



*Deutsche Schule Thessaloniki
Model United Nations*

Council of the European Union Manual

2026 Revised version

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1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

The following is the Manual for the Council of the European Union. This document strives to provide you with the basic knowledge needed for participating in the Council of the European Union of the DSTMUN conference. This committee is intended for experienced delegates who are willing to conduct extensive research on the topics and be very active during Committee work.

We hope that this manual will be useful and practical for your preparation as delegates!

We look forward to meeting you all in November!

The DSTMUN Organising Team

2. THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Council of the European Union is one of the seven institutions of the European Union, as listed in the Treaty of the European Union. It is, together with the European Council, the only EU institution which is explicitly intergovernmental. The Council is divided into 10 configurations, in which each National Minister has a granted seat. It negotiates and adopts legislative acts in most cases together with the European Parliament through the “codecision” procedure. The Rules of Procedure of the Council are regulated by the Council’s Decision 2009/937/EU of December 1st, 2009.

3. ORGANISATION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

3.1 The Presidency

The Foreign Affairs Council has a permanent chairperson, namely the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. In all other meetings the Presidency of the Council of the EU rotates every six months among the member of the European Union. The relevant minister of the country holds the Presidency at any give

time, and their role is to ensure the smooth running of the conference that is held as well as to establish the daily agenda.

3.2 Composition and Configurations

As Article 16 of the Treaty of the European Union states and as mentioned in Article 236 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, there are no fixed members of the EU Council. Instead, the Council is divided into several different Council Configurations. Depending on the configuration, each country is asked to send their responsible minister on the matter at hand. As of June 2024, there are ten formations: (a) General Affairs; (b) Foreign Affairs; (c) Economic and Financial Affairs; (d) Justice and Home Affairs; (e) Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs; (f) Competitiveness; (g) Transport, Telecommunication and Energy; (h) Agriculture and Fisheries; (i) Environment; (j) Education, Youth, Culture, Sport. Joint meetings, also called “jumbo meetings”, are nowadays a common phenomenon.

3.3 Administration

The General Secretariat of the Council is divided into seven directorates and is responsible for the continuous infrastructure of the Council, the preparation of the meetings, the assistance to the Presidency and the draft reports and their translation. There is also the Committee of the Permanent Representatives, which is a body aiming at the preparation of the work and tasks of the Council.

3.4 Tasks of the Council

The Council of the European Union is responsible for the negotiations and the adaptation of EU laws in company with the European Parliament upon the proposals of the European Commission. It also coordinates the EU countries' policies and develops the EU foreign and security policy, based on the guidelines of the European Council. Jointly with the European Parliament, it also adopts the annual budget of the European Union and last, but not least, it concludes agreements between the EU and non-member states or international organisations.

4. DEBATE

4.1 Quorum

In the Council of the European Union, a Quorum can be met when at least 20 out of the 27 member states are present at the committee session. The quorum shall be verified at the beginning of each session by Roll Call. The delegates may choose between “present” or “present and voting”.

4.2 Points and Motions

The Points available to the delegates in the Council of the European Union are the same as in every other Committee. This includes the Right of Reply, which is to be used when the national integrity of a Member State has been impugned upon by another delegate’s comment or statement.

As far as the voting procedure is concerned, the QMV method is applicable in some cases. Further details about the voting procedure can be found in section 5 of this Manual.

All general Points, Motions and Yields can be found in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of the Conference, as well as in the Delegate Manual, and all of them are applicable to the Council of the EU as well.

4.3 Resolution Denomination

A Draft Resolution that has been put to a vote by the committee and passes may be referred to as “Council Decision”.

4.4 Signatories of a Draft Resolution

The main author of the draft Common Position is the European Commission. The main author of the draft Intergovernmental Decision is recognised as the Main Submitter. The Main Submitter must be present for the introduction of a draft Intergovernmental Decision and must agree to support it unless major changes occur. The minimum number of signatories for a document to become a Draft Resolution is equal to the one-third of the delegates present in the committee.

