

Title: EU Simulation: The European Council

Grades: 10-12

Brief Description: Students will participate in a simulation of the European Council where they will debate issues and adopt resolutions. This activity would work well in an Advanced Placement European History or Comparative Government course in the weeks following the national exam in May.

Time: Two weeks: one day for lecture, one week for preparation (mostly out of class), 4-5 days for the simulation.

Objectives: To discuss and debate views and proposals of members of the European Council and adopt formal resolutions related to the issues being debated.

Materials Needed: Handouts 1-3, Internet access, one laptop computer

1. Teacher should provide a lecture on the institutions of the European Union and the policymaking process within the EU. In preparation for this activity a more detailed discussion of the European Council and its role may be necessary.
2. Students will choose a country* to represent. Students can work in pairs or alone. If they work in pairs, one student can represent the leader of the country and the other can represent the foreign minister.
*The number of countries included will vary depending on class size and issues chosen for debate; the country currently holding the presidency of the Council and the President of the European Commission should be included.
3. In preparation for the activity, students should complete a profile on their country and create a resume (see **Handout 1** for format) for the person they are representing. They should also create a placard for the country they are representing.
4. The teacher should develop the topic and issues that will be discussed during the simulation. They can be issues the Council is currently debating or issues that have already been resolved. It is important that the topic be broad so that the teacher can identify narrow issues related to that topic. (For example: the topic may be Turkey's ascension to the EU; an issue to be discussed would be Cyprus.)
5. In preparation for the simulation, students should develop proposals for each of the issues. (See **Handout 2** for format.)
6. Teacher should discuss the procedures to be used during the simulation with students prior to starting the summit (see **Handout 3**). Prior to the start of the summit, the student serving as president should create an agenda, and the teacher should make copies for each student.

7. On the first day of the simulation, students should seat themselves alphabetically by state name. The state holding the presidency of the Council sits at the “head” of the table and the president of the European Commission sits to his/her right. A secretary should also be chosen, and the teacher should provide a laptop computer if possible for him/her to keep notes of the proceedings.
8. The simulation will start with a *tour de table*, in which each participant will make a brief statement. A representative from each state must speak, including the chair.
9. Students will present and debate proposals on the issues following the agenda.
10. At the conclusion of the simulation, the teacher can put together a summative report of the resolutions for students, or he/she can have the student serving as president or secretary put it together.

Extension: Depending on the topic chosen, this lesson could be integrated into other subjects as well. It would probably work most easily with science, possibly looking at various environmental issues or math, possibly looking at various issues related to the European Monetary Union.

Standards:

NC Standard Course of Study

Advanced Placement European History

Competency Goal 2, Objective 2.07

National Standards for History (http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/thinking5-12_toc.html)

Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

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European Council Simulation
Country Profile and Representative Resume

Each of you will be playing the role of the head of government of your respective country (or the president of the European Commission). In order to do so effectively, you will need to have some general knowledge about the country you are representing as well as the leader you will be portraying. This assignment will require you to complete some research about your country and its leader. It is imperative that you have an understanding of your country and your leader's perspective in order to provide an accurate portrayal in the simulation.

- Country Profile

Your country profile will require you to research basic demographic, economic and political information. Your profile should be typed using the form provided (attached).

- Representative Resume

You are required to write a brief resume for the person you will be portraying in the simulation. It should follow the format provided (attached). The purpose of the resume is to learn about this person's political views and perspectives as they relate to his/her own country as well as the European Union.

Resources:

CIA World Factbook

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

Political Resources on the Net

<http://www.politicalresources.net/>

Country Profile

Demographically Speaking

- A. Total population:

- B. By gender
 - 1. Male:
 - 2. Female:

- C. By religion
 - 1. Christian:
 - 2. Muslim:
 - 3. Jewish

- D. By ethnicity (include any group that comprises more than 10% of the total population)
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

- E. By language (include any language spoken as a first language by 10% or more of the total population)
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

- F. Rate of population growth:

- G. Life expectancy
 - 1. Male:
 - 2. Female:

- H. Literacy rate:

Politically Speaking

- A. Form of government:

- B. Current head of state:

- C. Current head of government:

- D. Date of most recent election and voter turnout:

- E. Year the country became a full member of the European Union:

- F. Representative to the European Commission:

- G. Number of members in the European Parliament:
- H. Voter turnout in the most recent elections to the European Parliament in your country:
- I. Provide a brief summary of the major issues (not related to the economy) facing your country today.

Economically Speaking

- A. GDP (at purchasing power parity):
- B. GDP per capita:
- C. GDP by sector:
 - 1. Agriculture:
 - 2. Industry:
 - 3. Services:
- D. Unemployment rate:
- E. Population below the poverty line (%):
- F. Currency used:
- G. Brief summary of the current state of the economy in your country; make particular note of your country's economic strengths and weaknesses.

Resume

Name
Current political position

EDUCATION

Include a brief summary of the educational background of your representative.

POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

Include a brief summary of the political experience of your representative, including both positions held in the political party and the national government.

