Germany: Energy Adviser

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.

The Council in this scenario. Seven member states sit at the table: Bulgaria, Slovakia, Germany, Italy, Poland, France and the United Kingdom (this is 2009; the UK is a member state). Each state has one vote, cast by its National Representative. A common position endorsing the protocol needs a **simplified qualified majority: at least five of the seven, including at least two of Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom** (the facilitator will state the numbers for the actual cast). The small states cannot carry a position without the big ones; the big ones cannot decide alone. If the threshold is met, the Czech Presidency signs on the Council's behalf. Member states may also conclude side agreements outside the protocol (bilateral or trilateral understandings); these should be written down and supported by the stakeholders involved, and they are published only after the scenario. The Commission does not vote during the negotiation, but it votes last, to support or sabotage the result. The Presidency chairs without voting.

Your delegation: Germany (2 members)

Germany is the EU's largest economy and Gazprom's biggest European customer by volume. About 36 % of Germany's gas comes from Russia, but Germany is well diversified: Norwegian and Dutch gas, ample storage, and the Yamal–Europe pipeline through Belarus that bypasses Ukraine entirely. The current crisis has cut German supply by only about 10 %. Germany is barely affected, and it has enormous influence over the EU's response. That is the tension you carry into the room.

Germany is also Russia's key partner in **Nord Stream**, a direct Baltic Sea pipeline from Russia to Germany that would bypass Ukraine, Poland and the Baltic states. It is in the permitting phase and deeply controversial in Eastern Europe; a former chancellor chairs its shareholders' committee.

Key facts (all members):

- Dependency ~36 %, well diversified; only ~10 % supply cut; ample storage.
- Largest buyer of Russian gas in Europe; E.ON Ruhrgas and BASF/Wintershall have billions invested in the Russian gas relationship.
- Key partner in Nord Stream; German industry has lobbied against antagonising Russia.

Decision rule: Germany's National Representative casts the state's vote in the Council. Germany is one of the four big states whose votes the qualified majority requires.

Your role

Motivations & constraints: You are Germany's energy-policy expert in the Council: the infrastructure, the commercial relationships, the technical options. You support the National Representative and handle the substance. Your aims: support the government line (cautious, commercial, non-confrontational); protect German commercial interests in the Russian gas trade, including Nord Stream; and engage constructively on practical solutions (monitoring, technical-gas formulas, transit arrangements) without committing Germany to anything binding.

Red lines: No binding gas-sharing obligations that could set a precedent. No questioning Nord Stream's legitimacy.

Style: Be the reasonable German. While the National Representative holds the line, explore ideas informally with the Commission, the Presidency and Slovakia; test whether modest voluntary measures could satisfy the room. Have technical answers ready for when Poland attacks Nord Stream: commercial diversification, not a political project; it increases Europe's total supply capacity. If you see an opening for a small solidarity gesture that sets no binding precedent, propose it to your lead as smart politics: a small voluntary gesture now prevents a large compulsory obligation later.

Confidential (for you alone, not for your delegation): You are more uncomfortable with Germany's position than the National Representative. You have seen the data on Bulgaria and Slovakia, and you know their situation is genuinely severe, and that Germany could afford modest gestures of solidarity without any material cost: supporting EU financing for technical gas, or facilitating gas releases from German storage for south-eastern Europe. The problem is that your lead sees any gesture as a slippery slope to binding obligations; you disagree, and you think a voluntary gesture now would defuse the solidarity debate and forestall more radical proposals later. But you must make that case carefully, and they can simply refuse to let you speak. You also hold the technical facts that make a gesture real: German storage is roughly 60 % full, the Yamal route is operating normally, and E.ON Ruhrgas's contracts with Gazprom include flexibility. A modest release of 5–10 million m³ a day from storage for a few weeks, routed through Austria and Slovakia, is feasible, would barely register in Germany's balance, and would be transformative for Slovakia. Finally, consider whether Germany can acknowledge the legitimate case for transit diversification (interconnectors, reverse-flow investment in Eastern Europe) as a complement to Nord Stream rather than a threat to it.