European Tech Champions Act Simulation: Role Handout

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

Council: Spain

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 Council in this scenario

Five or six member states sit in the Council: Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Poland, plus the Netherlands if cast (the facilitator will say who is present). Each state has one vote. A text is adopted if **no more than one member state present votes against**. If the budget sheet contains any **EU borrowing for grants** or a **new own resource**, the Council has to decide **unanimously**, and abstention then counts as against. If the Commission opposes the final text, unanimity applies as well. On day 1 you build a Council mandate with the other member states; on day 2 you defend and trade it in the trilogue against the Parliament. Only member states present can declare loans, pledge voluntary national contributions or redirect their cohesion and Recovery money. The rules in full are in the general factsheet.

Your position in October 2025

Spain's economy has been one of the fastest-growing in the Union in 2024 and 2025, helped by the Recovery and Resilience Facility, of which Spain is one of the largest beneficiaries. Your government believes that NextGenerationEU proved that common European money works, and that the Union should do it again for technology. It wants fresh money, not old money moved from one programme to another, and certainly not money taken from cohesion.

Spain has assets of its own. The Barcelona Supercomputing Center hosts MareNostrum 5, one of Europe's largest supercomputers, and in 2025 Spain launched a public AI model for Spanish and

its co-official languages. Spain was one of the three countries that put EUR 1 billion each into the European Tech Champions Initiative in 2023.

Your government is a centre-left coalition. It wants the programme to serve the green transition and to respect workers, and it is wary of turning technology funding into defence funding: at the NATO summit in June 2025, Spain refused to commit to the new 5% target. It also wants money that is controlled: Spain has made audit and anti-fraud a condition of its support for every large European fund.

Your needs, wants and pain points

Needs (+3 each if fully met)

1. **Fresh money (budget sheet, block B).** Fully met: at least EUR 12 billion comes from fresh sources (EU borrowing for grants or loans, national contributions, new own resource), not from reprogramming or redirected cohesion or Recovery money. Partly met: 8 to 11.5 (+2), 5 to 7.5 (+1).
2. **A green programme (block D).** Fully met: the climate tag is at least 30%. Partly met: 20 to 29.5% (+2), 10 to 19.5% (+1).
3. **Audit and anti-fraud (Article 8).** Fully met: the text gives the European Court of Auditors, OLAF and the European Public Prosecutor's Office explicit powers over all programme money, including any national envelopes, and requires an annual report. Partly met (+1): only some of these.

Wants (+2 each if fully met)

1. **A supercomputing flagship (Article 3 or a new article).** The text creates a flagship HPC and AI facility to be hosted at an existing European supercomputing site, chosen by open selection. Partly met (+1): an HPC earmark of at least 10% without a flagship.
2. **AI in every language (Article 3(1)(a)).** AI support explicitly includes language technologies for all official languages of the Union. Partly met (+1): a mention in Article 1 only.
3. **Worker standards (Article 4 or a new article).** Beneficiaries receiving more than EUR 100 million (or a lower threshold) apply binding working conditions or collective agreements. Partly met (+1): a non-binding commitment.

Pain points (-5 each if they happen)

1. **Too much defence (block D).** The defence and dual-use earmark is above 10%. Partly (-2): above 5% up to 10%.
2. **No climate conditions (block D, Article 4).** The climate tag is zero and there is no "do no significant harm" principle. Partly (-2): a climate tag above zero but below 10%, and no such principle.
3. **Raiding cohesion (block B).** Any amount in the line "reprogramming from cohesion funds" counts as partly happening (-2). It cannot fully happen, because no member state can be forced to redirect its own allocation, but it sets a precedent you oppose.

Confidential (for you alone)

You can drop the supercomputing flagship if Article 8 gives strong audit and anti-fraud powers: at home, the audit clause matters more. You know that Italy hopes for a flagship in Bologna; a flagship chosen by open selection at an existing site leaves both of you a chance. You may also pledge up to EUR 5 billion of Spanish money voluntarily (Spain gave EUR 1 billion to the European Tech Champions Initiative in 2023), but only if the other large states pledge too.

Who you need and who is in your way

- **Fresh money:** France and S&D are allies. Germany and the Netherlands (if cast) are in your way. Note that loans count as fresh money for you, and Spain would borrow.
- **Climate:** the Greens and S&D are allies; Germany needs 20% and can be pulled higher. ECR and the Patriots (if cast) are in your way.
- **Audit:** the EPP, the Greens and Germany support strong audit. ECR and Poland may resist audit of national envelopes.
- **Defence:** France and Poland want a defence earmark; Greens and S&D share your caution.
- **Cohesion:** Italy and Poland share your interest in money for poorer regions; you can be the bridge between them and the Greens and S&D.

What you can give away

Quantum; the supercomputing flagship; national envelopes (you win open calls); a co-investment target of any size; state-aid flexibility, if France gives something in return.

If there is no deal

Your no-deal score is **0**. Spain loses nothing directly if the act fails, but it also gains no fresh money. You are the natural bridge in the Council between the ambitious and the cautious; if you stop building bridges, few others will.

Scorecard: Spain

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: fresh money (block B)	at least 12 from borrowing, national contributions or own resource	8 to 11.5 (+2); 5 to 7.5 (+1)	+3	
Need 2: green programme (block D)	climate tag at least 30%	20 to 29.5% (+2); 10 to 19.5% (+1)	+3	
Need 3: audit (Art. 8)	Court of Auditors, OLAF and EPPO powers over all money, annual report	some of these (+1)	+3	
Want 1: HPC flagship (Art. 3 or new)	flagship at an existing site by open selection	HPC earmark at least 10% without a flagship (+1)	+2	
Want 2: every language (Art. 3(1)(a))	language technologies for all official languages	a mention in Art. 1 only (+1)	+2	
Want 3: worker standards (Art. 4 or new)	binding working conditions from at most EUR 100 million	non-binding commitment (+1)	+2	
Pain 1: too much defence (block D)	defence and dual-use above 10%	above 5% up to 10% (-2)	-5	
Pain 2: no climate conditions (block D, Art. 4)	climate tag zero and no “do no significant harm”	tag above zero but below 10%, no such principle (-2)	-5	
Pain 3: raiding cohesion (block B)	cannot fully happen	any amount from cohesion funds (-2)	-2 only	
Total				
No-deal score			0	