

## WEEKLY ROUND-UP

### TOP STORIES: 12-18 October 2013

1

**Why Eurosceptics could win big in 2014:** On 13 October Marine Le Pen and her right-wing National Front (FN) won a convincing victory in a local election in Brignoles. The vote came shortly after a poll on European Parliament election voting intentions, commissioned by *Le Nouvel Observateur*, had the FN on top with 24% of the vote. With anti-euro and -EU parties in the UK and Germany riding high, Eurosceptics could make an historic leap forward in next May's polls. *Links: [Business Week](#); [Left Foot Forward](#); [Financial Times](#); [Independent](#), [BBC News](#); [Telegraph](#); [Financial Times](#); [Business Week](#); [New York Times](#); [EurActiv](#); [BBC News](#); [The Guardian](#); [Irish Times](#)*

2

**ALDE Party candidate for Commission President to be announced 1 February:** The Alliance for Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party will announce its candidate for President of the European Commission at a special electoral Congress in Brussels on 1 February 2014. Candidates shall be formally nominated by at least two member parties from more than one member state or by 20% of ALDE Party Congress voting delegates by 20 December. *Link: [ALDE](#)*

3

**EU leaders start looking for the next Barroso:** The issue of a successor to José Manuel Barroso is to be discussed in the sidelines of the EU summit on 24-25 October. Even though he has not ruled himself out from a third mandate, many EU leaders would like to see Barroso replaced and some MEPs from his own political family (EPP) are set to vote against him. Fredrik Reinfeldt or Jean Claude-Juncker could emerge as EPP candidates for Commission Presidency. *Link: [EU Observer](#)*

4

**Van Rompuy scorns direct election of Commission president:** Having public candidates for the Commission presidency is not a panacea for Europe's credibility woes, says European Council President Herman Van Rompuy. He said that the whole effort is doomed to fail unless the Commission is given more power over the member states. *Link: [EurActiv](#)*

### ALSO IN THE NEWS

**Pascal Lamy should lead European Commission, says Delors:** Former European Commission President Jacques Delors has backed the former WTO Director General Pascal Lamy to succeed José Manuel Barroso as the head of the EU executive next year. Delors said he had proposed having public candidates in 1999. *"I stand by it," he said, "but what will happen if a candidate wins the elections but does not please two or three governments [in Council]? We will face disappointment and outcries that we're anti-democratic."* *Link: [EurActiv](#)*

**Who will lead the Green party in Europe?** On 19 October members of Belgium's Ecolo party will elect their lead candidate for the European elections. The key players are Isabelle Durant, a current Parliament vice-president, and Philippe Lamberts MEP, who disputed first place five years ago. Durant has said that if she does not get first place, she will leave the European political scene. *Link: [Le Soir](#)*

**EU MEPs Must 'Pledge to Youth':** On 15 October the European Youth Forum launched its European elections campaign at the European Parliament, urging all MEPs, candidates and parties to sign a pledge demonstrating how the EU can engage with young people. It includes policy suggestions such as ensuring equal access to education and the implementation of a more ambitious youth guarantee scheme. *Links: [LoveYouthFuture](#); [VoteWatch Report](#); [Finnbay](#); [EurActiv](#);*

**Why a Partisan Commission President Would Be Bad for the EU:** A paper by the Centre for European Reform concludes that a party-nominated Commission president would weaken the Commission and lead to increasing conflict between the European Parliament and national governments. A 'pretend' democratic choice could also alienate the public further. The authors argue that instead of focusing on the choice of Commission president, politicians who want reform of the EU should use the election campaign to promote a wider public debate about the benefits of European integration. *Link: [CER Essay](#)*

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**Le Pen planning to unite far right into an anti-EU power block:** Marine Le Pen, leader of the National Front in France, and Geert Wilders of the Freedom Party (PVV) in the Netherlands, will attempt next month to launch a pan-European Eurosceptic movement. Other possible recruits include the Northern League in Italy, the Austrian Freedom Party, Vlaams Belang in Belgium and the Eurosceptic Democratic Party in Sweden. However, UKIP leader Nigel Farage has distanced his party from any possible new far-right alliance. *Links:* [Independent](#); [Telegraph](#); [Christian Science Monitor](#)

**Italian Prime Minister Calls Populism a Threat to Stability in Europe:** With European parliamentary elections less than eight months away, the Prime Minister of Italy, Enrico Letta, warned that the rise of angry populism poses the greatest threat to stability on the Continent and could undermine critical efforts to build and strengthen the eurozone's political and financial institutions. *Link:* [New York Times](#)

**French ex-president: EU needs to regain credibility among citizens:** Former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing has called on EU leaders to put forward a vision for Europe to inspire citizens, boost confidence and develop a shared sense of belonging. When asked at an event organised by *Le Nouvel Observateur* what went wrong in the EU, Giscard d'Estaing told the audience in Brussels: *"People presume Europe doesn't work. But, in fact, Europe works – it is just working its way through a crisis. We have to be clear on that point."* *Link:* [EurActiv](#)

**All eyes on the integrity of the 2014 European elections:** The public needs to be sure that the overall process for the next European Parliament elections will be open, fair and free from fraud or corruption. Under current rules and practices, for example, EU citizens would only know long after the European elections, in late 2015, how EU-level political parties have been financed and how they used their finances during the 2014 campaign. *Link:* [EU Observer](#)

**Almunia - the EU's problem is unaccountability, not economic liberalism:** National politicians have left Brussels technocrats with the unenviable task of explaining austerity decisions taken at European level to their public opinion, undermining trust in the EU's political system and democracy at large, according to Joaquín Almunia, the EU's Competition Commissioner. *"Those who take the most important political decisions in Europe in these years of crisis are not there when you need to tell people why they made those decisions [...] and who is responsible"* he said. *Link:* [EurActiv](#)

**Germany's Greens rule out further coalition talks with Merkel:** Germany's Greens ruled out any further coalition talks with Angela Merkel's centre-right CDU early on Wednesday, leaving the Chancellor to focus on discussions with the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) in her efforts to form a new government. After almost six hours of detailed policy discussions the Greens concluded they simply did not have enough in common with Merkel's party in areas such as energy, climate targets and taxation, to make further discussions fruitful. *Link:* [EurActiv](#)

**Cameron attacks EU red tape before reform drive:** European Union regulation is strangling economic growth and costing the continent billions of euros, according to a British government report published on 15 October. Prime Minister David Cameron hopes the paper will bolster his case for EU reform. The report, drawn up by six UK business leaders, identifies areas where EU legislation – or its absence – is holding back European businesses. *Links:* [Cut EU Red Tape Report](#) ; [EurActiv](#); [European Voice](#); [The Corner](#); [New Europe](#)

**UK manufacturers want to stay in the EU:** Eight out of ten British manufacturers would choose to stay in the European Union if a referendum on membership were held today, says a survey released on 14 October. The poll comes a week after Cameron's pro-EU deputy, Nick Clegg, who shares power in a two-party coalition government, urged businesses to make the case for staying in the bloc. He said it would be *"economic suicide"* to leave. *Link:* [EurActiv](#)