

MUNSA'25

Consiglio dei Dieci

Open Agenda

STUDY GUIDE



CONSIGLIO
DEI DIECI

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1. Letter from the Secretary General

Esteemed participants of the Model United Nations Conference of Sakıp Sabancı Anatolian High School 2025,

As Secretary-General, I am deeply privileged to be part of a conference that upholds the values of education, excellence, and collaboration. Working alongside a team of incredibly talented individuals, I am enthusiastic about organizing an event that truly showcases the essence of our club. Our conference offers a diverse array of committees, including engaging crisis committees and a variety of topics spanning different time periods and regions.

Just like every year, this year's conference is being organized by the SSAL MUN Club too. Our club's academic and organizational teams are working tirelessly to bring you the best MUN conference you've ever experienced. We believe that our conference will not only provide you with three unforgettable days but also significantly enhance your academic and personal development.

This year's MUNSA will feature 9 unique committees, each led by a team of passionate people. With that being said, the tenacious team of MUNSA'25 promises to challenge delegates to engage and think critically. Through our General Assembly committees, GA1: DISEC and GA3: SOCHUM, two cooperation organizations which are the African Union and the League of Nations, the main body and the most important committee of the UN, which is UNSC, the mysterious Consiglio dei Dieci, and two crisis committees, which are JCC and HCC; delegates will have access to a broad range of committee forms and topics. From this wide range of options, delegates have the opportunity to find a committee that fits their interests and matches their preferred style of debate.

To apply for MUNSA 2025, simply visit our website and register. Before doing so, I encourage you to explore our website, sakipsabancimun.com. Or, go where you can find detailed information about our team, registration deadlines, conference policies, and committees. Should you have any questions, feel free to reach out to our Public Relations team at munsabancipr@gmail.com.

On behalf of the Sakıp Sabancı Anatolian High School Model United Nations Club and the MUNSA'25 Team, I eagerly anticipate welcoming you all to our conference this September!

Mert Taşcı

Secretary General, MUNSA 202

2. Letter from the Under Secretary General

As the Under-Secretary of the Consiglio dei Dieci committee, I am honored to welcome you all to MUNSA'25. I extend my sincere congratulations for being part of this distinctive semi-crisis committee.

The Council of Ten, or Consiglio dei Dieci, was one of the most potent and enigmatic governing bodies of the Venetian Republic. In cases involving justice, security, and political intrigue, the Council was well known for its authority, discretion, and final say. You will be involved in internal conflicts, delicate diplomacy, and the ongoing balancing act between total control and republican principles while serving on this committee.

You will need to plan strategically, act precisely, and have diplomatic conversations in this semi-crisis situation. Venice's future will be decided by your choices, and you will encounter difficulties that will put your capacity for creativity and leadership to the test. The necessary historical context will be supplied by this study guide, but your initiative and strategy will be what makes this committee a reality. You can reach me at ardagunduz2008@gmail.com if you have any questions.

I also want to thank my diligent secretary, whose assistance was essential in preparing this committee. I look forward to seeing your skill, passion, and dedication over the course of these three days. May you find this experience both challenging and rewarding.

Best of luck,

Sincerely,

Arda Gündüz

Under-Secretary General

3. Introduction to the Committee

3.1 Historical Background of the Consiglio dei Dieci

Consiglio dei Dieci, also known as the Council of Ten, was one of the governing bodies of the Republic of Venice. It was first created in 1310 as a temporary institution to investigate the Tiepolo plot, which was an attempt to overthrow the Doge and the Great Council of Venice. The council was made permanent in 1455.

The Council of Ten was originally tasked with investigating and punishing conspirators. It was concerned with state security as a secret institution. Over time, the authority and power of the council grew. It had almost unlimited authority over all governmental affairs. It became the sole tribunal for many cases and crimes against the Republic, managed military affairs, oversaw diplomatic services, and the city's intelligence network.

One of the major events in the history of Consiglio dei Dieci was the execution of Doge Marino Faliero in 1355. Within months of being elected, he attempted a coup, which failed due to bad organisation. The Council of Ten arrested the conspirators and sentenced several of them to death, including Faliero. In this incident, the authority of the council surpassed even that of the Doge.

3.2 Structure of the Council

Form and Election

The council consisted of ten members, all selected from the patrician class. These members were chosen by the Great Council (Maggior Consiglio), which was the main governing assembly of the republic. The council members served short terms, generally just a year, to prevent any one family from gaining too much influence and power. The council was designed to protect the interests of the entire republic, not just the noble families.

