



ECOSOC BACKGROUND PAPER



Middle School of Kifissia Model United Nations 2021 – Web Edition
MARIA MATOUKA EFFROSYNI GKERTSOU

Introduction to the chairs

Firstly, I would personally like to welcome all the delegates to our MSKMUN 2021 online conference. My name is Maria Matouka, and I will be chairing the ECOSOC committee. As you know due to COVID-19, the conference will be held online but I reassure you that the MSKMUN team has put in so much effort that no possible technical or communicative problems will occur. Before moving on with the topic though, I find it essential to deposit some general and then useful information about myself. To begin with, I go to the first high school of Kifissia, I am a fan of literature, foreign languages and MUNs and I have participated in 5 MUNs. This is my second time chairing the ECOSOC Committee and I have to say that last year the outcome was quite satisfactory, even though for many delegates it was their first conference. I referred to that fact because each and every delegate beginner-or-non is encouraged to be active on the grounds that the point of MUNs is trying to get over your weaknesses and become more confident, fluent and comfortable at public speaking. I truly can't speak for all the other committee chairs but in case me and my fellow chair detect a delegate making fun of another delegate or in case we generally detect an inappropriate and unacceptable behavior, then there will be a warning and if such a situation continues to go on we will take other, more serious measures. Having said that, it is expected that all the delegates speak at least twice in this year's conference. I am sure that we will have a perfect co-operation and that this conference will be unforgettable, not only for the delegates but also for us, the chairs. If you have any questions about the topic or generally the Committee I would suggest you reach me by my email: maramatouka2005@gmail.com

Hello, delegates! My name is Effrosyni Gkertsou, I am attending the 1st High School of Kifissia and I would like to welcome all of you to MSKMUN 2021 online conference! I am so honored and excited to be chairing the ECOSOC committee, this year, with my fellow chair Maria Matouka. MUN has grown to be one of my greatest passions. More particularly, I have participated in three MUN conferences as a delegate and last year I had the honor to participate as a chair. Throughout the past three years, MUN has made a tremendous change in who I am. Every conference has taught me something new about the world and has made me think out of the box. With no previous public speaking experience, I learned how to stand, speak, deal with others, lead, write and research properly, and so many other talents I would have never known without MUN. Having that said, I sincerely hope that this will be a memorable experience for each one of you and that we have an amazing time learning about issues that affect our society. This year, for the first time ever, the MUN conference will be held online owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The health and well-being of the participants is one of our top priorities, and so too is maintaining an inclusive and accessible MUN environment, despite the challenges we may face. Despite that, let's make sure that this event is an opportunity to meet people with the same interests and to have FUN!!!! P.S. Should you need anything regarding the topic you can reach me by email: gkertsoueffrosyni@gmail.com

Topic 1: The situation of the lack of funding for scientific research

Summary of the topic

The lack of funding for scientific research is a widely discussed issue nowadays. We should bear in mind though that research is essential for our society's evolution. In specific countries there is no budget at all in order to support this kind of project which is unacceptable. Many attempts have been made in order to finance these projects, but it is observed that efforts are not obviously enough

Many young people study sciences and probably move on with a possible master in research and even though they are into their studies there are no chances for them in their country. This is a reason why unemployment rates have risen especially in this field and why many immigrate to foreign countries. That's why we should seek possible solutions to this so significant issue.

Definition of key terms

Term	Definition
Scientific research	The systematic investigation of scientific theories and hypotheses
Hypothesis	A single assertion, a proposed explanation of something based on available knowledge, for something yet to be explained
Scientific method	A process that helps construct an accurate depiction of our universe and its processes, in order to answer whatever question scientists may have
Scientific knowledge	Refers to a generalized body of laws and theories to explain a phenomenon or behavior of interest that are acquired using the scientific method.
Clinical researches	Clinical research is a branch of healthcare science that determines the safety and effectiveness (efficacy) of medications, devices, diagnostic products and treatment regimens intended for human use. These may be used for prevention, treatment, diagnosis or for relieving symptoms of a disease.

Background Information

The purpose of science is to create scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge refers to a generalized body of laws and theories to explain a phenomenon or behavior of interest that are acquired using the scientific method.

