

Teaching Notes & Game Variations

3(a) Game Variations

This section will cover several areas in which instructors might depart from the basic simulation format.

3(a)1. Group size:

The group size for conducting the simulation works well with 86 participants. This breaks down in the following way:

The Council of the EU comprises two representatives from each of its 27 Member States (each State's Minister of Interior & its Ambassador to the EU) for a total of 54 participants.

The European Parliament is best simulated with seven political groups, each with four Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), as well as a Commission of 4 representatives, for a total of 32 participants.

If you have additional participants, you can add up more MEPs to each of the parties, up to a total of 8 MEPs/political group. This last possibility is somewhat artificial and unwieldy; on the other hand, it allows all participants to feel, think, and act as a primary player in the simulation, enhancing their learning process. This potential addition results in a participant number of 114 participants.

If you have fewer than 86 participants, the most balanced way to construct the roles is to remove roles of the Member State Ambassadors to the EU, and reduce the number of MEPs per party. If you are still missing participants, remove an additional role from each of the groups, and so on. At the very least, the simulation requires 15 participants to function:

- 7 Council Member States: Make sure that the country holding the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU is included; beyond that role, you can choose the Member States that would best fit your goals for this classroom exercise. Ensure that there are enough conflicting positions between the states by quickly reading the roles you intend to assign;
- 7 European Parliament political groups: each political group represented by one MEP¹.
- 1 representative for the Commission: The Commission representative will introduce the legislation, promote its views, and facilitate informal dialogue in the European Parliament and the Council of the EU meetings. The Commission will be mediating between the two institutions to find a commonly agreed draft legislation in the Conciliation Committee.

¹ The political groups for this simulation reflect the major political groups of the European Parliament as of January 26, 2024. You can play this simulation as a historical simulation and keep these political groups. Otherwise we advise you to check the membership of the European Parliament at the moment you plan to play this simulation and update political group names, positions, and interests accordingly. In some cases these updates mean only minor tweaks, but in other cases, and especially if political group membership has changed significantly, it may require significant updates. Of course, one easy option for instructors is to ask the participants to conduct their research on the current positions and interests of the political groups.

In extended simulations (conducted over more than one day), you can accommodate up to four more participants by creating a press corps assigning participants the role of journalists covering the meetings. Their function during the simulation is to report on the activities of the meetings through the production of a newspaper, blogs, and/or videos. To gather this information, they attend the meetings, interview participants, and participate in press conferences.

Members of the press corps are expected to act in a professional manner and adhere to professional standards of journalism. Information obtained through covering meetings or interviews or press conferences should be reported as accurately as possible. All of the public meetings of the MEU simulation are open to the press corps; their access to private hallway conversations between representatives or other forms of small-group caucusing is at the discretion of the meeting's participants. When present in meetings, the journalists' role is to cover the meetings; they should not participate substantively in debates or interfere with the meeting's process. If you wish this to be a more significant part of the meeting, include activities giving participants experience in working with the press. For example, the meeting's leaders can conduct press conferences in which they make statements and then field questions from the press. Individual journalists can seek in-depth interviews with leaders and country representatives, or ask them questions at "on the doorstep" moments entering and exiting the meetings. Participants representing member states should be instructed to consider how representatives in the real world would strategically engage and cooperate with members of the press and to do so themselves in the simulation.

3(a)2. Timeframe:

Instructors can set aside a substantial period of time for running the simulation in a single session. To this end, it is recommended to dedicate at least 4-6 hours to the actual playing of the simulation itself, aside from time for preparation and debrief. However, instructors might decide to conduct it in a shorter timeframe – providing some situational reason for why the Council of the EU and the European Parliament must reach a decision within 2½ hours. Alternatively, they can decide to run the simulation in multiple sessions, each of short duration; for example, dedicating an hour and a quarter of class time to the simulation in each of 2 consecutive class meetings, and running a debrief session in a 3rd class meeting.

