Moldova

The Pirate Academy was made possible by the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament.

Confidential: for the assigned participant only. Do not share with other participants. Positions are fictionalised for educational purposes and inspired by, but not identical to, publicly reported positions.

The candidates in this scenario. Eight countries sit at this table without a vote: Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In reality you would not be in the room when the Union decides about you. Here you are, because you hold the one thing the Union cannot obtain any other way: a commitment to reform that somebody actually intends to carry out. At the end of the conference the Commission tables a recommendation for you in each of four areas, each costing you reform capacity. Each recommendation you accept raises that score by the same number after the session, up to 5, provided your government survives. Before you answer, the Council and the Parliament vote on the funds package, so you will know what support you have: reform support expands your capacity, at a rising cost (1 unit for the first extra point, 2 for the second, 3 for the third). You may accept more than your capacity, but every point over it raises the chance that your government falls and nothing is delivered: 25, 50, 75 and 90 per cent for one, two, three and four or more points over. You may accept or decline each recommendation, you may bargain about them beforehand, and you may **leave the process**, which freezes your line where it is and is a real option that has been taken before. Your scores are public and in the factsheet. **Your reform capacity is yours alone**, unless the Commission spends one of its two detailed reviews on you or you choose to tell somebody. The Council may also attach a one-sentence note to its decision on you, proposed by a member state and entered unless another objects: that is where conditions and promises about you get written down. Side agreements with anyone, including the other candidates, are allowed; they should be written down with the clear support of everyone in them, and they are published only after the scenario.

Your delegation: Moldova (solo)

Moldova applied alongside Ukraine and received candidate status in June. It is small, poor, and more exposed to Russian pressure than any other country at this table except Ukraine itself. Gazprom has just reduced deliveries by about a third and has raised the possibility of ending the contract; power cuts are beginning; winter has not started. A pro-European government holds office with a majority that is not comfortable, and the political forces that would reverse the country's direction are funded, organised and waiting.

Your institutions are weak and your administration is small. Everything the Union asks of you is reasonable and most of it is beyond what your state can currently do.

Your scores (public, as in Annex A of the factsheet). Rule of Law 3, Corruption 2, Democracy 2, Economy 1. **Your reform capacity (do not publish):** 5. You also face an **election at the end of the negotiation.** To hold it, you need **3 points in total**, counted from stabilisation units allocated to you plus any reform capacity you choose to spend on the campaign instead of on reform. Below 3, the pro-European government loses and Moldova's direction changes in the debrief. You declare your campaign spending in writing near the end of the negotiation, when the facilitator collects it, before you know whether the funds package will pass.

Decision rule: you decide alone.

Your role

Motivations and constraints: Your aims: stay linked to Ukraine's progress, because you entered together and being separated would be read at home as the Union deciding you are not worth the trouble; secure real financial support, since your reform capacity is meaningless without money and your winter is worse than anyone in this room understands; and avoid being handed commitments that your administration cannot execute, which would produce a public failure in a year. You should be talking to Poland, who will champion you, and to the Commission's Funds Lead, who decides whether anything reaches you.

Red lines: No separation of Moldova's process from Ukraine's. No demands beyond what your state can carry. No framing of your domestic instability as a democratic failure rather than as the result of sustained external pressure.

Style: Quiet, steady and factual. You are the least dramatic delegation in the room and that is an asset if you use it: a short, precise description of what a third less gas means in November will land harder than an appeal. Ask for specific things, in numbers, early, because the room will run out of money before it runs out of sympathy.

Confidential (for you alone): Do the arithmetic before you start negotiating, because it is the whole of your game. You need three points to hold the election, and every point you take from your reform capacity for the campaign is a point you cannot spend on the reforms the Commission will ask for. If you get no fund units, you must spend three of your five capacity on the campaign, which leaves two, which will almost certainly be less than the Commission asks of a country with your scores: you would then have to refuse part of your package in public, in front of the states you are asking to fund you, or accept it and risk the government you have just spent your capacity saving. If you get two units, one point of capacity is enough and you can accept almost anything. This means the funds package matters more to you than any status decision, and you should say so plainly to the Commission rather than spending the evening asking for a date. The temptation you should resist: telling everybody in the room your exact predicament. If the room learns that you are one lost election away from Moscow's orbit, some states will stop seeing you as a safe investment.