

WEEKLY ROUND-UP

TOP STORIES: 18–24 October 2014

1

Juncker Commission approved after last-minute portfolio changes: The European Parliament has approved the new European Commission by 423 votes to 209. Speaking to the assembly before the vote, Jean-Claude Juncker, who will assume the Commission presidency on 1 November, stated that his college represented the “last chance” to restore citizens’ trust. Following the hearings, Juncker slightly reshuffled the distribution of portfolios. Among the changes, sustainable development policies were added to Frans Timmermans' portfolio as Socialist MEPs were concerned about climate policy coming under the responsibility of Miguel Arias Cañete. The Commission was formally appointed by the European Council on Thursday. *Links:* [EurActiv](#); [European Parliament](#); [European Voice](#); [EurActiv](#); [EurActiv](#); [European Voice](#); [EU Reporter](#); [European Voice](#); [Europe Decides Twitter](#); [Europolitics](#)

2

Polish MEP saves Farage’s group: Robert Iwaszkiewicz, an MEP from Poland’s Congress of the New Right party, has joined the Eurosceptic Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group, saving it from being disbanded. The Group, led by Nigel Farage, faced collapse following the withdrawal of a Latvian deputy. Iwaszkiewicz’s arrival caused a stir in the European Parliament, as KNP leader Janusz Korwin-Mikke, a deputy for less than four months, has already been suspended by the institution for using racist language, and Iwaszkiewicz himself had made remarks about hitting women. Iwaszkiewicz said he joined the group to oppose to EU bureaucracy and support the free market. *Links:* [EUObserver](#); [EurActiv](#); [EFDD](#); [Europolitics](#); [Yahoo News](#); [European Voice](#)

3

Barroso bows out before MEPs: On 21 October José Manuel Barroso made a valedictory address as European Commission President. During his speech in the European Parliament he highlighted his greatest achievements and memories, including collecting the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the European Union. Critics say that his Commission was too fixed on austerity, failed to create economic growth and jobs, and saw a weakening of the institution. *Link:* [EUObserver](#)

4

Šefčovič to head Energy Union, Bulc also approved by MEPs: Maroš Šefčovič won the approval of the European Parliament as Vice-President for the Energy Union after a successful hearing on Monday. The Slovenian nominee, Violeta Bulc, who was Commissioner-designate for Transport also made a good impression. Both received the backing of the relevant parliamentary committees ahead of the vote on the entire Commission on Wednesday. *Links:* [European Voice](#); [European Voice](#); [EurActiv](#); [EUObserver](#); [New Europe](#); [Europolitics](#); [EurActiv](#); [New Europe](#)

5

UK faces large bill as Commission announces budget adjustment: Britain faces a bill of more than €2bn, to be paid by 1 December, after the EU’s statistical office noticed a discrepancy in contributions to the EU dating back to 1995. The relative success of the British economy, and the inclusion of previously unreported or under-reported black economy elements, such as drugs or the sex industry, means Britain must pay an amount equivalent to around a fifth of its annual contributions to the EU budget. The Netherlands, Italy and Greece are among other countries facing a bill, although of a much lower order, while France and Germany will get money back. The British Prime Minister, David Cameron, reacted angrily to the news and said he agreed with Matteo Renzi’s comments that the episode shows that the Commission “consists of bureaucrats and technocrats without a heart or a soul”. *Link:* [Guardian](#)

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ALSO IN THE NEWS

Leaders adopt climate change package: European Union leaders have adopted a long-awaited climate and energy package at the European Council. They agreeing on a nationally-binding 40% emissions reduction target by 2030 from 1990 levels, and an EU-binding target of a least 27% for energy efficiency increase and 27% renewable energy share by 2030. The German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, had expressed skepticism about the climate targets, while several central and Eastern European countries were concerned by the Commission's greenhouse-gas emissions target. *Links:* [European Voice](#); [European Council Conclusions](#)

Polish president wants euro decision after 2015 vote: The President of Poland, Bronislaw Komorowski, said on Monday that Poland should decide on its path towards euro accession following parliamentary elections due in the autumn of 2015. He added that Poland should prepare for a discussion on the euro, which "*should lead to a decision already after next year's parliamentary elections*". Opinion polls show a majority of Poles opposing entry to the single currency. *Link:* [Reuters](#)

Czech coalition keeps majority in parliament upper chamber: After a round of mid-term Senate elections, the Czech Republic's governing coalition maintained its majority in the upper house of parliament. Official results give the Social Democrats (ČSSD) and their coalition partners, the ANO movement and Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL), 46 senators in the 81-seat upper chamber. *Link:* [Reuters](#)

Ashton to stay on until end of Iran nuclear talks: The EU's outgoing foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, will continue leading nuclear negotiations with Iran until a deal is reached. The deadline for agreeing on a long-term settlement with Iran over its nuclear programme is officially set to expire on 24 November, but Ashton confirmed that she would stay beyond that date if necessary. Her term officially ends on 1 November, when she will be replaced as High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy by the Italian Foreign Minister, Federica Mogherini. *Link:* [Town Hall](#)

Barroso draws EU red lines in UK speech, Clegg criticises Cameron: During one of his final speeches as European Commission President, José Manuel Barroso has claimed that Britain risks "*alienating*" friends in Europe by talks of migration curbs. Barroso warned the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, against breaching the EU's principle of free movement of persons and against losing international influence by quitting the EU. Britain's Deputy PM, Nick Clegg, has also publicly disagreed with Cameron's European strategy. *Links:* [EUObserver](#); [European Voice](#); [EUObserver](#); [Europe Decides Twitter](#); [EurActiv](#)

Thousands of Catalans call for early elections: A demonstration has taken place against the cancellation of a referendum on Catalan independence that was due to be held on 9 November. The poll was suspended by Spain's constitutional court after the Spanish government questioning the legality of such a vote. More than 100,000 Catalans gathered in Barcelona calling for early regional elections, seen as a proxy vote on secession. This move is likely to benefit the more radical Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC), a coalition partner of the Convergence and Union (CiU) party of the Catalan President Artur Mas. Mas said that he had given up on the idea of a referendum but would rather hold a "*consultation of citizens*", which would be within the law. *Link:* [Reuters](#)

MEPs choose EU data protection chief: The European Parliament has backed appointed Giovanni Buttarelli as the new European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS), with Wojciech Wiewiórowski named as assistant EDPS. Members of the Parliament's Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee voted to endorse the two men following hearings on Monday evening. *Link:* [European Voice](#)

Member states warn Juncker against ISDS concessions: As Juncker gives reassurances to the European Parliament over the free trade agreement with the US, 14 member states are urging him to stick to the script. Jean-Claude Juncker, the President of the European Commission, was warned by member states not to make concessions to MEPs on investor protection in a free trade deal between the European Union and the United States. *Link:* [European Voice](#)

EU lawmaking down 40 percent in Barroso's second term: The volume of EU proposals fell by nearly 40% between 2010 and 2014, with the European Commission adopting 658 texts, down from over 1000 in each of the previous three terms. *Link:* [EUObserver](#)