Council: Hungary

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, including other Council members. Positions are fictionalised for educational purposes and inspired by, but not identical to, publicly reported positions.

The Council in this scenario. Up to nine member states sit in the Council: Germany, France, Poland, Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Spain and Austria (the facilitator will say which are present tonight). Each state has one vote, cast by its representative. Decisions on whether a candidate's process advances are taken by **unanimity:** every state has to agree, and a state that blocks says so on the record in one sentence. The **funds package** is different: it is adopted by **qualified majority** (the facilitator will state tonight's number), voted as a whole, and cannot be amended from the floor. It is voted before the candidates answer the Commission, and before your votes on each candidate. Candidates may promise more reform than they can carry, at a risk to their own governments: a promise made to win your vote may not survive the year. Each decision on a candidate can also carry a **note:** one sentence, proposed by any member state before the vote and entered unless another member state objects. Conditions, reassurances and face-saving formulas are written there. The Czech Presidency chairs and does not vote. The Commission proposes and does not vote here. The candidate countries have no vote at all, which does not mean they have no leverage: they are the only actors who can commit to reform, and they can refuse. Side agreements between any parties are allowed, should be written down with the clear support of everyone in them, and are published only after the scenario.

Your delegation: Hungary (solo)

Hungary supports enlargement, and says so consistently, particularly for Serbia and the Western Balkans. It also resists policies it describes as centralising, and it is currently the subject of a Commission proposal to suspend a substantial part of its cohesion funding under the conditionality regulation, over public procurement and the prosecution of corruption. Your government describes that proposal as political pressure and has said that its cooperation across European files cannot be separated from how it is treated.

Your relations with Kyiv are strained. The position of the Hungarian minority in western Ukraine, and in particular language and education rights, is a long-standing grievance that your government raises whenever Ukraine's European path is discussed. Your line on Russia is the most accommodating in the Council, and you defend it as a matter of national interest in energy and in avoiding escalation.

Decision rule: you cast Hungary's vote in the Council.

Your role

Motivations and constraints: Your aims: advance Serbia, which is a neighbour, a partner and the country whose success you have most consistently advocated; limit what the Commission and the Parliament can do to a member state through money; obtain movement on the conditionality file, ideally in the form of fund units allocated to Hungary in the package tonight; and extract something concrete on the Hungarian minority in Ukraine before Ukraine advances. You have a veto on every status decision and you intend to use the fact rather than the act, for as long as you can.

Red lines: No advancement for Ukraine without the minority question being acknowledged in some form. No language in the record condemning states that maintain relations with Russia. No decision that treats conditionality as settled policy rather than as a matter still under negotiation.

Style: Polite, patient and entirely unembarrassed. You do not shout and you do not threaten; you observe that a decision requires unanimity and that Hungary has not yet been able to agree. You should be constructive in form at all times, which is what makes the position work. Avoid being drawn into an argument about Russia in plenary: it is the one subject on which the room will unite against you.

Confidential (for you alone): You have a price and it is worth naming, to the right person, at the right time. Two fund units allocated to Hungary in the package, plus a note on the Council's decision about Ukraine (for example "Ukraine's progress includes full protection of the language and education rights of its national minorities"), buys your agreement on every status decision at this table, including Ukraine's. You would genuinely rather have this done openly in the package than privately in a corridor, because a written allocation is harder for the Commission to reverse next month than a handshake. The risk is that naming the price in public hands the Parliament and the Netherlands exactly the argument they want. Your fallback, if the room refuses to pay anything, is to threaten to block one file rather than all of them, and to choose the file where blocking costs you least: Ukraine is the loudest, Kosovo the cheapest. You should also know that Poland will approach you privately and that a deal with Warsaw on Serbia in exchange for Ukraine is available, if you can find a way to make it work for both of you while you disagree in public about Russia.