

WEEKLY ROUND-UP

TOP STORIES: 21–27 June 2014

1

Juncker nominated by European Council: The centre-right lead candidate in the European elections, Jean-Claude Juncker, has been overwhelmingly endorsed by the European Council to be the next President of the European Commission. After weeks of negotiations on the matter, the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, was joined only by Hungary in opposing Juncker. Cameron vowed to fight “*until the end*” to prevent the nomination but failed, stating that he would do the same again and questioning the decision given doubts among other EU leaders about Juncker’s candidacy. Cameron reiterated his view that the choice of Juncker would harm the prospects of the UK staying in the EU. Juncker now faces a vote in the European Parliament on 16 July, the same day as another summit that will discuss other EU top jobs. *Links:* [European Voice](#); [EUObserver](#); [Europolitics](#); [EurActiv](#); [EurActiv](#); [EurActiv](#); [EuroNews](#); [Bloomberg](#); [Belfast Telegraph](#); [EurActiv](#); [Europolitics](#); [EUObserver](#); [EUObserver](#); [BBC News](#); [The Guardian](#)

2

‘Grand coalition’ agreed, Schulz to become Parliament President again: The European People’s Party, the Socialists and the Liberals have reached a deal for a pro-European majority in the European Parliament. The deal will support the appointment of key personnel in the European institutions, including Jean-Claude Juncker as Commission President. At a meeting in Paris last Sunday, centre-left leaders of several countries agreed to support Juncker but expect to get other jobs in return for their support, including the presidency of the European Parliament for Martin Schulz for the first half of the upcoming parliament. The Greens criticised the negotiations and argue that the Parliament should decide parliamentary positions. *Links:* [EurActiv](#); [Europe Decides Twitter](#); [EUObserver](#); [EUObserver](#); [EPP Group](#); [EurActiv](#); [EurActiv](#); [EPP Group](#); [Europolitics](#); [Financial Times](#); [Europolitics](#); [Europolitics](#); [S&D](#); [EUObserver](#); [Greens/EFA](#)

3

Germany puts Oettinger forward for second term as EU commissioner: German Chancellor Angela Merkel has decided to nominate the current Energy Commissioner, Günther Oettinger, for a second term in the same office. Oettinger has repeatedly been at odds with the German government over the country’s energy transformation (*Energiewende*) and is criticised by Greens for supposedly not providing sufficient support for renewable sources of energy. While Oettinger’s nomination and his future policy area is not yet determined, the move is intended to ensure German control over the energy portfolio and was made possible as part of a broader deal with the German Social Democrats, under which Martin Schulz resumes his role as European Parliament President. *Links:* [European Voice](#); [EurActiv](#); [EurActiv](#); [European Voice](#); [Europolitics](#)

4

Dutch, French far-right fail to form group: France’s Marine Le Pen and the Netherlands’ Geert Wilders will not have a group in the next European Parliament after they failed to secure members from enough countries. Negotiations will continue to try to form a group in the coming months. *Links:* [EurActiv](#); [European Voice](#); [EUObserver](#); [Europolitics](#); [European Voice](#); [European Voice](#); [European Voice](#)

5

EFD group votes to change name: The Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) Group, headed by Nigel Farage of the UK Independence Party, announced that the Group’s name will change to ‘Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy’. The addition of the word ‘Direct’ reflects the addition of Italy’s Five Star Movement, which has used direct democracy as a fundamental tool of engagement throughout their campaign. *Links:* [European Voice](#); [BBC News](#)

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ALSO IN THE NEWS

Stubb takes over as Finnish prime minister, Katainen to Brussels: On Monday 23 June Alexander Stubb was sworn in as the new Finnish Prime Minister. Stubb, who heads the centre-right National Coalition Party (NCP), replaces Jyrki Katainen, who will replace (pending European Parliament approval) Olli Rehn as interim Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs, and who is likely to be renominated to the next European Commission. *Links:* [European Voice](#); [New Europe](#); [Reuters](#); [Europolitics](#); [EurActiv](#); [Europe Decides Twitter](#)

