Rules of Procedure

1.) **Chair.** The minister of the member state holding the Presidency of the EU will be in the chair, except in the Foreign Affairs Council, when the chair will be HR of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

   - The chair will be deputized by the minister from the member state to his/her immediate left, who will be responsible for receiving proposals from the Commission and for conveying rejected proposals to the directors-general, and who may temporarily be given the chair at the discretion of the Chair.

   *The Chair will have the sole and final power to:*
   - open and close sessions
   - recognize speakers
   - place limits on floor times
   - control discussion and debate
   - caution or remove observers
   - and - if necessary - clear the room of everyone except faculty advisors and members of the Secretariat.

   *The Chair is allowed to take positions and to promote his/her own views and agenda.*

2.) **Speakers.** During sessions, only the relevant ministers will be allowed to speak, and then only at the discretion of the Chair.

   - Speakers do not need to address each other through the Chair.

3.) **Voting procedure.** It is normal for Councils to reach decisions by allowing discussions to continue until a consensus is reached. In the event of a stalemate or impasse, the Council may use a tour de table. If a vote is deemed necessary, it may take one of three forms:

   - *unanimity:* (used rarely) Each minister has one vote; abstentions are permissible, and do not count against unanimity.

   - *a qualified majority:* (used for almost all decisions where law is being made). Each member state is given a different number of votes in rough proportion to its population size, and the vote must meet a pre-set total in order to prevail – see Appendix 2 of Guide for details. Abstentions are allowed, and members may give their proxy to the delegate of another state.

   - *a simple majority:* (used only for procedural issues). Each minister has one vote, although a vote is rarely taken. A majority is half of the ministers present plus one.

4.) **Workflow.** Ministers should focus on pre-agreed proposals for new laws and policies on Day 1 and Day 2, and begin discussing new Commission proposals as they begin arriving on Days 2 & 3. Please do not allow proposals upon which decisions have been made to become backed up.

   *NOTE:* Councils may occasionally receive proposals from the Commission that do not fit any of these three. In such cases, they should role-play the appropriate set of ministers.
Summary

• Consists of relevant government ministers from the member states

• Responsible for deciding which proposals will become law and which will not

• Formal rules of procedure

• Formal rules of decision-making

• Chaired by the minister from the member state holding the presidency of the Council, or – for Foreign Affairs – by the HR of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

• Goal: to approve or reject legislative proposals from the Commission, and to discuss broad EU policies

Format and Goals

Ministers will be seated in no specific order, with the chair at the head of the table.

MAJOR GOALS: to discuss - and vote on - legislative and policy proposals submitted by the European Commission. Ministers may either pass, amend, or reject Commission proposals. If a proposal is passed, it is considered finished. If it is rejected or amended, it should be sent back to the relevant group of directors-general for further deliberation. Ministers may also submit suggestions for new proposals to the directors-general.

Background

The Council of Ministers is the primary decision-making body of the EU, and the main forum for the representation of the national interests of the member states.

• It is roughly analogous to the US Senate, while the European Parliament is analogous to the US House of Representatives.

• National interests often conflict with each other and with what may be perceived as the "European" interest.

The Council is not one body, but several. Whether the foreign, economic, or environment ministers are meeting, they all come under the general title of the Council of Ministers. EU-Midwest limits itself to four councils:

• Foreign Affairs Council (foreign ministers)

• Economic and Financial Affairs Council (Ecofin) (economics/finance ministers)

• Environment Council (environment ministers)

• Justice and Home Affairs Council

Preparation

Each delegate should do as much advance preparation as possible on the member state they are representing, the political background and portfolio of the minister they are role-playing, and the positions on European policy taken by their member state.

They should also be clear on the role of the Council of Ministers in the EU policy-making process, and should come to EU-Midwest with specific policy objectives in mind.

In the course of the simulation, delegates role-playing ministers should make their decisions in the context of the political forces and pressures currently active in EU member states, and the national interests of the states they are representing.