

## WEEKLY ROUND-UP

## TOP STORIES: 13-19 September 2014

1

**Scotland votes no to independence:** Scottish voters rejected independence by a margin of ten percentage points in a referendum held on Thursday. Scotland's First Minister and leader of the Yes campaign, Alex Salmond, conceded defeat early on Friday morning with the No campaign running out winners by 55 per cent to 45 per cent. Turnout was high, at 85 per cent, with just four of Scotland's 32 council areas – including Dundee and the largest city, Glasgow – backing independence. The British Prime Minister, David Cameron, responded to the vote by declaring that more powers would be devolved to Scotland as part of a wider set of constitutional changes. The campaign ended with a flurry of activity from politicians, business leaders, and even Queen Elizabeth II, who urged Scots to “*think very carefully about the future*”. Links: [Reuters](#); [Deutsche Welle](#); [New Europe](#); [EUobserver](#); [EUobserver](#); [New Europe](#); [Deutsche Welle](#)

2

**MEPs express doubts about Commission restructuring:** Several Members of the European Parliament have stated concerns about the new structure of the European Commission as announced by the President-elect, Jean-Claude Juncker, last week. Many MEPs, especially on the left, disagree with the plans to move pharmaceutical products from the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers (DG Sanco) to DG Enterprise, and food waste and biocides from DG Environment to DG Sanco. Others oppose the split energy competences between the Vice-President for Energy Union and the Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, and the plan to move copyright issues from DG Internal Market and Services to DG Connect. Another group of nearly 50 MEPs is calling for a vice-president for sustainable development to be appointed. Links: [European Voice](#); [Europe Decides Twitter](#)

3

**Left wins Swedish election, PM steps down, nationalists make big gains:** The Swedish Prime Minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt, has resigned after his centre-right Moderate Party lost the parliamentary elections. The centre-left Social Democrats, led by Stefan Löfven, gained only one seat but emerged as the largest party and are expected to lead a new government with the Greens. However, the growth of the nationalist, anti-immigration Sweden Democrats – who went from 20 to 49 seats – means that Löfven may have to work with parties in the centre-right bloc that was led by Reinfeldt. Links: [EUobserver](#); [Reuters](#); [EUobserver](#); [Telegraph](#); [European Voice](#); [New York Times](#); [Guardian](#)

4

**Ewa Kopacz confirmed as Poland's new PM:** After receiving Donald Tusk's resignation, Poland's President, Bronislaw Komorowski, has accepted the candidacy of parliament speaker Ewa Kopacz as the country's new prime minister. Kopacz, who has been a member of the centre-right Civic Platform party since 2001 and served as minister of health from 2007 to 2011, has to appoint a new cabinet by 22 September. Links: [Polskie Radio](#)

5

**French government wins confidence vote:** The government of the French Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, won a confidence vote in the National Assembly by 269 votes to 244. Valls said that his Socialist Party should behave responsibly and warned that the far-right National Front is “*at the gates of power*”. Links: [EUobserver](#); [Economist](#)

## ALSO IN THE NEWS

**Commissioners' cabinets taking shape:** The commissioner-designates are starting to appoint their heads of cabinets. The cabinets will not have any official role until the European Parliament's vote on the entire College. The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, has named Stefano Manservigi as the head of her team, while the first vice-president in charge of Better Regulation, Inter-

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Institutional Relations, the Rule Of Law and the Charter Of Fundamental Rights, Frans Timmermans, has named Ben Smulders. [Links: European Voice; European Voice](#)

**Parliament sets hearings timetable:** The hearings of commissioner-designates will take place from 29 September until 7 October, with up to six hearings per day before various parliamentary committees. MEPs will first send written questions to the candidates. Given his wide-ranging role, Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President, will not be heard by a standing committee but by an open meeting of the Parliament's Conference of Presidents. [Link: European Parliament](#)

**Greens quit Finnish government:** Finland's Green League has quit the country's five-party coalition government in a row over approval of the Russian-built Fennovoima nuclear plant on Thursday. Finnish Green League chair and Environment Minister Ville Niinistö announced that his party would quit the government, leaving the government with four parties and just 102 MPs in the 200-seat Finnish Parliament. [Link: European Voice; New Europe](#)

**EU jobs summit postponed 'indefinitely':** A special EU summit on jobs and growth, which EU leaders agreed in August to hold this autumn, has been postponed indefinitely and without a reason. The Italian Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi, and the French President, François Hollande, had pushed for the EU to focus on promoting employment instead continuing austerity policies. Jean-Claude Juncker has named both jobs and growth as priorities for its new Commission. [Link: Europolitics](#)

**Van Rompuy to take up teaching post:** The outgoing President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, will start working as a teacher at Belgium's Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL). He will be teaching European politics to Master's degree students. His first conference will be about 'Europe in the storm'. [Link: EUObserver](#)

**German state elections bring surge for Eurosceptics and possibly a coalition on the left:** Two weeks after the party first entered a German state parliament (in Saxony), the Eurosceptic Alternative for Germany (AfD) party achieved ten and twelve per cent of the vote in state elections in Thuringia and Brandenburg respectively. While the AfD retains its core Eurosceptic profile and features traditionally conservative and law-and-order positions, voters from across the political spectrum have switched to the party. Meanwhile, the Social Democrats, who are fell to just twelve per cent of the vote in Thuringia, must now decide whether to continue a coalition with the Christian Democrats, led by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, or enter an unheard-of alliance with the far-left *Die Linke*. Merkel warned the Social Democrats, her coalition partners in the federal government, not to enter a pact with *Die Linke*, which in Eastern Germany is the successor of the SED, the communist ruling party in the former German Democratic Republic. [Links: EUObserver; EurActiv; Deutsche Welle; Reuters; EurActiv](#)

**Spanish socialists to reject Cañete:** Although the Socialists and Democrats seem to generally approve of Jean-Claude Juncker's new Commission, Miguel Arias Cañete, the Commissioner-designate for Climate Action and Energy, is likely face a tough hearing for owning shares in two oil companies and making sexist comments during a political debate ahead of the European elections. The shares have now been reportedly sold. However, the 14 Spanish Socialists in the European Parliament are expected to vote against his nomination and the Commission as a whole. [Links: EurActiv; Europolitics; New Europe; viewws; New Europe; Europe Decides Twitter; Europe Decides Twitter; European Voice; EUObserver; Europolitics; Europolitics](#)

**Belgium may get first female prime minister:** More than three months after it held federal elections, there are indications that Belgium could be on the verge of getting its first-ever female prime minister. Maggie De Block, a Flemish Liberal, is the latest figure to become a frontrunner for the post. [Link: EUObserver](#)

**President Erdoğan to 'prioritize EU bid' after October:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has defined his country's accession to the EU as one of his priorities. From October, Erdoğan intends to visit several EU capitals, starting in the Baltic countries. Turkey hopes to benefit from Italy's current EU presidency as Rome is known to support Turkish membership. [Link: Hürriyet Daily News](#)