European Commission: External Relations Representative

Confidential: for the assigned participant only. Do not share with other participants, including the other members of your delegation. Positions are fictionalised for educational purposes and inspired by, but not identical to, publicly reported positions.

Your delegation: the European Commission (3 members)

You are part of the European Commission delegation. The Commission is the EU's executive: in this crisis your role is to mediate, propose and implement. You are not a party to the dispute; you represent the European interest.

Your legal power is limited. In January 2009 energy policy is still primarily a national competence (the Lisbon Treaty, which gives the EU a formal energy competence, has not yet entered into force). You cannot compel member states to share gas, cannot impose common purchasing, cannot sanction Russia or Ukraine. Your tools are convening authority, technical expertise, moral persuasion, and one practical lever: the Commission can deploy, and partly finance, an **independent monitoring mission** at the metering stations on the Russia–Ukraine border. It is the centrepiece of the EU's response and your delegation's most important contribution.

Key facts (all members):

- The Commission works in tandem with the Czech Presidency: the Presidency chairs, you propose and implement. During the break the two of you post the Presidency text.
- The monitoring mission can be composed of EU officials and industry experts from European gas companies.
- The Commission is already working on the Third Energy Package: ownership unbundling, cross-border cooperation, a new agency of energy regulators. This crisis dramatically strengthens the case for it.

Decision rules: the Commission **does not vote during the negotiation**. It may offer **EU financing in exactly one article** of the protocol, and only if **all three of you sign off**; that is your one bullet, and it makes your internal alignment a negotiation of its own. The Commission has no resources for solidarity measures among member states (it cannot fill anyone's storage); it can only broker them. After Russia, Ukraine and the Council have declared, the **Commission votes last, by majority: support** (you sign and deploy the mission) or **sabotage** (you declare you will not deploy or finance anything under this text). A protocol you disown loses the mission and the EU money, though it may still work without them. Everyone in the room knows this rule; it is your lever against a deal that ignores the European interest.

Your role

Motivations & constraints: You represent the External Relations portfolio: the function, not the person. Your focus is the diplomatic and geopolitical dimension: EU–Russia relations, EU–Ukraine relations, the Eastern neighbourhood, and how this crisis fits into European foreign policy. While your colleagues handle the internal EU response and the technical detail, you are the Commission's interface with Russia and Ukraine: you probe positions, carry messages and look for the face-saving formula (language, framing, side-assurances) that lets both sides sign without looking as if they lost. You also protect the EU's neighbourhood policy: Ukraine is an Eastern Partnership country, and if this crisis permanently poisons EU–Ukraine relations, a key Commission policy dies with it. But Ukraine must also be a reliable partner; if it obstructs the protocol, you may have to deliver a tough message.

Red lines: No accepting the Russian framing that this is purely Ukraine's fault: whatever Ukraine's share of responsibility, the EU cannot endorse a narrative that justifies energy coercion by a supplier. No endorsing bypass pipelines as an EU solution: Nord Stream and South Stream may serve individual member states, but they shift vulnerability from some countries to others rather than solving anything collectively.

Style: Spend most of your time with Russia, Ukraine and the swing states (France, the UK). With Russia: respectful, businesslike. Acknowledge the commercial grievances, ask probing questions ("what would Russia need to resume supply immediately?"), and make clear the EU expects reliable supply and will draw conclusions if this becomes a pattern. With Ukraine: supportive but honest. If they are adding conditions, say privately: "we are on your side, but you are making it very hard for us to help you." With France and the UK: test whether they would back a common statement on energy solidarity; even a soft one signals to Moscow that the EU is less divided than it looks. Inside the Commission: push for the bigger picture.

Confidential (for you alone, not for your delegation): You see something your colleagues may not fully appreciate: the EU's own member states are a bigger problem than Russia or Ukraine. Germany is quietly backing Nord Stream, Italy South Stream; Poland is using the crisis to push an anti-Russian posture Germany and France will never accept; the UK is barely engaged. The real negotiation is not Russia against Ukraine; it is inside the EU. If member states agree on a common position, the external negotiation becomes manageable; if they do not, Russia will pick them off one by one through bilateral deals. Make this dynamic visible to the President's Representative, who may be too focused on the Russia–Ukraine axis. You also hold a pragmatic assessment of Ukraine from years on neighbourhood files: the rivalry between government and president, the murk around RosUkrEnergo, the contradictory signals are not going away. Help Ukraine through this crisis, but build mechanisms (monitoring, reverse flows, solidarity) that work regardless of Ukrainian politics, and do not tie the EU's credibility to Kyiv's behaviour. One specific insight: France is persuadable. Its nuclear fleet means it has little at stake in gas, which makes it a potential honest broker between the German–Italian and the Polish–Slovak camps. If France champions a moderate solidarity proposal, the internal EU deadlock can break.