

Diplomatia: A Player's Handbook

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1 About the game

Diplomatia is a strategic board game involving no random factor such as dice, with the player's success depending mainly on his negotiating abilities as they direct fates of various powers trying to dominate the map using elaborate strategy in cooperation with other players.

Diplomatia is a slight modification of *Diplomacy* (Realpolitik) by Alan B. Calhamer, created in 1954 for seven players on the map of Europe as of 1900.

Diplomatia alters this concept using ports and independence from a single map (at the time of translation there are CZ I, CZ-ORP, EU, EU-1914, Praga and NM versions).

2 Rules

1. Players

1.1 Number of players depends on the number of *powers* in the map used. For instance, *Diplomatia* EU has 11 powers.

1.2 Less players than powers is not recommended (try to use a different map instead!). The problem can be solved by aggregating some of the powers or their neutrality, while the defeated players can take command of them later through the game. Either way, a consensus of all the players is required.

1.3 More players than powers is not a big problem; usually, some of them join into pairs or bigger groups commanding a single power. This brings them some advantage as they can negotiate with multiple players at once, but they also have more trouble agreeing on their orders. Normally, they split roles, one coping with strategy and the other with diplomacy.

In the following text, a *player* is meant to be a person or a group of people commanding a single power.

1.4 Referee. One of the players who knows rules well can assume the role of a referee, who directs the timing of moves and evaluation of orders. That usually speeds the game up. This role has to be strictly neutral.

2. Requisites

2.1 Game map. The map should be large enough so that all players have access to it (A2 is an absolute minimum). It is divided into a number (usually a few hundred) named *areas*. They can be two types:

2.1.1 Land territories. They are marked with the colour of the power that *controls* them at the beginning of the game. Some maps might contain *neutral territories* coloured white¹, controlled by no one at start.

2.1.1.1 Supply centers. Some territories contain a *supply center* marked by a full black dot². They allow for fielding armies.

2.1.2 Sea sectors. They are all coloured blue. Some of them contain a *port* near the coast — a black dot labelled by a cursive font.

¹Some maps without neutral territories might use white as a colour for one of the powers. That can be easily recognised by looking at the spatial distribution of white areas.

²Some maps might mark other significant cities not being supply centers by a white dot with a black outline.

2.1.2.1 Controlling sectors at the beginning of the game is defined by the port position — they are controlled by a power controlling the coastal land region at whose coast the port lies³. If they do not contain a port or the coastal region is neutral, they are neutral, too.

Some maps need not contain sea sectors.

Some maps might also contain small islands without proper territory labeling, usually coloured grey. These are only for geographical precision and have no role in the game.

2.2 Pieces for *units* — *armies* and *fleets*. Every player should have a sufficient⁴ supply of both types in the colour of his power (in need, pieces of coloured hard paper might be used). Fleets should be differentiated from armies either by shape or by a blue mark.

2.3 Stationery. Every player should have a pen and enough paperlets (about A7) to write orders.

2.4 Map plans. It is useful for players to have a little plan of the map used so they need not be at the large map while negotiating details. This helps reduce unwilling information disclosure.

3. Starting situation

3.1 The map is placed horizontally or vertically so that it can be accessed by more players at once (the more, the better).

3.2 Assigning powers. Each player chooses a power that he or she will command. A random "hat" method is usually used, but it is also possible for everybody to write down their preferences and use them first (TODO).

3.3 Initial unit placement. Each player places a single unit on each area marked with full black dot that his power controls (those containing supply centers and ports). Armies are placed in territories, fleets in sectors.

Neutral areas containing supply centers or ports are not occupied.

4. Objectives

4.1 Full-length game. A player wins when he or she controls **more than a half of the supply centers** (not ports!) on the map. Whenever this occurs, the game ends.

4.2 Shortened game. It is usually not enough time to play full-length games and, after all, it is most fun at the beginning. That's when shortened game is used.

A time interval (or a number of turns) is chosen. After expiration, the player that controls **most supply centers** wins.

5. Controlling an area.

A power *controls* an area if (and only if)

- it was in his or her control at the beginning of the game (it is his *home area*) and it hasn't been yet entered by any unit or
- it is unoccupied and his unit was the last to occupy it or
- it is occupied by his unit.