Laws are observed patterns of phenomena or behaviors, while theories are systematic explanations of the underlying phenomenon or behavior. We arrive at scientific laws or theories through a process of logic and evidence. Logic (theory) and evidence (observations) are the two, and only two, pillars upon which scientific knowledge is based. In science, theories and observations are interrelated and cannot exist without each other. Theories provide meaning and significance to what we observe, and observations help validate or refine existing theory or

construct new theory. Any other means of knowledge acquisition, such as faith or authority cannot be considered science.

Given that theories and observations are the two pillars of science, scientific research operates at two levels: a theoretical level and an empirical level. The theoretical level is concerned with developing abstract concepts about a natural or social phenomenon and relationships between those concepts while the empirical level is concerned with testing the theoretical concepts and relationships to see how well they reflect our observations of reality, with the goal of ultimately building better theories

Depending on a researcher's training and interest, scientific inquiry may take one of two possible forms: inductive or deductive. In inductive research, the goal of a researcher is to infer theoretical concepts and patterns from observed data. In deductive research, the goal of the researcher is to test concepts and patterns known from theory using new empirical data. Hence, inductive research is also called theory-building research, and deductive research is theory-testing research.

The scientific method must satisfy four characteristics:

- **Replicability:** Others should be able to independently replicate or repeat a scientific study and obtain similar, if not identical, results.
- **Precision:** Theoretical concepts, which are often hard to measure, must be defined with such precision that others can use those definitions to measure those concepts and test that theory.
- **Falsifiability:** A theory must be stated in a way that it can be disproven. Theories that cannot be tested or falsified are not scientific theories and any such knowledge is not scientific knowledge. A theory that is specified in imprecise terms or whose concepts are not accurately measurable cannot be tested and is therefore not scientific. Sigmund Freud's ideas on psychoanalysis fall into this category and is therefore not considered a "theory", even though psychoanalysis may have practical utility in treating certain types of ailments.
- **Parsimony:** When there are multiple explanations of a phenomenon, scientists must always accept the simplest or logically most economical explanation. This concept is called parsimony or "Occam's razor." Parsimony prevents scientists from pursuing overly complex or outlandish theories with endless number of concepts and relationships that may explain a little bit of everything but nothing.

Depending on the purpose of research, scientific research projects can be grouped into three types: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. Exploratory research is often conducted in new areas of inquiry. Descriptive research is directed at making careful observations and detailed documentation of a phenomenon of interest. These observations must be based on the scientific method. Explanatory research seeks explanations of observed phenomena, problems, or behaviors. While descriptive research examines what, where, and when of a phenomenon, explanatory research seeks answers to why and how types of questions

It is observed today though that scientific research is neither funded by the government nor by private industries.

Bloc Positions

As it has been stated above scientific research is widely discussed as it concerns the future of humanity. Each state that wants to evolve supports scientific research both governmental and governmental scientific research

United States of America

The life sciences accounts for almost 50% of the nation's output in the natural sciences, followed by chemistry, physical sciences, and Earth and environmental sciences, respectively.

China

China's rise in the research rankings is a well-told story, but that does not make it any less remarkable.

Germany

In recent years, the country has become known as a desired destination for researchers, boasting a relatively low cost of living, stable growth and high research and development (R&D) spending.

It also counts more than 270 collaborative research centers that are funded by the German Research Foundation for up to 12-year periods, which allow researchers to commit to complex, long-term, multidisciplinary projects across universities and institutes.

United Kingdom

As Nature reported in April, Brexit has already damaged research in the UK. That said, it remains one of the world's best in producing high-quality research in the natural sciences, retaining its long-standing fourth rank in the Nature Index Top 50 Countries/Territories table.

Japan

With an impressive standing among the world's best research publishers, Japan is working hard to retain its position. While its strategy of funding selected institutions to boost their overseas collaboration is starting to bear fruit, it continues to look outwards in an effort to arrest the alarming decline in its high-quality scientific research.

France

France's strengths in the natural sciences are diverse, with chemistry, physical sciences, and life sciences accounting for roughly equal shares in its high-quality research output, followed by Earth and environmental sciences.

Canada

More recently, the country's budget decisions around research for 2019 have been controversial, with small spending bumps for genomics and physics presenting a stark contrast to the \$4 billion (US\$3 billion) boost for basic science and research in 2018.