Role of the Doge and His Councillors

The Doge of Venice and his two advisers were also present at council meetings. However,

their role was mostly supervisory. They rarely voted on decisions, and the Doge acted as an observer. This setup ensured that even the Doge could not dominate the council.

How It Worked

The council met in secret once or twice a week. Discussions were confidential. This secrecy made the council effective, giving it a reputation as an “invisible government” that quietly controlled many aspects of Venetian life.

3.3 The mandate of the council

The Consiglio dei Dieci began as an extraordinary, short-term instrument of conspiracy uncovering but developed as one of the most enduring and most awe-inspiring institutions of the Republic.

Founded in the aftermath of the conspiracy of Tiepolo–Querini in 1310, the Ten were tasked with ensuring state security and suppressing treason; their mandate was purposely broad and concealed from the outset so that controversial cases could be resolved outside the publicity and factional noise of the Great Council.

During the subsequent Middle Ages and into the Renaissance, the Ten gained prerogatives that extended to nearly all areas of Venetian governance: they could order investigations, grant warrants of arrest, hold secret trials, control censorship, direct intelligence networks, and even influence military appointments. The Council operated under a tight inner machinery: short one-year terms and rotating short-term heads limited overt power accumulation, but the fact that the proceedings were in confidence, that the council could meet in secret and impose economic and legal sanctions provided them with an immense scope.

In practice, the Ten enjoyed an operational spy system—employing diplomats (baili), merchants, ship captains, priests, and low-level informants—to take information from ports and courts around the eastern Mediterranean; intercepted letters were decoded regularly, suspects were kept in hidden cells, and verdicts could be executed without lengthy debate.

The Ten also exercised preventive control over public opinion: they regulated printing licenses and could suppress books or pamphlets considered prejudicial to public order or to the

Venetian foreign policy. In wartime, the Council performed other roles besides: it coordinated naval intelligence, regulated convoy defense, issued embargoes and requisitions, and negotiated secret arrangements to keep essential supplies. Because its practices and writings were not public, the Ten could also be a political instrument—frightening or threatening to blackmail nobles, controlling patronage, and resolving mutually incompatible family interests so that external stability to the Republic was assured even during times of internal politics wracked by factional rivalry. The institution's trifecta of legal authority, intelligence potential, and administrative flexibility made the Consiglio dei Dieci a central engine in how Venice protected itself from both foreign enemies and domestic disturbance.e

4. Key Terms and Definitions

Consiglio dei Dieci (Council of Ten) – A powerful and secretive Venetian Republic government council established in 1310 after the Tiepolo–Querini conspiracy. Originally temporary, it was made permanent in 1455 and managed state security, espionage, censorship, and major judicial matters.

Doge – The elected head and chief magistrate of Venice. While a unifying symbol of Venice, the Doge's powers were limited, especially compared to the Council of Ten and the Great Council.

Great Council (Maggior Consiglio) – The main legislative body of Venice, composed of patrician families. It elected members of the Council of Ten and other state officials and decided the oligarchic structure of the Republic.

Patrician Families – Noble families that dominated Venetian politics, economy, and society. Families such as the Contarini, Loredan, and Barbarigo often struggled amongst themselves for control of trade, diplomacy, and military policy.

Tiepolo–Querini Conspiracy (1310) – An unsuccessful coup against the Doge and the patrician government by Baiamonte Tiepolo and the Querini family. Its failure led to the creation of the Council of Ten.

Serrata of 1297 – The constitutional "closure" of the Great Council, restricting political power to hereditary patrician families, making Venice an oligarchic republic.

Second Ottoman–Venetian War (1499–1503) – A conflict between the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire, marked by the Battle of Zonchio (1499). It resulted in Venetian territorial loss in Greece and a decline in naval dominance.

Battle of Zonchio (1499) – The first recorded naval battle in history between cannon-equipped fleets. Venice was vanquished by the Ottomans, shattering its centuries-old naval supremacy.

Mediterranean Trade – The foundation of Venetian power, based on trade in spices, silk, salt, and luxury goods. Control of Mediterranean routes made Venice the premier economic power until challenged by Atlantic powers like Spain and Portugal.

Chrysobull (Chrysobol) – A Byzantine imperial letter granting Venice extensive trading privileges and tax exemption in Byzantine ports. Its revocation in 1118 contributed to Venetian-Byzantine wars.

Great Schism (1054) – The formal split between the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. Venice, as a Catholic power with close Eastern trade links, was significantly impacted by this division.

Council of Florence (1439) – An unsuccessful attempt at reuniting the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, temporarily mending the schism. The union was rejected by most of the Orthodox faithful and collapsed with the fall of Constantinople.

