



Parliament elects new European Commission

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Press release

MEPs approved the new college of 27 Commissioners, as presented by its President-elect Jean-Claude Juncker on Wednesday morning, with 423 votes in favour, 209 against and 67 abstentions. The new Commission now needs to be formally appointed by EU heads of state or government to enable it to take up duty on 1 November for a five-year term.

By way of comparison, the first Barroso Commission was voted into office in November 2004 by 449 votes to 149, with 82 abstentions. The second Barroso Commission was elected on 9 February 2010 by 488 votes to 137, with 72 abstentions.

In his opening statement on Wednesday morning, President-elect of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker outlined a number of changes to portfolios as requested by committees after the hearings of Commissioners-designate.

« I have a contract with the Parliament and I will respect it »

Given its composition, Mr Juncker, said "The future Commission will be very political" He defended its new architecture, with Vice-Presidents to "coordinate, put together and organise ideas". He stressed that he had had to "fight" to get enough women on board his college but admitted that "9 women out of 28 Commissioners is still pathetic."

Taking on board criticisms expressed by MEPs as part of the hearings, Mr Juncker said he had decided to give the pharmaceuticals back to the health commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis, jointly with Elżbieta Bienkowska, who would also be responsible for space policy, citizenship to Dimitris Avramopoulos and sport to Tibor Navracsics. He said he could not agree to the proposal to delete the word "negotiations" in the title of the enlargement portfolio as this would mean deluding the EU candidate countries.

On the proposed Investor - State Dispute Settlement clause in the TTIP talks, Mr Juncker said he would not allow the jurisdiction of EU courts to be limited by such a clause. He also stressed he would stick to his €300 billion investment package proposal, which will be presented "before Christmas."

"The rules (of the stability pact) will not be changed", Mr Juncker said, underlining that "they will be implemented with the degree of flexibility" that the treaties allow.

Manfred Weber (EPP, DE) said that citizens had been central in the process leading up to the election of the next Commission. "European democracy has made big strides forward." His group values Mr Juncker's experience and his political approach. "Now I want to start working on Europe's stability, growth, on migration issues, showing respect for the national level of competence and turning our eyes again beyond European borders", he said.

Gianni Pittella (S&D, IT) said "Today the worst enemy of Europe is not populism, but the lack of courage of our European leaders." We in the S&D will be encouraging you and we will be the critical spirit of the majority." Mr Pittella warned that the Commission's credibility will be at stake on the €300 bn investment plan and spoke out against a "race to the bottom" between European workers. He vowed to revise the posting of workers directive and revive the maternity leave directive.

Syed Kamall (ECR, UK) said "We welcome the fact that the structure does not look like desperately seeking 27 places for 27 people," praising Mr Juncker for having come up "with an integrated structure focused on outcomes." He also welcomed proposals to cut red tape, and focus on the digital market, energy security and the subsidiarity principle.

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"We are disappointed that you did not support Parliament's request to have a budgetary control commissioner", Mr Kamall said, criticising the appointment of Mr Moscovici. "We will abstain. and I confront you with the challenges of the future", he added.

Guy Verhofstadt (ALDE, BE) gave "a clear yes" to the new, hoping it would act differently from the previous one. "We expect a Commission with ambition and vision, to lead us out of the crisis, and not a secretariat of the Council", he said. He insisted on the necessity of a "credible strategy on investment and growth" and asked Mr Juncker to intervene immediately should deadlock occur where Commissioners share portfolios, like Messrs Dombrovskis and Moscovici. Mr Verhofstadt said he supported a letter written by major European artists criticising the attribution of the Culture portfolio to Commissioner Navracsics.

Neoklis Sylikiotis (GUE/NGL, CY) said that the proposed college shows that the new Commission will support neoliberal policies that lead to loss of jobs, harsh austerity and the asphyxiation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This new Commission is the "fruit of an agreement between the S&D, ALDE and EPP groups, which flies in the face of decision making in the EU", he said. "We want to see real change in EU policy in order to get us out of the crisis and create jobs", instead of continuing austerity, he concluded.

Rebecca Harms (Greens/EFA, DE) said "My group will say 'no' to the Juncker Commission", adding that "The decision that Mr Navracsics should take his portfolio is in itself grounds to say no". She also criticised the Juncker team's approach to climate policy and the lack of a sustainable development focus, as well as its "irresponsible approach" to refugee policy.

Nigel Farage (EFDD, UK) said "We will vote against this anti-democratic form of government", adding that "This will be the last European Commission that governs Great Britain, because at the end of the five years, we will be out of here".

Harald Vilimsky (NI, AT) said "Just as we didn't mourn the departure of Mr Barroso, we're not particularly happy with Mr Juncker being sworn in either", adding that "Neither Mr Barroso nor Mr Juncker were candidates of the people (...) They represent the technocracy, the nomenklatura", he added. "We will vote against you and by doing so, vote in favour of the family of European peoples", he added.

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