In no area might there be more units than one at any time. Armies may not enter sea sectors and fleets may not enter land territories.

6. Turns.

Diplomatia is a *turn strategy*, the game consists of *turns*. Every player has the right to issue a **single order** to perform some *actions* to each of his units every turn. Turns are numbered, starting with 1.

6.1 Turn phases. Each turn consists of three or four *phases*: *diplomacy*, *order evaluation*, *retreats* and every other turn (starting with turn 2) *control evaluation*.

6.2 Diplomacy. In this phase, players may freely communicate and write orders for their units. It should take at least 10 minutes (15 is better). If all players say they need no more time, it can be shortened. In the first turn, it should be longer.

If the player wants his or her orders to be evaluated, they have to be given to the referee or into a black box where others cannot read it.

³Caution, this might not be true throughout the game, only at its beginning!

⁴A three or four times the starting amount is usually enough, unless the game is to be very long.

6.3 Order evaluation. During this phase, all the orders are read aloud in arbitrary order, confronted against each other and the changes they result in are performed on the map (excluding retreats).

6.4 Retreats. If there are any units forced to retreat during the evaluation, their players may issue *retreat orders* to them in this phase according to rules below. During this phase, no communication is allowed.

If the number of retreats is so low they cannot influence each other, the orders need not be written and the players may say them aloud; the rules below still apply. If there are more retreats, common rules for order evaluation apply.

6.5 Control evaluation. This phase occurs every other turn (2, 4, 6...). For every power, the number of controlled areas with supply centers and ports is counted.

6.5.1 Army evaluation. If a player controls less supply centers than has armies, he or she has to *remove* some of them so that the numbers are the same, according to his judgement.

If he or she controls more supply centers than has armies, he can *field* new armies so that the numbers are the same. Armies can only be fielded in unoccupied home territories with a supply center. If there are not enough such territories, the armies that lack them cannot be fielded.

6.5.2 Fleet evaluation. The same rules apply except that fleets may be *built* in non-home sectors.

Armies and fleets might not be traded (i. e. it is not possible to remove an army when lacking ports and vice versa).

Fielding and removing units is performed in the same way that the retreat orders are.

7. Unit actions. Every unit has the right to perform a single action each turn. These are not restricted by any acts or treaties agreed upon between the players during the diplomacy phase, though written. (See any history textbook for inspiration.) However, if the power is represented by more than one person, all of them must agree upon the orders issued.

For an action to be performed, a order must be written according to the rules below.

7.1 Unit strength. All units are equally strong. A unit supporting (see Support) another unit lends its strength to it.

7.2 Actions common to armies and fleets

7.2.1 Defense. Empty action. A unit is ordered not to do anything aside from defending its own area. This action is executed whenever a unit gets no orders, a order to this action is therefore a matter of clarity.

7.2.2 Move. A unit may attempt to move to an area of the same type (armies can't enter sectors) that is adjacent to its own (this might be modified using convoys).

A move targetting an area occupied by a unit belonging to a different power is an *attack*.

7.2.2.1 Swapping restriction. Two units might not swap their position in a single turn using simple moves. Should such a swap occur, no movement takes place. However, two armies might swap their positions when at least one of them uses a convoy.

7.2.2.2 Defeat. If the attacking unit has higher strength than the defender, the defender is *defeated* and the attacker moves to its area.

A unit cannot be defeated by the unit's player's forces and any support for attacks on self-owned units are invalid.

The defeated unit's action is cancelled and the unit is forced to *retreat*; if it has nowhere to retreat, it is *destroyed*. The action is not cancelled if it is an otherwise successful move to an area other than the attacking unit's one.

7.2.2.3 Blocked area. Two or more units of equal strength may not move into the same area in the same turn. If such orders are issued, none of them is carried out and the units remain in their original positions. The target area is termed *blocked*. See example 2.

7.2.2.4 Siege. A unit whose area has been blocked by more attacks with equal strength, is not defeated (see example 9).

7.2.2.5 Retreat. A defeated unit with a cancelled action may retreat to any unoccupied area of its respective type that has not been blocked this turn. It also cannot retreat to the area where the victorious attacker is coming from. A retreat may neither be

supported nor convoyed.

If there is no suitable area available for retreat or a retreat order is not issued, the unit is *destroyed* and removed from the map.

