

## WEEKLY ROUND-UP

## TOP STORIES : 7 - 13 September 2013

1

**European Parliament launches 'This time it's different' campaign:** the ACT.REACT.IMPACT campaign launched by the EP on Tuesday 10 will last a year, until the new Commission takes office in November 2014. The campaign aims to explain Parliament's powers, focussing on five themes: the economy, quality of life, money, jobs and Europe in the world. The campaign includes social media, videos, information seminars, conferences and debates, and will cost €16 million. The campaign is to have four phases, with the initial one explaining the legislative powers of MEPs. The second phase, from October, will have "interactive events" in EU cities which will focus on key topics such as jobs and the economy. The third phase, from February, will remind people of when the elections are, using the slogan "Act, React, Impact." The final stage, after the election, will highlight the voting-in of the new European Commission President.

*Links:* [Europolitics](#); [EurActiv](#); [Euobserver](#); [New Europe](#); [EU Reporter](#); [Campaign Video](#).

2

**Barroso delivers State of the Union 2013 address in Strasbourg:** In his speech, Barroso stated that the very fact the European bloc got through the financial crisis is a major achievement. In a speech that made several references to Europe's bloody past, he also warned of the dangers of reversing EU integration. With just a few months to go before the EU institutions finish the current legislative period ahead of the EU elections, Barroso promised to table proposals on the social dimension of Europe, on industrial policy, as well as legislation on how to punish member states that violate the EU's democratic norms. *Links:* [Barroso's speech](#); [EurActiv](#); [Euobserver](#).

3

**Barroso says UKIP 'could win European elections' in the UK:** Barroso has fired off an undiplomatic warning to British Conservatives that they risk losing out to the UKIP party in the next British elections by copying UKIP in their eurosceptic stance. He told MEP Martin Callanan: "Increasingly, your party and your group is looking like UKIP and the eurosceptic and anti-European group [...] I start to have some doubts whether you are going to be elected in Britain or if it is not UKIP that will win the elections." *Links:* [The Times](#); [BBC News](#); [The Independent](#); [EurActiv](#).

4

**Eurobarometer survey shows Europeans want to elect Commission president:** According to the poll, European citizens are more inclined to vote if they are given the chance to choose who will be the next president of the European Commission. Some 70% of people polled also said that they favoured the direct election of the Commission president in the future. The report polled some 27,600 European citizens, and indicated that the number of Europeans describing their feeling of belonging as both "national and European" is up by 6 points (49% of the respondents) since the last survey in June 2012. *Links:* [Europolitics](#); [EurActiv](#).

## ALSO IN THE NEWS

## GENERAL MONITORING

**Interview with Janis Emmanouilidis, European Policy Centre:** The new and improved structure for the 2014 European elections could be a revolutionary change but has also the potential to backfire. Emmanouilidis suggests that although these elections will increase the interest in the European Parliament, there is a risk of disappointment if things do not pan out the way MEPs have imagined, for instance if parties do not manage to identify candidates who suit the purpose. *Link:* [Europolitics](#); [European Policy Centre](#).

**Rehn announces candidacy, Verhofstadt out drumming up support:** Olli Rehn, the Finnish economic and monetary affairs commissioner intends to be an ALDE candidate for European Commission president. Until recently, only the President of the political group ALDE, Guy Verhofstadt, and Anders Fogh Rasmussen, current secretary-general of NATO and former Danish prime minister. Rehn's candidacy is

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likely to sit well with the most liberal in the ALDE (Germany, Eastern Europe and the Scandinavian countries). *Link:* [Europolitics](#)

**UKIP rejects joining Wilders' extreme right-wing coalition:** The President of the Dutch Nationalist Party (PVV), Geert Wilders, well known for his anti-Islamic rants, hopes to form an extreme rightist coalition within the European Parliament. In the run-up to the elections, he has approached various national parties in the extreme right, hoping to form a coalition. So far, UKIP and the Swedish Democrats (who have no MEPs), rejected his proposal. *Link:* [Europolitics](#)

