European Commission: Funds Lead

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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 Commission in this scenario. Your team speaks with one voice: everything the Commission tables, the review sheet and the funds package alike, needs the agreement of all of you. You assess the candidates, you recommend what each should reform, and you propose how the fund units are spent (twelve with a full cast; the facilitator states tonight's number). You do not vote in the Council. Two levers are yours alone. First, you may call for a **detailed review of two candidates** at any point during the negotiation, and the facilitator will then tell you those two countries' real reform capacity and the specific problem each is facing; you get two, not three. Second, the funds package is voted as a whole and cannot be amended from the floor, so what goes into it is decided by you and nobody else. You may show drafts whenever you like, to test reactions; only the version you table at the start of the Final Act counts, and it is voted before the candidates answer your recommendations. Units may also be left unallocated. Candidates may accept more than their capacity at a risk to their governments; reform support is the only way to make an ambitious sheet safe, and its cost rises for each point given to the same country (1, then 2, then 3, then 4 units). The package needs a qualified majority in the Council and a majority of groups in the Parliament (a tie means no); if either fails, no money moves at all.

Your delegation: the European Commission (up to three)

You are the guardian of the process and the only actor in the room with an institutional interest in the enlargement methodology surviving the year. The Union has just moved faster for Ukraine and Moldova than it ever moved for the Western Balkans, and your problem is to make that look like a process rather than a favour. Your three members should divide the work early: one holds the overall line and speaks in plenary, one builds the review sheet, one builds the funds package. You will not have time to do this sequentially.

Decision rule: consensus. If your three cannot agree, the Commission tables nothing, and a Commission that tables nothing has handed the session to the Council.

Your role

Motivations and constraints: You hold the fund units and you write the package. Three uses are available: **reform support**, which adds capacity to a candidate at a rising cost (1 unit for the first extra point, 2 for the second, 3 for the third, 4 for the fourth, for the same country) and is the only way a country can accept more reform than it could manage alone without risking its government; **stabilisation**, which prevents a specific bad thing a specific country is facing, at a price that country knows and you may not; and **reward**, which does nothing mechanically and is a public signal. Units may also be allocated to a **member state**, which is legally awkward and politically sometimes decisive. Your aim is a package that passes: the Council by qualified majority, the Parliament by simple majority, in a single vote, unamendable. That means counting votes before you table, not after.

Red lines: Every unit should have a stated purpose you can defend in one sentence in public. You should not leave the package so thin that candidates cannot meet the reforms the Commission is demanding of them, because that is the Commission asking for something it has refused to pay for. You should not hand a member state a unit without something written in return.

Style: Numerate and blunt. You are the only person who can say what something costs, and you should say it early and often, because the room will otherwise design a package it cannot afford. In the Council's room, present the arithmetic rather than the politics: these units, these demands, this shortfall.

Confidential (for you alone): Do the arithmetic now, before the session starts, because it is worse than anyone expects. The prices you already suspect are on the board add up to roughly the whole budget before Serbia, Albania or Kosovo receive anything and before a single unit is spent on reward. Ukraine is the hardest case: a country at war needs units for its war effort and, for any serious sheet, several more for reform support, and the rising cost means every unit you add there buys less. That means the package cannot be fair; it can only be a set of priorities you are willing to defend. Decide which countries you are going to disappoint and have your sentence ready. You also have a private view your colleagues would dislike: you think at least one unit should be offered to Hungary, not as a reward but as the price of the unanimity votes, and you would rather that were done openly in the package than privately in a corridor. The Parliament will attack you for it, but the package may pass anyway. If your Reform Assessment Lead persuades the team to ask less of the countries under pressure, your job gets easier and your justification gets harder: softer demands mean less need for reform support, which frees units and simultaneously removes your reason for spending them.