League of Cambrai (1508) – A France, Papacy, Holy Roman Empire, and Spain league against Venice to restrict Venetian expansion in northern Italy.

Inquisitori di Stato (1539) – Venetian magistrates who prosecuted treason, corruption, and espionage in close coordination with the Council of Ten in secret trials.

Salt Monopoly – Basis of Venetian wealth and power. By controlling the production and commerce of salt in Chioggia and elsewhere, Venice achieved economic domination of Mediterranean and European markets.

5. Timeline of Important Events

1297 — Serrata of the Maggior Consiglio is constitutionally closed to membership, and Venice is turned into a hereditary oligarchy where a permanent class of patricians exercises political power and distant trading franchises. This institutional barrier stimulates all that follows in elite politics.

1310 — As a reaction against the Tiepolo–Querini conspiracy, the city creates the Consiglio dei Dieci as an exceptional committee to investigate and punish treason. Originally temporary, it is given the right to operate secretly in the Republic's defense.

1330s–1400s — During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the jurisdiction of the Ten increasingly extends beyond conspiracy: it begins to attempt sensitive judicial cases, report on diplomatic security, and oversee aspects of military organization. Its aura of secrecy and surveillance earns it a reputation throughout the patriciate.

1455 — The Consiglio dei Dieci is institutionalized as a permanent state body of security. Its permanence consolidates the layer of shadow government that will be at the center of Venice's internal government in the early modern period.

1490s — Under increasing external pressure and internal sensitivities, Venice moves toward social and religious domination. In 1498 and the following year, the Republic imposed restraint on foreign fraternities and intensified scrutiny of minority groups and the press as a precaution against provocation.

1499–1503 — The Second Ottoman–Venetian War begins (particularly naval losses at Zonchio and subsequent loss of key ports). The war demoralizes Venetian dominion in parts of the eastern Mediterranean, interferes with trade routes, and compels the Ten to enhance intelligence, convoy protection, and clandestine diplomacy.

1508 — Venice joins the League of Cambrai; the Italian Wars are costly in terms of territory and politics, and mark a low point for Venetian power on the Italian peninsula.

1516 — The death of Ferdinand of Aragon and the concentration of Spanish/Habsburg power under Charles V redefines European balances and places Venetian maneuvering in the service of new external pressures.

1521–1526 — Restored Habsburg–French rivalries in Italy create an unstable diplomatic environment; Venice seeks to preserve trade by cautious alignments and abundant negotiating.

1526 — The Battle of Mohács radically expands Ottoman influence in Central Europe, increasing the Ottoman strategic threat seen by Venetian decision-makers.

1527 — The Sack of Rome by Imperial troops disheartens papal authority and reconfigures Italian politics in terms that Venice attempts to exploit diplomatically.

1528 onwards — Protestant thinking begins to spread more widely throughout Northern Europe; Venetian authorities increasingly suspect works of unorthodox content reaching the city's presses and merchants, and censorship is on the rise.

1539 — The Republic formalises special magistrates—the Inquisitori di Stato—whose role is to prosecute spying, corruption, and treason; these officials closely cooperate with the Ten in covert proceedings.

1570–1573 — Ottoman occupation of Cyprus ends Cypriot War; Venice suffers a major territorial and commercial loss and later becomes part of the Holy League's naval coalition, which wins the Battle of Lepanto (1571), a symbolic but not a complete check on Ottoman naval power.

Late 1500s — Protestant religious hostilities of Protestant movements and the opening of Atlantic trade routes increasingly erode Venice's monopolistic economic position; the Republic adapts to a new multipolar economic order.

1600s — Venice undergoes long-term commercial decline relative to Atlantic powers. The Consiglio dei Dieci remains at the heart of domestic government, but the state's focus shifts away from expansion to preservation, diplomacy, and internal order.

6. Mediterranean Trade Conflict

Trade in the Mediterranean Sea was central to the Republic of Venice. It was the basis of the Republic of Venice's success and political rise. Due to its strategic location, Venice soon became one of the most powerful cities in Europe. Commercial traffic reached its peak in the 13th century, but continued to be fundamental in the political and social life of Venice for a long time.

