



"This time it's different" - Parliamentary hearings

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Before the commissioners-designate as presented by incoming Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker can take office and start work, members of the European Parliament will exercise their power of democratic scrutiny enshrined in the Treaty by holding hearings to quiz the 27 candidates on their skills and their qualifications for the posts proposed to them.

These hearings, which will be public, will take place from 29 September to 7 October. The candidates will be heard by the parliamentary committee(s) active in their proposed fields of responsibility.

After each hearing, the committee will meet in camera to draft its evaluation of the candidate's expertise and performance which will then be sent to the Conference of Presidents, Parliament's political group leaders. In the past, these hearings led to candidates withdrawing or having their portfolios changed.

For more detailed and continuously updated information on the hearings, see <http://www.elections2014.eu/en/new-commission>

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Background

Timetable for hearings by the Parliament

29 September to 7 October: public hearings of Commissioners-designate before the parliamentary committees relevant to their proposed fields of responsibility.

22 October: European Parliament plenary session in Strasbourg where the Commission President, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and candidate Vice-President of the Commission and other Commissioners-designate need to be approved in a vote of consent by Parliament by a majority of votes cast. If approved, they can be appointed by the Council, acting by a qualified majority.

1 November: the European Commission 2014-2019 starts its mandate and takes office.

Background

Timeline of events

22-25 May 2014: citizens of 28 European Union Member States elected 751 members of the European Parliament. The EPP again emerged as the biggest political group in Parliament, with 221 MEPs. The EPP party candidate for Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, a former Prime Minister of Luxembourg and Eurogroup chairman, was therefore first in line to seek the support of EP political groups for his nomination.

27 June 2014: the European Council of EU government leaders officially nominated Mr Juncker as its candidate for President of the next European Commission, with 26 countries in favour and two against.

8 and 9 July: Mr Juncker made a statement to Parliament in plenary session in Strasbourg, followed by a debate with the political group leaders. MEPs elected him as Commission President with 422 votes in favour, 250 against and 47 abstentions out of 729 votes cast.

mid-July: the Commission sent Member States requests to propose their candidate Commissioners.

30 August: the European Council appointed Ms Federica Mogherini as the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and candidate Vice-President of the Commission and Mr Donald Tusk as next President of European Council.

5 September: Incoming Commission President presented the list of Commissioners-designate.

10 September: Commission President Juncker announced the allocation of portfolios to the various candidate Commissioners and set out his plans for the future organisation of the European Commission.

16 - 18 September: the Conference of Committee Chairs and Conference of Presidents of the EP decided how the hearings will be held, i.e. before which forums each Commissioner-designate will have to appear, and finalised the time schedule for the hearings. Committees sent written questions to the Commissioners-designate.

26 September noon: deadline for candidates to reply to written questions

Background

Commissioners' Hearings in previous terms

In 2004 **José Manuel Barroso** was nominated by the European Council on 30 June. Hearings took place from 27 September to 8 October. Three commissioners came under fire from Parliamentary committees, **Rocco Buttiglione**, (Italy: Justice, Freedom and Security) **Ingrida Udre** (Latvia: Taxation) and **Laszlo Kovacs** (Hungary: Energy). The vote on the Commission had been scheduled for 27 October in Strasbourg, but Barroso concluded that the first team he had put forward would not obtain enough support from MEPs, and therefore opted not to submit this team to a vote of approval by Parliament. On 4 November he presented a new team to the European Council. Rocco Buttiglione was replaced by **Franco Frattini** and Ingrida Udre by **Andris Piebalgs**. M. Kovacs stayed but was assigned the portfolio of Taxation rather than energy. New hearings were organised on 15 and 16 November for the three commissioners-designate and the Parliament approved the reshuffled Commission on 18 November 2004.

On 10 February 2010 the election of the European Commission brought to an end almost 5 months of nomination process, stalled due to delays in the ratification of the Lisbon treaty. In January 2010 Commission President **José Manuel Barroso** had to withdraw the candidate from Bulgaria, Ms **Rumiana Jeleva**, who came under fire from the EP Development Committee. She was replaced by **Kristalina Georgieva** and after her hearing on 3 February the Parliament approved the full Commission at the plenary in Strasbourg by 488 in favour to 137 against and 72 abstentions.

Background

Procedure for EP hearings of the Commissioners-designate

The European Parliament committees sent written questions to the Commissioners-designate on 18 September. By 26 September each candidate had to respond to at least five questions:

- two general questions common to all,- the first on general competence, European commitment and personal independence, and the second on management of the portfolio and cooperation with Parliament and
- three questions from the committee responsible. Joint committees may also put an additional two questions each.

From 29 September to 7 October, the Commissioners-designate will be heard by the European Parliament committees relevant to their proposed fields of responsibility. The hearings are held in public and broadcast and web-streamed live.

