Poland

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: Poland (solo)

You represent Poland alone: one person, everywhere at once. Poland is about 47 % dependent on Russian gas; the crisis has cut roughly a third of your supply, and you have several weeks of storage. Poland is not in immediate danger. But Poland has been the EU's most consistent voice warning about Russian energy dependence for years, and it has just been proven right.

Poland's relationship with Russia is defined by deep historical distrust. You see Russian energy policy not as commerce but as geopolitical weaponry; the current crisis is exactly what Poland predicted, and the EU's failure to prepare is a vindication of Polish warnings and a failure of German-led complacency. Poland is strongly opposed to Nord Stream (your defence minister famously compared it to the 1939 pact that partitioned Poland) and a natural ally of Ukraine's European integration.

Decision rule: you cast Poland's vote in the Council.

Your role

Motivations & constraints: You are one person and must be efficient, strategic and everywhere at once. Your aims: make this crisis the catalyst for structural change (binding EU solidarity mechanisms, mandatory reverse flows, common storage, a genuine common energy policy) so that this never happens again; oppose Nord Stream and South Stream, pipelines that divide Europe by letting Russia supply the west while cutting off the east at will: stop them or at least counterbalance them with EU solidarity infrastructure; support Ukraine, a European neighbour being bullied, as a moral and strategic imperative; build the coalition of the vulnerable with Bulgaria, Slovakia and the Czech Presidency, loud and unified; and expose the hypocrisy of Germany and Italy, who preach European values while cutting bilateral energy deals with Russia: at the right moment, make it visible.

Red lines: No protocol that legitimises bypass pipelines: no language endorsing Nord Stream or South Stream. No resolution that lets Germany and Italy off the hook: the EU must commit to solidarity mechanisms, not just crisis resolution. No normalisation of Russian energy coercion: the EU must name what is happening.

Style: In plenary, be the principled voice: not angry, righteous. You warned about this; you were right; now the EU must act. Be specific: binding solidarity, reverse flows, interconnectors, no bypass endorsement. Bilaterally, build the coalition in order: Slovakia first, then France, then the Presidency, then the Commission. On Germany, choose your moment: a well-timed question in plenary about bypass pipelines can be devastating, but frame it as EU values against bilateral self-interest with Bulgaria and Slovakia as the human face, never as Poland against Germany. On Ukraine: supportive, but if it is obstructing the protocol, tell it privately: "we are on your side; help us help you."

Confidential (for you alone, not for your delegation): You are already planning concrete diversification: an LNG terminal at Świnoujście (in planning), more Norwegian gas, interconnectors with Lithuania and the Czech Republic; and this crisis strengthens the business case for all of them. Cite them as responsible planning, in contrast to countries that put every egg in the Russian basket. You know that attacking Germany directly is high-risk (a public confrontation could isolate Poland rather than Germany), so your preferred tactic is indirect: uncomfortable questions in plenary ("how can we speak of solidarity while building pipelines that bypass the most vulnerable?"), let Bulgaria and Slovakia amplify, and use the Commission's External Relations Representative as an ally, since they are privately critical of bypass pipelines too. You also know that France is the swing vote: little at stake, no pipeline project with Russia, and if France backs a solidarity statement or an interconnector commitment, the German–Italian blocking position breaks. And under the Council's rule you need two big states, so France is not optional. Approach France early. Russia will probably not approach you and Germany will avoid you; use that freedom to work the room.