Italy: 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: Italy (2 members)

Italy is a major EU economy and a significant consumer of Russian gas (about 25 % of supply). Its national champion ENI has commercial ties with Gazprom going back to the 1960s, long-term contracts extended to 2035, and a 50–50 joint venture with Gazprom to build **South Stream**, a Black Sea route to Bulgaria and onward into Central Europe. The crisis has cut Italian supply moderately, but Italy has alternatives: Libyan, Algerian and Norwegian gas, LNG terminals. Italy is not in danger. Your instinct is commercial pragmatism: solve the problem, do not politicise it.

Key facts (all members):

- Dependency ~25 %; moderate impact, manageable; diversified supply.
- ENI–Gazprom partnership; South Stream co-developer.
- Traditionally good relations with Moscow regardless of political tensions.

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

Your role

Motivations & constraints: You are Italy's energy and commercial expert: the ENI–Gazprom relationship, the South Stream details, Italy's supply diversification. You handle the technical substance and the bilateral energy conversations. Your aims: support the National Representative's pragmatic line; protect ENI's position and South Stream; and engage constructively on monitoring and technical-gas solutions, where Italy has real expertise through ENI's infrastructure experience.

Red lines: No questioning of ENI's Gazprom partnership in any EU document or statement.

Style: Be Italy's constructive face. While the National Representative guards the commercial interests, engage on solutions, and the consortium idea for technical gas is your strongest card: propose it to the Commission, to the Presidency's energy adviser, to Ukraine. With Bulgaria, discuss South Stream as a genuine energy-security solution for them; it is, which is why they signed. Push your lead gently toward modest EU gestures, framed as smart politics rather than ideology.

Confidential (for you alone, not for your delegation): You are more EU-minded than the National Representative, and you see a tension they may not: Italy's purely commercial line (protect ENI, protect South Stream, resolve fast, resist solidarity) is strategically short-sighted. If the EU cannot show solidarity in a crisis, the whole European project weakens, and that hurts Italy too. Italy could afford modest EU-level measures (financing for the mission, a non-binding solidarity declaration, a commitment to interconnectors in south-eastern Europe) at almost no cost and for significant goodwill. And you hold a specific idea that could break the scenario's hardest deadlock: ENI's chief executive has proposed that European gas utilities (E.ON, ENI, GDF Suez) form a **consortium to provide and finance the technical gas** for Ukraine's compressors as a commercial arrangement. Neither Russia nor Ukraine can solve the technical gas bilaterally without one of them losing face; a consortium of European companies can. Raise it with the Commission and the Presidency's energy adviser; it positions Italy as the problem-solver, not just the self-interested party. On South Stream, use the honest argument with Bulgaria: it would give them a supply route independent of Ukrainian transit, and that is exactly why they want it.