



# Manual for trans-national Simulation Games

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<b>1</b>	<b>SIMULATION GAMES AS A LEARNING TOOL IN EU STUDIES.....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	AIMS: .....	2
1.2	FORMATS .....	3
1.3	ORGANIZATION .....	4
<b>2</b>	<b>BUILD-UP PROCESS:.....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	TASKS FOR CO-ORDINATORS .....	5
2.2	TASKS FOR STUDENTS:.....	6
<b>3</b>	<b>THE SIMULATION GAME.....</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1	RULES OF PROCEDURE.....	6
3.2	THE ROLES IN THE EXERCISE .....	7
3.2.1	<i>The Chair:</i> .....	7
3.2.2	<i>The Council Secretariat</i> .....	8
3.2.3	<i>The Commission</i> .....	8
3.2.4	<i>The European Parliament</i> .....	9
3.2.5	<i>National Delegations from the Member States</i> .....	9
<b>4</b>	<b>DE-BRIEFING PROCESS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT AND (SELF-)EVALUATION.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>LITERATURE: .....</b>	<b>11</b>
6.1	RULES OF PROCEDURE .....	11
6.2	INTRODUCTORY READING AND INSTITUTIONS:.....	11
6.3	NEGOTIATIONS .....	12
	<b>ANNEXES: .....</b>	<b>13</b>
	MODEL EU NEGOTIATING BRIEF: .....	13
	INDICATIVE SCHEDULE I .....	14
	INDICATIVE SCHEDULE II.....	15

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<sup>1</sup> The manual is based experiences within the Proteus/Copas project at the University of Cologne and Sciences Po Paris ([www.proteus.uni-koeln.de](http://www.proteus.uni-koeln.de)) and on an evaluation of this project by Staffan Zetterholm.

# **1 SIMULATION GAMES AS A LEARNING TOOL IN EU STUDIES.**

Simulation games, in the sense of simulated negotiations, have for a number of years been used by universities or university consortia within the field of European studies as a tool to teach about complex political processes. Thereby the European Union - constituted as a complex set of nested negotiations - is an academic subject particularly suited for training through simulation games.

The focus has often been on negotiations within the Council of Ministers or on Intergovernmental Conferences, but sometimes different levels of the negotiations have been simulated, such as the working level where civil servants from the member countries meeting in Council working groups.

In addition existing academic simulation games have shown that the negotiation agenda may be broader (e.g. more openly reflecting broad political cleavages about the forms of European co-operation) or narrower, giving detailed knowledge of specific elements of a policy field (e.g. the limits and forms of European police co-operation) and a detailed experience of the stages and intricacies of one type of EU decision-making processes. As long as political conflict is added to the technical problems of a particular policy area the students seem to be fascinated and participate actively and in a committed way.

It is the aim of this paper is to give concrete advices and examples on how to run a EU-simulation game for those interested in applying this innovative teaching concept themselves.

## **1.1 Aims:**

Simulation games as an alternative to the classical classroom setting in university teaching provide a wealth of advantages not only in regard to the student's experience with a new form of learning but also in regard to the substance that can be communicated through simulation games. Thereby they cannot and should not replace traditional teaching method but they can serve as an additional teaching tool for a specific set of knowledge and competences. The aims of using simulation games within an academic module can therefore be summarised as follows:

### **Simulation games enhance provide the students with:**

- **Factual knowledge through 'direct' experiences** about
  - the policy field being negotiated, be it agricultural policy, environmental policy or foreign policy, etc.
  - about EU institutions and decision-making procedures
  - about the multi-level nature of European politics, particularly the relationship between the »Brussels«-level and the member states level
- **Understanding of the complexity** of 'real world' politics and real world problems, and about how to grasp and handle that complexity.

- **Skills / competences** that are otherwise difficult to communicate, namely:
  - the ability to observe and analyse the dynamics of a negotiation situation.
  - interpersonal, oral written communication and negotiating skills: Develop common solutions within a team and defend them in front of a broader group
  - confidence in using new information technology
  - research abilities in regards to highly specific problems (going beyond academic literature)
  - trans-national / trans-disciplinary definition of problem solutions (crosscultural or intercultural learning)
  - transformation of theoretical knowledge into concrete behaviour
  - trans-national co-operation
  
- **Experience of intercultural interaction and collaboration.**
  - In case of a trans-national simulation game, the experience of other cultures in regards to problem solving, debating culture (...) makes up one of the most striking learning effects for the participating students.