Funding and committee posts to be distributed based on final group count: European Parliament political group leaders continue to negotiate on which of their members will be assigned to the 20 parliamentary committees as the chairmanships of the committees are agreed. The EPP notably take Foreign Affairs, Environment and Industry, the Socialists Economic and Monetary Affairs, Civil Liberties and International Trade, the Liberals Budgets, and the Conservatives (ECR) Internal Market and Consumer Protection. Last-minute changes in the groups include the move of Brian Crowley from the Liberals (ALDE) to the ECR Group, and the addition of Romanian Mircea Diaconu to the ALDE Group. *Links:* [European Voice](#); [Europolitics](#); [Europe Decides Twitter](#); [Europe Decides Twitter](#); [Irish Times](#); [RTÉ News](#); [European Voice](#); [European Voice](#); [Europe Decides Twitter](#);

France's UMP moves to expel newly-elected MEP: Jérôme Lavrilleux, a new MEP from France's centre-right UMP, has been suspended from the party UMP due to his alleged involvement in irregular payments during Nicolas Sarkozy's 2012 presidential campaign. However, Lavrilleux is still in on course to take up his seat as an MEP next week. *Link:* [European Voice](#)

Greens back Lunacek and radical left Iglesias in race for Parliament presidency: Austrian Ulrike Lunacek has been nominated as the Greens/EFA Group candidate for the presidency of the European Parliament, joining Spanish *Podemos* member Pablo Iglesias (the candidate of the GUE/NGL Group) and British Conservative Sajjad Karim in opposing the favourite for the job, German Social Democrat Martin Schulz. *Links:* [The Local](#); [Greens/EFA](#); [Greens/EFA](#); [GUE/NGL](#), [European Parliament](#)

Polish tape scandal may lead to snap election: Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk won a vote of confidence in the national parliament despite a scandal over leaked recordings of conversations involving senior ministers. In a statement, Tusk called on *Wprost* magazine to release all recordings and noted that the revelations aimed to weaken the government during the Ukrainian crisis. Among the revelations was a tape of Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski criticising David Cameron, and his statements may taint his reputation and undermine his aspirations to become Catherine Ashton's successor as EU High Representative. The political atmosphere in Poland remains tense and analysts foresee snap elections in the fall. *Links:* [EUObserver](#); [EUObserver](#); [Deutsche Welle](#); [EUObserver](#); [Deutsche Welle](#); [Reuters](#); [Bloomberg](#)

Romanian parliament calls on President to step down: Romania's parliament has passed a non-binding resolution calling on President Traian Băsescu to step down following the arrest of his brother for allegedly accepting bribes from a mobster and accusations that his son-in-law used forged documents to obtain damages. Băsescu has ruled out standing down. *Link:* [EurActiv](#)

Court throws out legal challenge by Wilders: The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has ruled against the request made by Dutch far-right leader Geert Wilders to allow him to sit in both the Dutch national and European parliaments. Wilders appealed to the ECJ on the basis of a Dutch law but his request was declared inadmissible by the ECJ because Wilders had given insufficient information on his application. *Link:* [European Voice](#)

Flemish nationalist spat hits EU scene: Karel De Gucht, the EU Trade Commissioner, has criticised the choice made by the New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) to join the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) Group rather than the Liberal formation. He said it was a shame that a leading Belgian party had decided to join a Eurosceptic group. Meanwhile the N-VA leader, Bart De Wever, has been unable to form a government in Belgium. King Philippe will now restart consultations, with analysts believing that he may turn to outgoing Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo to start coalition talks. *Links:* [EurActiv](#); [Reuters](#)

Czech barrier may be lifted: A Czech administrative court is proposing to cancel the country's five per cent threshold for representation in the European Parliament. The decision has been made in response to a complaint lodged by the Greens who (along with the Pirate Party) would have gained an EP seat if no arbitrary threshold had been set. *Link:* [Prague Post](#)