Many goods were exchanged by Venetians. Some of these are cotton, fabrics, iron, wood, alum, salt, and spices. The Venetian merchants brought European metals, wood, leather, and fabrics to the East. While the East supplies spices, precious stones, and silk. Spices also included sugar, which was produced in Cyprus. A good that Venice held a monopoly on was salt. The salt monopoly, as well as being a commercial privilege, was also a political deterrent against foreign nations. The areas of greatest salt production were the northern part of the Venetian Lagoon and the district of Chioggia. Over the centuries, Chioggia became the greatest salt producer in the Mediterranean, reaching its peak in the 13th century. Later in the 14th century, during the height of commercial expansion, salt production had decreased. Still, Venice maintained a monopoly by requiring merchants to transport a certain percentage of salt, which was often purchased in Puglia, Sicily, Sardinia, the Balearic Islands, Cyprus, and on the coast of Libya.

In the 11th century, the Doge of the time, Pietro II Orseolo, acquired new commercial privileges with the Byzantine Empire. With the Norman occupation in 1081, the Byzantine Empire requested the presence of the Venetian fleet. Venice used this opportunity to secure extensive commercial privileges. The year after the Byzantine-Norman wars, Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos granted Venice the chrysobol. This commercial privilege allowed Venetian merchants substantial tax exemptions in numerous Byzantine ports. In 1118, Emperor John II Komnenos decided not to renew the chrysobol, which resulted in Venice declaring war on the Byzantine Empire in 1122. This war took 4 years and ended with the victory of Venice, which had a new opportunity to stipulate a new agreement with even better conditions. To weaken the growing power of Venice, the Byzantine Emperor provided commercial support to the merchant republics Ancona, Genoa, and Pisa. In 1171, the Venetian merchants were expelled from Constantinople, which led to a new war, and the commercial privileges came to an end.

The commercial traffic of Venetian merchants extended all over the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, covering a large area including many cities. Venice had access to a network of many ports and trade centres. Venice's control over the eastern trade routes caused an increase in conflicts with Genoa, which in 1255 exploded into the War of Saint Sabas. Later on 24 June 1258, the two republics faced each other in the Battle of Acre, which resulted in an overwhelming Venetian victory. In the following years, the war between Genoa and Venice resumed, and after a long series of battles, the war ended in 1270 with the Peace of Cremona. However, this was not the end of the conflict as a new war between Genoa, the Byzantine Empire, and Venice broke out in 1293, won by the Genoese, and ended in 1299. The battles between the Venetians and the Genoese resumed, and in 1378, the two republics faced each other in the War of Chioggia. While the Genoese managed to conquer Chioggia,

the war resulted in a Venetian victory on 8 August 1381 with the Treaty of Turin, which sanctioned the exit of the Genoese from the competition over the Mediterranean.

Venice also faced rivals in the Venetian hinterland. The war waged by the Scaliger lords of Verona caused serious economic losses to Venetian trade. This conflict led to the Scaliger War in 1336. The war came to an end in 1339, with the Scaligeri signing a peace treaty in which they promised not to interfere in Venetian trade.

7. The Political, Social, and Economic Situation in Venice in 1499

7.1 The financial circumstances

In 1499, Venice remained one of the wealthiest cities in Europe thanks to its vast network of maritime trade throughout the Mediterranean. Silk, spices, and luxury goods were imported from the East by Venetian traders.

However, Portugal and Spain, which had found new Atlantic trade routes, were starting to challenge Venetian hegemony. The ancient sea and land routes across the Levant were losing money.

The Ottoman Empire, which ruled over much of the eastern Mediterranean, imposed high taxes and restricted Venetian trade. The economy of the Republic consequently continued to deteriorate.

7.2 Social Background

In 1499, Venice was a very hierarchical society. Both political and economic life were dominated by the patrician elite, which held sway over the Great Council and the Council of Ten.

The lower classes were laborers and sailors, and the middle classes were merchants and artisans in urban areas.

With its Greek, Jewish, and other minority populations, Venice was also a center of multiculturalism. Although these organizations were somewhat accepted due to their economic value,

they were subject to restrictions and their activities were closely monitored by the Council of Ten.

There was a great deal of wealth inequality: common workers frequently lived in poverty, while patrician families benefited from trade monopolies.

7.3 The political situation

The majority of political power in Venice, an oligarchic republic in 1499, was held by patrician families. The main organization in charge of internal order, espionage, and security was the Council of Ten. The Ottomans in particular posed an external threat to the Republic. The Second Ottoman–Venetian War, which began in 1499, severely taxed Venice's resources. As Venice attempted to maintain its trading empire and balance alliances in Europe, it was constantly threatened by the Papacy and more powerful monarchies.

7.4 Key Difficulties in 1499

1. Ottoman expansion led to a decline in control over Eastern trade routes.
2. As a result of their Atlantic discoveries, Portugal and Spain became more competitive.
3. Growing war costs as a result of the continuous Ottoman war.
4. Tensions within society between commoners and patrician elites.
5. The Catholic Church's influence and religious diversity during a time of escalating religious unrest in Europe.