## 1.2 Formats

Simulation games can be organised in a variety of ways that depend to a large degree on the educational circumstances of the students, the pedagogical aims of the co-ordinators and the resources available for the preparation and running of the game itself. Each of the chosen formats provides specific opportunities and limits for the substantial and organisational preparation of the game that should be taken into account before organising such a game.

### 1. *Level of education and status of the simulation within the university programme*

- The level of education (undergraduate / graduate / postgraduate) and previous knowledge determines to a great extent, the content and organisational effort necessary:
  - Thereby the topic chosen (degree of specification, form of legislation...) has to reflect the specific standard of the students.
  - The knowledge standard of the participating students has to be taken into account when planning the preparation sessions (individual student efforts regarding research abilities; focus of content-oriented or strategic preparation)
  
- Intra- or extra- curricular activity (possibility to obtain credits): The quality of a simulation game largely depends on the time students can afford to spend on preparation and involvement. This, of course varies with the status of the game in the overall schedule and has to be taken into account when preparing the simulation in regards to:
  - time allocated for student's preparation
  - the complexity /specificity of the chosen topic
  - form of assessment / sanction

## 2. *Scope of participating institutions*

The question of permanent presence and influences the format of the simulation in regards to:

- schedule and frequency of formal meetings
- possibility of informal negotiations
- degree of organisational efforts
- the necessity to use remote communication techniques

In this respect one can distinguish:

- The one faculty / Post-graduate Programme Course:
- interdisciplinary university simulation (Politics, Law, Economics)
- trans-national (interdisciplinary) simulation:

## 1.3 Organization

The simulation game is organised and monitored by a team of academic staff, which sets the rules of the game, gives input to the build-up process, accompanies and stipulates the preparation of the students taking part in the simulation, monitors the actual simulation - and may intervene with advice or redress if the negotiation seriously goes out of hand. Finally this team takes care for the de-briefing of the participants. On the other hand, it is highly important for the success of the exercise that, within the restraints laid down by the monitoring team, the negotiation is run by the students in an independent way and that they are allowed independently to grapple with procedural and substantive aspects of the negotiation without the monitoring team taking over their responsibilities.

Before a simulation exercise can take place the co-ordinating team has to engage into a range of preparatory efforts in order to establish the organisational framework within which the simulation can take place. The most important elements in this preparatory phase are:

- establish links between universities / faculties involved (if necessary)
  - determine the persons responsible
  - division of tasks:
    - preparation of plenaries (organisation, rooms...)
    - website (design, update...)
    - e-mail services
    - organisation of guest speakers
- agree on topic
  - legislative process: directive, regulation, area (associated decision making processes and actors)
  - IGC
  - Convention
- agree on overall schedule
  - number of plenary sessions
  - meetings with experts (e.g. in Brussels)
- agree on minimum requirements for students
  - previous studies
  - common basic literature list
- select students
  - number
  - previous studies

- allocate roles
  - o number of institutions / member states involved
  - o number of levels simulated
- discuss principles and aims
  - o determines the preparatory efforts for the plenary sessions

Even if simulation games differ a lot regarding the abovementioned organisational and substantial circumstances the basic model remains the same. The basic pattern of a simulation game consists in principle of three major elements:

- the build-up process
- the simulation game itself
- the debriefing process

## **2 Build-up process:**

During the **build-up process** the participant students come to learn the policy area or the negotiation area. This is a gradual process and does often include two stages: first: different kinds of input or briefings as to the general negotiation field given by specialists of that field, as well as readings by the students of relevance to the policy field.

Second, a preparation by the students of the specific negotiation position taken by the actor (country or institution) to be played by the student. This is a process that requires active participation by the student, and in many cases active research by the student, as the negotiation position of the actor is rarely spelled out in advance in detail. Furthermore, the students must get information about the intensity of the negotiation positions of the different actors and the resulting (lack of) willingness to compromise. The build-up process may also include input regarding negotiation techniques, rules of thumb, and different negotiation strategies. Typically, the intensity of the build-up process and the active participation by the students, will become more prominent the more the date of the actual simulation approaches. Within the build-up process the organisers have to allow for sufficient time for the students to get known each other within the negotiation team and in within the group as a whole. This getting-to-know each other phase is particularly important in view of the final negotiation round in order to create a co-operative negotiation environment and to reduce anxieties.