Given the amount of time required for in-the-room setup, logistics, and lead-in, any shorter period of consecutive time than 1.25 hours will simply not provide participants with sufficient time to commence the simulation and become deeply involved in it, to say nothing of navigating it all the way to completion. If you can only dedicate the minimum amount of a single 1.5 hour session, assign participants their roles and the simulation scenario in advance, tasking them to compose position papers for their countries and to send these papers in advance to all other participants. This way, once in the classroom, actual negotiations can begin immediately rather than participants devoting nearly an hour to sharing their member-states' positions.

Of course, the larger the number of students in a simulation group, the longer the minimal time required for the simulation is. Put simply, while the number of country roles remains the same, there are more students representing each country, all of whom will take time speaking. In addition, inter-player interacting increases with every added person at the table, further affecting time.

Accordingly, the initial minimum suggestion for 1.5 hours relates to a simulation group of up to 30 students. If you have 30-60 students in class, and assign 2 students for each member-state, you might still be able to squeeze a simulation into this timeframe but would do well to reduce the number of issues you intend the class to negotiate. If you have more than 60 students in the class, and assign 3-4 students for each member-state, the 1.25 hours timeframe will simply not suffice, and the simulation should be scheduled for at least 2.5 hours.

Once again, these are *minimal* timeframes. Students will benefit far more by dedicating more expansive timeframes to the simulation. All of the simulations in this toolkit could easily be used over a 2-3 days Model EU conference setting with approximately 12-16 hours of negotiation time for the participants.

3(a)3. Instructor interventions

The simulation is designed to be self-sustaining; once set in motion, it can be fully carried out without instructor intervention. However, instructors can intervene in the simulation, adding new events or facts, and thereby changing the simulation's course. One reason to do so would be to slow down a group that is rapidly or artificially headed towards agreement without full engagement with the issues or with their differences. Conversely, instructors might wish to incentivize or aid a group that is not progressing and seems to lack the motivation or skill to do so. Such interventions essentially manipulate the timeline and pace of the simulation.

Another reason for intervening would be in order to introduce real-world or seemingly real-world occurrences into the simulation, giving participants a taste of what it feels like to deliberate policy while real-world influences seep into the meeting room. While externally introduced events might be initially categorized as 'positive' or 'negative' in sense of their anticipated effect on parties' capacity to collaborate, any event might be utilized by different parties to achieve different ends.² Instructors can, of course, come up with their own intervention methods. Below are two examples, one 'positive' interventions and one 'negative' interventions, for use in "*Counter-Terrorism EU Legislation*". Instructors should stop the simulation for a moment, and announce that they have 'breaking news' for participants:

Examples of "Breaking News" Interventions

- A high-profile investigative journalism report revealed that the massive ransomware attack that plagued a major EU ally (feel free to fill in the blanks with a country of your choice from outside the EU), recently conducted by hackers using surveillance tools the state had put in place in order to spy on its own citizens. This is an issue of concern for those groups interested in ensuring the EU does not replicate the limits on privacy which have been established in other countries, ostensibly to fight terrorism.

² For more on the introduction of such twists in simulations, see Ebner, N. & Efron, Y. (2005). Using tomorrow's headlines for today's training: Creating pseudo-reality in conflict resolution simulation-games. *Negotiation Journal* 21(3), 377. Available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1292594

- Major terrorist attacks have occurred in several EU Member States' capitals. It seems that these attacks were coordinated and conducted by individuals who had come to the EU under the guise of asylum seekers or refugees. It has been reported that communication and coordination between terrorists was done through a communication app. Had the laws allowed, this particular app could easily have been tracked and monitored, allowing law enforcement to prevent the attacks.