8. The Second Ottoman-Venetian War (1499–1503)

The Ottoman–Venetian War of 1463–1479 was a 16-year conflict fought on land and sea across different regions, ending with a decisive Ottoman victory. This war affected both the Ottomans and the Venetians. The war changed both naval and land superiority, military-wise. The events of this war took place at the end of the 15th century. The war was triggered because of the time Ottoman leader Bayezid II's ambition for power and strategic supremacy. The eastern Mediterranean seas were strategically important. Major ports were in those regions, and the sea was determining who dominated the region.

The conflict started in 1499 when the naval clashes in the Aegean Sea became a problem for both parties. In some of these clashes, things were so out of control that warships with cannons on them started rolling on like it was a battle. This battle will be known as the Battle of Zonchio, also known as the Battle of Sapienza. The Venetians' centuries-old supremacy was shaken in this battle. The Ottoman fleets, outnumbering the well-armed Venetian battleships, took advantage of the numbers, and they damaged the centuries-old reputation that the Venetians had. Their throne was no longer secure.

Following the events of Zonchio, the Ottoman fleets started raiding the strongholds they had in the Greek region (1500). In a short time period, Modon, Coron, and Navarino fell under Ottoman rule. These strongholds weren't important only because of the military side of things, but also because the trade network of the Venetians started to come crumbling down. The fall of Lepanto (1502) further increased Ottoman control of the region.

This was disastrous to the Venetians because their economic and strategic network was falling apart piece by piece, and they could only hope for this to stop. The Venetians lost most of their land in the Morea region. Its navy, once the unchallenged legend of the deep Mediterranean seas, had been forced to retreat. Economically, Venetian traders now faced higher tariffs and commissions as the Ottomans got a tighter grip over the region.

Yet the war didn't destroy the Venetians economically. Despite its losses, the 1503 peace treaty allowed the Venetians to regain access to Ottoman markets. Venetian traders and merchants continued economic activity in Istanbul, Alexandria, and Damascus, only under less favorable terms. This showed the realities of the time: Venice was too valuable as a trading partner for the Turks to erase, but not strong enough to resist the Turks' expansion by force.

The war also had a secret side. After the Battle of Zonchio (1499), the Consiglio dei Dieci worked hard to gather information. They built a wide spy network and secretly sent news about Ottoman shipbuilding, new taxes, and military movements. But the Ottomans also had agents in noble Venetian families and in politics. During this period, the rivalry between patrician families made the spy games even more complicated. So the war was also inside Venice. A lot of important choices, such as which ports to protect, which commanders to trust, or which cities to befriend, were decided by the Consiglio dei Dieci.

In the end, the war didn't erase Venice completely as a regional power, but the Ottoman victory proved to everyone that the imaginary boundaries preventing other nations from taking the Venetians' old legacy were gone, and showed everyone that Venice was no longer a superpower.

9. Conflict Between Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy

The East and West were two centres of influence throughout Christian history. Although there was an informal divide between the two, they were seen as one. That was until 1054, when the Great Schism happened. The Christian community formally split into the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The Catholics and Orthodox cooperated through the Crusades. In 1095, after a Byzantine request for aid, Pope Urban II encouraged military support for Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komnenos. The Crusades, which were led by the Papacy, aimed at seizing Jerusalem and its surrounding territories from Muslim rule. Although the ultimate goal of the Crusades was to aid the Eastern Church, the Fourth Crusade turned into a battle against Christians. In 1202, due to an issue regarding payment, Venetian Doge Enrico Dandolo decided to use the Fourth Crusade to attack the rebellious city of Zara. Despite Pope Innocent III forbidding such an action, his attempts failed as the crusaders attacked Zara. The Siege of Zara was the first attack against a Catholic city by Catholic crusaders. Venice conquered the city and won the war in 1204. The crusader fleet did not stop there, but continued towards Constantinople to besiege it the same year, putting an end to the Byzantine Empire and formally making Venice an independent state. In the end, the Fourth Crusade deepened the hatred between Catholic and Orthodox communities.

