

Model European Council Simulation

(developed for a middle or high school classroom of 15-29 students)

Simulations may include several different institutions and simulate numerous inter-relationships in the EU. However, the most efficient classroom arrangement will focus on the European Council. The European Council members are the national executives from the 25 member states. This institution convenes four times a year and establishes the general direction for EU decision-making. The European Council does not develop actual policies, but instead discusses urgent issues and negotiates the EU's position on such matters. This simulation requires students to determine their country's positions. The European Council simulation facilitates active discussions on current events, but it does not entail a thorough knowledge of policy-making in the EU.

Preparing the Simulation

1. Teachers begin the exercise by assigning the countries to each student. Each class would ideally have 25 students to represent each country of the EU-25. However, the simulation accommodates smaller and larger class sizes. If classrooms contain fewer than 25 students, then teachers might remove the smaller countries from the pool of assignments (Luxembourg, Malta, Cyprus, etc.). If classrooms contain as few as 15 students, then teachers might focus on particular regions (assign the original EU-15 from Western Europe or fifteen countries from Central and Eastern Europe). If classrooms contain more than 25 students, then teachers might add the candidate states to the pool (Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Croatia).

2. Teachers should decide if they want students to focus on one topic or multiple topics. One topic will likely take entire length of time for a class (approx. 50 minutes). However, teachers can choose to hold several simulations through the school week, with each day focusing on a topic.

Research for the Simulation

3. The simulation requires preparatory research. Teachers might assign one or more written assignments to complete before the simulation (*see Appendix D for some sample guidelines for these assignments*).

4. Teachers might require the students to research and author "alter-ego" profiles of the person in their position. The student playing the British Prime Minister would then research and produce a report on Tony Blair. The information for this assignment can be

found on the internet, in news articles and on the member state sites. This assignment allows students to understand the background and preferences of their personality.

5. *Teachers might also assign a country profile.* The teacher decides the information to be included in this profile. Students might investigate the history, politics, economics or current demographics of their country. Students might also study the country's relationships with their bordering neighbors or their interests in the European Union. The information for this assignment can be found on the internet, in most textbooks, in news articles and on the member state sites. This assignment allows students to understand the background and preferences of their country.

6. *Teachers can assign a policy history.* For instance, if the simulation will focus on immigration in Iran, then the student should investigate the history of immigration policy (Judicial and Police Cooperation) in the EU. If a simulation focuses on air pollution, then the student should investigate the history of environment policy in the EU. If a simulation focuses on diplomatic relationships with Iran, then the student should investigate the history of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). This assignment might ask students to explain the purpose of a particular policy area and describe the EU's role in making policies for that area. The information for this assignment can be found on the internet, in most textbooks, in news articles and on the EU website. This assignment allows students to understand the background of a particular country and become familiar with the EU decision-making process.

7. *Teachers **should** assign policy position papers.* This assignment requires students to determine their country's position on each topic under consideration and to study the background of that topic. Students **should** write a short diplomatic statement, to read at the beginning of the conference. Students also might write such a statement and a longer paper that examines the background of their country's position. Students **should** also study the background of the topic. Why is immigration a pertinent topic? Why discuss air pollution? What is happening in Iran? The information for this assignment can be found on the internet, in news articles and on the member state sites. This assignment informs the student on their position for the simulation and should enable the student to discuss the topic.

Conducting the Simulation

8. *Teachers can make this simulation as formal or informal as they like.* In the spirit of a true diplomatic summit, students could dress up, sit around conference-style tables with

name placards for their countries, and observe familiarities like referring to each other by “Mr.,” “Ms.,” and their surnames.¹

The simulation can proceed in the following manner:

1. Each representative reads their country’s statement on the topic. The teacher may have the students read these statements in alphabetical order by country name or in random order (15 minutes, approx).
 2. The teacher might ask a representative to propose a common EU position for deliberation in the body. If the body remains quiet, the teacher might propose this position.
 3. The deliberation should then address the common position. Some members might stand and explain their support for the proposal. Some members might stand and explain their opposition to the proposal. These members might propose changes to the common position (15-20 minutes).
 4. The teacher should then open the body to informal negotiations. Members should leave their seats and informally discuss the issue with their allies and opponents (10 minutes, approx.).
 5. Members should re-convene to vote on the common proposal (5 minutes).
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Learning in the Simulation

This simulation facilitates several different types of learning. Students engage in intra-personal, linguistic learning in the preparation for the simulation. Students employ bodily-kinesthetic, inter-personal intelligences in the actual simulation.