Within this phase there are specific tasks for co-ordinators and students which can be summarised as follows:

### **Tasks for Co-ordinators**

- preparation (general)
  - o introduction to the rules of the game
  - o introduction of topic
    - main features of the topic
    - problems associated
    - main cleavages
    - indicate important information resources:
      - literature
      - statements / speeches by officials
      - internet resources

- status within political landscape (related dossiers, political relevance)
  - introduction of negotiation techniques and strategies. Since this is a new area for most of the students it is of utmost importance and will impact substantially on the quality of the simulation
- preparation (with single groups)
- short introduction of the particularities of their role
  - indications about the positions that should be simulated
  - it is particularly important to instruct the group that is playing the Presidency since they are chairing the meeting. The success of the negotiation depends crucially on the ability of the chair group to guide the negotiations and to lead the discussions to a conclusion
- ➔ these information might be given orally or in form of a dossier (or as a mix of both). The degree of elaboration depends on how much individual initiative is expected of the participating students and on how much resources are available for the detailed preparation by the super-visors

#### **Tasks for Students:**

- Research of general background information on EU politics
- Research on the specific interests of the country/institutions represented by the team
- Preparation of the team's negotiating positions for the weekly plenary meetings
- Consultation/bilateral bargaining with other teams in order to agree joint positions and explore opportunities for coalition-building (informal meetings)
- Drafting of negotiation briefs (see annex) as preparation for the final simulation
- intermediate reports and final agreements among all teams

### **3 The simulation game**

The actual simulation is for practical reasons often restricted to one or two days, but may of course be shorter. It is structured through a set of rules, defining the limits and the procedures of the negotiation. Depending on the format chosen there might be more actual negotiation sessions – for example on different levels such as ministerial, COREPER, administrative.

#### **3.1 Rules of procedure**

- **Schedule of meetings:** The meetings officially scheduled as full rounds of negotiations have to be pre-determined by the co-ordination group. These meetings are obligatory for all of the participating students.
- **Additional meetings:** Groups may organise supplementary meetings (e.g. on the working level) if they wish, but this is not an obligation. Any supplementary full meeting, however, should be notified and the Council Secretariat should be involved to keep guard of procedures and to take record. Supplementary meetings might include meetings of specialist working groups or/and COREPER. Students should be free to organise such meetings (or not) in order to allow for their own initiatives within the game. Informal meetings (bilateral or plurilateral) may take place on whatever basis students choose

- **During the final Negotiation meeting**
  - the session must start and end with everybody present
  - generally the rules of procedure of the Council (see literature) serve as the basis for the negotiations. However, they might be amended or modified by the coordinators to make negotiations less complicated. (these modifications should be kept to a minimum)
  - there may be adjournments for informal discussion. These should be timed and in no case for too long (30 minutes max).
  - the large group may break into subsets for specific purposes, e.g. experts could be asked to work on particular sections of the proposal, or Permanent Representatives could be asked to solve a particular problem (timing must be clearly stated)
  - exceptionally the Presidency might want a BRIEF (30 minutes max) session in restraint (ministers plus one official) or super-restraint (ministers only). In such a circumstance the other participants should be assigned a specific task by the Presidency, and the Commission team should use this opportunity for further consultations with delegations
  - Occasionally the Presidency may want bilateral ‘confessionals’ with individual national delegation (short!)

## **3.2 The Roles in the Exercise**

Depending of the student group involved, the time allocated and the negotiation process simulated various roles can be attributed to the participating students:

### **3.2.1 The Chair:**

S/he is the minister / head of government of the country holding the presidency at the time of the simulation game. The Chair’s task is to guide the session according to the Council rules of procedure, set the agenda, determine the procedure to be used during the session (time table, brakes), decide on negotiation objectives (i.e. global compromises, partial decision, postponement of the decision, package deals) etc.

Since the role of the chair is particularly demanding it can be considered to split the roles between the persons chairing the meetings and those who are responsible for the country positions of the presidency country. The problem can be diminished by assigning more students to the presidency group than to the others this allows for a division of work without separating the group as a whole.

In fulfilling his/her duties the Chair should work closely with the Council Secretariat, which has responsibility for the logistics of meetings, and which will be able to liase with national delegations for the Presidency.

