure	- Aufnahmeverfahren
overstrained	- überstrapaziert

Overpopulation and growth

The population of the world is growing **at a very fast rate**. Between 1960 and 2000, the population of the earth **doubled** from 3 **billion** to 6 billion. Experts argue that by the year 2050 the world population could pass the 10 billion **mark**.

The challenges we **face** because of this are numerous. Firstly, we need to establish a **sustainable** food production and an equal **food distribution** so that all the people can be fed and the problem of **starvation** in the poorest areas needs to be **addressed**. If we want to maintain the high **living standard** in developed countries and allow third world countries to **emulate** this, the industrial production would also have to be increased. However, does our planet hold enough resources to uphold the lifestyle of our **consumer society**?

Given the fact that industrial production is one of the major reasons for our environmental problems, would it be wise **to heed the call** for continuous **economic growth**? Is the political and corporate **credo** of economic **progress** compatible with the limits of the earth's capacity for growth? The price we have to pay for our ideas of progress and growth are clearly visible: **pollution, water shortages, scarcity of raw materials**, holes in the **ozone layer, climate change, geopolitical conflicts, toxic waste**, extinction of species, deforestation etc. The list seems endless. Nevertheless, we seem to continue down the road of eternal growth without asking the question: how much is enough?

Keywords

at a fast rate	- schnell
to double	- verdoppeln
billion	- Milliarde
mark	- Marke
to face problems	- Problemen begegnen
sustainable	- nachhaltig
food distribution	- Nahrungsverteilung
starvation	- das Verhungern
to address a problem	- ein Problem ansprechen
living standard	- Lebensstandard
to emulate	- nachbilden
consumer society	- Konsumgesellschaft
to heed the call	- dem Ruf folgen
economic growth	- Wirtschaftswachstum
credo	- Überzeugung
progress	- Fortschritt
pollution	- Verschmutzung
water shortage	- Wasserknappheit
scarcity	- Knappheit
raw materials	- Rohstoffe
ozone layer	- Ozonschicht
climate change	- Klimawandel
geopolitical conflict	- geopolitischer Konflikt
toxic waste	- Giftmüll
extinction	- Ausrottung

Life in the cities

The biggest cities on earth are growing rapidly. In search for jobs and **opportunity**, many people move to the city. Urban growth has increased dramatically and over 48% of the world's population are living in cities. The phenomenon of **urbanization** brings about various problems.

a) Traffic and pollution

Attempts to create efficient **public transport** systems have only partially been successful. **Underground systems, railways** and buses allow people to commute to work, but the car is still very popular. As a result, heavy traffic during **rush hour** still causes problems.

b) Housing and jobs

House shortage poses a serious problem for the life in cities. Since there is more demand for **accommodation** than there are apartments or houses available, the rent and prices of **properties** are very high. People on **low incomes** cannot always find **affordable** accommodation. Rising unemployment also leads to **evictions** or **foreclosures**. **Homelessness** has also significantly increased in cities, making the disadvantaged dependent on **shelters** or **charity organisations**. In the worst case, homeless people have to **sleep rough**.

c) Crime

The melting pot of cultures or religions and the rising gap between the wealthy and the poor can create tension within the community. Crimes against property, authority or a person are increasing and **crime rates** have exploded in many cities. **Gated communities** within cities are on the rise, so that wealthier people can protect themselves. People commit crimes for different reasons. They might be poor, greedy or they lose themselves in the heat of the moment. **Rape, murder, theft, burglary, robbery, assault, arson, mugging, child abuse**, vandalism and kidnapping are just some examples of criminal offences. **Lax gun laws** in the USA are also part of this problem.