Throughout history, there have been attempts made to reunite the Christian community. On 31 March 1272, the Second Council of Lyon was assembled. It was the fourteenth general council of the Roman Catholic Church. Pope Gregory X presided over the council, called to act on a pledge by Byzantine emperor Michael VIII to reunite the Eastern church with the West. The main topics discussed at the council were the conquest of the Holy Land and the union of the Eastern and Western Churches. The council was seemingly a success, but it did not provide a lasting solution to the schism. Another attempt was the Council of Florence. It was the seventeenth general council of the Catholic Church, held between 1431 and 1445. The Council was convoked in Basel as the Council of Basel by Pope Martin V shortly before his death in February 1431. The name became the Council of Ferrara in 1438 and the Council of Florence in 1439. The Council concluded in 1445 after negotiating a union with the Eastern Orthodox Church. This bridging of the Great Schism proved fleeting, but it was a political coup for the papacy. The union signed at Florence never came into effect as the agreement was rejected by the public.

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, reunion became impossible. The new Orthodox leadership under Ottoman rule followed an anti-Catholic policy, and the Ottomans kept them under control. At the same time, the Orthodox community around Russia completely rejected the idea of reunion. The Russian Church, which was a part of the Church of Constantinople, was granted full independence. In the West, Catholics and Orthodox continued to coexist with tension. The gap between the two communities kept growing wider through the following years.

In 1454, Venetian authorities were informed about a rebellion against the Republic. The conspiracy was led by Sifis Vlastos as an opposition to the religious reforms for the unification of Churches agreed at the Council of Florence. The conspirators were executed by hanging. As a punishment, the Council of Ten forbade the ordination of Orthodox priests for five years. While these events were happening in plain sight, the underground world was also working. During the Crusades, special intelligence agents infiltrated prisons to free captured crusaders or sabotage rival palaces, mosques, and military defenses.

The Crusades changed the tenor of espionage and intelligence work within Europe. With the changes, the thirteenth-century councils established new laws against heretics and anti-clerical political leaders. This movement became known as the Inquisition. The Catholic Church relied on vast networks of informants to find and denounce suspected heretics. Espionage was essential for the process. The spy networks of the West mostly consisted of priests, merchants, sailors, and local people at first. Over time, a more formal and organised system was formed. Many professional spies emerged who could even write coded letters to hide intelligence. Around the same time, the East worked much differently. Unlike the Catholics, who had Rome, the Orthodox community did not have a centralised structure. Although there was no organised espionage system, intelligence flows still existed. Officials, soldiers, and merchants collected various information, and the Monasteries acted as watch posts. No formal network was established in the East.

The Catholics and Orthodox used these systems to spy on each other. These networks influenced their strategies and the outcome of many battles between the two communities, such as the Fourth Crusade. Intelligence networks on both sides were crucial to learn the real intentions of their rivals. This allowed them to see through the others' facade and define their actions.

10. Family Conflicts in Venice

In the Republic of Venice, power wasn't focused in the hands of a single ruler but was distributed among its patrician families. The families weren't merely noble dynasties; they were also separate traditions, economic foundations, and rival visions of the Republic's future. Their letters of allocation inform us about how their rivalries shaped Venetian politics, creating a state of affairs in which each decision about diplomacy, trade, and war was embroiled in family conflict.

On one side were the diplomatic and trade families. Contarinis and Barbarigos argued that Venice's premier asset was its maritime commerce. They believed that conflict with the Ottomans would threaten Venetian trade routes and jeopardize the wealth of the city, which was so intimately invested in the Eastern Mediterranean. Similarly, the Grimanis, who had amassed their fortune in banking and possessed excellent financial management skills, preached budgetary conservatism. They warned that profligate wars would drain the treasury and destabilize the Republic's carefully balanced economy. These families thus were voices of restraint, summoning peace and pragmatism instead of costly military forays.

Opposed to them were the militaristic and honor-based families, whose reputations were made in naval command and colonial defense. The Loredans, Venier, Cornaro, and Mocenigo families insisted that Venice must respond to Ottoman expansion with force. They had derived strength and prestige from naval fleets, colonial holdings, and generations of military service, and compromise with the Ottomans was, to them, dishonorable. For these families, Venice's identity could not be divorced from military valor and the defense of its empire. Lorenzo Loredan was the most notable representative of this hawkish viewpoint, demonizing any attempt at negotiation as a betrayal of Venetian independence.

Caught between these two groups were the pragmatists and opportunists. Alvise Gritti, with his close personal links to the Ottoman court, embodied both the benefits and the distrust of diplomacy. While he profited enormously from trade with Constantinople, his loyalty was continually questioned by other patricians who feared him as a potential Ottoman puppet. The Morosini family, meanwhile, adopted a more flexible strategy—supporting hawkish policies when they promised new gains, yet ready to pivot toward diplomacy if it offered better rewards. Their adaptability made them influential but also untrustworthy in the eyes of more rigid families.

