

WEEKLY ROUND-UP

TOP STORIES: 25-31 January 2014

1

Bové and Keller to lead Greens' campaign: MEPs Ska Keller (Germany) and José Bové (France) have won the Green Primary, the first ever Europe-wide online vote to select leading candidates for the European elections. Keller narrowly won, with both candidates taking around 11,000 votes. Parliamentary group leader Rebecca Harms finished third and Monica Frassoni fourth. *Links:* [European Greens News](#); [European Voice](#); [EU Business](#)

2

We have four candidates for Commission president, says Daul: EPP President Joseph Daul has said he is gauging support for four possible centre-right candidates for the European Commission presidency. He named the Finnish prime minister, Jyrki Katainen, the former PMs of Latvia and Luxembourg, Valdis Dombrovskis and Jean-Claude Juncker respectively, and European commissioner Michel Barnier. Nominations open on 13 February and the EPP candidate will be chosen on 7 March. *Links:* [EurActiv](#); [Europolitics](#)

3

Martin Schulz wins overwhelming SPD support: European Parliament President and Party of European Socialists lead candidate-designate Martin Schulz was officially endorsed as the head of the German Socialist Democrats' list for the European Parliament election. Schulz highlighted the need to connect with European citizens in a speech at the SPD Europe congress in Berlin. *Links:* [PES news](#); [PES news](#); [EurActiv](#)

4

Commission presidency debate to be televised: The European Broadcasting Union, has confirmed that a live Europe-wide television debate between candidates for the presidency of the European Commission will be broadcast by members (who include the BBC, ARD, TVE and RAI) on 14 May. *Links:* [European Voice](#); [Europolitics](#)

5

Lagarde brushes aside questions on EU job: The head of the International Monetary Fund, Christine Lagarde, has told reporters that her focus is on her current job, not a role as President of the European Commission – a position for which she is thought to have the backing of the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel. *Link:* [Bloomberg News](#)

ALSO IN THE NEWS

Dombrovskis to stand for the European Parliament: Former PM Valdis Dombrovskis is set to lead the Latvian Unity party's list of candidates for the European elections. Dombrovskis, a contender for the Commission presidency, will be joined on the list by ex-foreign minister Artis Pabriks. *Links:* [Baltic Course](#)

Reding sees her future in European Parliament: Viviane Reding will not seek the EPP nomination to be a candidate for the Commission presidency and will back her compatriot Jean-Claude Juncker. Reding will stand instead for the European Parliament. *Links:* [Europolitics](#); [New Europe](#); [European Voice](#)

Think-tanks call for stronger successor to Barroso: Pierre Defraigne, Executive Director of the College of Europe Madariaga Foundation, has led a call by think-tank representatives for a stronger and more prominent group of commissioners to be the future leaders of Europe. *Link:* [EurActiv](#)

CSU wants more 'Bavaria in Europe', sets EU campaign rolling: Markus Ferber MEP has been chosen as the lead candidate for the Bavarian conservative Christian Social Union (CSU) for May's European election. Ferber said he wants a more efficient Europe "of the regions", one that is "aware of its Christian roots" and which "knows its boundaries" politically and geographically. *Links:* [EurActiv](#); [European Voice](#)

Schäuble advocates separate eurozone parliament: Germany's Finance Minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, has proposed a separate European parliament exclusively for eurozone members, a plan dismissed by Martin Schulz, the current head of the European Parliament. *Links:* [EurActiv](#); [EurActiv](#)

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AfD launches campaign: Germany's new Eurosceptic party, Alternative for Germany, launched its European Parliament election campaign on Saturday with an attack on European federalism and a defence of national sovereignty. The party is, however, ravaged by in-fighting. *Link:* [EurActiv](#)

Bulgarian president seeks electoral rules referendum on European election day: Bulgarian President Rossen Plevneliev has proposed a national referendum on the country's election rules with the aim of addressing low trust in political institutions. The vote would take place on 25 May. *Link:* [EurActiv](#); [Novinite](#)

The EU vote and Europe's overlooked minorities: *EUobserver* says that EU citizens belonging to ethnic and religious minority communities represent 12% of the total EU population and can play a key role in stopping the rise of racist parties, but are overlooked in most parties' election campaigns. *Link:* [EUobserver](#)

Dublin candidates jockey for position: Mary Fitzpatrick, a Dublin city councilor, has been selected as Fianna Fáil's candidate for the European Parliament election in Dublin. She will be up against Nessa Childers MEP, who announced that she will stand as an independent candidate in the constituency. Irish junior minister Brian Hayes announced that he will seek the nomination from Fine Gael in order to succeed party colleague Gay Mitchell MEP. *Link:* [The Irish Independent](#); [RTE News](#); [The Irish Independent](#)

Taoiseach backs Higgins and McGuinness: Ireland's Prime Minister, Enda Kenny, said he expected Jim Higgins MEP and Mairead McGuinness MEP to be front-runners in the fight for seats in the new Midlands-North-West constituency. A poll suggests McGuinness would take the first seat, followed by Fianna Fáil's Pat 'the Cope' Gallagher and Sinn Féin's Matt Carthy, leaving Independent MEP Marian Harkin and Jim Higgins fighting for the last seat. However, Gallagher is yet to confirm he will stand, leaving the possibility of Éamon Ó Cuív, currently an MP, leading the FF charge. *Link:* [The Mayo News](#); [Galway Advertiser](#)

Turkish Cypriot's bid to be MEP: Sener Levent, a publisher and writer, is set to become the first Turkish Cypriot to stand for election to the European Parliament. The move follows the introduction of new rules making it easier for Turkish Cypriots to vote in the elections. *Link:* [European Voice](#)

Greek government rules out early elections: Greece's PM, Antonis Samaras, has insisted that his coalition government will continue until the scheduled 2016 elections, dismissing speculation about an early vote to coincide with polls in May for local government and the European Parliament. *Link:* [Business Week](#)

Ruling coalition parties to run together: The leader of the centrist Istrian Democratic Party (IDS), Ivan Jakovic, said after a meeting of Croatia's ruling centre-left coalition that the coalition parties would run together in the 2014 elections for the European Parliament. *Link:* [Dalje](#)

Sobotka to lead new Czech government: A three-party Czech government was sworn in on 29 January, three months after parliamentary elections. The new PM is the leader of the Social Democrats, Bohuslav Sobotka. The other parties represented are the Christian Democrats and a parliamentary newcomer, ANO, which hopes to join the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party. *Link:* [European Voice](#)

Commission acts to defend voting rights: The European Commission has issued guidance to member states with rules preventing their citizens from voting in national or regional elections because they live in another EU country. The Commission also acted to ensure that EU citizens can stand in European elections in other member states (with Slovenia this week enacting laws to simplify the candidacy procedures for non-Slovenians). *Links:* [Europa Press](#); [Europa Press](#); [EurActiv](#); [Slovenian Press Agency](#)

Green party quits Danish coalition, but PM stays in power: The leader of Denmark's Socialist People's Party (SF) has announced that the party is leaving the government over the purchase by Goldman Sachs investment bank of nearly a fifth of a state-owned energy company. The departure of the SF does not seem likely to threaten the government for the moment. *Links:* [EurActiv](#); [European Voice](#).

Petr Fiala elected new ODS leader: Peter Fiala, a former education minister, has been elected to lead the Czech Republic's conservative Civic Democratic Party (ODS). Jan Zahradil MEP, President of the Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists, was elected as ODS First Deputy Chairman. *Link:* [AECR](#)