Switzerland

For a nation of just 8.4 million, Switzerland punches well above its weight in high-quality research output.

In 2018, an analysis by the United States National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) found that it contributed nearly three times more articles to the 1% of highly cited papers indexed by the Scopus database in 2013 than would be expected given its total output, due to factors such as its comparatively large research investment and hosting of the Large Hadron Collider.

The Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich), the institution with the highest output of high-quality research in the natural sciences in the country, had almost twice the output of the second most prolific institution, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (EPFL).

South Korea

Academic publishing has been booming, and national R&D spending by industry and government was 4.24% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2016, which was the second-highest percentage for any country worldwide. But many scientists – particularly those in smaller research groups – have communicated their dissatisfaction with the country's funding decisions.

Australia

Australia has the rare distinction of being the only country to shake up the top 10 in the 2019 Nature Index Top 50 Countries/Territories table, and the only country in the top 10 apart from China where FC increased in 2018. While the top nine has remained unchanged for three years, Australia jostled Spain out of the 10th slot, up from rank 11 in 2017.

Timeline of events



Questions that a resolution must answer

- In which fields and why is scientific research essential?
- Governmental funding, non-governmental funding, or both?
- Will such funding be a fruitful investment?
- Are there any UN or other organizations that could contribute to a more beneficial funding and in which they should help?
- Should there be a quality control in order to judge whether a scientific research is useful and beneficial or not and how would that be perfectly achieved?

- Is it a significant part of our society, If yes in what scale, and is the equipment a part that should be financed by the state?
- What would the harm be in a world without scientific research ?
- Are the 10 countries referred above better economically due to their financing more scientific projects?

Resources for further research

- <https://www.sciencemag.org/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Funding_of_science
- <https://www.nature.com/collections/bihhaafahc>
- <https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2015/07/01/chapter-3-support-for-government-funding/>

Sources used

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- <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-research-methods/chapter/chapter-1-science-and-scientific-research/>
- <http://www.bu.edu/articles/2015/funding-for-scientific-research/>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research>
- <https://www.natureindex.com/news-blog/top-ten-countries-research-science-twenty-nineteen>

Topic 2: Measures taken to boost small businesses in the post pandemic era

Summary of the topic

COVID-19 caused tragic consequences to the health and lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the world. It has also upended economies everywhere, as businesses in almost all sectors have been forced, in the first place during general lockdowns, to temporarily cease their activity and their workers to stay home in order to stem the spread of the virus and, afterwards, to adapt their normal working arrangements to the new circumstances, because of increased insecurity and the imposition of health protocols. However, a big part of entrepreneurs around the world have decided to close their business for an indefinite period, after taking under consideration extreme revenue losses due to changed consumer behavior following government recommendations or decisions. As a result of this new situation, enterprises, and especially micro-small ones, which are the most vulnerable factors of the

economy in times of crisis, are facing serious challenges to their ongoing viability, and their workers have to deal with temporary or partial unemployment.

In order to face this new reality, governments around the world should incorporate comprehensive plans and implement effective measures to sustain enterprises throughout the crisis and help them to recover; additionally, to provide social protection to workers in need.

Definition of key terms

Term	Definition
Crisis	A sudden and unexpected event that threatens to disrupt an organization's operations and poses both a financial and a reputational threat.
Entrepreneurship	The activity of setting up a business or businesses, taking on financial risks in the hope of profit.
Financial Instruments	Financial instruments are monetary contracts between parties. They can be created, traded, modified and settled. Financial instruments may be divided into two types: cash instruments and derivative instruments. Cash Instruments. Derivative Instruments. Debt-Based Financial Instruments. Equity-Based Financial Instruments.
Firm	A company or business, especially a small one.
Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)	GEM carries out survey-based research on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship ecosystems around the world.
Health Protocol	In a healthcare setting, a protocol, also called a medical guideline, is a set of instructions which describe a process to be followed to investigate a particular set of findings in a patient, or the method which should be followed to control a certain disease.
International Labor Organization (ILO)	ILO is a United Nations agency whose mandate is to advance social and economic justice through setting international labor standards.
Lockdown	A lockdown is a requirement for people to stay where they are, usually due to specific risks to themselves or to others if they can move freely. The term "stay-at-home" or "shelter-in-place" is often used for lockdowns that affect an area, rather than specific locations.
Pandemic	Pandemic is defined as an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting many people.
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)	UNCTAD is the part of the United Nations Secretariat dealing with trade, investment and development issues.
Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)	A small or medium-sized enterprise, or SME, as defined by the European Commission is a business or company that has fewer than 250 employees.

