



European Parliament press kit for the 26-27 June European Council

[25-06-2014 - 17:52]

Background

The 26-27 June European Council will discuss inter alia the nomination of a candidate President for the European Commission, on whom the European Parliament is to vote at its 14-17 July plenary session in Strasbourg. The Council will also discuss this issue with Parliament's acting President Gianni Pittella on Friday morning in Brussels.

The outgoing Parliament repeatedly pointed out that the nomination must take account of the May 2014 European election results. This requirement was also reiterated by Parliament's Conference of Presidents at its 27 May meeting and in exchanges with European Council President Herman Van Rompuy.

Parliament's Conference of Presidents therefore backs Mr Jean-Claude Juncker, as the candidate of the European People's Party, the biggest political group in the House, to make the first to attempt to form the required majority within the European Council and Parliament for the post of the Commission President.

The European Council will also adopt the 2014 country-specific economic reform recommendations for each EU member state. These recommendations, proposed by the European Commission early in June and since endorsed by EU heads of state, are the backbone of "European Semester" economic policy coordination.

MEPs have regularly highlighted the need for member states to act on these recommendations. The findings of a recent Parliament study of their progress to date is included in this press kit.

This press kit provides selected press releases about Parliament's priorities on the above issues.

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Background

Conference of Presidents statement on Commission President Election

The Conference of Presidents held a meeting on 27 May 2014 ahead of the informal dinner of EU Heads of State and Governments scheduled for today, and is committed to the following ago.

Declaration Number 11 related to Art 17.6 and 17.7 TEU states that "the European Parliament and European Council are jointly responsible for the smooth running of the process leading to the election of the President of the European Commission (...)" .

"Representatives of the European Parliament and of the Council will thus conduct the necessary consultations (...)."

According to the letter and the spirit of the Treaty, and taking full account of the results of the European elections, we commit ourselves to a dialogue and consultations amongst the Leaders of the Political Groups in the House, with the aim of determining the European candidate to become the next Commission President from the political family able to form the necessary qualified majority in the European Parliament.

The candidate of the largest Group Mr Jean Claude Juncker will be the first to attempt to form the required majority.

On this basis, we invite the European Council, to start inter-institutional consultations in conformity with Declaration 11.

Note to editors

The decision has been taken with the support of political groups representing 645 Members in the current legislature and at least 561 in the one which will start on 1 July.

The Conference of Presidents decided that Mr Daul (EPP) and Mr Swoboda (SD) would hand over the statement to European Council President Herman Van Rompuy today and inform him of the decisions of the Conference of Presidents as set out in the statement above.

Background

EP Conference of Presidents - practical arrangements for election of next Commission President

The European Parliament Group Leaders and the President of the European Parliament, in the framework of the Conference of Presidents, met today European Council President Herman Van Rompuy to discuss practical arrangements for electing the next President of the European Commission.

A large majority of the EP Political Group Leaders agreed that the next European Commission President must be elected from the "lead candidates" already put forward by the political groups.

The Conference of Presidents also agreed that there will be a meeting of the Conference of Presidents on Tuesday 27 May 2014 at 11.30am to evaluate the results of the election.

In line with Declaration 11 of the Lisbon Treaty, European Parliament President Schulz will inform European Council President of this initial evaluation in the Conference of Presidents ahead of the informal meeting of Heads of State and government on the same day.

There was also a large majority of political group leaders who agree that the European Council should evaluate the European election results and consult the European Parliament political groups before coming with a proposal for a new Commission President.

Background - Lisbon Treaty provisions for electing the Commission President

For the first time, in accordance with the Lisbon Treaty, the President of the European Commission will be elected by the European Parliament.

The procedure requires the European Council to propose a candidate (by a qualified majority vote) to the European Parliament, taking account of the results of elections and after consulting its representatives.

The European Parliament then elects the Commission President by an absolute majority of its members. Should the candidate not obtain the required majority in Parliament, the Council must propose another candidate within a month.

Lisbon Treaty Declaration 11 states that consultations between the European Council and the European Parliament, taking into account the result of elections to the European Parliament, shall take place prior to the decision of the European Council to nominate a candidate.

