

"Simulating EU Institutional Dynamics The TwinSim at the University of Catania"

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TwinSim is a negotiation model explicitly designed for students of European Politics Master courses. The TwinSim scenario is the European Union facing the immediate aftermath of the European elections and the urgent political decision of the appointment of the President of the Commission. Students experience the negotiation between the European Council and the European Parliament aimed at breaking through the strategies and preferences of political parties and Member State governments. The negotiation goal is achieving the appointment of a President with the largest and participated consensus.

The simulation players receive instructions via references, documents, and websites to prepare their strategy and position.

There are three types of players:

1. the Members of the European Council. They debate about the list of the candidate names, negotiate, and select one of the candidates as the designated President to pass the vote of the EP members. The position of the Council members is based on (a) the European election results and EP party group seats, (b) the preferences of the national governments and political parties, and (c) the political goals of the EP party groups;
2. the four largest EP party groups. They debate about the Council designated President to reach to the EP final decision on the name of the candidate President;
3. the designated candidate that will be voted by the EP members.

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

- Taking into account the results of the European elections, the President of the European Council consults with the EP on a possible candidate for the Presidency of the Commission.
- Following the consultation, the President of the European Council proposes a candidate to the European Council.
- The European Council decides on its proposal for candidate by qualified majority.
- The Candidate President will makes a speech to the European Parliament of maximum 15 minutes and should then answer questions.

- Election of the Commission President by the European Parliament by a majority of its component members.

EUROPEAN COUNCIL

A) Summary

- consists of Heads of state or government of the 28 member states,
- responsible for defining the general EU political directions and priorities
- formal rules of procedure - The European Council mostly takes its decisions by consensus in certain specific cases outlined in the EU treaties, it decides by unanimity or by qualified majority. If a vote is taken, the European Council President does not take part.
- Goal: to set the EU political agenda.

B) Preparation

Each student should do as much advance preparation as possible on the member state they are representing, its political orientation and agenda, and the positions taken by their member state on the candidates. In the course of the simulation, students role-playing ministers 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.

C) Format and Goals

In each Council meeting chamber, ministers will be seated in alphabetical order by member state. President of the European Council leads the meeting

MAJOR GOAL: to negotiate, discuss and vote on the candidate proposed by President after consultation with European Parliament.

Candidate will be selected according to (a) last elections results and EP compositions; (b) national preferences.

D) Rules of procedure

1) Chair. The President of the European Council chair the meeting. The Chair have the sole and final power to open and close sessions, recognize speakers, place limits on floor times, control discussion and debate.

Given that the Chair is simply the first among equals in a group of national government ministers, due respect will be shown by the Chair to all members of his/her Council.

Nevertheless, the Chair is allowed to take positions and to promote his/her own views and agenda.

2) Voting procedure. The Council votes on a candidate by a qualified majority.

(2) EUROPEAN Parliament

A) Summary

- Only directly elected institution by citizens (Brussels and Strasbourg);
- Representation of citizens rather than states;
- Elected every five years (last election 2014)
- Largest groups: European Peoples Party (centre-right) and European Socialists (centre-left);
- Smaller parties: Liberals, Greens, Eurosceptics, etc.
- Goal: Budgetary powers; legislative powers; scrutiny of the executive; appointment and dismissal of Commission.

B) Preparation

Each student should do as much advance preparation as possible on the EP, its composition and major political parties. In the course of the simulation, students role-playing MEP of the four major groups should contribute to the final discussion in the context of the political forces and pressures currently active in the EU.

C) Format and Goals

The Members of the European Parliament sit in political groups – they are not organised by nationality, but by political affiliation. There are currently 7 political groups in the European Parliament (Only the biggest will be represented in this simulation: PPE, S&D, EcR, ALDE).

25 Members are needed to form a political group, and at least one-quarter of the Member States must be represented within the group. Members may not belong to more than one political group. Some Members do not belong to any political group and are known as non-attached Members. Each political group care of its own internal organisation by appointing a chair (or two co-chairs in the case of some groups), a bureau and a secretariat.

