

European Agenda on Migration Simulation Logistics

Simulation Overview

Target audience: The *European Agenda on Migration* simulation-game is constructed as a teaching-tool for high-school, undergraduate, and graduate courses on such topics as European Union studies, international organizations, international relations, conflict analysis and resolution, negotiation, mediation, and international law. but it may reap higher benefits in a mid-level course for 2nd or 3rd year students who have taken introductory courses on one or more topics such as European government, negotiation, or international relations. It can be used to prepare, train, and test the negotiation skills of groups of participants in preparation for Model European Union and Model United Nations conferences. This simulation can also be used for conducting a 1-2 day(s) Model European Union conference.

Topic: The simulation focuses on the issue of migration to the EU, but it can serve as a model for developing simulations on other policy areas such as economics, agriculture, environment, trade etc.

Simulation method: The simulation is set in a scenario that is primarily fictitious – yet still blends in and incorporates real events, history and detail, forming a “pseudo-reality”: a situation familiar and compelling enough to spark interest, motivation and identification, yet controlled and constrained through incorporating fictitious elements to allow for maximum learning and skill-building.

Simulation synopsis: The simulation is a multi-party negotiation at a meeting of the European Council to determine the EUCO policy with regards to migration, primarily in face of the waves of migrants seeking refuge in Europe as a result of upheavals in the Middle East and elsewhere. Participants are tasked with designing a plan for how the EU will tackle this migration. This is currently a ‘hot’ topic on the EU agenda and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. ‘Migration’ is used to refer to all forms of movement of people from third party, non-EU countries to the EU - economic migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Participants will decide on their own whether they want to discuss migrants in general, or to have their country focus on specific types of migrants, during the European Council meeting.

There are 29 parties participating (27 EU Member States, plus the president of the European Council and the president of the European Commission). All parties receive private information describing their interests and positions. In deciding the European Council’s policy, it is up to participants to decide whether they wish to act in a competitive manner - or if they prefer to use collaborative approaches seeking win-win, integrative solutions for the betterment of the European Union.

Learning goals: Through taking part in this simulation, participants will:

- Deepen their understanding of the European Union and its decision-making processes;

- Understand the dynamics of negotiation and alliance-building within the European Council;
- Experience the pathways to deciding an agenda item discussed at a European Council meeting; and
- Apply negotiation skills in a multi-party setting.

Roles: Structure and balance: There are four major groups of countries in the simulation. While there are some differences between internal members in each group, with regards to specific interests, their overall approaches to migration issues are similar. The push and pull between these four groups provide the central dynamics of the simulation. Some countries belong to more than one of these groups, given their multiple interests and alliances. Instructors should familiarize themselves with the groupings in order to follow the simulation and guide any interventions they choose to make (see below). Participants are provided with a description of these groups, but not a detailed breakdown of the countries in them; they will need to discover allies and opponents on their own. The four groups are:

“Entry Points” countries: **Greece, Italy, Malta, and Spain.**

Destination countries: **Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden.**

Countries which are neither primary destinations of migration nor major transit countries: **Cyprus, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, and Portugal.**

Transit countries: **Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.**

Simulation dynamics and outcome: **Ultimately, the decision making mechanism in the European Council for the purposes of this simulation is reaching a consensus expressed through a unanimous vote, following the rules laid down by the EU Treaties (see Section I).** Power imbalances and time pressure will require participants to create alliances and think quickly, with regards to protecting their country’s individual interests as well as promoting the EU’s interests as a whole.

Setting, timeframe, and interventions: This guide assumes that the simulation will be played in a face-to-face environment, with full monitoring by the instructor. The instructors should provide time for preparation and debriefing, before and after the simulation, respectively, as discussed below. The simulation can be adapted to be conducted in 1 ½ hours, or played out over the course of three full days. One method for achieving this versatility involves the instructor intervening with ‘breaking news’ which require participants to either re-assess and prolong the simulation, in the unlikely situation that there is overly or artificially rapid agreement, or provide them with opportunities and assistance for moving past ‘stumbling blocks,’ speeding up the process.

Logistics, Setup and Simulation Management

Number of participants: This simulation is ideally designed for use with a class of 29 students. For smaller or larger groups, see Section 3(a) Game Variations, below.