At COREPER level the role of the chair is played by the Permanent Representative of the country holding the Presidency at the time. At both COREPER and ministerial level the Presidency should keep in close touch with its ‘home’ delegation

### 3.2.2 The Council Secretariat

The Secretariat plays a crucial role of support for the Presidency by providing it with a steering brief and discussing the positions which the Presidency should take in response to potential developments which may occur during the meetings

During meetings and between meetings, the Secretariat should liaise with Member State delegations and the Commission team. It should keep track of proposed amendments to the texts and their possible implications.

Furthermore, the Council Secretariat provides information on procedural matters, draws up lists of speakers, works out the exact wording of proposed amendments and contributes to the search for compromise solutions. It also takes the minutes of both COREPER and the Council Meetings which must be handed in before the deadlines mentioned in the agreed timetable.

### 3.2.3 The Commission

The exact role of the Commission depends on the procedure simulated. Whereas it plays a very prominent role in an 'ordinary' legislative procedure, it has a much more modest role to play in the framework of an IGC.

#### *In legislative Procedures*

The Commission takes the initiative in the exercise by submitting a draft proposal. It also promotes the decision-making process by balancing the different national positions in order to find a compromise during the negotiations and provides expertise at the request of member States or the President.

Each Member of the Commission team plays a specific role; it is of key importance to come to a good division of labour

- Commissioner Responsible: s/he is the Head of the Commission Delegation and speaks on its behalf during the Council Meeting. S/he is responsible for the Commission's Strategy as laid down in the proposal and the level of ambition to be pursued during the negotiation and maintains contact with the Member States on the political level.
- Officials: will have a specific technical expertise regarding the chosen topic. They are responsible for contacts with Permanent Representations members, as well as liaising with national experts. In close co-ordination with the Commissioner, they will have to come to a more precise division of labour

In case of an IGC simulation the rights and obligations of the members of the Commission team are somewhat different. As they are not taking the initiative and are not entitled to vote within the European Council, they have a much more modest role. The task of the Commission is to pursue the Community interest even in the absence of formalised power. Therefore a subtle negotiation strategy is needed building on detailed knowledge of the negotiated item and the status as a Non-Member-State participant within the negotiations

### 3.2.4 The European Parliament

The European Parliament might be included within the simulation of a 'normal' legislating process. That, however will pose much higher demands on the organisation of the simulation game, since the complicated procedures of Co-decision with the necessity of additional meetings between Parliament representatives and Commission or Council will be necessary. We thus propose to leave out the Parliament in order not to overcomplicate the organisational set-up of the simulation game

Within the simulation of a IGC, however, the President of the Parliament can be easily integrated in the set-up of the game, adding an additional perspective to the negotiations. Having no voting rights either the President of the Parliament has to follow similar strategies as the Commission. However, as the representative of the only directly democratically accountable institution at the European level, it can play the Democracy card within the negotiations

### 3.2.5 National Delegations from the Member States

Each national delegation might consists of: a) the head of government lead minister / on the topic of the simulation; b) the Permanent Representative; and c) one or more officials from the national capital with specific expertise on the subject under discussion.

The National Delegations respond to the Commission's proposal by preparing their national positions which includes reactions to the Commission's initiative, proposed amendments, coalition-building with other delegations and/or the Commission and, eventually, defending their position during both the COREPER and the Council Meetings.

Each member of the delegation plays a specific role. Each delegation should first meet to agree the distribution of roles within the delegation. Then each member of the delegation should individually sketch out her/his approach to the issues, which should be set out in the individual brief to be handed in at the respective deadlines. Then each team should meet to agree a collective position. Once a collective position is agreed, each group should also agree on a division of labour and about who is to do what as the exercise proceeds

- Minister responsible: s/he is head and the speaker of the national delegation and is responsible for the co-ordination of different views inside his/her government enabling a coherent national position to be taken, as well as the elaboration of the general strategy of the delegation. S/he should get in contact with his/her Ministerial colleagues from other delegations and with the Commission
- Permanent Representative / Deputy Permanent Representative: S/he is the head and speaker of the delegation at the COREPER Meeting and assists his/her Minister during the Council. S/he liases with the other COREPER members and the Commission
- Official from the Ministry responsible for the topic simulated

## **4 De-briefing process**

The de-briefing process takes place within one or two sessions after the simulation game itself. It is aimed to summarise and structure the experiences that the participating students have made in the course of the simulation. Here questions are addressed, such as:

- what happened in the negotiations,?
- why did it happen as it did?
- was it reasonable or realistic compared with 'real world'-negotiations?
- Which strategies were successful and why?

