

Asia-Pacific Model European Union 2017

Simulation Guide

I. Introduction

The European Council defines the general political direction and priorities of the European Union. With the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009, it became an official EU institution. Its main characteristics are:

- Consists of Heads of State or Government of the member states (meeting sometimes with the foreign ministers or other ministers responsible for matters discussed)
- Focuses on overall strategic direction of European integration
- Informal rules of procedure
- Emphasis on consensus decision-making
- Chaired by an appointed President
- **Goal:** to agree on a set of Conclusions

II. Background

The European Council has no formal legislative power. Nonetheless under the Lisbon Treaty it is responsible for defining “the general political directions and priorities” of the Union. This makes the European Council the Union’s strategic body, a 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 promoting new initiatives,

- develop a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Council Conclusions almost always include a statement of positions on key foreign policy issues.¹

The European Council alone has the power and authority to resolve major issues and reach key decisions. **For the purpose of the Asia-Pacific Model European Union 2017 the Council consists of the Heads of State or Government of the EU member states. The HoSs are to be accompanied by Foreign Ministers (one from each country).** The actual Council meets at least four times per year, each meeting taking place in Brussels. Council meetings usually last no more than ten hours, spaced over a 24-hour period. Work takes place in a combination of plenary sessions and break-outs. Together, these meetings are designed to discuss matters of common concern, and to agree a set of Conclusions.

At the Asia-Pacific Model European Union 2017, we try to replicate the work of the Council as exactly as possible given the circumstances.

III. 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 and his/her government. **They should also be clear on the role of the European Council in the policy-making process, and should come to the Asia-Pacific Model European Union 2017 with specific policy proposals and objectives in mind.**

At the simulation, delegates role-playing Heads of State or Government and respective 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.

IV. Format and Goals

Heads of State or Government and respective Ministers of member states will be seated in alphabetical order (using the native name of the country – Belgique comes first) with the President of the Council seated at the head of the table.²

¹ <http://www.european-council.europa.eu/home-page.aspx?lang=en>

² See: Countries: names, codes and protocol order at: <http://publications.europa.eu/code/pdf/370000en.htm#pays>

MAJOR GOAL: to discuss and debate the views, ideas and proposals of Council members with the goal of agreeing a formal **set of Conclusions**.³

V. Rules of Procedure

Because the Heads of State or Government normally want to decide for themselves how best to use their meetings, the European Council has few formal rules of procedure.⁴ Council meetings are deliberately kept 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 the Asia-Pacific Model European Union 2017:**

1. Prior to the Conference

- i. **Research and Preparation** - Prior to the Asia-Pacific Model European Union 2017 conference the Presidency will send an official notification outlining in broad terms the priorities of the meeting and goals. This will be known as the Agenda. The Agenda will be sent to all participants on **20th of April 2017**. Each participant should do as much advance preparation as possible on the member state they are representing with special emphasis on their positions with regards to the topics outlined in the Agenda.
- ii. **Position Papers** - The participants representing EU member states will not introduce their own comprehensive agenda proposal but will comment from their country's position on each of the issues on the Presidency's agenda. Each team should prepare a **1500-words** position paper that describes their country's position on each of the issues on the agenda. Each team will communicate their position (by sending it to Asia-Pacific Model European Union 2017 coordinator at: chris@hkbu.edu.hk) by **5th of May 2017**. The Presidency needs the position papers for an appropriate preparation of the summit meetings and to get an idea in advance about each country's position on the topics. The position papers will be then forwarded to all delegates attending the

³ See more at: <http://www.european-council.europa.eu/council-meetings/conclusions?lang=en>

⁴ See more at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?ELX_SESSIONID=ThSMJk6fJ2LT0G6zQDGMh6TL77VYyL20yLZ5zJjf10RBmxrfZndK!1469323985?uri=CELEX:32009D0937

simulation. (For more information and a position paper example see: **Guidelines for position papers**). Apart from that, the participants will be required to make **4/6-slide PPT presentations** about their particular MS during the first part of the conference – which will be a *tour de table* (the format of the presentation to be based on the Position Paper). The Presentation should take not more than **6 minutes**. The time limit of the presentation will be policed by the Chair in a strict manner, with a warning at 4 minutes.

