

TOP STORIES : 5 - 11 October 2013

1

EPP founding father Wilfried Martens dies: The former Belgian prime minister and President of the European People's Party, Wilfried Martens, passed away during the night of 9 October. He was 77 years old. Martens had handed over his duties as EPP leader to Joseph Daul, EPP Group chair, on 8 October, due to his deteriorating health. He will receive a state funeral on Saturday 19 October in the Saint Bavo cathedral in Ghent. *Links:* [The Parliament.com](#); [EU Business](#); [New Europe](#); [EurActiv](#); [European Voice](#); [EPP](#); [ALDE Group](#); [ALDE](#); [PES](#); [European Greens](#); [AECR](#); [Statement by Herman Van Rompuy](#)

2

Socialists & Democrats endorse Schulz's application as candidate for Commission presidency: On 9 October the S&D Group endorsed the application of European Parliament president Martin Schulz to be the Party of European Socialists' candidate to be European Commission president. Schulz has been nominated by his German party, the SPD, and backed by the French Socialist Party and the S&D group. *Links:* [S&D](#); [Europolitics](#)

3

Polls in France suggest victory for far right: France's National Front party has come out top in a poll of how French voters intend to cast their ballot in next year's EU elections. The magazine that carried out the survey, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, remarks that the poll is "of course not a prediction. But it describes a new reality in French political life." *Links:* [EU Observer](#); [EurActiv](#); [Telegraph](#); [The Corner](#); [Euronews](#); [The Guardian](#); [The Guardian](#)

4

What if the EPP chooses not to name a leader for the European elections? Officially, the designation of the European People's Party candidate for the Presidency of European Commission is meant to be discussed at an EPP meeting in November in Brussels. Several of the political family's heavyweights, led by Angela Merkel and Herman Van Rompuy, will be working behind the scenes to torpedo the idea. *Link:* [Le Soir](#)

5

Parliament to welcome 5,000 young people in May 2014: The European Parliament is doing everything possible to convince European citizens to cast their votes in the European Parliament elections on 22-25 May 2014. Against the backdrop of growing Euroscepticism, MEPs are targeting young people in particular. For the next Europe Day (9 May), the European Parliament will welcome 5,000 youths to Strasbourg for three days of brainstorming. *Link:* [Europolitics](#)

ALSO IN THE NEWS

Vying for Top EU Jobs: In February 2014, the names of the Socialist, Green and Liberal candidates to succeed José Manuel Barroso as president of the European Commission should be made public. The European Green Party will pick two candidates through an online primary, which closes on 20 October. The Party of European Socialists opened its nomination process last week, with this part of the process ending on 31 October. The ALDE Party will hold open calls for nominations at the end of November, with Guy Verhofstadt likely to announce his intention to run. The EPP's procedure for choosing a candidate is still being developed, but the centre-right party should announce its candidate at the EPP Congress in Dublin on 6-7 March 2014. The process for the Party of the European Left is still unknown, while participation from the Conservatives (AECR) is very unlikely. *Links:* [Spiegel](#); [Europolitics](#); [European Voice](#)

Alexander Stubb interested in EU commissioner post: Finland's Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade, Alexander Stubb, is not yet sure if he will stand in next year's European Parliament elections. He would, however, consider an offer to join the European Commission. *Link:* [Yle](#)

German government hopes to see a high turnout in the European Elections: The German government confidently expects a high turnout in the European elections. On 25 May voters in Germany will decide which parties Germany's 96 Members of the European Parliament will be representing. For the first time

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ever there will be a three per cent hurdle in these European elections in Germany, rather than the five per cent threshold that normally applies in German elections. Parties obtaining less than three per cent of the total votes cast will not be represented. *Link: Bundesregierung.de*

Spinelli Group rewrites Lisbon Treaty: The 100 or so members of the European Parliament who make up the federalist Spinelli Group have revised the entire Lisbon Treaty, article by article. In the revision, the Commission would become a genuine government; the Council's blocking responsibilities would be limited; and the European Parliament would participate in Council meetings and have right to initiate legislation. *Link: Europolitics*

Fear of a Growing Protest Vote in 2014 European elections: The success of Europhobic parties in member states will likely pave the way for a surge in support for Eurosceptics in next May's European elections. A quarter of the seats in the European Parliament (roughly 188) might be taken by extreme and populist parties after elections, German Green MEP Jan Philip Albrecht said last Friday. While the rise of extremist parties is concerning, the citizens of Europe possess the wisdom to recognise the dangers posed by nationalism and populism and to stand up to them, argues EPP MEP Eduard Kukan. *Links: [The Parliament.com](http://TheParliament.com); [The Corner](http://TheCorner); [New Europe](http://NewEurope); [New Europe](http://NewEurope)*

Cameron faces party rebellion over EU referendum: British Prime Minister David Cameron's control over his own party looks set to be challenged after a rebel Conservative MP, Adam Afriyie, launched a campaign to bring forward a planned referendum on EU membership to next year. *Link: EurActiv*

Nick Clegg speech on a richer, stronger, safer and greener Europe: Prime Minister David Cameron's promise to reform Britain's relations with the European Union is an ill-fated attempt to unite his party that could lead to the "economic suicide" of withdrawal from the bloc, Nick Clegg, leader of the British Liberal Democrats, said in a speech on Europe. *Links: Clegg's Speech on Europe; EurActiv; Independent*

Sir Graham Watson is 'IN' for a stronger and safer Europe: Responding to Nick Clegg's speech on Europe and launch of the 'Why I am IN' campaign today, ALDE Party President Sir Graham Watson said "Every single one of the three million people in the UK whose job depends on Britain's membership of the EU should stand up and say why they want 'IN'." *Link: ALDE*

Neil Kinnock: EU referendum poses "massive dangers" for Britain: Ed Miliband is under pressure from his own MPs: according to former British Labour leader Neil Kinnock, he must "absolutely not" support an EU referendum because it poses "massive dangers" for British businesses. *Link: Telegraph*

No Euroscepticism Please, We're German: German ardour for the European project is not cooling, as some would have the public believe. Instead, Germany is recognising the value of the EU, and above all the single currency, now more than ever, according to an article in Press Europe. *Link: Press Europe*