Physical surroundings and props: The simulation requires a large room, to accommodate participants' sitting around a large rectangular table (which can be formed of regular desks placed side by side), or in seats placed in a large circle. It would be helpful to have a map of Europe and its surroundings handy, as well as a whiteboard or flipchart. For a 1-2 days conference setting, the EUCO Presidency team should have access to a computer linked to a video projector and all the participants should be able to see the screen. As negotiations between smaller groups are likely to develop, try to provide a second room, or an adjacent hallway (one in which the participants will not disturb other activities), for conducting such caucuses.

To add a sense of reality to the situation, instructors should consider asking participants to dress up formally for the occasion, and (as resources permit) add touches to convey a sense of the real-life setting (such as by providing name tags for the countries, placards with countries' flags printed on them, actual miniature flags on the table in front of the country's seats, etc.). Conditions permitting, follow the seating arrangements dictated by protocol (see <http://publications.europa.eu/code/pdf/370000en.htm>). All official meetings shall respect the following seating order: the European Council Presidency, the representative of the Member-State holding the rotating Presidency of the EU, and the Commission representative take the central places at the table. On the left of these central positions are the countries which previously held the rotating presidency of the European Union. On the right of these central positions are the countries which will hold the future rotating presidency of the European Union. When instructors take this kind of initiative, participants will often augment it through efforts of their own, such as by adding an element of national dress to their garb.

Convening an in-person/online meeting with a representative from the EU or a transatlantic expert at some point before the game may give an even more realistic dimension to the simulation.

Required / optional material: To conduct the simulation itself, all that is strictly required are the roles to be handed out to each team. Instructions to the group regarding procedural issues, decision-making, and timeframe can be imparted orally. Depending on preparation time and participants' previous studies, teachers can consider assigning participants to review the material found on some of the websites provided in the appropriate module. Teachers might decide to add in material of their own, or ask participants to conduct their independent research.

Simulation setup role assignment, instructions and initiation: In this phase, you designate participants to their individual roles, and assign them the material they need to prepare. This can be done on the spot, by handing out roles to participants and instructing them to be ready to begin the European Council in one hour, or in the following class session. When circumstances allow it, or, when you wish participant preparation to go beyond the role

material provided in this guide, assign the material at least one day (or, one lesson) before the simulation is to take place, allowing participants to prepare themselves fully. Announce precisely when and where the European Council is to take place, stressing that everybody must be present, prepared, and ready to begin the European Council at that time. Stress that absences will threaten the success of the meeting. Give any group instructions you feel necessary to the group. At the designated starting time, gather the group, and announce that the simulation has begun; all their behavior, from now on, must be in-role.

MEU Rules of Procedure

The European Council President is the chair of this simulation. The Council meetings should be opened by the participant(s) playing the role of the President in the European Council. At the beginning of the meetings the Presidency should introduce each other and their roles in the specific Council. Next, they should introduce the European Commission representative, who will then introduce the agenda item. Throughout this conference, the participants playing the role of the European Commission will promote the interests of the European Union as a whole. It is best if the participants playing these roles (Presidency and Commission) have a private conversation before the simulation to set a plan for facilitating the discussions. The individuals playing the role of the European Commission can assist with the facilitation of the session(s), only if asked by the president of the European Council. The Presidency team then opens the floor for a first round of speeches from all participating Member States. These initial speeches should not be longer than 2 minutes and they should take place in alphabetical order. Afterwards, more comments can be entertained and the actual negotiations begin. The simulation ends with the EUCO announcing an impasse or adopting a conclusion. It can also end with the instructor announcing that time has run out.

After the opening-remarks phase, the EUCO President can suggest structured or unstructured break-out meetings (to allow for informal negotiation) with just a few of the participants or full plenary meetings, as she/he sees fit in order to have a successful negotiation. The President of the EUCO can facilitate dialogue or allow participants to engage without a facilitation/moderation. Instructors should be very mindful in assigning the presidency role, as the way the simulation plays out depends to a certain extent on the ability of the EUCO President to facilitate an effective group process.

The proceedings can be as informal or formal as the instructor desires based on the learning goals of the simulation. If you want the group to follow more formal proceedings, prompt the EUCO president to use the European Council's Rules of Procedure, of which the following are a part:

- “8. At the start of a meeting, the President of the EUCO shall give any further information necessary regarding the handling of the meeting and in particular indicate the length of time it intends to be devoted to each item. It shall refrain from making lengthy introductions and avoid repeating information which is already known to delegations.

