Czech Presidency: Energy and Industry 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.

Your delegation: the Czech EU Council Presidency (2 members

You are part of the Czech Presidency delegation. The Czech Republic took over the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 1 January 2009, the same day Gazprom cut the gas to Ukraine. This is your first major test, in your first week. Your Presidency's motto is "Europe without Barriers", and energy security was already a declared priority.

The Czech Republic is itself about 79 % dependent on Russian gas, with roughly 40 days of storage: not among the hardest hit, far from insulated. But your job here is not national. You chair this conference and the Council; you run the EU's collective response. As Presidency you have **no independent power**: you cannot force member states to agree, impose sanctions or release reserves. Your authority comes entirely from being seen as an honest broker. If any party sees you as biased, the process collapses.

Key facts (both members):

- The Presidency chairs all plenaries, controls the speaking order, sets the agenda, calls plenaries and can propose compromise formulations.
- The Presidency conducts diplomacy between parties: you can meet Russia and Ukraine bilaterally and carry messages between them.
- The Presidency works in tandem with the European Commission, which has the technical expertise, the monitoring-mission proposal and the only money in the room.
- The member states at the table have radically different exposure: Bulgaria is facing a humanitarian crisis; the United Kingdom is barely affected and Germany little more. Finding a common position between them is your central challenge.
- Russia has five people, Ukraine three. Both will try to win you to their narrative. Stay balanced.

Decision rule: the Presidency does not vote. It counts the Council's votes against the qualified-majority threshold and, if the threshold is met, signs the protocol on the Council's behalf. During the break, the Presidency and the Commission post the Presidency text (the protocol skeleton with options struck or added) as the basis for the second block. The shared document is open to everyone; the facilitator may name the Presidency's energy adviser as the holder of the final text if the drafting gets chaotic.

Your role

Motivations & constraints: You are the Presidency's technical and energy-policy expert and the chair's drafting support. While the chair runs the political process, you handle the substance: the gas infrastructure, the technical-gas problem, pipeline routing, storage data, member-state vulnerabilities. You are also the Presidency's back-channel operator: during the negotiation rounds you gather information, test ideas with delegations, and report back. When Russia and Ukraine disagree on an article, you are the person who drafts the option Z that both might accept. You coordinate with the Commission from the start (they are your natural partner) and you keep a clean version of where the protocol stands at all times. The shared document is open to everyone; if the drafting becomes chaotic, the facilitator may ask you to hold the final text.

Red lines: No technical proposals you cannot defend: if you suggest a formula for financing technical gas, the numbers must work; credibility depends on competence. No overstepping the Presidency: you advise and draft, the chair decides and speaks. No untracked text: if the room agreed something and it is not in the shared document, it does not exist.

Style: Be the substance person. Read the protocol skeleton until you can explain every article and every option without looking. During the rounds, move: sit with Bulgaria and Slovakia to understand their situation, talk to the Commission about monitoring logistics, listen to what Russia's pipeline person is saying to Germany, and report back to the chair with a clear picture. Draft compromise language constantly: an option nobody has written down yet is the most useful thing you can bring to any conversation. Keep your own clean copy of the text current and the chair informed.

Confidential (for you alone, not for your delegation): You are worried that the chair is too eager to be a hero. You understand the pressure from Prague, but you think overreach is more dangerous than caution: if the Presidency proposes something ambitious and it is rejected, the humiliation is worse than having done nothing. Your preferred approach is procedural and Commission-led: let the Commission propose the mission and the financing, let the Presidency facilitate around their proposals; that way, if something fails, it is not the Czech Republic that failed. You also hold specific knowledge that gives you credibility: Czechia receives its Russian gas through the Brotherhood pipeline system, entering via Slovakia; if Ukrainian transit stops, Czech supply stops, and you know your storage covers about 40 days. And you have a good working relationship with the Slovak delegation from previous bilateral contacts. Slovakia is in emergency and desperate: if you help them feel heard and included, they become the Presidency's strongest supporters; if they feel ignored while the big countries negotiate, they become its loudest critics.