

## WEEKLY ROUND-UP

### TOP STORIES: 12–18 July 2014

1

**Juncker elected as Commission President:** The European Parliament has elected Jean-Claude Juncker as the next President of the European Commission. Juncker won 422 votes, comfortably above the threshold of 376. In his statement prior to the vote Juncker laid out his priorities for the next European Commission, emphasising his commitment to economic growth and implementing structural reforms while also taking account of the social consequences of decisions. Juncker's nomination received support from the majority of MEPs from the European People's Party, the Socialists and Democrats, and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats. *Links:* [Europe Decides Twitter](#); [European Voice](#); [EUObserver](#);

2

**EU leaders make no progress on top jobs:** European leaders failed to agree on who would take the EU's other top jobs during a summit on 16 July. Tensions over Ukraine have intensified the discussions surrounding the new High Representative, the Union's top diplomat. Italy is promoting its young Foreign Minister, Federica Mogherini, while central and Eastern European states consider her too friendly towards Russia and doubt her experience. Bulgaria's Kristalina Georgieva is considered a potential compromise candidate. The selection of the new President of the European Council appears equally difficult. Candidates include Denmark's Prime Minister, Helle Thorning-Schmidt. The current President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, called a new meeting for Saturday 30 August. As member states continue to nominate commissioners, debates have begun regarding the distribution of portfolios, although it is now feared that the member states' indecisiveness could delay the installation of the new College. *Links:* [Europolitics](#); [Europolitics](#); [Europolitics](#); [EUObserver](#); [EurActiv](#); [EurActiv](#); [Euronews](#); [EUObserver](#); [EurActiv](#); [EurActiv](#); [EUObserver](#)

3

**Approval of four new temporary commissioners:** After being grilled by members of European parliamentary committees, four new commissioners have been approved, replacing those who left to become MEPs. They will serve for the rest of the Commission's current term (which is scheduled to end on 31 October). The new commissioners are Jyrki Katainen (Finland – economic and monetary affairs), Ferdinando Nelli Feroci (Italy – industry and entrepreneurship), Martine Reicherts (Luxembourg – justice and fundamental rights) and Jacek Dominik (Poland – budgets). *Links:* [European Parliament](#); [New Europe](#); [EUObserver](#); [EurActiv](#); [European Voice](#); [European Voice](#); [European Parliament](#), [European Parliament](#)

4

**Cameron names Hill for commissioner:** Jonathan Hill has been nominated by David Cameron as the UK's next nominee to the European Commission. This nomination comes during a re-shuffle of Cameron's cabinet ahead of the next general election. Lord Hill of Oareford left his job as Leader of the House of Lords in the changes. Hill's career in politics has mainly been as a behind-the-scenes advisor. He has also worked for a lobbying company in the UK. He is relatively unknown both in the domestic and European political landscapes, but is thought to be a moderate on European issues and a good 'fixer'. *Links:* [New Europe](#); [Reuters](#); [Wall Street Journal](#); [EUObserver](#); [EUObserver](#); [EurActiv](#); [European Voice](#); [EurActiv](#)

5

**Newly-founded party wins the Slovenian general election:** A six week-old party has won Slovenia's general election, with its leader, Miro Cerar, expected to become prime minister. The Party of Miro Cerar (SMC) won around 37% of the votes on a centre-left platform, pledging to cut Slovenia's budget deficit and fight against major corruption scandals. The elections were called by President Borut Pahor after Prime Minister Alenka Bratusek resigned in May 2014. *Links:* [European Voice](#); [EUObserver](#); [New Europe](#); [Deutsche Welle](#); [Financial Times](#); [Financial Times](#); [Bloomberg](#); [BBC News](#); [European Voice](#)

*This is the last Europe Decides Weekly before the summer break.*

*Weekly updates will resume on 5 September, and you can keep up to date with the latest news on Twitter (@europedecides).*