Sustainable Development (IISD)	Sustainable development means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	17 Sustainable Development Goals, which are an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go together with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth.

Background Information

The advancing COVID-19 pandemic has caused a steep global economic pullback, without modern parallel. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) COVID-19 could wipe out approximately 6.7 per cent of working hours globally in the second quarter of 2020 – equivalent to 195 million full-time workers. The International Trade Centre’s COVID-19 Business Impact Survey estimated that 25 per cent of small businesses in developing countries would close permanently, with almost 75 per cent in Africa experiencing severe consequences. Large reductions are also foreseen in the Arab States (8.1 per cent, equivalent to 5 million fulltime workers), Europe (7.8 per cent, or 12 million full-time workers) and Asia and the Pacific (7.2 per cent, 125 million full-time workers).

SMEs constitute the backbone of the global economy, accounting for over two thirds of employment globally, and 80 to 90 per cent of employment in low-income countries. Owing to the extreme losses that are affecting every nation and every sector of industry, not only have enterprises suffered from severe revenue losses but there are also many people facing unemployment and poverty. The role of entrepreneurship and micro-, small and medium sized enterprises in social and economic development has become more critical than ever and should be among the priority policy measures of the international community and States during postCOVID-19 recovery and beyond.

Several factors explain the vulnerability of SMEs:

- Micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises account for many firms in non-essential services, with some 232 million enterprises in wholesale and retail trade having been hit hard by containment.
- Many micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises operate in the informal economy and, for this reason, lack access to support packages from the States.
- Women entrepreneurs - owners, at a vast majority, of SMEs - have suffered even more owing to increased care burdens during lockdowns, under-representation in sectors particularly affected by lockdowns and other systemic pathology, including lack of access to finance, technology, markets, networks and a social protection net. It is expected that firms managed by women have been 27 per cent more likely to file for insolvency or bankruptcy.
- Compared to large firms, SMEs have fewer resources and lower capacity to cope with abrupt economic shocks, lacking cash flow, diversified businesses, markets and external sources to leverage in the face of a crisis.

When the pandemic was declared, Governments, in the first place, responded with short-term policies, including tax relief, extensions of loan guarantees, direct grants and subsidies to SMEs.

For a longer-term strategy, Governments are also increasingly implementing structural policies to support SMEs in adopting digital technologies (teleworking), expanding their market reach and preserving as many jobs as possible. However, multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination based on undue criteria such as gender or race are often missing from responses whereas in areas of economy, such as entertainment or tourism, businesses are unable to adopt efficient measures to restore their clientele.

Bloc Positions

Europe

Coronavirus has shaken Europe and the world to its core, testing healthcare and welfare systems, societies and economies, even the way of living and working together. In order to protect lives and livelihoods as well as to build a lasting, prosperous, inclusive and fair for all Member States, recovery, European Commission is proposing to harness the full potential of the EU budget “Next Generation EU”, a new recovery instrument of €750 billion, coupled with targeted reinforcements to the long-term EU budget for 2021-2027 will bring the total financial firepower of the EU budget to €1.85 trillion. European Commission has also unveiled its adjusted Work Program for 2020, which will prioritize the actions needed to propel Europe's recovery and resilience.

Funds raised for “Next Generation EU” will be invested across three pillars:

1. Supporting Member States through investments and reforms.
2. Kick-starting EU economy by incentivizing private investments.
3. Addressing the lessons of the crisis

- European countries where SMEs sentiment has become slightly more optimistic:
In Germany, the ifo Business Climate Index (not specified by size) strongly improved in June. In the Netherlands, the sentiment of businesses on the continuity of their business improved in May compared to April.

A survey conducted in June in the United Kingdom showed that over 71% of small businesses indicate their firm has the opportunity to emerge better and stronger after COVID-19.

- European countries developing teleworking, digitalization and new business practice:
A survey in Germany in early May shows that, whereas at the outset of the crisis 88% of German SMEs operated with mandatory in-person work, 81% expect that the pandemic will make their companies more flexible and one third of SMEs estimates digitalization has grown in importance due to the pandemic.