The simulation also exposes students to a variety of information about the European Union. Students learn about the individual countries and leaders within the EU. Students learn about EU policy areas and current events in Europe. Perhaps most important, students develop a sense of inter-governmental decision-making in the EU and other such international institutions. The member states often disagree on EU matters. These disagreements result in watered-down proposals or legislative deadlock. Students should become aware of this inter-governmental bargaining process. Hopefully, students will disagree on a certain proposal and work to persuade their colleagues of a particular course of action. Some simulations may be unable to provide a consensus on the topic. Such simulations would be very successful, in that they instruct the students in the realities of such decision-making.

¹ From *Bridge to the Future: Enlarging the European Union*

Contact Information

If you have any questions about the simulation guide or the Model EU.

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Appendix A: The European Council²

III) European Council

A) Summary

- consists of heads of government of the 25 member states (meeting sometimes with the 25 foreign ministers)
- focuses on overall strategic direction of European integration
- informal rules of procedure
- consensus decision-making

B) Background

The European Council is the forum in which the leaders of the EU member states meet to:

- provide strategic direction and consistency to the EU by discussing and deciding the overall character and goals of the Union (i.e., to act as a "political dynamo"),
- resolve problems which the Council of Ministers and the Commission have been unable to resolve (i.e., to act as the "supreme arbitrator", or court of last resort),
- provide political impetus to the EU by developing and encouraging new initiatives,
- develop a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Council Conclusions almost always include a statement of positions on foreign policy issues.

The European Council alone has the power and authority to resolve major issues and reach key decisions. The Council consists of the heads of government of the EU member states, their respective foreign ministers, and the President of the European Commission.

The Council normally meets twice per year, each meeting taking place in the member state holding the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Council meetings usually last no more than ten hours, spaced over a 24-hour period. During this time, there is an opening plenary session, and a formal dinner followed by an informal and confidential "fireside chat". The next day begins with informal, bilateral working breakfasts, and is followed by

² This appendix is taken from the Midwest Model European Union Simulation Guide; Copyright: Department of Political Science, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), 2000. Those parts relevant only to the Midwest Model European Union were edited from the appendix.

one or two further plenary sessions. Together, these meetings are designed to discuss matters of common concern, and to agree a set of Conclusions.

C) Preparation

Each delegate should do as much advance preparation as possible on the member state they are representing, the personal and political background of the leader they are role-playing, and the positions on European policy taken by that leader. They should also be clear on the role of the European Council in the policy-making process, and should come with specific policy proposals and objectives in mind. At the simulation, delegates role-playing heads of government should make their decisions in the context of the political forces and pressures currently active in EU member states, and the national interests of the states they are representing.

D) Format and Goals

In the Council meeting chamber, heads of government and foreign ministers of member states are seated alphabetically by member state, with the representative/s from the member state holding the Presidency of the EU at the head of the table. MAJOR GOAL: to discuss and debate the views, ideas and proposals of Council members with the goal of agreeing a formal set of Conclusions of the Presidency.

E) Rules of Procedure

Because the heads of government normally want to decide for themselves how best to use their meetings, the European Council has no formal rules of procedure. Council meetings are kept deliberately flexible and informal, and many of the most important discussions take place outside the Council chamber in the intervals between actual sessions.

Nevertheless, the following rules will apply at EU-Midwest:

1) Chair (*teacher*). The head of government of the member state holding the Presidency of the European Union will be in the chair. The Chair will have the sole and final power to open and close sessions, recognize speakers, place limits on floor times, control discussion and debate and caution or remove observers.

