SIMULATION DESIGN

Model EU: One Day

One joint session, four items that cross the portfolios, and European Council conclusions adopted by consensus in front of everyone.

College and high school.

The teaching problem

Students treat the European Union as a single thing that either acts or does not. It is several bodies with different interests, and the interesting part is that a government has to hold one position across all of them at once. A finance minister who protects cohesion spending has made an environment minister's problem, and that only becomes visible when the same room takes up both.

The session

One joint session of the European Council and three Council configurations, meeting together, on four items drawn from what is actually live: the next multiannual budget, the post-2030 emissions trading revision, the digital euro, and animal transport rules alongside enlargement.

Say out loud that the joint session is artificial. The EU has no body in which the European Council and three Council configurations sit together. Put that in the student document with the reason: fifteen students and one class period. Students who notice the problem should find that you noticed it first.

The four items, and who answers on each

1. **The next budget.** Heads of government on the ceiling and what they will trade. Finance ministers on which heading they protect, cohesion or agriculture, and what they will cut to pay for it.
2. **Emissions trading after 2030, tied to competitiveness.** Environment ministers on the cap and on their most exposed industry. Finance ministers on whether carbon revenue becomes an EU resource, which has to be consistent with their answer on item 1. Heads of government on whether they still sign the conclusions.
3. **The digital euro.** Finance ministers on the holding cap. Agriculture ministers on whether merchants must accept it, including small rural retailers, because their own constituency pays for the answer.
4. **Animal transport, and enlargement.** Agriculture ministers on the hours limit and on whether EU rules follow animals outside EU territory. Heads of government on admitting Ukraine before the decision rules and the farm budget are reformed.

The budget question is put to every delegation whatever its portfolio. That is what makes the items cross over, and it is the cheapest way to produce the collision this design exists for.

The element that does the teaching

One government, one position, four items. A delegation cannot answer item 2 without reference to what it said on item 1, and the chair should say so when it happens: “You protected cohesion twenty minutes ago. Where is this money coming from?” That single move is the whole lesson, and it is available only because the items are in one room.

The closing act

The heads of government adopt European Council conclusions by consensus, in front of everyone, where one refusal holds the whole document and that country has to live with the room afterward. It is also the best single artifact of the day for assessment.

Speaking turns

Heads of government take all four items plus the conclusions. Finance ministers take items 1 to 3. Agriculture ministers take items 3 and 4. Environment ministers take items 1 and 2. **Nobody below two.**

An earlier draft of this agenda gave the environment ministers one turn in a hundred minutes while heads of government had four. The fix was not a new item, which the period could not afford. It was a climate question added inside item 1, on ring-fencing climate spending as a fixed share of the budget and at whose expense, which happened to cross a question the finance ministers had already answered.

The running order

0–8	Opening. The chair states the agenda, the three floor rules and the ninety-second limit.
8–48	Items 1 and 2, in a fixed speaking order, questions put to portfolios by name.
48–58	**Break.** Ten minutes, standing, finding allies. Say that a student who stays seated has wasted it.
58–88	Items 3 and 4, with positions now visibly conditional on what was agreed during the break.
88–95	**Conclusions** adopted by consensus, or not adopted.
95–100	**Debrief**, standing. See The Debrief.

Chairing: take items 1 and 2 yourself, hand item 3 and item 4 to two different heads of government, and keep the gavel for the conclusions. You hear every intervention that way, which is where the assessment evidence comes from.

The trap in this format

Procedural drift. Students who have done a simulation before will spend the room's time on points of order to show fluency. Motions are in order only at the two moments named on the agenda; anything else is ruled out without discussion.

Before you publish the agenda

1. Can you say in one sentence what the session is for, without using the word coverage?
2. Does the question genuinely divide the room, and can the body actually decide it?
3. Is every role down for at least two scheduled turns?
4. Have the demanding roles been spread deliberately rather than claimed?
5. Does someone know they are chairing, and have they been briefed?
6. Have the real questions gone out, with a line saying they are the real ones?
7. Is anything artificial about the setup named in the student document?
8. Is there a ten-minute break in the middle for students to find allies, and is the room arranged so they can stand up and move?
9. Is the closing act something the room can watch fail?
10. Is the debrief in the running order, with time of its own?

The three floor rules to read aloud, and a minute-by-minute template, are in Running Order, Floor Rules, and the Day-Of Check on the Class-Based Simulations page. The topics below are defaults. Replace them with whatever is live when you run the session; what should not be replaced is the one structural element in each design that does the teaching.