A survey in Europe suggested that only 56 percent of all companies with 50 or fewer employees provided remote access to email, applications, and documents for their employees, compared with 93 percent of all companies with more than 250 employees.

Asia - Pacific

As far as Asia and Pacific is concerned UNDRR's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific developed a toolkit to support SMEs, which comprehends:

- Protecting employees and customers from contracting and passing COVID-19.
- Protecting businesses from incoming disruptions, especially in countries that have not yet been severely impacted by COVID-19.
- Taking measures in favor of businesses impacted by COVID-19 to utilize all resources that might be available to them to remain solvent and operational.

More particularly,

In Australia, 80% of small business owners have high hopes to survive the crisis, although 52% fear that sales will not rebound enough to survive in the longer term. However, 79% of companies feel confident their organization will be able to rebound financially.

In Korea, the Bank of Korea business confidence indicator improved in June for the second month in a row, with the sentiment for small and medium sized companies improving more than for larger firms.

The economic picture coming out of China has been mixed. The most prominent economic data point released by the Chinese government to date is the 6.8 percent drop in China's first-quarter GDP — an unprecedented contraction since the country began its reform and opening over 40 years ago. Yet, China's official unemployment data showed very little change, increasing from 5.3 percent in January, when COVID-19 first broke out, to 6 percent in early June. More recently, there have been some positive signs of a rebound: the May Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) figure expanded to 50.7 and exports grew by a surprising 3.5 percent in April. The overall economic picture, in other words, is still unclear and yet to be determined.

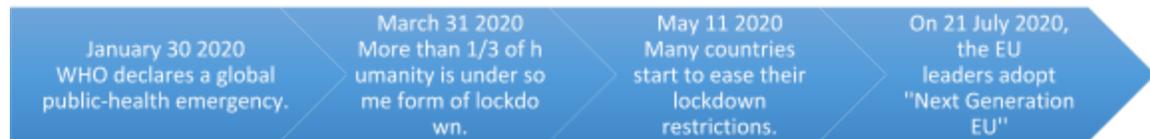
America

According to a survey among 86 000 small businesses in the United States by (Facebook & Small Business Roundtable, 2020), 51% of businesses increased online interactions with their clients to adapt to the crisis. Also, 36% of self-employed personal businesses that use online tools report that they are conducting all their sales online, and 35% of businesses that have changed operations have expanded the use of digital payments.

A May survey by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CIBC) finds that of the 26% of business owners who do have online operations, 30% have seen an increase in sales and 25% say they have remained the same compared to pre-COVID-19 levels. However, according to a June survey, 44% of SMEs are facing a variety of technology and tech support challenges, such as in the areas of digital marketing (19%), e-commerce (13%) and their other online offerings, including their website (17%). 32% of small businesses reported needing assistance with safety measures, including workplace and customer safety, followed by finances (28%), marketing support (19%), refocusing their business (18%), community/networking (14%) and workspace equipment such as furniture or products (11%).

Timeline of events

This diagram points out the most important dates in the post pandemic era.



Questions that a resolution must answer

- What kind of problems and in which sectors have SMEs faced during the pandemic?
- Which areas of entrepreneurship are most vulnerable to the pandemic?
- In which countries are SMEs more affected because of containment?
- How did small businesses adjust to the economic disruptions resulting from COVID-19?
- How should the international community, NGOs and governments react in a short and long-time term?
- Which strategies are the most comprehensive in order to boost SMEs in the post pandemic era?
- How should SMEs be persuaded to adopt new technologies in their activities?
- Do you think it is important to raise awareness on changing attitudes and commercial behavior for SMEs most affected by the pandemic?
- Do you think that SMEs recovery from COVID-19 is only a matter of financial nature or should a broader approach of solutions be planned and implemented?
- Do you think there is a need to adopt special measures for the endorsement of SMEs run by women and young entrepreneurs?

Resources for further research

www.ilo.org

<https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/home>

<https://www.bbc.com/news>

<https://edition.cnn.com/>

<https://www.oecd.org/about/>

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<http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/coronavirus-covid-19-sme-policy-responses-04440101/>

<https://www.undrr.org/publication/covid-19-small-business-continuity-and-recovery-planning-toolkit>

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