Background

Elections 2014: EU-wide campaign to choose who runs the EU for next five years

Candidates for the job of EU Commission President should present their political programmes in all EU countries and hold a series of public debates, says a resolution passed on Thursday. European political parties should be listed on ballot papers along with national ones, and name their candidates for President well before the elections, to buy time to run EU-wide campaigns on European issues, MEPs say.

Recommendations to the EU member states and political parties for improving the organisation of the next European elections are set out in a resolution by Andrew Duff (ALDE, UK), adopted by 507 votes to 120 with 18 abstentions.

Public debates between candidates for Commission president

European political parties should name their candidates for Commission President "sufficiently well in advance of the election" to enable them to mount an EU-wide campaign on European issues, based on the party platform and the programme of their candidate for Commission President, stresses the resolution.

Candidates should personally present their political programmes in all EU member states, MEPs say. They also urge European political parties to hold a series of public debates between the nominated candidates and ask EU countries to permit political broadcasts by the European parties.

MEPs expect that "the candidate for Commission president put forward by the European political party that wins the most seats in the Parliament will be the first to be considered, with a view to ascertaining his or her ability to secure the support of the necessary absolute majority in Parliament".

Put European political parties on the ballot

Parliament urges member states and political parties to see that the names of the European political parties and, where appropriate, their emblems, appear on the ballot paper. No member state currently does this.

National political parties should inform citizens during the electoral campaign which European political party they belong to and also which candidate they support for Commission President.

Candidate MEPs

Political parties should ensure that the names of candidate Members of the European Parliament are made public at least six weeks before the start of polling. Parties should also field more female candidates, and encourage equal representation wherever possible.

Background

EU 2014 elections: give European voters bigger say on Commission, say MEPs

European political parties should propose candidates for Commission President at the next European elections, which should be moved forward to May 2014, said the European Parliament in a resolution passed on Thursday.

Members recommended that each European alliance of political parties should propose a candidate to run for European Commission President and lead their 2014 European election campaign. This would boost the profile of the elections and offer an added incentive for citizens to participate, say MEPs.

As many members as possible of the next European Commission should be chosen among newly-elected MEPs so as to give voters more say, says the text, which argues that this would strike a better balance with Council, given that governments currently nominate all candidates.

Member states should also propose two candidates, a man and a woman, for each Commissioner's post, so as to ensure gender equality, MEPs add.

Elections in May, not June

The resolution also recommends holding the next European elections in May rather than June, as for previous ballots. MEPs propose polling days on 15-18 May or 22-25 May 2014 to give the new Parliament time to prepare the election of the Commission President in July.

Finally, Parliament suggests member states to modify their electoral law to introduce "appropriate and proportionate" minimum thresholds for the allocation of seats so to ensure that the House can work smoothly, as well as duly reflecting the citizens' choice.

According to EU treaties, the European Parliament elects the President of the Commission and gives its consent to the whole college of commissioners. The new Commission is due to take office on 1 November 2014.

The resolution was passed with 316 votes in favour, 90 against and 20 abstentions.

Background

Study on implementation of economic reform recommendations

The European Council will adopt the 2014 country specific recommendations for each Member State. These economic reform recommendations, proposed by the Commission in early June and subsequently adopted by the heads of state, are the backbone of the European Semester for economic policy coordination, itself central to the new economic governance structures put in place over the last three years.

MEPs have regularly pointed out that the implementation of the recommendations has often been underwhelming. Many member states, although endorsing the recommendations themselves during European Councils, often do not translate them into real reforms. This undermines the goal set by heads of state to coordinate economic policy better across the EU.

In a resolution from October 2013, MEPs concluded that for 2012 only 15% of the recommendations had been significantly implemented. A detailed study by the European Parliament services, published in March 2014 and based on analysis by the IMF, the OECD and the European Commission, shows that in 2011 and 2012 governments have on average 'fully implemented' 18% of recommendations and have carried out very little or no work on 43% of them..

During the next Parliamentary term MEPs are expected to devote particular attention to scrutinising how well governments are translating the reform commitments they sign up to.

An infographic summarising the study can be found at the link below.