2. The Conference

- i. **Opening Plenary Session** – The Asia-Pacific Model European Union 2017 conference will commence with an opening plenary session. This session starts with a short address by the President of the European Council welcoming the delegates and opening the proceedings. In this speech, the President of the European Council will outline the Agenda of the Presidency on how to resolve the issues in question. The teams representing the Member States will be asked to lay out their countries main **position on each topic in not more than 6 min. (The Teams should share the presentations – 3 minutes per member of the team.)**
- ii. **Seating Arrangement** - Members of the delegations shall be seated in alphabetical order (using the native name of the country).
- iii. **Assignment of Agenda Items / Setting the Agenda** - The President of the European Council has the right to propose the areas that will be negotiated by the HoSs. If there are NO objections, there shall be NO VOTE on the agenda. However, a delegate may also move to “set the agenda.” In this case courtesy requires that the delegate be given a maximum of **one minute** to explain his/her rationale. If at least two other delegates second the formal proposal (motion), it will immediately be put to a vote (see Voting Procedures). The Chair will declare the agenda set as such if the vote is successful. The Chair will say: “*The President of the European Council wishes to set the agenda as follows, unless other proposals are put forth at this time.*” If there is an objection by a delegate, he/she will respond: “*<Country Name> moves to set the agenda...*”
- iv. **Role of the Chair** - In order to provide structure to the sessions themselves modified rules of parliamentary procedure apply (with certain exceptions). The President of the European Council chairs all sessions. As the Chair, the President of the European Council will have sole and final power to open and close sessions, recognize speakers,

place limits on speaking time and control discussion and debate. It is important to recall that these are proceedings among delegates of equal rank. They would usually have known each other for some time and would have interacted often. Thus, the atmosphere is one of collegiality, equality and congeniality. This includes the relationship between the Chair and the other participants. While the Chair is formally in charge of the proceedings and entitled to all courtesy and respect, he/she would usually “propose” and “suggest,” rather than “decree” and “dictate.” The Chair, more than any other participant, is interested in a harmonious and consensual outcome of the conference. In cases where parliamentary procedure is unclear or in doubt, the Chair shall use his or her judgment to settle the matter and proceed with the session. The main goal of the Chair is to get different small resolutions passed during the session and summarize them into a Conclusion document at the end of the negotiation day. Note that the meetings will be chaired by the President of the European Council, not a member state.

- v. **Roll Call (Quorum)** - The first order of business for each session will be to establish roll and a quorum. This is done by the Chair at the beginning of each individual session and does not require a motion.
- vi. **Debate Format** - The “real” European Council generally meets four times a year. These meetings include an opening plenary session, a formal dinner, an (sometimes even more important) informal and confidential “fireside chat,” bilateral working breakfasts, and further plenary sessions. While we strive to accurately simulate the workings of European Council meetings, the format of the Asia-Pacific Model European Union 2017 has been structured to facilitate negotiations and student learning. There will be two types of debate used at the Asia-Pacific Model European Union 2017, formal and informal.

Formal debate will require participants wishing to speak to put their name stand vertically and be recognized by the Chair. The chair will mark the names of the recognized countries on the speaker’s list. It is the Chair’s obligation to ensure and guide the flow of communication and to afford each member an equal opportunity to speak. The Chair keeps track of the proceedings including the fair administration of the right to speak. The length of speaking time can be motioned by participants, otherwise it will be set by Chair. Participants make their statements while seated around the table. Participants need not address each other through the Chair. The Chair, however, may comment on statements and express his or her view like all other

delegates. **Participants may yield the remaining speaking time to a fellow member state by indicating so at the end of their speech.** If not, the Chair may call upon another participant.

