

## WEEKLY ROUND-UP

### TOP STORIES: 28 June – 4 July 2014

1

**Schulz elected Parliament President in first test of 'grand coalition':** Martin Schulz has been elected for a second time as President of the European Parliament. Schulz, who recently returned to lead the Socialists & Democrats group, won 409 out of 612 valid votes, winning in the first ballot. Of the other candidates – who participated in a pre-election debate that Schulz did not attend – British Conservative Sajjad Karim (ECR Group) took 101 votes, with Spanish far-left candidate Pablo Iglesias and Austrian Green Ulrike Lunacek taking 51 votes each. The vote was a successful first test of the grand coalition between the EPP, Socialists and Liberals, although Schulz faced criticism for benefitting from a 'backroom deal' having criticised such agreements during the European election campaign. Schulz keeps the presidency until 2017, when an EPP candidate – possibly France's Alain Lamassoure – is thought likely to take over the position. *Links:* [Europa RAPID](#); [S&D news](#); [New Europe](#); [New Europe](#); [Deutsche Welle](#); [European Voice](#); [EUObserver](#); [Europolitics](#); [European Voice](#); [New Europe](#); [EurActiv](#); [European Voice](#)

2

**Juncker vote in Parliament moved to 15 July as Cameron tries to patch up differences:** The European Parliament has brought forward its vote to elect Jean-Claude Juncker as the new Commission president to 15 July, one day earlier than originally planned. This will give more time to EU leaders before they meet in Brussels on 16 July to decide on a package of other top EU jobs, including the presidency of the European Council. Juncker's biggest opponent in the European Council, British Prime Minister David Cameron, called the President-designate last weekend to discuss reform and economic growth in Europe. Thanks to the 'grand coalition' agreement in the Parliament, Juncker is likely to be elected, but the Socialists have stated that their support is dependent on certain conditions, including an unbreakable commitment to promote investment, sustainable growth and decent, secure jobs, and a plan to tackle poverty and inequality. *Link:* [EUObserver](#); [EUObserver](#); [European Voice](#); [Deutsche Welle](#); [S&D news](#)

3

**Renzi steals the show as Greeks depart:** Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi saw his presentation of the priorities of the Italian Presidency of the Council greeted by warm applause from MEPs. Renzi focused on growth and values in his speech. The Commission and Parliament praised the work of the outgoing Greek Presidency. Greek PM Antonis Samaras said that from January to June, Greece had concluded 67 legislative initiatives and achieved consensus on another 15, addressing critical policy areas such as the economic and banking union, unemployment, and competitiveness and growth. Jose Manuel Barroso, the European Commission President, said Greece "not only responded to crisis but also contributed constructively to the European agenda." *Links:* [Europolitics](#); [Italian Government news](#); [Europarl news](#); [European Voice](#); [Europa RAPID](#)

4

**Parliament elects vice-presidents and quaestors:** Fourteen vice-presidents of the European Parliament were elected this week, along with five quaestors. The vice-presidents include former European Commission vice-presidents Antonio Tajani and Olli Rehn *Links:* [Elections2014 news](#); [EUObserver](#); [S&D Group](#); [Europolitics](#)

5

**Changes at the Commission as three vice-presidents quit:** Four European commissioners left their jobs on Tuesday 1 July to take seats in the European Parliament, with national capitals naming proposed replacements. Viviane Reding (Luxembourg) will be replaced by Martine Reicherts (head of EU Publications office); Olli Rehn (Finland, Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro) will be replaced in the same portfolio by former Finnish PM Jyrki Katainen; the place of Antonio Tajani (Italy) will be taken by Ferdinando Nelli Feroci (a former Italian Permanent Representative to the EU); and Jacek Dominik will take the seat of Janusz Lewandowski (Poland). The nominees face hearings in the European Parliament on 14 July and there may be a reshuffle of portfolios. José Manuel Barroso also named Michel Barnier and Günter Oettinger as new vice-presidents. *Links:* [European Voice](#); [EUObserver](#); [EUObserver](#); [Europe Decides Twitter](#); [European Voice](#); [Europolitics](#); [European Voice](#); [European Voice](#); [Europa RAPID](#); [New Europe](#); [EurActiv](#)

