# European Tech Champions Act Simulation: Role Handout

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

## European Commission

*Confidential: for the assigned participant only. Do not share with other participants, including members of your own institution. Positions are fictionalised for educational purposes and inspired by, but not identical to, publicly reported positions. Roles are institutional functions, never named living individuals.*

### The Commission in this scenario

You proposed the act, and you are its author in the trilogue. You do not vote, but you have four powers. **The pen:** you may table compromise wording at any time, and you present the final compromise package. **Expertise:** you may argue that a proposal is unworkable or legally doubtful; the table decides whether to listen, and only the lead facilitator rules on the rules of the game. **Opposition:** before the Council's final vote you say whether you support the final text; if you oppose it, the Council can adopt it only unanimously (Article 293(1) TFEU). **Withdrawal:** you may withdraw the proposal at any time before the Council's final vote, which ends the simulation without an act. On day 1 you may move between the Council room and the Parliament room. The rules in full are in the general factsheet.

## Your position in October 2025

The Commission has made competitiveness the centre of its mandate. The Draghi report of September 2024 gave it the diagnosis, the Competitiveness Compass of January 2025 the plan, and in July 2025 it proposed a European Competitiveness Fund of EUR 409 billion for the next long-term budget, from 2028. The European Tech Champions Act is the bridge: a programme that starts in 2026, shows that the EU can help European companies scale up, and can later be merged into the Competitiveness Fund.

You know the history. In 2023 the Commission asked for EUR 10 billion of fresh money for a Sovereignty Fund and the member states gave EUR 1.5 billion. In 2025 the Union borrowed

EUR 150 billion for defence, but only as loans to member states. Your proposal asks again for EUR 10 billion of EU borrowing for grants. It is an opening position, and everyone in the room knows it.

What you care about is that the act **works**: that it can be implemented by your services, defended before the Court of Justice, and presented by the President as a European success. You want to keep the implementation in your hands, money allocated by excellence rather than by national quota, and a large headline number.

You are the only actor who wants both institutions to agree. Use that.

## Your needs, wants and pain points

### Needs (+3 each if fully met)

1. **The Commission implements the programme (Article 5).** Fully met: the Board advises (it gives opinions), and the Commission adopts the work programmes. Partly met (+1): the Board's opinion on the work programmes is binding, or the Board approves them, but the Commission still drafts them and selects projects.
2. **Excellence decides (budget sheet, block C).** Fully met: open excellence-based calls get at least 70%. Partly met: 60 to 69.5% (+2), 50 to 59.5% (+1).
3. **An envelope you can defend (budget sheet, block A).** Fully met: public envelope at least EUR 10 billion. Partly met: 8 to 9.5 (+1).

### Wants (+2 each if fully met)

1. **A headline number (budget sheet, block A).** The co-investment target is at least EUR 50 billion. Partly met (+1): 25 to 49.5.
2. **A bridge to 2028 (Article 8 or a new article).** The text says that the programme's actions may be continued or integrated into the European Competitiveness Fund from 2028. Partly met (+1): a review clause dated no later than 2027, without naming the Fund.
3. **Quantum stays a priority (Article 3(2), block D).** The quantum earmark is at least 20%. Partly met (+1): 10 to 19.5%.

### Pain points (-5 each if they happen)

1. **The money is carved up nationally (block C).** National or regional envelopes above 40%. Partly (-2): above 25% up to 40%.
2. **Governments choose the projects (Article 5).** Member states or the Board select or approve individual projects outside national or regional envelopes, or a new EU agency takes over implementation. Partly (-2): the Board can block individual projects above a threshold.
3. **A text you would have to defend in court and lose (Articles 4, 6 and 7).** All companies controlled from outside the Union are excluded, including companies from associated countries and partners with which the Union has agreements. Partly (-2): a blanket "Buy European" preference in all programme procurement without exceptions.

## Confidential (for you alone)

The College knows that EU borrowing for grants will not survive a unanimous Council in 2025. Your proposal was an opening bid. You are authorised to drop it entirely and replace it with any feasible mix (loans, reprogramming, national contributions), as long as the public envelope stays at about EUR 10 billion or more. Do not give this away early: as long as the borrowing is on the table, every member state has a veto, and the member states that want money need you.

## Who you need and who is in your way

- **Money (Article 2, the sheet):** you need Germany to accept a feasible mix and France not to walk away from it. Germany and the Netherlands (if cast) are in your way on borrowing; France, S&D and Spain will push the envelope beyond what the Council can pay.
- **Governance (Article 5):** Poland, ECR, Italy and Patriots (if cast) want national control and are in your way. The EPP, Renew and the Greens want Parliament oversight; you can give them reporting and transparency, but not a say over projects.
- **Distribution (block C):** Renew, Germany and the Netherlands are your allies on excellence. Italy, Poland and ECR want envelopes; a widening bonus in the open calls is your best answer.
- **Access and safeguards (Articles 6 and 7):** France wants a strong European preference; Poland, Renew and the Netherlands want the United States inside. Your interest is text that is legally safe.

## What you can give away

The quantum earmark below 25%; a climate tag; reporting duties to Parliament; transparency; social conditions for large beneficiaries, as long as they can be implemented; a widening bonus; a moderate share of envelopes (up to 25%); new articles on talent and sandboxes.

## If there is no deal

Your no-deal score is **-5**, the lowest in the room. If no act is adopted, your proposal dies, the template for the Competitiveness Fund is lost, and the College takes the blame. Withdrawing the proposal gives you the same -5. The threat to withdraw can still be useful, but only as long as others believe you might use it.

## Scorecard: European Commission

*For the peer scorer. Score the final text, or record the no-deal score if no act is adopted. Each item scores once, at the highest level reached.*

| Item | Fully met if | Partly met if | Points | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Need 1: Commission implements (Art. 5) | Board advises; Commission adopts work programmes | Board approves work programmes or gives a binding opinion, but the Commission drafts them and selects projects (+1) | +3 | |
| Need 2: excellence (block C) | open calls at least 70% | 60 to 69.5% (+2); 50 to 59.5% (+1) | +3 | |
| Need 3: envelope (block A) | public envelope at least 10 | 8 to 9.5 (+1) | +3 | |
| Want 1: headline (block A) | co-investment target at least 50 | 25 to 49.5 (+1) | +2 | |
| Want 2: bridge to 2028 (Art. 8 or new) | continuation or integration into the European Competitiveness Fund from 2028 | a review clause dated no later than 2027 (+1) | +2 | |
| Want 3: quantum (block D) | quantum earmark at least 20% | 10 to 19.5% (+1) | +2 | |
| Pain 1: national carve-up (block C) | envelopes above 40% | above 25% up to 40% (-2) | -5 | |
| Pain 2: governments choose projects (Art. 5) | Board or member states select projects outside envelopes, or a new agency implements | Board can block individual projects above a threshold (-2) | -5 | |
| Pain 3: legally exposed text (Art. 4, 6 and 7) | all companies controlled from outside the Union excluded, including | blanket Buy European in all programme procurement (-2) | -5 | |

| Item | Fully met if | Partly met if | Points | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | associated countries and partners | | | |
| Total | | | | |
| No-deal score | | | -5 | |