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### ALSO IN THE NEWS

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**Schulz's warning over gender quota for new commissioners:** The European Parliament President has said that the new team of commissioners risks rejection by his institution if the number of women is not increased dramatically. Martin Schulz's announcement comes after the current nine women commissioners sent him a letter pushing for at least ten female commissioners out of the total 28 in Jean-Claude Juncker's team. France seems to have less interest in gender balance than in getting the economic portfolio in the European Commission. Indeed, France has not sent a woman to the Commission since 1999. *Links:* [EUObserver](#); [EurActiv](#)

**Schäuble doubts whether France should receive economic portfolio in new Commission:** German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble expressed doubts over whether France should be given the post of Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs. Schäuble recalled the role played by Pierre Moscovici, the former French finance minister and possible candidate for the post, in the country's economic difficulties. According to Schäuble, whether or not France "of all countries" in its current state should be allocated this post, "is for smarter people than myself to decide". *Link:* [EurActiv](#)

**Rutte 'not available' for Van Rompuy job:** Amid ongoing discussions on filling the EU top positions, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte has dismissed reports suggesting he would consider himself as a candidate to replace Herman Van Rompuy as President of the European Council. "I haven't been asked and I'm not available," he said. *Link:* [EU Business](#)

**European Parliament decides on size of interparliamentary delegations:** The European Parliament has adopted a document setting the numerical strength of its 44 interparliamentary delegations. *Link:* [European Parliament](#)

**New leader for the Spanish Socialists:** Pedro Sanchez, a 42 year-old economics professor has been elected as the new leader of the Spanish Socialist party, PSOE. With a very short parliamentary career and no previous experience at cabinet level, Sanchez represents a generational change in PSOE in a bid to boost citizens' trust in the party after the defeats suffered in the general elections of 2011 and in the May 2014 European elections. *Links:* [Financial Times](#); [Financial Times](#)

**Merkel wants to leave office of own free will, not through defeat:** According to reports, German Chancellor Angela Merkel does not want to remain in office until the next scheduled federal election in 2017. It is suggested by *Der Spiegel* that Merkel would consider the office of either Secretary-General of the United Nations in 2016 or President of the European Council in 2017. The current Minister of Defence, Ursula von der Leyen, is considered to be her likeliest successor. *Links:* [EUObserver](#); [The Telegraph](#)

**Sergey Stanishev to seek re-election as PES Leader:** Sergey Stanishev, the Bulgarian S&D MEP and a former Prime Minister, has said he will not be seeking a nomination to be the next Bulgarian commissioner. Instead, Stanishev announced he will focus on re-election as head of the Party of European Socialists (PES) in 2015. *Link:* [infoBalkans](#)

**Hague resigns amid cabinet reshuffle:** After four years as Foreign Secretary, William Hague has stood down to become Leader of the House of Commons. He also said he will quit as an MP in 2015. His resignation took place in the context of a big government re-shuffle on 15 July. Philip Hammond, the UK's Defence Secretary, was named as Hague's replacement. *Links:* [New Europe](#); [New Europe](#); [Reuters](#); [Deutsche Welle](#); [EUObserver](#); [Reuters](#); [EurActiv](#); [Financial Times](#); [Financial Times](#)

**Secret tapes in Polish 'Waitegate' Scandal could cost Poland key Commission post:** The scandal surrounding the publication of private conversations between Polish politicians, including Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, continues, with Sikorski apparently having dismissed the Polish alliance with the United States and criticized British Prime Minister David Cameron. Sikorski is among the names being considered for the post of High Representative. Prime Minister Donald Tusk suggested that Russia could be behind the bugging to damage Polish chances of getting a top EU job. *Link:* [Newsweek](#)

**Hollande speaks of alliance with Renzi on budget rules:** François Hollande, the French President, declared in a TV interview that he and Italian PM Matteo Renzi "managed to convince fellow EU leaders" that more flexibility was needed in EU's budget deficit rules. Hollande also added France will stick to its promises, as it has missed deficit targets until now. *Link:* [EUObserver](#)