**Malta: S&D incumbents not on EU lists:** the Maltese right-wing Nationalist Party (PN, EPP group) and labour Party (PL, S&D group) have presented their draft lists of candidates for the EU elections. Malta has six seats. So far, the PN has listed eight potential candidates, and the PL seven. *Link:* [Europolitics](#)

**Letta wants choice of Europe's leaders to be closely linked to EP election results:** Italian PM Enrico Letta suggested the choice for the next Commission president should not be made by heads of state or government, but rather by a solid election campaign. Italy will take over the Presidency of the Council in the second half of 2014, and is intending to be a bridge for the renewal of European policy over the next five years, explained Letta. (*Agence Europe*)

**Cohn-Bendit launches 'Europeans Now':** Although MEP Daniel Cohn-Bendit (Greens/EFA, FR) will not stand in the European elections, he and communications consultant Félix Marquardt have launched an initiative called 'Europeans Now', a "non-ideological and progressive European non-profit movement that aims to take European integration to the next level". The initiative aims to encourage young people to sign up to vote in the European elections. They hope to publish their charter at the start of 2014, and have said that it will be "simple and ambitious". *Link:* [Europolitics](#); [www.europeansnow.eu](http://www.europeansnow.eu) or [#EUNOW](#)

**Don't just change Europe's leaders, change its whole direction:** ECR Chairman, MEP Martin Callanan, responded to Barroso's "State of the Union" address by stating that Europe does not need a new leadership, rather a completely new direction. He said the idea of a new eurorealist direction with different ideas was not antagonistic or anti-EU: "*The real anti-Europeans are those whose idea of change in the EU only means moving faster in the old failed direction. The real nationalists are those who force us to accept a European nation that actually in reality nobody wants.*" *Link:* [ECR Group](#)

**VP Viviane Reding to debate Future of Europe with citizens in Namur:** within the Citizens' Dialogue series, VP Reding together with Minister-President of Wallonia Demotte will talk about the future of Europe with citizens and Belgian local high school students soon to be of voting age. The debate will focus on issues of particular interest to today's young generation. *Links:* [EC Midday Express](#); [Future of Europe Debates](#).

**VVD manifesto: more jobs and flexibility, fewer rules, subsidies and Commissioners:** On 9 September ALDE Party member VVD launched its draft manifesto for next year's EP elections. Head of list Hans van Baalen MEP stressed that for the VVD the return to economic growth and more jobs is paramount: "*The EU can be a lot more effective, cheaper and more modern. The VVD wants fewer Commissioners, fewer rules and less waste of money, but more jobs, growth and opportunities for entrepreneurs. Unnecessary institutions such as the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions may be abolished.*" [Draft Manifesto](#) (in Dutch); *Link:* [ALDE Party](#)

**UK's Labour opposition mulls in/out EU referendum pledge:** The Labour party is considering matching the Conservative's offer of an "in/out" referendum on EU membership in a marked policy shift ahead of the next UK general election in 2015. A decision could be announced at Labour Party's annual conference in Brighton later this month. Ed Miliband may offer to convert a "referendum lock" on EU laws into an "in/out" referendum on Britain's EU membership. The so-called "referendum lock" is a policy of the Conservative and Liberal coalition government, unopposed by the Labour party. *Link:* [EurActiv](#)

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**Time to deliver, President Barroso:** in an Op-Ed in the EuObserver, Birgitta Ohlsson, Swedish minister for EU affairs, urged Barroso to deliver on promises made twice, in both this and last year's State of the Union address. Ohlsson referred to the promise of support for human rights and the development of set instruments to tackle violations made by Member States. *Link:* [Euobserver](#)