It will be left to the Chair to determine the flow and temper of Council meetings, but he/she should be fair, efficient, and courteous, avoid being partisan in any way, and ensure that every delegate is given the opportunity to speak. The order of business at all meetings will be determined by the Chair in consultation with other members of the European Council.

4) Voting procedure. The Council does not normally take formal votes, instead trying to reach its decisions through consensus: a general agreement on a topic which those opposing - or unable fully to support - are prepared to allow the Council to adopt without recourse to a vote. Reservations and objections may be recorded, but the Council as a whole will agree to proceed.

Where consensus cannot be reached, votes are taken as a last resort, with each member state having one vote and a simple majority prevailing.

A device known as a *tour de table* may also be used, at the discretion of the Chair. The Chair asks each head of government in turn to give a short summary (up to 2 minutes) of their thinking on the matter under discussion, thus ensuring that every member state is able to outline its position, and allowing the Chair to determine whether a compromise is possible. However, it can be time-consuming.

Each member state has the power of veto if its leader feels that critical national interests are at stake in an issue under consideration. The veto is very rarely used, however, and is always controversial.

European Council decisions are not legally binding, but are binding in a moral, political and pragmatic sense. The general conclusions of the Council then have to be turned into law by the European Commission, Council of Ministers, and European Parliament.

Appendix B: Rules of Procedure³

IX) GENERAL RULES OF PROCEDURE

1) Designations. The term "European Community" will only be correct when referring specifically to the EC; at all other times "European Union" is correct. Delegates should also take care to distinguish between the Council of Ministers and the European Council when using the term "the Council".

2) Power of the chair. Ultimate power to oversee, direct and run each meeting will be vested in the Chair, who will have the sole power to open and close sessions, recognize speakers, set time limits on speakers and debates, control discussion and debate, and maintain order.

The Chair must make every effort to be fair, to avoid partisan behavior of any kind, to ensure the smooth flow of proceedings, and to make sure that all discussions are relevant and as productive as possible.

4) Disruptive behavior. Delegates should remember at all times the importance of the three Cs: cooperation, compromise, and consensus. All delegates must at all times behave in accordance with the norms prevailing in a meeting among representatives of democratic governments, and should avoid any kind of hostile, aggressive, or disruptive behavior.

In the event of disruptive behavior by a delegate, the Chair may issue a formal warning to that delegate. If the delegate fails to co-operate after two formal warnings, the Chair may require the delegate to be silent for a specified time, or (as a last resort) may order the delegate to be expelled from the meeting chamber for a specified time. A silenced delegate may vote, but any delegate expelled from a meeting will lose all voting rights for the duration of his/her absence.

It is left to the Chair to define "disruptive behavior", but it may include open hostility, verbal abuse, constant interruption, raising of voices, delaying tactics, sleeping, a refusal to follow the rules of procedure, a refusal to co-operate in decision-making, or consulting with another delegate in a manner that interferes with the smooth flow of the meeting.

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5) Voting. Where votes are taken, they should normally be open, and made (except in the Commission) by roll call in alphabetical order by member state. Voting will be verbal, and expressed either as "Yes", "No", or "Abstain". Once a vote has been declared open, no-one will be allowed to speak other than to cast their vote. Once all votes have been cast, the Deputy Chair will tally the vote and immediately announce the result. The decision of the Deputy Chair on a tally will be final.

6) Speaking. Any delegate wishing to address any meeting must raise his/her hand and be recognized by the Chair. Verbal requests are not acceptable, nor is speaking out of turn. Delegates must remain seated while speaking. Speakers may not be interrupted by anyone but the Chair.

11) Point of Order. If, during a meeting, a delegate feels that the meeting is running in a manner contrary to these Rules, he/she may rise to a point of order. The Chair may overrule, or accept the appeal. If accepted, the Chair may make an immediate ruling, or ask the delegate to speak on the point of order for a maximum of one minute (but he/she may not speak on the subject of the debate). The Chair will then immediately rule on the point of order.

