

WEEKLY ROUND-UP

TOP STORIES: 23-30 May 2014

1

2

3

EPP is biggest loser but wins European elections: The centre-right European People's Party has emerged as the biggest group in the European Parliament following the European elections. According to the latest projections, the EPP will have 213 seats in the new parliament, losing around 60 seats. The Socialists & Democrats will have the second biggest group with 190 seats, a slight drop on its previous total. The big winners of the night were a range of parties on the Eurosceptic and anti-system right and left, pushing the number of non-attached members over 100. It seems likely that many of these groups will affiliate to existing groups in the Parliament. At 43.1%, the overall election turnout was slightly higher than at the last elections in 2009. Although Western European countries such as France, Germany and Denmark had a higher voting turnout than in 2009, Eastern countries like Hungary and Slovenia actually showed a downward trend. Slovakia's turnout was set at an all-time low of 13%. Links: Europe Decides results page, EurActiv, EUObserver, ALDE news, Irish Times, Times of Malta; Focus news, Chicago Tribune; EurActiv; EurActiv; EUObserver; EUObserver; EUObserver; EUObserver; EUObserver; EUObserver; EUObserver; EUObserver; EUObserver; Europolitics; Slate; European Public Affairs

Juncker in pole position for presidency after nervous week: EPP candidate lead candidate Jean-Claude Juncker is the frontrunner to become President of the European Commission. A meeting of parliamentary leaders on Tuesday morning gave Juncker the opportunity to build majorities in the Parliament and European Council that would back his bid, but the European Council, meeting on Tuesday evening, did not discuss names and gave its President, Herman Van Rompuy, a mandate to find a candidate that could command a double majority. Post-summit comments by Angela Merkel that Juncker was not the only capable candidate sparked a wave of criticism in Germany for ignoring the results of the election. However, on Friday afternoon she confirmed that she would back Juncker's presidential bid. Links: EUObserver; EUObserver; EUObserver; Greens-EFA news; Bloomberg; GUE/NGL news; EUObserver; EUObserver; New Europe; S&D news; EurActiv, BBC News, Parliament Magazine, EUObserver, Europolitics, New Europe; Wall Street Journal; S&D news; EurActiv; Europolitics; Wort; EUObserver; EUObserver; S&D news; New Europe; EurActiv; Europa RAPID; EUObserver; New Europe; Europa RAPID; New York Times; EUObserver; Reuters; EUObserver; European Voice; Policy Network; EurActiv; EurActiv; New Europe; New Eu **EUObserver**; **Bloomberg**; **European Voice**; **European Voice**; **Economist**; **Europolitics**

Poland nominates Sikorski to replace Ashton: Poland's Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, has put forward the country's Foreign Minister, Radoslaw Sikorski, to succeed Catherine Ashton as High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Sikorski would be a "natural candidate", said Tusk, adding that Poland has gained significant influence in foreign policy and so the appointment "would be within the scope of our interests". Sikorski has been Poland's Foreign Minister since 2007 and was a leading figure in the Ukraine crisis earlier this year. Links: EurActiv

ALSO IN THE NEWS

Win by far-right party rattles French establishment: The historic victory of the far-right National Front in the European election has rocked the French government and the French political establishment. Marine Le



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Pen's party won 25% of the vote, comfortably ahead of the centre-right UMP (20.3%) and the Socialists (14.7%). Manuel Valls, the Socialist prime minister, described the election result as a "more than another warning; it's a shock, an earthquake". French President François Hollande pledged to press ahead with reforms at home and pushed for the EU to reform and scale back its power. Links: New York Times; Wall Street Journal; Reuters; BBC News; Chicago Tribune; EurActiv; EUObserver; Contexte; Financial Times; Telegraph; Guardian; Wall Street Journal; Economist; Reuters; Guardian; Wall Street Journal; EUObserver; EurActiv; Daily Kos; EUObserver; New Europe; Deutsche Welle; Europolitics; Europolitics; Irish Times; New York Times; BBC News; Reuters; Economist; New Europe; Policy Network; Guardian

Podemos plans to cement rise of citizen politics: *Podemos* ('We Can'), a new Spanish party born from the *Indignados* movement, emerged as the third largest political force in many Spanish regions in the European election. Nationwide, *Podemos* scored a remarkable eight per cent and won five seats in the Parliament. It is expected to join the GUE/NGL group. The idea behind the party is to let citizens practice politics, and proposes to do away with tax havens, establish a guaranteed minimum income and lower the retirement age to 60. Twelve parties elected at least one MEP, while the two leading parties, the People's Party and the Socialists, together won only 49% of the vote, compared with 81% in 2009. *Links: EUObserver; Financial Times; Guardian; Guardian*