Opening and Self-Updating the Simulation

Counter-Terrorism EU Legislation captures, loosely, the real-world approach in the European Union, circa mid-2017. As such, it is most easily played as a historical and fictional simulation rather than one teaching this issue with complete substantive accuracy, using only the roles provided in this package, with no external material affecting parties' interests, positions or alliances. Played this way, the game will run more or less as described in this package, given the internal balances incorporated in the roles creating the major groups and positioning their information and interests vis-à-vis one another. If the primary goals of the exercise are to learn about how the EU legislative process functions, or to practice negotiation and conflict resolution skills in the context of an international policy-setting organization - as opposed to providing participants up-to-date information on the substance of counter-terrorism legislation - it is recommended to play the simulation in this way.

Another way to play the situation is through participant update. As you assign roles, task participants to conduct research on their own with regards to current events, policy changes, public opinion in their role- country regarding the substantive topic. This method poses several advantages: participant investment in the simulation at an early stage, enhancing participants' identification with their roles, and engaging in a simulation more accurately aligned with contemporary reality. On the other hand, the method presents challenges to the simulation. Significant shifts in countries' positions might undermine the simulation's internal balance. Additionally, quite simply, participants might operate off of information that they have misunderstood or under-researched. If one of the exercise's main goals is providing participants with an up-to-date understanding of the challenges of negotiating counter-terrorism legislation, you might consider running the game in this way while following some of these recommendations for preempting some of the aforementioned challenges:

Advance preparation: After assigning participants their role, give them a week or two in which to prepare. Ask them to learn from both media and governmental sources of their assigned countries about their assigned government's interests, in order to have an enriched experience. Remind them that they are to conduct their own research and not to discuss the simulation with other parties. This is necessary in order to avoid participants engaging in pre-simulation negotiation. Assign them to write up a one-page summary of the information they have gathered that they see as affecting their role. Particularly, they are to note any divergences from the information provided in the original role information. Ask them to submit this report to you at a point several days before the simulation. Assign the European Commission representatives their preliminary legislation drafting assignment.

Instructor review: Review the notes participants have provided you with. Focus on three elements: First, based on your own knowledge of current affairs, address factual inaccuracies. Second, consider whether the additional reports seem to significantly undermine the balance of conflict and cooperation between the major groups. If so – find a way to keep it balanced, either by telling one participant to ignore a particular fact or set aside a particular interest they have reported on, or by providing additional information or interests to a *different* party. Finally, keep an eye open for parties who have submitted a list of new information or positions that indicate that they might ‘go rogue,’ engaging in the simulation through an extreme departure from the original role, current reality, or the norms of behavior of participants in the Council of the EU/European Parliament/European Commission meetings, in such a way that could derail the simulation as a learning exercise. In this event, respond to the participants’ report with information or instructions aimed at bringing them into line.

Final preparation: Return participants’ reports, together with your comments, allowing them enough time to review and consider these before the simulation’s initiation.

Conducting the simulation online:

The simulation can be conducted online, in a variety of ways. One variation would be to conduct it in a text-based environment. This can be created within any one of the learning management systems (LMS) most universities employ. Instructors can create a discussion forum for asynchronous participation by all parties, as well as provide private forums for groups or teams requesting to caucus amongst themselves. Some LMS allow students to create forums on their own, in which case participants can create a forum and grant access to particular others. Parties can also caucus along the sidelines through other methods that are commonly embedded in LMS – email, videoconferencing or instant messaging applications.

Another variation is to conduct the main part of the simulation via live, synchronous, videoconferencing. For this purpose, instructors will require access and an appropriate license to a videoconferencing platform with the capacity for supporting a large number of participants at the same time. The instructor might facilitate who has the floor (and the microphone and camera) for speaking at any given point, or hand this capacity over to the chair of the respective meeting. While the forum convenes on camera, parties can converse with one another through text-based synchronous means – either those usually included in videoconferencing software, or other, separate, applications.³

³ For a full discussion of conducting negotiation and conflict resolution simulations online, see Matz, D. & Ebner, N. (2010). [Using role-play in online negotiation teaching](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1916792). In C. Honeyman, J. Coben & G. DiPalo (Eds.) *Venturing Beyond the Classroom: Vol. 2 in the Rethinking Negotiation Teaching Series*. St Paul: DRI Press. Available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1916792