Informal debate (a break) allows participants to leave their seats. Heads of State or Government are expected to mingle and speak amongst themselves. At the “real” EU summit these informal debate sessions can be more important than the formal debate because HoSs can talk more privately about their dispute and settle it outside the public arena. This time should be used to negotiate and write/edit/prepare drafts of conclusions. The Chair or any participant may call for (motion) informal debate for a specified time and if necessary. If at least two other delegates second the motion, it will immediately be put to a vote (**see Voting Procedures**). The Chair will determine the length of informal debate within any given hour. Once informal debate time has expired, formal debate will resume.

vii. Suspension - A Chair or a delegate may call for a suspension. If at least two other delegates second the motion, it will immediately be put to a vote, and requires the support of at least a simple majority to succeed.

viii. Points and Motion - Delegates may rise to make **points of order** (always permitted, except during a speech and actual voting), **points of information** (after a speech is completed, whenever the Chair asks “are there any points and motions at this time), and points of **personal privilege**.

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.

Point of Information. If a delegate wishes to obtain 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 Secretary General)

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 his/her treatment by other delegates, he/she may rise to a point of personal privilege and receive an immediate ruling by the Chair.

Motions may also be used to combine or divide agenda items or to call for break (informal debate). Motions are also in order (determined always by the Chair) to “close debate on an issue” and bring it to a vote. Motions are always subject to a “second” by two delegates and are brought to a vote immediately.

Rule: All motions by any participants (other than the Chair) are always subject to a second by two delegates. These may be asked to give an explanation of the rationale (no more than one minute). If successful motions will be brought to a vote immediately.

- ix. **Tour de Table** - A device known as a *tour de table* may also be used, at the discretion of the Chair. The Chair will ask each head of government/state 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.
- x. **Closure of Debate** - **The Chair will decide and officiate the closure of a debate.**
- xi. **Voting Procedures** - Where votes are taken, they should normally be open, and recorded by the Chair. 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 his or her vote. No one may approach or leave the room. Once all votes have been cast, the Chair will tally the votes and immediately announce the result. The decision of the Chair on a tally will be final.
 - **Voting on procedural issues** (e.g., adjournments, informal debate, setting the agenda if it is not set by the chair) requires a **simple majority** of the delegates **present** in the session including Presidency. **One member, one vote! Chair can vote on procedural issues – he has one vote. There is no abstention on procedural issues.**
 - **Voting on substantive issues**, such as **conclusions** is required only if the delegates cannot reach **consensus**. (**Note: in the European Council, the Presidency only calls rarely for a vote**).
 - Note: there is no “present and voting;” or “present” rule in the EU!
- xii. **Set of Conclusions of the Presidency.** A conclusion on an agenda item, essentially a brief paragraph prefaced with the following operative phrases “recommends,” “emphasizes,” “insists on,” “notes,” “welcomes,” etc. must have five signatures from five participants (one of whom may also be the Commission President). Due to time

constraints, in this simulation the Conclusions of the European Council will be submitted **(to the Chair through the Secretary-General)** in an outline format and will contain the matters agreed upon by delegates during negotiating sessions. Multiple resolutions can (but do not necessarily have to) be agreed upon for each agenda item, so long as they are not conflicting. As Conclusions of the Presidency are agreed upon through consensus, **(voting is used only as a last resort)** resolutions should have considerable support before they are formally proposed and discussed in formal debate. The Chair will ask if there are any member states who are opposed to the resolution. If there are none, the resolution will be passed and be included in the Conclusions of the Presidency. If there are objections, debate and negotiation will continue until a consensus is reached or the resolution is abandoned. A vote on a resolution can be used if consensus cannot be reached to pass resolutions, but this is **considered a last resort and only occurs in rare circumstances**. Heads of State or Government should be careful not to be found out of character by unjustly proposing a vote.

- xiii. Judging and Awards** – Nominations for awards will be brought by members of the judging panel and the President of European Council. Participants are evaluated on their preparedness, accurate representation of country position, and use of diplomacy including correct use of parliamentary procedure, negotiating skill, and ability to make compromises (see **“Judging criteria” for more details**).