Amid these tensions stood families like the Dandolos, who prioritized law, order, and institutional stability. Unlike others who fought primarily for material or military advantage, the Dandolos were the custodians of the processes of the Republic. By insisting that every treaty, alliance,

or declaration of war follow constitutional precedent, they were a moderating force. Their existence did not eliminate conflict but retarded rash decision-making and forced compromise between opposing families to frame their arguments within the bounds of legality.

These disputes reveal that Venetian family conflicts were never merely household arguments. Instead, they were competing visions of what Venice was and should be. The mercantile families envisioned a Venice that thrived as a commercial hub, embedded in the network of Mediterranean trade. The martial families envisioned a Republic forged of honor, military strength, and resistance to foreign domination. The pragmatists sought to mediate between these extremes for individual or factional advantage, while the legalists sought to keep the Republic intact amidst the turmoil.

Thus, Venice's domestic conflicts may be seen as a microcosm of the Republic itself: a state constantly torn between commerce and war, tradition and novelty, pragmatism and principle. All of these competitions did not weaken Venice directly; rather, they forced the Republic to balance its choices carefully so that no single family was ever able to dominate totally. But they also meant that unity was fragile, and every choice was laden with long-standing family competition.

11. Rules of Procedure

Through the committee, we will follow a special procedure adapted from the “Harvard MUN Procedure.” Also, bear in mind that we will provide you with workshops at the beginning of the committee and again before drafting the communiqué, so there is no need to stress if you are not fully confident with the procedure at first.

11.1 Harvard Mun Procedure

Harvard MUN procedure is a style of debate patterned after the Model United Nations procedure, but also less formalistic and more discursive than the UN procedure. Instead of spending most of the time on long speaker lists, Harvard MUN encourages active debate through caucuses, bargaining, and collaboration. The outcome is not only to debate points but also to negotiate and arrive at pragmatic solutions, as well as build coalitions that can write and pass resolutions.

The process of an average Harvard MUN committee would typically run as follows:

Roll Calls- At the start of each committee session, the Chair conducts a roll call to check attendance.

Opening Speeches – At the start of the debate, all delegates present their country's perspective in a brief speech.

General Speakers' List (GSL) – The typical mode of debate. Delegates are called alphabetically from the list to provide speeches articulating their standpoints and opinions.

Moderated Caucus – The Chair holds a formal debate on a specific sub-issue (e.g., refugee camp budget, security concerns). Delegates give short statements (30–60 seconds) and respond directly to one another.

Unmoderated Caucus – An informal session where delegates rise from their chairs in an effort to negotiate, lobby, and collaborate on resolutions. This is where serious diplomacy takes place.

Draft Resolution – Written proposals in UN resolution format are submitted by delegates after discussion and negotiation. Drafts need multiple sponsors and signatures.

Amendments – Adjustments in clauses (additions, deletions, modifications) can be proposed by delegates.

Voting Procedure – Delegates vote on the passing or rejection of the resolutions. A majority is usually needed, depending on committee rules.

Roll Call

At the start of each committee session, the Chair conducts a roll call to check attendance.

Delegates respond with either:

“Present” – You are present and will participate in the debate, but you may choose to abstain during substantive voting.

“Present and Voting” – You are present and must vote either for or against during substantive voting (no abstentions allowed).

Roll call also helps establish a quorum (the minimum number of members required to start a debate).

Opening Speech

Each delegate makes an opening statement (about 1 minute) at the beginning of the committee.

Gives the country's position on the topic.

Refers to key concerns, top priorities, and potential solutions.

Should be professional, diplomatic, and brief (not aggressive or excessively lengthy).

This is your opportunity to set your country's agenda and gain allies.

General Speakers' List (GSL)

The standard debate mode.

Delegates are put on a list and selected in turn. Each has a set speaking time (typically 1–2 minutes).

Speeches should provide broad positions, general points, and priorities, and not nitty-gritty details.

GSL continues until a motion is made to move into a caucus.

Yields (to question, another delegate, or back to the chair) may be used by delegates after each speech.

Yields (in GSL):

Yield to questions (other delegates ask you).

Yield to another delegate (you pass on the rest of your time).

Yield to the Chair (complete your speech graciously).

Motions & Caucuses

A motion may be suggested by delegates in the structure of caucuses to change the debate format.

-Moderated Caucus:

Structured debate on a specific sub-topic.

The chair invites delegates to speak for a short time (30–60 seconds).

Example: "Motion for 10-minute moderated caucus, 1 minute per speaker, on humanitarian aid distribution."

Useful to delve deeper into details.

-Semi-Moderated Caucus

A hybrid form of debate combining elements of both moderated and unmoderated caucuses.

