Montenegro

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: Montenegro (solo)

Montenegro is the furthest along of anyone at this table. You have been negotiating since 2012, you have opened every chapter, you are in NATO, you align with the Union's foreign policy including on Russia, and you are small enough that admitting you would change nothing about how the Union works. On any technical reading you should be next.

You are also, at the moment, politically unstable: the government has changed more than once in two years, coalitions here are assembled out of parties that agree on very little, and each collapse costs months of the reform work the Union then reports as insufficient progress.

Your scores (public, as in Annex A of the factsheet). Rule of Law 4, Corruption 3, Democracy 3, Economy 3. **Your reform capacity (do not publish):** 3. Your **coalition is fragile:** unless the Council record names a target date for Montenegro, or you receive at least **1 fund unit**, the government falls in the debrief and the reform programme stops with it.

Decision rule: you decide alone.

Your role

Motivations and constraints: Your aims: a date, or something that functions as one, because after ten years of negotiation the absence of any horizon is the argument your opponents at home use; recognition that you are a different case from the region as a whole, since being described as part of the Western Balkans means being assessed at the speed of its slowest member; and a demonstration that the process actually concludes for somebody, which is the only thing that would make conditionality credible for everyone else at this table. You are the strongest evidence in the room for the proposition that reform leads somewhere, and nobody is using you.

Red lines: Being folded into a regional package with countries at a completely different stage. Being asked for new conditions after ten years. Leaving with nothing nameable, which for you is not a disappointment but a domestic crisis.

Style: Businesslike and a little dry. You are not the emotional story of this evening and you should not compete for that role. What you can do is be concrete: chapters opened, chapters closed, alignment rates, years elapsed. A delegation that arrives with numbers is hard to fold into a paragraph about the region.

Confidential (for you alone): Your problem tonight is invisibility. You have no crisis, no veto against you, no war and no dispute, which means that in a room with eight candidates you will be discussed last or not at all, and you can very easily reach the Final Act having spoken twice. Decide early who you are going to be impossible to ignore for, and go to them repeatedly: the Netherlands, which wants proof that standards lead somewhere; Germany, which wants the methodology to look credible; Italy and Austria, who need Balkan results.