If a fleet convoying an army is destroyed, the army is destroyed with it.

If two or more units get an order to retreat to a single area, they are all destroyed.

7.2.3 Support. A unit may support another unit to lend its strength to it so that a specified action has a better chance of being performed. The support is valid only for the specified action.

The supporting unit stays in its position during the turn.

7.2.3.1 Target area restriction. The support may only be targeted into an area that the supporting unit would be able to move to if no other units existed. This places no restriction on the location of the unit supported.

7.2.3.2 Support irrefusability. A support may be given without consent and cannot be refused, even if it is not beneficial to the player supported.

7.2.3.3 Move support. It is possible to support any unit's move to a valid target area as specified above⁵. The initial areas of the supporting and supported units need not be adjacent to each other (see example 3).

7.2.3.4 Defense support. Any unit might be supported in defending its own area. If the supported unit is attacked, its action is automatically changed to defense.

7.2.3.5 Support cutting. A support is cut whenever the supported unit is attacked from an area other than the target of its support (see examples 6 a 7). In order evaluation, support cutting is performed before cancelling by defeat (therefore, a defeated unit may still cause a support to be cut).

7.3 Army actions

7.3.1 Port seizure. An army may try to gain control of a sea sector whose port is located on the coast of its territory. The action is assessed as a move of a player's imaginary fleet into the sector with all consequences (it may be supported or blocked by other fleets, but not armies).

The army does not change position during this action.

7.4 Fleet action

7.4.1 Convoy. A fleet may try to convoy an army over the sea. It stays in place while the army moves to the territory adjacent to the fleet's sector (so it might end up in a territory not adjacent to its original one). The army's move is an ordinary move and must be ordered to it. If it is blocked, the army stays in place.

If the final target of the convoy is a sea sector, the convoy is invalid. Supports may not be convoyed.

7.4.1.1 Convoy chain. Convoys may be chained in such a way that every fleet is ordered to convoy the army from the previous to the next fleet's location; the last fleet's convoy must end in a land territory (see example 4).

7.4.1.2 Redundant convoy. It is possible to order multiple fleets to convoy a single army with the same destination and target. The army then moves even if one of the fleets is defeated.

If it is possible to use a simple move as well as convoy to move an army, convoy is used if at least one of the convoying fleets belongs to the army's power⁶.

8. Orders. Players write orders for their units on their own pieces of paper. One piece may contain multiple orders. It always has to be marked by a legible turn number. It is also very recommended to add the player's power's name.

Each unit may be given only a single order. If it gets more, none of them is valid.

If an invalid order is issued to a unit, it is considered to have no orders. A valid order that has unintended consequences cannot be cancelled.

Every order consists of

- a name of the area where the ordered unit is located,

⁵An army therefore might not support a fleet attacking another fleet.

⁶This prevents from convoying against the player's will and an unwilling position swap.

- a symbol of the action to be performed (described below),
- *target* of that action (which might be either an area or another order).

8.1 Defense. Marked with *O*, *H* or *X*. The target is empty (*Karélie O*). These orders need not be issued.

8.2 Move. Marked by a dash (*Karélie – Lotyšsko*), simple arrow (*Karélie → Lotyšsko* — if it is not intended to be an attack) or a double arrow (*Karélie ⇒ Lotyšsko*, *Karélie ⇔ Lotyšsko* etc., to mark it is intended to be an attack).

8.3 Support. Marked by *P*, *S* or a tilde. The target is another unit's action.

8.3.1 Move support. A move action stands as target (*Estonsko P Karélie – Lotyšsko*, *Estonsko P Karélie ⇒ Lotyšsko*). It is necessary to write the whole supported action, not only its target area!

8.3.2 Defense support. Marked with *PO*, may also be *P* or *S* (*Estonsko PO Karélie*).

8.4 Port seizure. Marked with *ZP* (*Karélie ZP Finský záliv*).

8.5 Convoy. An army has to get an order to move to the target territory (*Karélie – Uppland*) and all the convoying fleets an order to convoy it to the another part of the chain (marked *T*: *Finský záliv T Karélie – Botnický záliv* a *Botnický záliv T Finský záliv – Uppland*).

A referee may accept an order not following these rules if its meaning is unambiguous. If no referee is chosen or someone questions the acceptance, at least two thirds of the players must agree upon it.