The chair maintains a speakers' list, but delegates may also move and interact more freely once their turn has ended.

Example: "Motion for 12-minute semi-moderated caucus, 45 seconds per speaker, on coordination between regional blocs."

Useful when both structured speeches and flexible diplomacy are needed simultaneously. (Generally, they are not preferred by chairs)

Unmoderated Caucus:

Casual session where delegates move about freely, build blocs, and prepare working papers.

The most innovative phase is usually for diplomacy and resolution writing.

Example: "Motion for 15-minute unmoderated caucus" (no need to indicate the topic)

Other motions: prolong caucus time, introduce draft resolutions, proceed to voting procedure, etc.

Points (used by delegates to address the Chair)

Point of Personal Privilege – Used if you are having trouble hearing, need clarification, or are uncomfortable (e.g., temperature, microphone issue).

Point of Parliamentary Inquiry – To ask information from the Chair about rules or procedure.

Point of Order – To tell the Chair of an error of procedure or contest a decision.

These points keep the conversation moving and ensure neutrality.

Extra Features

Right of Reply – If your country is personally offended, you can request to respond briefly.

Amendments – Formal proposals to change draft resolutions. They can be friendly (accepted by sponsors) or unfriendly (need to be voted on).

Resolution Paper

The final product of the debate is a resolution, an official UN-style document.

It has two main sections:

Preambulatory Clauses – Explain the background, remind of previous treaties, and show why the issue is important.

Example: "Recalling the UN Charter and previous resolutions on humanitarian assistance..."

Operative Clauses – Concrete solutions, measures, and actions suggested by the committee.

Example: "Encourages member states to contribute to an international refugee support fund..."

Resolutions are presented in blocs of countries, laid before the committee, debated, maybe changed, and finally voted on.

In this committee, instead of moderated caucuses, we will hold semi-moderated caucuses to keep the discussion engaging, speed up the process, and add dynamism to the debate. (It will not be necessary to have a moderated caucus before a semi-moderated one, and there won't be any limitations on the number of semi-moderated caucuses taken, even if they are respectively.)

11.2 Round-the-Table

Instead of the General Speakers List (GSL), we will use a round-the-table Format.

Round-the-Table is an unusual debate format used mainly in specialist or small committees (e.g., crisis committees, history committees, or Security Council-style ones). Instead of a normal speaker's list or caucus, the Chair literally goes around the table and gives each delegate a turn to speak.

What is it for?

Ensures every delegate gets to have their say.

Brilliant when the Chair wants to hear all perspectives quickly, especially at the beginning of a session

or after a major update in an emergency.

Facilitates a structured and equitable floor, preventing forceful delegates from taking over.

How does it work?

The Chair requests a Round-the-Table.

Starting at one corner of the room, each representative is given a set amount of speaking time (e.g., 1 minute).

Every representative must make some use of his or her time to announce his or her nation's stance, news, or proposals.

No motions are necessary to talk — the Chair decides the sequence.

When everyone has had a chance to say something, the Chair may go back to the General Speakers' List or call for motions (e.g., for caucuses).

Rules

Delegates cannot relinquish their time (difference from GSL).

Interjections or questions are not normally allowed during the round.

It is often used at the beginning (for introductions) or mid-point (for updates, summaries, or quick consensus).

11.3 Communiqué

Finally, instead of drafting a Resolution Paper, we will produce a communiqué.

A Communiqué is a group statement or notice prepared by various delegates (or country blocs) on the floor in debate. It is shorter, less official, and less mandatory than a complete resolution. It's like an agreement in principle or a press release-type document.

What is it for?

To demonstrate unity and agreement between various nations on specific issues.

To put out recommendations, calls for action, or joint grievances without creating a complete resolution.

Usually used in small committees (like regional bodies, crisis committees, cabinet simulations) where the resolution format is too formal or cumbersome.

How does it work?

In an unmoderated caucus, delegates (usually from the same bloc) pen a communiqué.

It includes short statements of shared positions or consensus. Example:

"We, the members of the African Union, urge intensified cooperation in combating cross-border terrorism."

Upon finishing, the bloc submits it to the Chair.

The Chair reviews it for form (not substance).

The communiqué is then read to the committee or distributed.

Sometimes, a vote must be taken; sometimes it is simply recorded as the opinion of those signatories.

Rules

A communiqué must have signatories (countries agreeing with the statement).

It does not need as many signatories as a resolution and is typically less difficult to approve.

It can never replace or supplant a resolution, but can be used as a stepping-stone to one.

Typically written in concise diplomatic language, not formally lengthy like resolutions.

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