It is important to involve the students in this process by:

- writing an activity report in which they reflect upon their chosen strategies and the success and failure
- filling out the evaluation form (see attachment) which helps to respond to the student's needs in a following exercise

## **5 Assessment and (Self-)evaluation**

As the simulation game is part of an academic curriculum the knowledge and the skills achieved must be somehow assessed. This is often done both by asking the students to present in writing the negotiation positions of the country they are playing and maybe some background material, and by evaluating their actual performance in the simulation according to a number of criteria. Additionally, more academic papers about different aspects of the negotiation field may be requested from the students. A possible form of assessment is as follows.

1. Background Paper (individual or in teams )
  - o Academic paper analysing the position of respective country / institution
  - o Assessed according to the standards of 'normal' seminar paper (citation, use of relevant literature, theoretical reflection...)
2. Negotiation Brief (group: Country/ institution)
  - o Practical negotiation guide for the group
  - o Assessed according to the quality of arguments, the differentiation between important and less important aims, strategies indicated...): see Annex???
  - ➔ for the purpose of assessment, students can be asked to submit a maximum paper (available for all participants and minimum paper (only available for academic staff - important for the final evaluation)
3. Negotiation activity report (describing the own performance, the course of the negotiation as seen by the delegate)
4. In the case of the Council Secretariat the quality of the president's steering paper may be assessed, as well as the quality of the drafted text and the minutes presented after the sessions (if there are more then one negotiation rounds)

## **6 Literature:**

The literature given to the students depends to a large degree on the topic which is negotiated. Principally the students should already have a sound knowledge about the EU, its Member States and the decision making processes. Therefore the literature indicated here is mainly related to negotiation skills, dynamics, tactics and game theory. It is part of the game's design to determine a common literature list or not depending on the degree of initiative expected by the participants.

### **6.1 Rules of Procedure**

- Council Decision of 31 May 1999 adopting the Council's Rules of Procedure (1999/385/EC, ECSC, Euratom, Official Journal of the European Communities L147/13
- General Secretariat, Council of the European Union, Council Guide (1997), 3 volumes: 1. Presidency Handbook, 2. Comments on the Council's Rules of Procedure, 3. Delegates' Handbook
- Council of Ministers (1995): Report on the Functioning of the Treaty on European Union, adopted by the EU's foreign ministers, April 10, published in the European Report Document, supplement to European Report (No 2032, 12 Apr.)
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### **6.2 Introductory Reading and Institutions:**

- Dinan, Desmond (1995): *Ever Closer Union*, Macmillan.
- Edwards, Geoffrey and Spence, David, *The European Commission*, London,
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- Hix, Simon (1999): *The political system of the European Union*, New York.
- Keohane, Robert O and Hoffmann, Stanley (eds.) (1991), *The New European Community: Decision Making and Institutional Change*,.
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- Moravcsik, Andrew (1999) *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* London, UCL Press
- Nugent, N. (1999) *The Government and Politics of the EU*, Macmillan, 4th ed.
- Nugent, Neil (2000): *The European Commission*, Mc Millan.
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- Renshaw, Fiona Hayes and Wallace, Helen *The Council of Ministers of the European Union* London, Macmillan, 1996
- Richardson, J (ed.), *European Union: Power and Policy-Making*, London, Routledge, 2001.
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- Sbragia, Alberta M., *Euro-politics: institutions and policymaking in the 'new' European Community*, Washington, D.C., :Brookings Institution, 1992.
- Schmidt, Susanne K. (2000): *Only an Agenda Setter? The European Commission's Power over the Council of Ministers*, *European Union Politics*, Vol. 1, Issue 1.
- Sherrington, P (2000): *The Council of Ministers: political authority in the European Union*, London.
- Urwin, Derek, *Western Europe Since 1945*, London, Longman, 1991.

- Wallace, Helen and Wallace, William (eds), Policy-making in the European Community (3rd ed.), 1996.
- Westlake, Martin The Council of the European Union, 1995.
- Zwaan J. (1995): The Permanent Representatives Committee.