The places assigned to Members in the Chamber are decided by political affiliation, from left to right, by agreement with the group chairmen.

MAJOR GOAL: 1) Those students who will act as members of the major political parties within the EP, will be charged with debating the candidate proposed by the Council and making a final

decision on him (discussion will be on the basis of the political position of the political parties at the EP as it is presented in the web site of each party.)

2) Those students who will act as Leaders of the national executive within the European Council will be charged with selecting a candidate to be proposed to the Parliament on the basis of the rules stated by the Lisbon Treaty and of the national positions and interests.

3) Student who will act as candidate will defend her/his position during the hearing at the EP.

D) Rules of procedure :

1. When the European Council proposes a candidate for President of the Commission, the President shall request the candidate to make a statement and present his or her political guidelines to Parliament. The statement shall be followed by a debate.

The European Council shall be invited to take part in the debate.

2. Parliament shall elect the President of the Commission by a majority of its component Members.

The vote shall be taken by secret ballot.

4. If the candidate does not obtain the required majority, the President shall invite the European Council to propose a new candidate within one month for election in accordance with the same procedure.

GENERAL RULES OF PROCEDURE

The following general rules will apply to all meetings.

1) Students should 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.

3) Responsibilities of students. All students must attend all scheduled meetings.

Students are encouraged to remain seated throughout each meeting, but may leave the chamber for short periods without the permission of the Chair. Anyone leaving a meeting chamber loses all voting rights for the duration of their absence unless they have appointed an alternate or given their proxy to the student of another state, and so informed the Chair.

4) Disruptive behaviour. Students should remember at all times the importance of the three Cs: cooperation, compromise, and consensus. All students 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 behaviour.

5) Voting. Where votes are taken, they should normally be open, and made by roll call in alphabetical order by member state, and recorded by the Chair. The Chair will be the last called to vote. 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 Chair will tally the vote and immediately announce the result. The decision of the Chair on a tally will be final.

6) Speaking. Any student 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. Students must remain seated while speaking. Speakers may not be interrupted by anyone but the Chair. Except in the European Council, speakers should normally address each other through the Chair.

7) Closure of debate. The Chair will normally decide on the closure of a debate, but a student may move for closure, and (if necessary) be given a maximum of one minute to explain his/her rationale. If at least two other students second the motion, it will immediately be put to a vote, and requires the support of at least eight students to be successful. The Chair will declare the debate closed if the vote is successful.

8) Point of Order. If, during a meeting, a student 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 student 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.

9) Point of Information. If a student 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

THE ROLE OF THE JUDGES

The simulation convenor, and where appropriate other teaching staff, will not be part of any team, but will provide input and interference from the outside. They are known as the 'judges' and their words and judgements will be final. Their input here includes:

- Providing input from imaginary teams not actually represented at the negotiating table
- Representing interference from the outside world
- Judging on any disputes about facts either between teams or within individual teams
- Relaying information about 'events' or problems which might occur in any of the participating states or institutions
- Providing general guidance about the nature of the negotiating process

SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

4 May 2015

17.00-17.30 – Briefing session

The Judges provides instructions and logistics.

5 May 2015

9.30-10.30 First session

The president of the European Council consults with the EP on a possible candidate for the presidency of the Commission.

10.30-11.30 Second session

Following the consultation, the President of the European Council proposes a candidate to the European Council. The European Council decides on its proposal for candidate by qualified majority.

11.30-12.30 Third session

European Parliament vote on the candidate by a majority of its component members.

15.00-16.00 Debriefing session

READING LIST

Longo F., (2014), A Party System without a party government in the European Union? , in Mascia M. (ed.) Towards a European Transnational Party System, Padua, AUSE.

Sara B. Hobolt (2014) A vote for the President? The role of Spitzenkandidaten in the 2014 European Parliament elections, Journal of European Public Policy, 21:10,

Relevant web site:

Last European Election: <http://www.elections2014.eu/en>

EPP Group: <http://www.eppgroup.eu/>

S&D Group: http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/?request_locale=EN

ECR Group: <http://ecrgroup.eu/>

ALDE Group: <http://www.alde.eu/>