

WEEKLY ROUND-UP

TOP STORIES: 11-17 January 2014

- 1** **Stubb to run for European parliament seat:** Finland's EU affairs minister Alexander Stubb on Friday announced his decision to run for a seat in May's European Parliament elections for the conservative National Coalition Party. Stubb was a member of the European Parliament between 2004 and 2008 and later also served as Finnish foreign minister. *Link:* [EUobserver](#)
- 2** **Barnier ready to run for Commission President:** Michel Barnier, the internal market commissioner, told *Le Figaro* he is ready to 'engage' should the European People's Party appoint him as its candidate for the Commission presidency. His priorities include industrial strategy, infrastructure policies, the single market, security and immigration. *Link:* [Le Figaro \(in French\)](#)
- 3** **David McAllister tops German centre-right list:** David McAllister, Prime Minister of Lower Saxony will be appointed as the CDU's top candidate for the European Parliament elections. Although rumoured for months, the official appointment will take place at the CDU's executive meeting on 7-8 February. *Link:* [EurActiv](#)
- 4** **Influential MEP splits Bulgarian Socialists:** Ivailo Kalfin, a former Bulgarian foreign minister, has quit the Bulgarian Socialist Party. Kalfin, who is highly regarded for steering the country to EU accession in 2007, is set to run for the European Parliament elections on a separate ticket, potentially splitting the centre-left vote. *Link:* [EurActiv](#)
- 5** **Pirates adopt common European programme:** The European Pirates have published a common manifesto ahead of the European Parliament elections in 2014. The manifesto focuses on democracy, culture and internet rights. *Link:* [PPEU Wiki](#)

ALSO IN THE NEWS

Greek socialists form new alliance for EU elections: PASOK will team up with a new centre-left group to contest the European elections rather than run alone, after its support was decimated by the country's debt crisis. PASOK will run with the Progressive Democrats, under the '58 initiative' banner. *Link:* [EurActiv](#)

ALDE plans election meeting: The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party has opened registrations for its electoral meeting on 1 February, where its candidate for the presidency of the European Commission will be chosen. *Link:* [ALDE Party](#)

Flemish lists for European elections: On 7 January the Flemish Christian Democrats (CD&V) selected its candidates for European Parliament elections. Current MEPs Marianne Thyssen and Ivo Belet are followed by Steven Vanackere, a former deputy PM of Belgium. The Flemish Liberals (Open VLD), chose Guy Verhofstadt as their lead candidate. *Link:* [Europolitics](#)

Socialists and 'Europa Plus' competing for centre-left support in Poland: The socialist Democratic Left Alliance (DLA) will put up all five of its incumbent MEPs for the European Parliament elections but will add 'new faces' too. The final list will be revealed on 8 February. Europa Plus, a formation featuring former DLA MEP Marek Siwiec, will also put up candidates. *Link:* [Euractiv \(in Polish\)](#)

Liberals launch [www.ivoteliberal.eu](#): The ALDE Party will launch its campaign website on 1 February, the date on which Olli Rehn or Guy Verhofstadt will be chosen as lead candidate. *Link:* [ALDE party](#)

2014 European elections and the challenge for Liberals: Guy Verhofstadt, a potential ALDE candidate for the European Commission presidency, warns that the European election in the UK will see Eurosceptics determined to turn back the clock, Conservatives wanting to leave the EU, and Labour sitting on the fence. He calls for an EU that focuses on the single market and civil liberties. *Link:* [Liberal Democrat Voice](#)

French Liberals threaten split: French MEP Marielle de Sarnez has warned of a split in the ALDE group if Olli Rehn is chosen as the Liberal candidate for the Commission presidency. De Sarnez is secretary-general of the European Democratic Party (PDE-EDP), which sits in the ALDE group. *Link:* [Le Monde \(in French\)](#)

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Czech MEPs eager to run for re-election: Six of the seven current Czech Social Democrat MEPs have confirmed their wish to run in the European election. The Social Democrats, who won October's general election, plan to finalise the list in late January or early February. [Link: Euractiv \(in Czech\)](#)

UK parliament should have right to veto EU laws, say 95 Tory MPs: On 12 January, nearly a third of the Conservative parliamentary party at Westminster sent a letter to David Cameron stating that the House of Commons should be able to veto EU legislation and repeal existing measures threatening Britain's "national interests". The move – called "unrealistic" by the government – came two days after the EU Referendum Bill was discussed in the UK's second chamber, the House of Lords. [Link: EUobserver](#), [EurActiv](#)

'Reform or we leave EU,' warns British chancellor: The UK will leave the EU if there is no reform, the country's finance minister, George Osborne said this week. Osborne said the *status quo* condemns Europe's citizens to an ongoing economic crisis and continuing decline. [Links: EUobserver](#); [EurActiv](#)

Hollande brings Europe back to top of France's priority list: EU issues were at the forefront of François Hollande's press briefing on 14 January, with the restart of the EU's Franco-German engine and strengthened fiscal and social convergence in the eurozone at the centre of the President's reform agenda. The conference was overshadowed by rumours about the Mr Hollande's private life. [Link: EurActiv](#)

EU election fault lines - the free movement of labour: Julian Priestley, a former Secretary-General of the European Parliament, sees this year's elections as being fought on jobs and immigration. In recent months, the debate on migration has shifted from immigration to the EU to free movement of labour, leading to debates on employment as well as living costs and low wages for non-nationals. [Link: Policy Network](#)

2014 election is "AD's most fertile ground yet": The Chair of Malta's Green *Alternattiva Demokratika* party, Arnold Cassola, has said that this year's European Parliament election is potentially the party's most fertile electoral ground yet, thanks to Malta gaining an MEP, the one-constituency system for the Euro-elections, and the fact that the Greens traditionally do better in European polls. [Link: Malta Independent](#)

Tories to come third in Euro elections behind Labour and Ukip, says poll: A YouGov survey finds that the British Conservatives will come third in May's European election, behind Labour and the UK Independence Party. Labour would win 28 MEPs (up 15), Ukip 23 (up ten) and the Tories 15 (down 11). [Link: Telegraph](#)

Defiance against the EU reaches record levels in France: Trust in national and European institutions has hit a record-low in France, according to a recent poll. While 42% of French citizens said they trusted the EU in 2009, the percentage has fallen to 32% today. 35% think that belonging to Europe is a good thing, compared to 47% in 2009. "This shows the magnitude of the task at hand for the EU election candidates" said Pascal Perrineau, director of SciencesPo University's Centre of French Political Studies. [Link: EurActiv](#)

Lega Nord in position: In a briefing to the press, Matteo Salvini, the new leader of the Italian far-right Northern League party, explained his plan to be part of the alliance with the French National Front's Marine Le Pen for the European elections, and to switch political groups after the vote. [Link: EurActiv \(in Italian\)](#)

New anti-euro party forms in Ireland: The National Independence Party has been formed in Ireland. The party is said to have a similar ideology to Britain's Ukip, favouring an exit from the eurozone and restrictions on economic migrants. [Link: EUobserver](#)

Eurosceptic election manifesto divides Germany's left: A draft election manifesto released by Germany's Left Party (*Die Linke*) is highly critical of the EU, describing it as "a neo-liberal, militaristic and largely undemocratic power". Amid rising euroscepticism the party is split over whether the wording accurately depicts its European message. [Link: EurActiv](#)

European elections may be 'tense' as extremism grows: Growing extremism across Europe requires political parties in favour of deeper integration to make their case more vigorously in a bid to avoid losses at the European Parliament elections, warned Commission President José Manuel Barroso in a speech in the European Parliament this week. [Link: Bloomberg](#)