### **6.3 Negotiations**

- Clarke, M. (1978): Simulations in the Study of International Relations, Hesketh
- Evans P./ Jacobson H./ Putnam R. (1993): Double-edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics, University of California Press.
- Fisher R. (1971): Basic Negotiating Strategy, Allen Lane.
- Fisher R. (1978): International Mediation: A working Guide, International Peace Academy)
- Fisher R / Ury W. (1992, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.): Getting to Yes: How to Negotiate Agreement without Giving it
- Humphreys J. (1997): negotiating in the European Union: how to make the Brussels machine work for you, London.
- Ikle F.C. (1964): How Nations Negotiate, Harper and Row
- Putnam, R. (1988): Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: the logic of two-level games, in: International Organization, 42:3, Summer.
- Raiffa H. (1982): The Art and Science of Negotiation, Harvard University Press 1982.
- Raunio, T. / Wiberg, M. (1998): Winners and Losers in the Council: Voting Power Consequences of EU Enlargements, JCMS, Vol.36 No.4 Dec., 549-562.
- Ury W. (1991): Getting past no: negotiating with difficult people, Business Book Ltd
- Zartman W.J. (1982): The practical negotiator, Yale.
- Winham G.R. (1979): Practitioners' Views of International Negotiation, in: World Politics, October

## **Annexes:**

### **Model EU Negotiating Brief:**

1. The Proposal (from Commission or Presidency)
  - a. What are the main features of the text?
  - b. What may lie behind it?
  - c. What other issues are involved?
  - d. What is the timetable of the negotiations?
2. Implications for your Member State
  - a. What are the implications for your Member State government
  - b. What are the implications for important organised interests (NGOs, Business)
3. Negotiation Objectives
  - a. What is your preferred outcome?
  - b. What must you achieve?
  - c. What might be negotiable?
  - d. What are your priority objectives?
  - e. What are your subsidiary objectives?
4. Positions of other participants
  - a. What positions are already known
  - b. What information is needed to supplement the information you already have?
  - c. Which delegations will carry significant influence?
  - d. Which delegations are potential allies
  - e. Which delegations have most different positions?
5. Line to take at this meeting
  - a. What is your basic position to be explained?
  - b. What is your tactical position to be developed?
  - c. What links are to be established with other delegations?
  - d. How much movement is to be made at this meeting?
  - e. What is your planning/conditioning for subsequent meeting(s)
6. Other Factors
  - a. Is there any linkage with other current dossiers?
  - b. What are the legal implications of the proposal, if any?
  - c. What are the financial implications, if any
7. Other Activities to be considered
  - a. Consultations with other delegations?
  - b. Consultations with others in your organisation?
  - c. Consultations with relevant interest groups?

## Indicative Schedule I

Applied in COPAS - an interdisciplinary transnational simulation game between the University of Cologne and Sciences Po in Paris: [www.proteus.uni-koeln.de](http://www.proteus.uni-koeln.de), <http://www.epsnet.org/copas.htm>

### Academic Year I

Oct. – Febr.	Application and preparation period of the students organisation of contents, methods, etc. and rules by academic staff
February	Selection of participants
March	first preparatory plenary meeting: (two-day seminar in Paris)
April	second preparatory meeting (two day trip of the participants to Brussels)
May	third meeting and simulation (two days)
June	evaluation and de-briefing period

### Time period in-between:

- additional seminar sessions will be organised by the respective faculties
- participants were expected to co-operate intensively by means of e-mail, mailing-lists and the project website

## Indicative Schedule II

for Simulation Game within Postgraduate Institution (model Bruge)

- Week 1: Plenary (introduction to Simulation Exercise: topic, rules of the game)
- Week 2: Commission takes initiative by submitting a first proposal
- Week 3: Each Student (except Council Secretariat) submits an individual negotiating brief of no more than two pages
- At the same time each delegation, including the Commission, should also submit a team negotiating brief written by all its members
- The Council Secretariat Team hands in their Presidency Steering Brief
- Week 4: Plenary Session (1 hour)  
Followed by  
Meeting of COREPER (2 hours)
- Week 5: Council Secretariat presents minutes of the meetings of COREPER
- Week 6: Commission submits its revised proposal
- Week 7: Meeting of Council of Ministers (min. 8-9 hours, open end)
- Week 8: Each participant submits her / his Negotiation oactivity report
- Council Secreteriat presents the minutes of the Council meeting
- Week 9: Feedback Session