VIEWS

Include brief statements responding to the following questions:

- What is the single greatest issue facing your country today?
- What is the single greatest issue facing the European Union today?

The European Council Simulation
Proposal Format

Students are required to write proposals for each of the issues being discussed during the simulation. Each proposal should be kept fairly succinct and simple using the following format:

NAME OF COUNTRY

- Provide a brief introductory statement of 2-3 issues clarifying the issue and the country's stance on it.

- List specific policy proposals to be introduced to the group as a whole for its consideration.
Example: *The government of (country) proposes that:*
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)

- Brief concluding statement that clarifies the country's position on the issue.

European Council Simulation Procedures and Evaluation

Background

The European Council is the forum in which the leaders of the EU member states meet to formulate policies and develop initiatives to be considered by the European Commission. The European Council has the power and authority to resolve major issues and reach key decisions. The European Council is comprised of the heads of government of the EU member states, their foreign ministers, and the President of the European Commission.

The Council normally meets twice per year and each meeting takes place in the member state holding the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Decisions made by the European Council are not legally binding but its proposals and resolutions have typically been turned into law by the European Commission, Council of Ministers, and European Parliament.

Procedures

In the actual meetings of the European Council, the heads of government determine among themselves how best to use their meetings; therefore, the European Council has no formal rules of procedure. However, in this simulation the following procedures will be implemented:

Chair

The head of government of the member state holding the Presidency of the European Union will be chairing the summit meeting. (In his/her absence, the head of government sitting to his/her immediate left will assume the role.) The Chair will have the power to open and close summit sessions, recognize speakers and control debate on the floor.

Seating Arrangement

In our Council meetings, the heads of government of member states will be seated alphabetically by state, with the representative from the country holding the Presidency of the European Council at the "head" of the table and the President of the European Commission seated to his/her right.

Placard

Students are expected to have a cardboard placard on the day that the summit begins. The placard should have your country's name and your council member's name. You are also encouraged to include a depiction of your country's flag (in color, if possible). It should be able to stand on your desk, and you should have it with you during each day of the summit.

Agenda

The Chair will set the agenda for the summit, thus determining the order in which the specific issues will be discussed.

Secretary

One member of the council will be designated by the group as the secretary and will be responsible for keeping detailed notes on the proceedings during the summit.

Proposals and debate

After the members are seated, the Chair will call the meeting to order. The first order of business will be a *tour de table*, where each member makes a statement (approximately two minutes) reflecting his/her country's opinion on the topic and issues to be discussed. It is a broad statement of goals not a presentation of specific proposals. The Chair will be the last member to speak.

Next, the Chair opens the floor to specific proposals on the first issue on the agenda. Initially, all proposals related to that issue should be presented with the secretary keeping a list of the proposals. Once all proposals related to the issue have been presented, they can be debated individually. Members indicate their desire to present a proposal or participate in the debate by raising their placards.

Proposals that initially appear to have broad support will require a limited period of debate. Proposals that do not appear to have broad support will be debated further and/or modified.

Resolutions

Ultimately, the goal of the Council is to come up with resolutions based on and including one or more of the proposals presented on an issue.

Sample resolution (related to Turkish ascension to the European Union):

Resolution proposed by member states ____, ____, ____, ____, and ____ pertaining to Agenda Item ____.

The Council of the European Union wishes to address the cultural cleavage between the Turkish government and Turkey's Kurdish minority; therefore, it recommends that there be demilitarization of the zones of Turkey heavily populated by Kurds. This would include a removal of the Parliamentary Police Force from these areas. In addition, a program for the decommissioning of weapons by the PKK should be developed by a council comprised of representatives of both Turkish and Kurdish factions.

Once a resolution has been created, it should be handed to the Secretary who will read it to the members. If there does not appear to be a consensus, a *tour de table* may be necessary. If there does appear to be a consensus, the resolution will be brought to a vote by the Chair.

Voting procedure

The Council usually does not take formal votes, as its goal is to make decisions through consensus; however, for the purposes of our simulation votes will be taken on proposed resolutions. (Note that the President of the European Commission may participate in the discussions and sponsor resolutions but is not allowed to vote.)

Votes will be made by roll call in alphabetical order by member state and recorded by the Secretary. The chair will be the last called to vote. The president of the European commission does not have a vote. Members can vote one of three ways: "Yes," "No," or "Abstain."

In order for a resolution to pass a consensus must be reached. This does not mean that all member states have to vote "Yes" on a resolution. Members who are unable to fully support the resolution have the opportunity to have their reservations or objections heard but will ultimately abstain from the final vote.

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 and each delegate will only be able to use his/her veto once. However, the threat of a veto can be used during debate in order to gain leverage on a particular issue.

Following the resolution of all agenda items, a comprehensive report will be issued summarizing the individual resolutions.

EVALUATION

Each part of the simulation will be evaluated separately. They will be weighted as follows:

Country Profile = 25 points

Representative Resume = 25 points

Proposals = 75 points (25 points each)

Placard = 15 points

Participation in the simulation = 60 points