**EU exit bad for most British businesses, poll suggests:** of 415 firms surveyed by YouGov, 78% thought staying in the EU would be in their best interest. 10% thought it would be better to leave and 12% were not sure. A separate poll on 10 September found that 43% of Britons would choose to leave the EU and 39% would opt to remain in if a referendum were held now. *Link:* [EurActiv](#)

**CoR to support electoral campaign on the ground:** the CoR will actively support and promote the EP's communication activities ahead of the elections, at local and regional level. The CoR contribution will be based on a roadmap guided by the concept of "Going local". The CoR will organise its 6th Summit of Europe's Regions and Cities on 7-8 March 2014 in Athens during the Greek EU Presidency. *Link:* [CoR](#)

**Cameron hits back at Barroso in eurosceptic row:** Prime Minister David Cameron struck back at Barroso on 12 September for saying in his annual 'State of the Union' address that Britain's ruling Conservatives had copied UKIP eurosceptic policies and so would be punished at the polls; Cameron said the president had "got it wrong" and should avoid lecturing his Conservative Party. *Link:* [EurActiv](#)

**Barroso: I proposed putting a 'face' on EU elections:** Barroso said yesterday that he came up with the idea that European political parties present their candidate for the top EU job at the European Parliament elections in 2014 in last year's State of the Union speech, and regretted that little progress had been made in this direction. *Link:* [EurActiv](#)

**Former UKIP deputy leader resigns:** Mike Nattrass, a former deputy leader of UKIP says the party is being run as a "totalitarian" organisation by Nigel Farage. He will sit in the non-aligned group for the remainder of the term. *Link:* [European Voice](#)

**Barroso: Politicians are in 'comfort zone':** Barroso described his annual 'State of the Union' speech about the EU as a call for politicians from across the political spectrum "to come out of their comfort zone" to make a "positive case" for EU integration ahead of the EP elections. *Link:* [European Voice](#)

### GERMAN ELECTIONS

**Germany is a vegetarian in a world full of carnivores:** the FT suggests that the German political debate is peculiarly parochial considering it is the leading power in Europe, as political leaders are debating 'veggie day' and road tolls. *Link:* [Financial Times](#)

**Greens dream of power fading as German election nears:** over the past two months, the Greens have seen their support crumble to 10 percent, a four-year low. The collapse, in the most crucial phase of the campaign, appears to have doomed what faint hopes the party had of returning to power with the Social Democrats (SPD), with whom it ruled from 1998 to 2005. *Link:* [Reuters](#)

**'Team Angie' embark on final sprint to German election day:** 7000 CDU supporters gathered in Düsseldorf to support Merkel and launch the final stage of her election campaign. Merkel stated that in a two vote system, where one vote goes to individual candidates, and the second to a party, "you must give both votes to the CDU." *Link:* [Financial Times](#)

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**UK 'disengaged' from German elections:** Despite the importance of Germany to the British economy, there has been very little interest in the German election campaign in Britain. But on a political level, the UK government is hoping for more stability. *Link:* [Deutsche Welle](#)

**The German election: What's in it for Europe?:** As German election day approaches, the outcome and coalition formed in its aftermath will have an impact on the country's positions on European issues. Roland Freudenstein, Deputy Director and Head of Research at the Centre for European Studies (CES), the European foundation related to the EPP, ponders which the likely post-election scenarios are and what they mean for Europe. *Link:* [EurActiv](#)

**US foreign policy looms over German election:** In Germany's election, controversial US policies on surveillance and Syria have forced the candidates to walk a fine line on relations with Washington. But the US wants Berlin to play a bigger global leadership role. *Link:* [Deutsche Welle](#)

**The German elections will test David Cameron's luck:** Angela Merkel has been patient so far over Cameron's Euroscepticism. But the elections could change everything. *Link:* [The Guardian](#)

**The German election results will burst Britain's Eurosceptic bubble:** The UK media can say what they like, but Angela Merkel will not move her country an inch from its place at the heart of the EU. *Link:* [The Guardian](#)