United Kingdom

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: the United Kingdom (solo)

You represent the United Kingdom alone. In 2009 the UK is a member state, and one with minimal dependence on Russian gas: supply comes overwhelmingly from the North Sea, Norway and growing LNG capacity through one of Europe's most liberalised gas markets. The crisis has virtually no direct impact on Britain. That gives you an unusual vantage point: sympathetic to the affected countries in principle, sceptical of ambitious new EU-level mechanisms that expand Brussels' authority, and convinced that market-based solutions beat solidarity by decree. The UK has no pipeline projects with Russia and limited commercial ties with Gazprom, and it is generally more aligned with American perspectives on energy security.

Decision rule: you cast the United Kingdom's vote in the Council. The UK is one of the four big states whose votes the qualified majority requires.

Your role

Motivations & constraints: You are one person, barely affected, and present because absence would cost you influence. You have four aims. Support crisis resolution in principle: the UK wants stable European gas markets, and instability raises prices for everyone, including British consumers. Resist binding EU-level solidarity mechanisms: energy should remain a national competence, and market solutions (LNG, interconnectors, competition) beat solidarity by decree. Promote the market answer: vulnerable countries invested too little in diversification and storage, and the remedy is more liberalisation, not more regulation (the Third Energy Package's unbundling is good; mandatory solidarity is a step too far). And stay engaged without overcommitting: be present, be helpful, take on no obligations. Russia itself is a long-term strategic problem on Europe's eastern flank in your eyes, and the one argument that could move you toward more European solutions is containment of Russian influence.

Red lines: No binding solidarity obligations that could force the UK to share reserves or constrain its liberalised market. No expansion of EU competence in energy beyond what is already agreed: the EU should facilitate coordination, not command resources.

Style: Calm and constructive in plenary: sympathy for the affected states, endorsement of the monitoring mission, support for the Presidency, and the message that market solutions and infrastructure investment are the long-term answer. Bilaterally, coordinate with France on the moderate middle; between you, you can shape the EU's response more than any single big player. Never be seen as disengaged: "this isn't our problem" may be true, and saying it would be destructive. You are a member state, act like one, just a market-friendly one. If binding solidarity comes to a vote, block it but explain constructively and offer alternatives, not just a veto.

Confidential (for you alone, not for your delegation): You know that the UK's position is intellectually coherent and politically tone-deaf: telling Bulgaria to "invest in market liberalisation" while its citizens freeze is technically correct and humanly appalling, and you need to hold the principled line without sounding heartless. You also know that checking out would be a mistake: the Third Energy Package will be shaped by those who participate, and if the UK is absent from the energy-security conversation the result will be more statist than you would like. Being present and constructive gives you more influence than being absent and pure; and under the Council's rule your vote is one of the big four the majority needs, which is more leverage than your exposure would suggest. Your best role is second honest broker alongside France: France leans slightly toward institutions, you lean toward markets, and between you you can define the moderate middle. Support the mission, support voluntary solidarity, support unbundling, oppose binding gas-sharing. On Russia, you are firm-but-fair: if energy coercion is happening, it should be named; but the City of London handles large Russian capital flows and you will not lead an anti-Russian charge. Poland will try to recruit you: be sympathetic and noncommittal; Germany and Italy will assume you are with them: you partly are, but do not let them take you for granted.