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### ALSO IN THE NEWS

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**Pittella elected as S&D Group president:** The Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament has elected Italian MEP Gianni Pittella as the Group's new president. Pittella was the only declared candidate to replace Martin Schulz, who was re-elected as European Parliament President. Pittella had been acting President of the Parliament for the past two weeks. *Link:* [S&D news](#); [EUObserver](#); [Europe Decides Twitter](#)

**Plenary confirms committee members:** The European Parliament has backed the proposals of the political groups for membership of the Parliament's 20 committees and two sub-committees. Agreements have also been made on the chairs and vice-chairs of committee, with committee members to vote on the office-holders next week. *Links:* [European Voice](#); [Europe Decides Twitter](#); [Europolitics](#); [European Voice](#); [EPP group](#); [Europe Decides Twitter](#)

**Greens back Farage in row over committee chairs:** Despite their strong political differences, the Greens in the European Parliament is planning to support the allocation of a committee chairmanship to the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) group, led by Nigel Farage. The Greens oppose reported plans of the EPP, S&D, ALDE groups to block the EFDD from heading the Petitions Committee. *Links:* [Euractiv](#); [EUObserver](#); [Europe Decides Twitter](#); [Europe Decides Twitter](#)

**Hahn nominated for second Commission term:** The European Commissioner for Regional Policy, Johannes Hahn, has been nominated by the Austrian government for a second term. Austrian vice-chancellor Spindelegger suggested that Hahn keep his portfolio. The final decision will be made in agreement with the new President of the European Commission, although the European Council's nominee, Jean-Claude Juncker, may wish to make changes, especially as he has vowed to improve the gender balance of the College. *Links:* [European Voice](#); [EurActiv](#); [Johannes Hahn Twitter](#)

**Juncker and Van Rompuy discuss EU summit and top positions:** Herman van Rompuy, the President of the European Council, has held meetings with Jean Claude Juncker, the nominee for the European Commission presidency, to discuss candidates for other top jobs. Contenders for the position of High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (who sits in the Commission) include the Italian Foreign Minister, Federica Mogherini, the European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva, and the Dutch Foreign Minister, Frans Timmermans. The next President of the European Commission and a possible President of the Eurogroup are also likely to be discussed and decided on 16 July at an EU summit. *Links:* [Europe Online Magazine](#); [La Vanguardia](#)

**Former President Sarkozy detained:** Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy has been arrested in a corruption probe. Sarkozy is suspected to have attempted to obstruct an investigation into the financing of his presidential campaign in 2007. He denies any wrongdoing and says the accusations are politically motivated. The centre-right politician is now under formal investigation. *Links:* [New Europe](#); [Deutsche Welle](#); [Bloomberg](#); [EUObserver](#)

**GERB boycotts parliament until cabinet resigns:** Bulgaria's centre-right opposition party, GERB, is boycotting parliament until the cabinet resigns. The action led to the latest sitting being cancelled. Prime Minister Plaven Oresharski said he would choose a moment at the end of July to step down. The parliament will be dissolved on 6 August and new elections are planned for 5 October. *Links:* [The Sofia Globe](#); [The Sofia Globe](#); [The Sofia Globe](#)

**Czech government still undecided about nominee:** The Czech government met on 3 July to discuss who should be the country's nominee to the next European Commission. The principal candidates are Pavel Telička MEP (ANO 2011, ALDE) and Pavel Mertlík (ČSSD, PES). No final decision was made. *Link:* [EurActiv](#)

**European Council grants Albania candidate status:** Albania has been accepted as an official EU membership candidate. Ministers across the 28 EU member states have agreed to start the country's membership process, but have warned that further progress depends on sustained efforts to reform. *Links:* [EurActiv](#); [Europa RAPID](#)

**Lithuania to join eurozone:** Lithuania will become the 19th member of the Eurozone in January 2015 after EU finance ministers have agreed to give the country the green light to join the currency. *Link:* [Wall Street Journal](#)

**Michel to lead talks on Belgian government formation:** After the failure of Bart De Wever, the leader of the separatist New Flemish Alliance (N-VA), failed to form a Belgian federal government, King Philippe has asked Charles Michel, leader of the Francophone Liberals (MR) to lead talks and try to reach a compromise. *Link:* [European Voice](#)