4.5 Amendments

Delegates are able to propose first- and second-degree amendments to the clause at hand during the debate on that clause, in order to make changes to its content. If a clause has already been voted upon, no amendments to that clause will be in order. Additionally, after all initial clauses have been debated upon, delegates are

able to propose additional clauses to be added to the resolution via amendments. Amendments should be submitted on the official amendment sheet and be debated upon in closed debate.

4.6 Tour de Table

A Tour de Table shall be conducted at the discretion of the Presidency, at which point it will be requested that each delegate give a short summary of their thinking on the matter under discussion. The speech should last approximately 30 seconds. Every delegate is obliged to deliver a speech. The delegates should deliver a speech from their seats and alphabetical order will be followed. Pass declarations will be overruled by the Presidency. A Tour de Table is mandatory to be introduced before the voting of the last Resolution of the conference.

4.7 Caucus of the Board

The Board reserves the right to halt the working process withing the Council in order to take 30 seconds of caucus to solve any dispute or plan their committee session. The Caucus of the Board may only be introduced by the President. At the time the President introduces such a caucus, delegates should remain silent in their seats. The Secretariat reserves the right to be present during the Caucus.

5. VOTING IN THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Under Articles 7 and 9 of the Common Provisions Regulation, in the Council of the European Union all discussions and votes take place in public.

5.1 Simple Majority Voting

In accordance with Article 238, §1 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, simple majority vote is required for procedural and administrative issues. Simple Majority in the Council of the EU means 50% +1, namely 14 members are required for a proposal to pass.

5.2 Qualified Majority Voting (QMV)

The Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) is being used when the Council takes decisions during the ordinary legislative procedure. More than 80% of all EU legislation

is adopted with this procedure. In DSTMUN QMV will be used when voting on Draft Resolutions. More specifically a QMV system is applied in order to calculate each EU Member State's population into percentages. For a Draft Resolution to pass, both a general 65% of the total EU population and at least 55% of the Member States (in practice 15 out of 17) must be in favour. This voting procedure is mandatory to be conducted via Roll Call Vote.

5.2.1 Article 16 of the Treaty of the European Union

Article 16 of the Treaty of the European Union, as amended by the Treaty of Lisbon stipulates that the Council voting arrangements of the Nice Treaty applied until October 31st, 2014. The conditions of the new QMV system are explained in the same article and are effective since November 1st, 2014.

5.2.2 Abstentions under the Qualified Majority Voting

Abstentions are allowed and any member can abstain at any time. However, the count as a vote against and may not be considered the same as not participating in the vote.

5.2.3 Special Cases

When not all Council Members are present during the voting procedure, e.g. due to an opt-out in certain policy areas, a decision may be adopted if 55% of the participating Council Members, which at the same time represent at least 65% of the population of the participating member states, vote in favour.

5.3 Unanimity

The Council has to vote unanimously on a number of matters which the Member States consider to be sensitive. Under this category fall (1) common foreign and security policy (with the exception of certain clearly defined cases which require qualified majority, e.g. appointment of a special representative, (2) citizenship (the granting of new rights to EU citizens), (3) EU membership harmonisation of national legislation on indirect taxation, (4) EU finances (own resources, the multiannual financial framework), (5) certain provisions in the field of justice and home affairs (the European prosecutor, family law, operational police cooperation, etc.), (6) harmonisation of national legislation in the field of social security and social protection, among others.

Unanimity in practical terms means that all countries should vote in favour. A Unanimity Vote is usually not required for the topics under consideration of the EU Council at DSTMUN.

5.4 Blocking Minority

The blocking minority must include at least four Council members representing more than 35% of the EU population. If both these requirements apply a vote does not pass.

6. CLOSING REMARKS

The Council of the European Union is considered by many the most significant body of the EU. Delegates must be well-prepared and be aware of the fact that this committee follows slightly different Rules of Procedure and schedule. We hope that this Manual has provided you with the essential information needed to participate in this Committee.