- 9. At the start of a discussion on a substantive point, the Presidency shall, depending on the type of discussion which is needed, indicate to delegations the maximum length of their interventions on that point. In most cases interventions should not exceed two minutes.
- 10. Full table rounds shall be proscribed in principle; they may be used only in exceptional circumstances on specific questions, with a time limit on interventions set by the Presidency.
- 11. The Presidency shall give as much focus as possible to discussions, in particular by requesting delegations to react to compromise texts or specific proposals.
- 12. During and at the end of meetings the Presidency shall refrain from making lengthy summaries of the discussions and shall confine itself to concluding briefly on the results (substance and/or procedure) achieved.
- 13. Delegations shall avoid repeating points made by previous speakers. Their interventions shall be brief, substantive and to the point.
- 14. Like-minded delegations shall be encouraged to hold consultations with a view to the presentation by a single spokesperson of a common position on a specific point.
- 15. When discussing texts, delegations shall make concrete drafting proposals, in writing, rather than merely express their disagreement with a particular proposal.
- 16. Unless indicated otherwise by the Presidency, delegations shall refrain from taking the floor when in agreement with a particular proposal; in this case silence shall be taken as agreement in principle.”

Participant-driven simulation conduct: Make sure that the European Council President is aware of the simulation’s ending time. Other than that, the simulation design allows for the entire process to be driven, start to finish, by participants, without instructor guidance or intervention.

Instructor interventions: During the simulation’s run-time, the instructor’s task is largely to be attentive to the proceedings and discussion, noting interesting elements to raise for discussion in the post-simulation debrief session. There are three situations in which instructor intervention is desirable: Participants will sometimes pose questions to the instructor – for example, about EUCO procedural rules, the simulation storyline, information they see as ‘missing,’ or how they should be playing their role. When possible, the instructor would do best to point participants towards sources for procedural rules or the information provided in their roles. Sometimes, however, the instructor needs to take on the responsibility of clarifying a point or explaining something in the instructions. To this end, teachers should review the simulation before engaging in it so they will be able to clarify or adjust details without upsetting the fundamental balance between participants. A second – fairly rare - trigger event for instructor intervention is disruptive behavior on the part of participants. This might be unusually inappropriate or abusive behavior by participants in-role, but will more likely be occurrences of participants suddenly slipping out of role during the course of the simulation, and engaging in discussion that bursts the ‘bubble’ of simulated

reality. This often happens for short moments, with the simulation self-restoring; however, if things get out of hand in this regard, the instructor can encourage participants to regroup and restore the simulation bubble. Finally, instructors may intervene to add in news of new information or events that s/he wishes to introduce into the simulation.

Final stages and simulation ending: A non-intrusive intervention, such as a note to the President of the EUCO or catching their eye while tapping one's watch, should be enough to help participants keep their eye on the clock as the deadline approaches. As it does, the European Council President with the help of the President of the European Commission together with leading Member States should work on drafting the language of any agreement parties have come to. When there is a written draft agreement the EUCO President distributes it to all parties, and calls for a vote. If it passes unanimously (only the 27 Member States have voting rights), the President of the EUCO announces the conclusions. If one head of state disagrees with the agreement, then no conclusions are passed. If there is time remaining, negotiations can resume with the hopes of achieving agreement, drafting it and voting on it anew. If time runs out with no unanimously agreed-upon solution, the European Council ends with a conclusion stating the minimal agreement that has been reached, even if the agreement was just to continue the discussions. Of course, if parties realize they are not going to reach unanimous agreement on all the issues, they can attempt to carve out issues for which there is consensus, and agree to attempt to settle the rest at a later date.

Transitioning from simulation to debrief: If the meeting has ended with an agreement, you might ask parties to sign it, or stage a group photo, in order to have a moment of celebration during which participants will shift slowly back into their natural selves. Continue this by announcing that in a couple of minutes all representatives will be leaving back to their embassies, and they can use the time to say goodbye to other representatives. Then, announce the end of the simulation, and ask participants to return to their seats to discuss what happened.