9. Leaving the game early. If any of the players doesn't want to continue in the game, multiple choices may be made to compensate:

9.1 Civil disorder. A civil war breaks out in the player's power's forces. Its armies behave as if they received no orders and remain in their positions. Should they be forced to retreat, they are destroyed right away.

If the number of units of such power is to decrease, the units farthest from their home areas are eliminated. In case of ambiguity, a lot should be used.

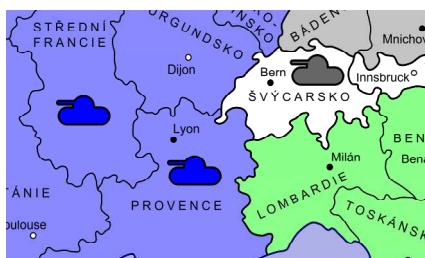
9.2 New player introduction. The power's control may be given to a previously eliminated or completely new player. This is by far the best alternative.

9.3 Overtaking. The power's control may be given to a player commanding an existing power (weaker ones or allies should be preferred). This alternative should be avoided if possible.

For any of these decisions, all players have to agree. It is best to agree on a preferred variant before starting the game.

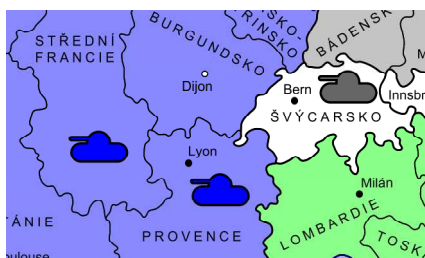
3 Example

Example 1: Blocked move



- **France (blue):** Provence – Lombardie, Střední Francie – Provence.
 - **Germany (grey):** Švýcarsko – Lombardie.
- None of the moves is carried out. Lombardie has been blocked, so Provence could not be vacated and the army from Střední Francie has nowhere to move.

Example 2: Move support



- **France (blue):** Provence – Burgundsko, Střední Francie P Provence – Burgundsko.
 - **Germany (grey):** Švýcarsko – Burgundsko.
- The French attempt to move succeeds. The army from Provence moves to Burgundsko and the Germans fail.

Example 3: Chained convoy



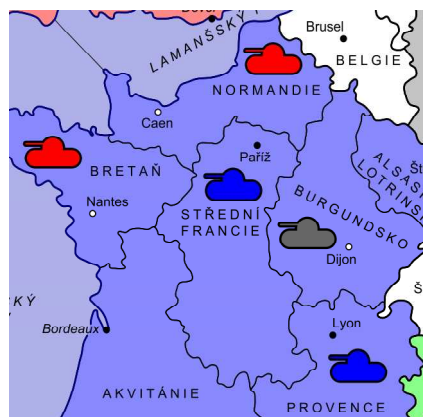
- **Spain (yellow):** Katalánsko – Alžírsko, Středozemní moře - západ T Středozemní moře - sever –

Alžírsko.

- **France (blue):** Středozemní moře – sever T Katalánsko – Středozemní moře - západ.

This is an example of a successful chained convoy. Both fleets remain in place whereas the Spanish army moves from Katalánsko directly to Alžírsko.

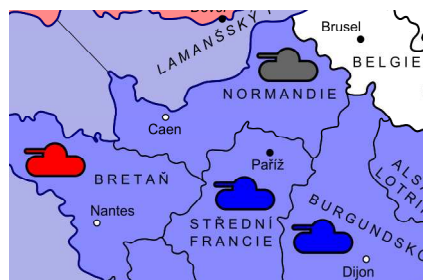
Example 4: Successful attack



- **Britain (red):** Bretagne – Střední Francie, Normandie P Bretagne – Střední Francie.
- **Germany (grey):** Burgundsko P Bretagne – Střední Francie.
- **France (blue):** Provence PO Střední Francie, Střední Francie O.

All supports are valid (even the one from Burgundsko, though it is not adjacent to Bretagne; it only needs to be adjacent to Střední Francie). The attacker is stronger, so the French army must retreat; the only territory available is Akvitánie. If the player does not want to retreat there, the army may be destroyed.