Where portfolios are mixed, there are three options for the hearings:

- if the portfolio falls within the remit of a single committee, the candidate will be heard only by that committee;
- if the portfolio falls more or less equally within the remit of more than one committee, the candidate will be heard jointly by those committees;
- if the portfolio falls mainly within the remit of one and only to a small extent within that of another committee, the candidate will be heard by the committee mainly responsible, with the association of the other committee or committees.

The hearing of the First Vice-President designate Frans Timmermans will have a different format. He will appear before a Conference of Presidents open to all MEPs in view of his horizontal responsibilities.

Each hearing will last three hours. Candidates may make an opening statement of no longer than 15 minutes. Where possible, questions will be grouped together by theme. The bulk of the speaking time will be allotted to political groups. Before the end of the hearing, the candidate will have the chance to make a brief closing statement.

Each committee will then meet in camera to draft its evaluation of the candidate's expertise and performance, and then send it to the President of the Parliament. In the past, these hearings have sometimes led to candidates withdrawing or having their portfolio changed.

Where committees require further information in order to complete their evaluation, the President will write on their behalf to the incoming President of the Commission.

The committees' evaluations will be examined by the committee chairs and presented to the Conference of Presidents, which will declare the hearings closed.

Background

Commissioners-designate and portfolios

Vice-Presidents		
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Policy and Security Policy	Federica Mogherini	(Italy)
First Vice-President for Better Regulation, Inter-Institutional Relations, Rule of Law and Charter of Fundamental Rights	Frans Timmermans	(Netherlands)
Vice-President for Budget and Human Resources	Kristalina Georgieva	(Bulgaria)
Vice-President for Energy Union	Alenka Bratušek	(Slovenia)
Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness	Jyrki Katainen	(Finland)
Vice-President for The Euro and Social Dialogue	Valdis Dombrovskis	(Latvia)
Vice-President for Digital Single Market	Andrus Ansip	(Estonia)
Commissioners		
Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality	Věra Jourová	(Czech Republic)
Digital Economy and Society	Günther Oettinger	(Germany)
Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs	Pierre Moscovici	(France)
Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility	Marianne Thyssen	(Belgium)
Regional Policy	Corina Crețu	(Romania)
European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations	Johannes Hahn	(Austria)
Migration and Home Affairs	Dimitris Avramopoulos	(Greece)
Health and Food Safety	Vytenis Andriukaitis	(Lithuania)
Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union	Jonathan Hill	(United Kingdom)
Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs	Elżbieta Bieńkowska	(Poland)
Climate Action and Energy	Miguel Arias Cañete	(Spain)
International Cooperation and Development	Neven Mimica	(Croatia)
Competition	Margrethe Vestager	(Denmark)
Transport and Space	Maroš Šefčovič	(Slovakia)
Trade	Cecilia Malmström	(Sweden)
Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries	Karmenu Vella	(Malta)
Education, Culture, Youth and Citizenship	Tibor Navracscics	(Hungary)
Research, Science and Innovation	Carlos Moedas	(Portugal)
Agriculture and Rural Development	Phil Hogan	(Ireland)
Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management	Christos Stylianides	(Cyprus)

Background

Useful information

A dedicated website is available containing all information and news on the hearings of the candidate Commissioners before the European Parliament committees. Information includes the Commissioners' CVs and relevant procedures and documents.

<http://www.elections2014.eu/en/new-commission/>

The website will also feature live webstreaming and VODs of all hearings.

<http://www.elections2014.eu/en/new-commission/hearings>

Infographics are available on the news portal of the European Parliament's website <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/infographics>

Press officers for the different policy areas and nationalities are available for further information, both in Brussels and in the capitals of member states. Link to the contact list is below this section.

Audiovisual media

For audiovisual media, a dedicated website will offer broadcast-quality material

<http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Page.aspx?id=1527>

Media library on Commissioners' hearings 1995 - 2014

<http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Page.aspx?id=1469>

Europe by satellite, EbS <http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/ebs/schedule.cfm>

For further information, contact the hotline/newsdesk HotlineNewsdesk@europarl.europa.eu

Social media

Follow our Twitter accounts for latest updates on timing, practical information and live coverage of the hearings. The specialised Twitter accounts are listed in the next section.