12) Point of Information. If a delegate wishes to obtain a clarification of procedure or of any other matter, he/she may rise to a point of information and receive clarification from the Chair or anyone else designated by the Chair.

13) Point of Personal Privilege. If a delegate wishes to raise a question, leave the room for an extended time, or make a request relating to personal comfort or their treatment by other delegates, he/she may rise to a point of personal privilege and receive an immediate ruling by the Chair.

15) Bargaining, coalition-building, and package deals. These are normal elements in Union decision-making, and can be undertaken during formal meetings or in informal sessions outside meetings.

Appendix C: Sample Syllabus for Model EU Simulation

Political Simulations: Model European Union

Spring 2005

MWF 10:10-11:00

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The purpose of this course is to learn about the decision-making process in the European Union (EU). We will rely on different methods to study decision-making. Course lectures will provide background on the history, institutions, actors, and decision-making process of the EU. Student projects will provide knowledge over the specific issues and policy-making areas under the EU's authority. We will then apply our knowledge in simulations of the decision-making processes within the EU. We will assume the roles of member state representatives and EU bureaucrats. These simulations will prepare us to take part in the Midwest Model of the European Union at the Indiana University Purdue University campus on April 13-15, 2005. Around twenty Model EU delegations from colleges and universities across the Midwest will participate in this conference. Participants will engage in plenary debates, conduct informal negotiations and exchange ideas over semi-formal lunches and dinners. This conference offers an opportunity to apply our studies and develop a better understanding of the EU.

Required Texts:

EU powers and politics have rested in a constant state of flux. The EU has progressively added new members and assumed new responsibilities. The decision-making process continually changes the costs and benefits for different member states. Power and influence within the EU shifts between different institutions, levels of governance and actors. The Model EU requires that we understand these changes and keep abreast of current events in the EU. Textbooks offer limited utility for these goals. However, the course texts will provide the necessary education in the history, basic structure and decision-making process within the EU.

Bulmer, Simon and Christian Lequesne. 2005. Member States of the European Union.

McCormick, John. 2005. Understanding the European Union (3rd Edition).

Wallace, Helen and William Wallace. 2005. Policy-Making in the European Union (5th Edition).

News Sources:

You must stay informed of current events in the EU to perform well in the course and at the conference. The best source is the daily newspaper, *the Financial Times*. You can subscribe to the newspaper, at a heavily discounted rate, for the semester. You can also read the Financial Times website at www.ft.com

A fantastic site to research the policy stances of particular countries is European Business News Online at www.eubusiness.com.

The *EU Observer* is another important news sources on the EU. You can access this source at www.euobserver.com. You can access the cover stories for free or subscribe for access to all news stories and the archives.

Of course, it is helpful to access the EU website to learn about current events. However, it is a bit difficult to navigate the various sites of the EU institutions. You can find the main EU website at www.europa.eu.int.

The Economist magazine regularly reports on the EU. *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* occasionally cover the EU.

We will regularly have classroom discussion on EU current affairs.

Course Requirements:

- 1.) Attend all classes
- 2.) Complete the assigned readings before coming to class and stay informed on EU current events
- 3.) Complete three written assignments: Country Profile, Alter-Ego and Policy Area Summary. Papers must be completed according to the schedule. Late papers will be marked down five points for each day the paper is late. Contact me in case of an emergency.
- 4.) Post weekly news updates on your policy area under the Oncourse Discussion tab.
- 5.) Author policy proposals for use in class simulations and at the Model EU.
- 6.) Prepare for and participate in mock simulations in class

- 7.) Complete mid-term examination.
- 8.) Attend and participate in the Model EU competition in Indianapolis

Assessment:

Since the primary purpose of this course is to prepare you for the Midwestern Model Conference in April, 20% of your grade will depend on your performance at the conference. The written assignments will serve both to assess your knowledge of the EU and prepare you for the conference.