Example 5: Support cutting



- **Britain (red):** Bretagne – Střední Francie.
- **Germany (grey):** Normandie P Bretagne – Střední Francie.
- **France (blue):** Burgundsko – Normandie, Střední Francie O.

A German army supports the British attack on Střední Francie, but its support is cut as it is attacked from Burgundsko. The attack fails as a result.

Example 6: Zničení jednotky



- **Spain (yellow):** Jižní Atlantik – Biskajský záliv.
 - **Britain (red):** Keltské moře P Jižní Atlantik – Biskajský záliv.
 - **France (blue):** Biskajský záliv – Keltské moře.
- The Spain fleet attacks a French one, supported by a British one. The support is not cut as the attacks comes from the territory where the support is directed. The French fleet is therefore defeated and as it has nowhere to retreat, it is destroyed.

Example 7: No position swapping

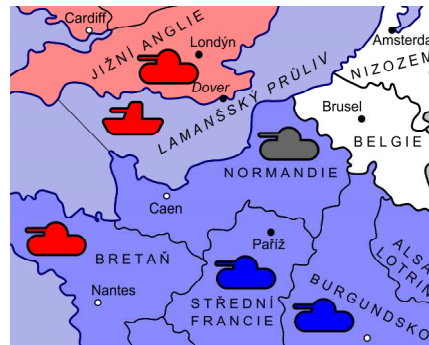


- **Spain (yellow):** Jižní Atlantik – Biskajský záliv.
 - **Britain (red):** Keltské moře P Jižní Atlantik – Biskajský záliv.
 - **France (blue):** Biskajský záliv – Jižní Atlantik.
- The Spanish fleet attacks a French one, supported by a British one. The French fleet has lower strength and is defeated. Its action is cancelled, because it cannot move to the attacker's sector. Having no other sector to retreat to, it is destroyed.

- **Britain (red):** Jižní Anglie – Normandie, Bretaň P Jižní Anglie – Normandie, Lamanšský průliv T Jižní Anglie – Normandie.
- **France (blue):** Burgundsko – Normandie, Střední Francie P Burgundsko – Normandie.

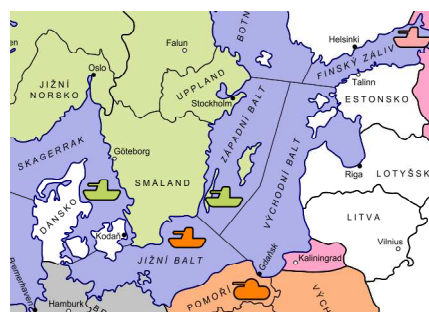
The German army in Normandy is attacked by both British and French forces, each with a strength of two units. Because the strengths are equal, the German army is not defeated (the attacking armies

Example 8: Siege



have blocked each other).

Example 9: Destroying a convoyed army



- **Visegrad (orange):** Pomoří – Småland, Jižní Balt T Pomoří – Småland.
 - **Scandinavia (olive green):** Skagerrak – Jižní Balt, Západní Balt P Skagerrak – Jižní Balt.
 - **Russia (pink):** Finský záliv – Východní Balt.
- The Visegrad fleet is trying to convoy an army but is attacked. The attack has higher strength, so the fleet is defeated. It could have retreated to Východní Balt, but another fleet from Finský záliv is moving there, so it can't. It is destroyed along with the army it was trying to convoy.

Example 10: Empty port seizure



- **Russia (pink):** Karélie ZP Finský záliv.
- A Russian army from Karélie is trying to seize the port of Kronštadt in the unoccupied sector Finský záliv. As there is no other fleet moving there, the seizure is successful and the sector comes under Rus-

sian control.

Example 11: *Occupied port seizure*



- **Russia (pink):** *Karélie ZP Finský záliv.*
- **Scandinavia (olive green):** *Botnický záliv P Karélie ZP Finský záliv.*
- **Visegrad (orange):** *Finský záliv – Botnický záliv.*

A Russian army from Karélie is trying to seize the port of Kronštadt in the sector Finský záliv, which is occupied by a Visegrad fleet. The seizure is considered as an attack of an imaginary fleet that is supported from Botnický záliv. The support is not cut by the Visegrad fleet attack as it is directed towards it. The seizure is therefore successful, Russians take control of the sector and the Visegrad fleet is forced to retreat.