EP PressService [@EuroParlPress](https://twitter.com/EuroParlPress)

There will also be a Twitter dashboard for every hearing, using a word cloud to show in real time the meeting-related topics most discussed on Twitter. www.ephearings2014.eu/epdashboard

A Tumblr account will offer access to 27 Storify files, aggregating material from each hearing: www.ephearings2014.eu

European Parliament will also cover the hearings on its social media profiles:

- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/europeanparliament>
- Instagram <http://ow.ly/BO5s0>
- Flickr <http://ow.ly/BLith>
- Storify https://storify.com/europarl_en

Background

Parliament Committees' Twitter accounts

AFET	@EP_ForeignAff	https://twitter.com/EP_ForeignAff
DROI	@EP_HumanRights	https://twitter.com/EP_HumanRights
DEVE	@EP_Development	https://twitter.com/EP_Development
INTA	@EP_Trade	https://twitter.com/EP_Trade
BUDG	@EP_Budgets	https://twitter.com/EP_Budgets
CONT	@EP_BudgControl	https://twitter.com/EP_BudgControl
ECON	@EP_Economics	https://twitter.com/EP_Economics
EMPL	@EPSocialAffairs	https://twitter.com/EPSocialAffairs
ENVI	@EP_Environment	https://twitter.com/EP_Environment
ITRE	@EP_Industry	https://twitter.com/EP_Industry
IMCO	@EP_SingleMarket	https://twitter.com/EP_SingleMarket
TRAN	@EP_Transport	https://twitter.com/EP_Transport
REGI	@EP_Regional	https://twitter.com/EP_Regional
AGRI	@EP_Agriculture	https://twitter.com/EP_Agriculture
PECH	@EP_Fisheries	https://twitter.com/EP_Fisheries
CULT	@EPCulture	https://twitter.com/EPCulture
JURI	@EP_Legal	https://twitter.com/EP_Legal
LIBE	@EP_Justice	https://twitter.com/EP_Justice
AFCO	@EPInstitutional	https://twitter.com/EPInstitutional
FEMM	@EP_GenderEqual	https://twitter.com/EP_GenderEqual
SEDE	@EP_Defence	https://twitter.com/EP_Defence
PETI	@EP_Petitions	https://twitter.com/EP_Petitions

Background

Hearings timetable

Monday 29 September

14.30 - 17.30

JAN 2Q2 - Karmenu **VELLA** (Malta), **ENVI/ PECH**

JAN 4Q2 - Cecilia **MALMSTRÖM** (Sweden), **INTA**

18.30 - 21.30

JAN 2Q2- Neven **MIMICA** (Croatia), **DEVE**

JAN 4Q2 - Günther **OETTINGER** (Germany), **ITRE/ CULT**

Tuesday 30 September

09.00 - 12.00

JAN 2Q2 - Carlos **MOEDAS** (Portugal), **ITRE**

JAN 4Q2 - Vytenis **ANDRIUKAITIS** (Lithuania), **ENVI**

13.30 - 16.30

JAN 2Q2- Dimitris **AVRAMOPOULOS** (Greece), **LIBE**

JAN 4Q2 - Johannes **HAHN** (Austria), **AFET**

18.00 - 21.00

JAN 2Q2- Christos **STYLIANIDES** (Cyprus), **DEVE**

JAN 4Q2 - Maroš **ŠEFČOVIČ** (Slovakia), **TRAN**

Background

Wednesday 1 October

09.00 - 12.00

JAN 2Q2 - Corina **CREȚU** (Romania), **REGI**

JAN 4Q2 - Marianne **THYSSEN** (Belgium), **EMPL**

13.30 - 16.30

JAN 2Q2- Jonathan **HILL** (UK), **ECON**

JAN 4Q2 - Věra **JOUROVÁ**(Czech Rep.), **IMCO/ JURI/ LIBE/ FEMM**

18.00 - 21.00

JAN 2Q2- Tibor **NAVRACSICS** (Hungary), **CULT**

JAN 4Q2 - Miguel **ARIAS CAÑETE** (Spain), **ITRE/ ENVI**

Thursday 02 October

09.00 - 12.00

JAN 2Q2 - Pierre **MOSCOVICI** (France), **ECON**

JAN 4Q2 - Phil **HOGAN** (Ireland), **AGRI**

13.30 - 16.30

Background

JAN 2Q2- Kristalina **GEORGIEVA** (Bulgaria), **BUDG/ CONT/ JURI**

JAN 4Q2 - Elżbieta **BIEŃKOWSKA** (Poland), **ITRE/ IMCO**

18.00 - 21.00

JAN 2Q2- Margarethe **VESTAGER** (Denmark), **ECON**

Monday 6 October

14.30 - 17.30

JAN 2Q2- Valdis **DOMBROVSKIS** (Latvia), **ECON/ EMPL**

JAN 4Q2 - Alenka **BRATUŠEK** (Slovenia), **ITRE/ ENVI**

18.30 - 21.30

JAN 2Q2- Andrus **ANSIP** (Estonia), **IMCO**

JAN 4Q2 - Federica **MOGHERINI** (Italy), **AFET**

Tuesday 7 October

10.00 - 13.00

JAN 2Q2 - Jyrki **KATAINEN** (Finland), **ECON/ EMPL/ ITRE**

14.30 - 17.30

JAN 2Q2 - Frans **TIMMERMANS** (The Netherlands), **Open Conference of Presidents**