The Renegotiation Game: Rules

Background: The game represents the scramble behind the renegotiation of the UK's terms of association with the EU, and the attempt to put together a package of a deal that can be put to the British people in a referendum. Whether it's a good deal or a rubbish one is down to the player.

The game is intended for 2-6 players, through 3-4 is optimal.

Each player takes the part of a negotiator. In reality there is one single UK team behind the talks. That said, David Cameron has said he intends to retire as Prime Minister in a couple of years, so whoever comes out of these negotiations looking good stands a significant chance of a promotion…

Use: This game is freely available for personal use. Just download the pieces from http://therenegotiationgame.weebly.com/, cut out and play. Actual games manufacturers can drop us a line, and we would be happy to negotiate some tequila-based terms.

The board: The game board represents the capitals of Europe. Travel is between capitals, which are linked by a travel line. The default distance a player can travel in a turn is up to three capitals away.

The cards: There are two types of cards – points cards, and events cards.

Points cards represent treaty changes. For a points card to count as points, it has to be laid by the player and still in place at the end of the game.

Events cards represent, unsurprisingly, things that happen. Some need to be played at once (this is indicated on the card). Others can be played during the turn of the player. A few can be played as 'interrupts' at any time. Unless otherwise stated, the effect is upon the person against whom the card player decides to lay it (this may be himself).

Players are represented by any gubbin that is to hand, providing of course that they are suitably sized and differentiated. Having several identical garden gnomes crushing the map would not be a practical option. Monopoly counters, tiddlywinks, coloured sweets (providing you have strong willpower), or dice with different numbers showing, are all possibilities.

Setting up the game:

(i)   Assemble the map.

(ii)   Assemble just the points cards and "bank a negotiation demand". Keep three of each type randomly per player. Place the remainder respectively in the discard piles, face down.

(iii)   Place these kept cards with all other remaining cards and shuffle them well.

(iv)   Each player is dealt three starting cards, which he/she can look at. Each city on the map is dealt three cards, stacked face down. The remaining cards are distributed between London, Brussels, Paris and Berlin, as evenly as possible.

(v)   Each player chooses a character sheet, which is placed in from of him/her. Each character has a special starting advantage.

(vi)   Player counters are placed as the default on the board in London.

Player order: Play is clockwise. The starting player is chosen by consensus. If there is no consensus, or there is no consensus on what constitutes consensus, default MEP speaking rules are chosen – the eldest starts.

Order of play: A player in his (or her) turn can *either* move along the map *or* pick up a card at their location. Move can be up to a maximum of three connected capitals in distance per turn. A card, or multiple cards, can be played at any point in that person's turn. A person cannot, by dint of playing a travel card, pick up a card from more than one location, but can pick up as well as move by that means. At the end of the player's turn, the player must have no more than five cards in their hand. Any cards not played in excess of those five must now be discarded into the discard file (player's choice which ones to discard).

Delays: Any player who causes a disruptive pause in the game (for instance, by having to answer the telephone or go to the toilet when it is their turn) has to hum the EU anthem, *Ode to Joy*, while doing so.

Interrupts: Interrupt cards can be played at any stage by the player holding the card. Once it is played, and the card has its impact, the game is resumed (if possible) by the player interrupted; if not, his turn ends.

Victory conditions: The game ends when the first person manages to place four (in exceptional circumstances, fewer) points cards. At this point, all points laid by all players are tallied. The player who has finished first gains a bonus +10 points to his tally. The winner is the person with the biggest score.

Concluding the negotiations (and ending the game): The person with the most points is only declared the winner after first presenting the terms of his negotiation deal to Parliament (the other players). This takes place in an impromptu speech lasting between thirty and sixty seconds. If this game is a replay, or another board game has preceded it, then the winner of the previous game provides two random non-sweary words that must be included in the victor's speech, for example 'ferret' and 'sherbert', or 'leprechaun' and 'radish'. In the event of a tie for winner, a tea break is called and the matter is quietly dropped.

No cards left on the board? Once no cards are left on the map, then any player can travel to Brussels and declare negotiations are over (and get the bonus points for finishing first).

Unexpected gaps in the rules: Unforeseen circumstances and unknown unknowns are to be expected in the diplomatic environment, and are dealt with by consensus. In the absence of consensus, the player closest to Berlin settles the issue.