Keywords

opportunity	- Möglichkeit
urbanization	- Städtebauentwicklung
public transport	- öffentliche Transportmittel
underground system	- U-Bahn Netz
railway	- Eisenbahn
rush hour	- Spitzenverkehrszeit
house shortage	- Wohnungsnot
accommodation	- Unterkunft
property	- Immobilie
low income	- niedriges Einkommen
affordable	- erschwinglich
evictions	- Räumungen
foreclosure	- Zwangsversteigerung
homelessness	- Obdachlosigkeit
shelter	- Obdachlosenasyll
charity organisation	- Wohltätigkeitsorganisation
to sleep rough	- auf der Straße übernachten
crime rate	- Kriminalitätsrate
gated community	- abgeriegelte Gemeinschaft
rape	- Vergewaltigung
murder	- Mord
theft	- Diebstahl
burglary	- Einbruch
robbery	- Raubüberfall
assault	- Körperverletzung
arson	- Brandstiftung
mugging	- Überfall
child abuse	- Kindesmisshandlung
lax gun laws	- lockere Waffengesetze

d) Terrorism

The 9/11 terrorist attacks, which took place in the US in 2001, **lunged** the west into an international **war on terror**. Military actions and **economic sanctions** were used in an attempt to **eradicate** terrorism. However, as recent events in Paris have shown, the war on terror abroad seems to have brought terrorism to our doorstep.

Many young people from everywhere around the world with no perspectives have been **radicalized** and are willing to sacrifice their lives for fanatic ideas. The rise of ISIS is a good example for this. Even people who were born in Europe travel to Syria to fight for the caliphate. Are **warfare**, **drone attacks** and **carpet-bombing** the adequate way to deal with this problem or can these acts by western countries also be considered as terrorism? What is for certain is the fact that many **innocent bystanders** die in these conflicts. Some politicians believe that instead of fighting fire with fire, one needs to analyse the reasons why people decide to become terrorists and one should attempt to integrate these **marginal groups** into society instead of **isolating** them. This is of course easier said than done.

Terrorists have many different **aims**. Primarily they want to generate fear in the public through **random acts of violence**. The attempt to destabilise governments, belief systems or ideologies **lies at the core** of their actions. In some cases, they force a government **to give in to** certain demands and they do not shy away from political **assassinations**. Kidnappings, robberies and human trafficking are a way to finance their operations. For terrorists, **ends always justify means**.

Keywords

to lunge	- Satz nach vorne
war on terror	- Krieg gegen den Terror
economic sanctions	- Wirtschaftssanktionen
to eradicate	- ausrotten
to radicalize	- radikalisieren
warfare	- Kriegsführung
drone attacks	- Dronenangriffe
carpet-bombing	- Flächenbombardierung
innocent bystander	- unbeteiligter Zuschauer
marginal group	- Randgruppen
to isolate	- isolieren
aim	- Ziel
random acts of violence	- wahllose Gewalttaten
to destabilise	- destabilisieren
to lie at the core	- zu Grunde liegen
to give in to	- nachgeben
assassinations	- Ermordungen
ends justify means	- der Zweck heiligt die Mittel

CHECKPOINT

Can you answer these questions with adequate vocabulary?

1. Complete the table below:

CRIME	CRIMINAL	VERB
mugging	mugger	to mug somebody
assault	attacker	to assault somebody
child abuse	_____	_____
rape	_____	_____
murder	_____	_____
theft	_____	_____
burglary	_____	_____
vandalism	_____	_____
armed robbery	_____	_____
arson	_____	_____
drug trafficking	_____	_____
smuggling	_____	_____
kidnapping	_____	_____
hostage taking	_____	_____
hijacking	_____	_____

1. Why do people emigrate to other countries?
2. What is the difference between an asylum seeker and an economic migrant?
3. Which dangers do refugees face on their way to Europe?
4. Why is the political image of Europe put to the test with the current refugee crisis?
5. Your opinion: How should politics deal with the current refugee crisis? How should it certainly not deal with the current refugee crisis?
6. Why is the desire for eternal growth a serious problem for our society?
7. Why is the desire for progress and growth not halted by governments?
8. What is the price we have to pay for our desire for eternal growth?
9. Which big challenges do cities face today and how can these issues be resolved?
10. "One person's freedom fighter is another person's terrorist." Explain this quote in the light of the war on terror.
11. How can we stop people from being radicalised?
12. What other challenges does our society face today?