Farage: 'You ain't seen nothing yet': The UK Independence Party won the most seats in the European Parliament election in Britain, beating Labour and the Conservatives into second and third place respectively. While the result had been widely anticipated, the comprehensive nature of its victory – securing 27.5% of the vote and 24 MEPs – came as a surprise to many. The Ukip leader, Nigel Farage, was in a jubilant mood after news of the win, declaring that his party had the momentum to repeat its success both in an upcoming by-election and in next year's general election. Links: Financial Times; Guardian; Telegraph; Guardian; Guardian; Guardian; Financial Times; Telegraph; Economist; EurActiv; Fox News; BBC News; Sky News Twitter; Reuters; EurActiv; Deutsche Welle; Economist

Tsipras calls for elections in Greece after win: Greece's radical left party, Syriza, took first place in the European elections for the first time, electing six MEPs and winning 26.5% of the vote. The ruling centre-right New Democracy party was second on 22.8%. Alexis Tsipras, the Syriza leader, said the result was a clear rejection of austerity policies and called for national elections. Ultra-nationalist party Golden Dawn won three MEPs. Links: EurActiv; Financial Times; New Europe; New Europe; Guardian; Bloomberg; Wall Street Journal; Economist

Le Pen and Wilders launch anti-EU alliance: Far-right parties, leaded by France's National Front (FN) and the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) have launched plans for a new group in the European Parliament. At a press conference to launch the group the two parties' leaders, Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders respectively, were joined by Belgium's Flemish Interest (Vlaams Belang, VB), the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), and the Italian Northern League (Lega Nord, LN). The group needs representation from two more parties to officially form, but Le Pen declared that negotiations with other parties are ongoing. In parallel, Ukip's Nigel Farage met Beppe Grillo, the leader of Italy's Five Star Movement, to discuss a possible alliance. Links: EurActiv; WORLD news; Guardian; New Europe; Wall Street Journal; European Voice; EUObserver; Europolitics; Euronews

Lithuanian president wins second term in run-off vote: Dalia Grybauskaite won 57.9% of the vote in the second round of Lithuania's presidential election, securing a second term. It is the first time in Lithuania's history that a president has won re-election. *Links:* Reuters; BBC News; New Europe; Europa RAPID

Belgian king gives coalition-forming mandate to Flemish separatist leader: The separatist New-Flemish Alliance (N-VA) party won the Belgian federal elections in Flanders, securing a third of the vote in the Dutch-speaking region. Party leader Bart De Wever has now been appointed by King Philippe to lead coalition talks to form the new government. This may be a difficult task since the majority of French-speaking parties are sceptical about forming an alliance with a separatist party. Links: <u>EUObserver</u>; <u>Financial Times</u>; <u>Bloomberg</u>; <u>Reuters</u>; <u>EUObserver</u>





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Slovakia nominates Šefčovič as EU commissioner; Estonia names Ansip: Robert Fico, Slovakia's Prime Minister, has confirmed he will nominate Maros Šefčovič as his country's next EU commissioner. Šefčovič won the highest number of preference votes in the European election in Slovakia. Meanwhile, Andrus Ansip, the former Estonian prime minister who was also elected to the European Parliament last weekend, was named by Estonia's government as its nominee. *Link: EUObserver; European Voice*

Germany's AfD seeks allies with Tories: Germany's anti-euro party, Alternative for Germany (AfD) is in talks to join the British Conservatives' group in the European Parliament. The AfD leader, Bernd Lucke, said he wants to talk to members of the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) Group and refused to work with Ukip or the French National Front. *Links: EurActiv; EurActiv; Financial Times; EUObserver*

France's UMP leader resigns over illegal campaign funding allegations: The leader of France's centre-right UMP, Jean-François Copé, has resigned after he was accused of covering up illegal campaign funding during Nicolas Sarkozy's 2012 presidential campaign. Jérome Lavrilleux, a deputy director of Sarkozy's presidential campaign who was elected to the European Parliament on Sunday, admitted the anomalies but denied wrongdoing. He stated that neither Sarkozy nor Copé were informed of the illegal funding during the campaign. *Links:* New Europe; Reuters

Spanish Socialist leader resigns over European Parliament election defeat: Spanish Socialist leader Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba has stepped down following PSOE's weak showing in the European Parliament election. PSOE lost nine of its 23 seats. Meanwhile the leader of Ireland's Labour Party, Eamon Gilmore, resigned after his party's dismal showing. Labour, which is currently in a coalition with the centre-right Fine Gael, failed to return any MEPs. In Slovenia, Igor Luksic of the Social Democrats and Gregor Virant of the Civil List (ALDE) also resigned over their parties' election results. Virant remains interior minister for the time being. In Hungary, Socialist leader Attila Mesterhazy also stood down. Links: <u>EUObserver</u>: <u>The Economist</u>; <u>New Europe</u>; <u>EUObserver</u>; <u>EUObserver</u>; <u>New Europe</u>

Antonescu stands down and urges party switch: Crin Antonescu has resigned as the leader of Romania's National Liberals (PNL) in reaction to his party's failure to reach 20% of the vote in the European Parliament election. Meanwhile, the party's leadership voted to leave ALDE and join the EPP instead, but it remains to be seen whether PNL MEPs will follow the lead. *Link*: <u>Sofia Globe</u>