The final grade will be based on the following distribution:

5% - class attendance, participation and effort

5% - policy proposals

10% - news updates

40% - papers: Country Profile, 10%; Alter-Ego, 10%; Policy History, 20%

20% - mid-term

20% - Model EU participation

General Business:

Make sure that you include proper citations in any written or oral work. Plagiarism will result in a failure for that assignment, referral to the administration and other potential consequences.

The class includes a group assignment for a reason. We must work together as a team at the conference and it is thus useful to begin to work together for common purposes within the class.

I hope you enjoy your experiences with the class and conference. Both are intended to educate you on the EU and allow you to learn in a hands-on, interactive manner.

You should thus not hesitate to ask questions, introduce discussion points, articulate your opinions and comment on the reading materials. The small class size should allow everyone to participate. Additionally, such dialogue can only prepare us for the conference.

Finally, everyone should check out the website for the Model EU conference:

<http://www.iupui.edu/~modeleu/welcome.htm>

Appendix D: Sample Guidelines for Written Assignments

Guidelines for Alter-Ego:

The paper must be 3 pages minimum (5 pages maximum) with 1.5 spacing. This is the profile of the position you will fill at the conference.

The first two-thirds of the paper:

You should focus on the powers and responsibilities of the position. You should provide an institutional description of how your position interacts with other individuals in the member state and at the EU. For instance, if you are Foreign Minister, what is your relationship with the President and the EU Commissioner? This should not focus on the particular personalities, but the institutional division of power. You should focus on the interests of your position. What are your likely goals in EU decision-making?

The last third of the paper:

You should briefly (half page) profile the actual personality that you will likely model. So, if you are the French President, you should profile Chirac: his personality, his interests and his goals in the EU.

You should briefly (half page) provide your thoughts on the position. What do you make of the position? Is it important in EU decision-making? Why do you think it is important or not important?

Guidelines for Country Profile:

The paper must be 4 pages minimum (6 pages maximum) with 1.5 or double spacing. This is the profile of the country you will represent at the conference.

The first part of the paper:

You should describe your country. What is the language? What is the structure of the state? Is France a federal state or a centralized state? What are the demographics of its population? Is Lithuania comprised 100% of Lithuanians or does it have a large Russian minority population? What is the status of the economy? Is it growing or stagnant? Is it agriculturally-based or services based? You may even comment on popular foods and customs, if you like. However, keep in mind that this is not a tourist brochure.

The second part of the paper:

Who are your neighbors? How does your country relate with its neighbors? Does it have good relations or tensions? Does it cooperate with its neighbors in any form of partnerships outside of the EU? Does it vote with its neighbors in a block in the EU?

Also, how does your country work in the EU? Does it possess a lot of power and influence in EU decision-making? What role does it serve in EU decision-making? Who are its main allies and rivals in the EU?

The third part of the paper:

What are its goals in the EU? What does it hope to gain from EU membership? Please, be specific. Every country hopes to prosper economically in the EU. Does your country hope to gain from agricultural subsidies? Does it gain security? Does it gain from open borders for investment and capital? Also, is your country inter-governmentalist or supra-nationalist?

The final part of the paper:

Provide your thoughts on the country. What do you think it can achieve in the EU? Where do you think it is going in the future? What hopes would you have for the country, if you were actually a native?

Guidelines for Policy Summary:

The policy summary should address the history of the policy area. When did it fall in the EU's policy domain? Have the EU's powers in the area expanded over the years? If so, why and how? The summary should address the specifics of the EU's current role in the policy area. Does the EU exclusively control the policy area or share competences with the member states? What legislation does the EU make in the area now? The summary should address both the EU and the member state's interests in the area. The summary should provide examples of current policies and it should predict likely future policies.

The summary should be 4 pages minimum (6 pages maximum). The proposals should each be 1-2 pages. You should use 1.5 spacing.

Oral Presentation:

You will then summarize the policy area to the class. You can prepare an actual presentation (audio-visual aids and all), work from the written work, make notes or just wing it (although, that is not advised). Your presentation must last for 40 minutes. You will then take questions from the class for 10 minutes.

The grade for the assignment will be split between the written work (50%) and the oral presentation (50%). Each group is responsible for its own division of labor.