



Martin Schulz elected President of the European Parliament

Plenary sessions

MEPs elected Martin Schulz to be the new European Parliament president with 387 votes in favour out of 670 cast. The 56-year old German MEP will lead the European parliament for two and half years, until the beginning of the next legislature in July 2014.

Martin Schulz (S&D, Germany) replaces the outgoing President Jerzy Buzek (EPP, Poland).

"This Chamber is the place where the interests of the people are defended"

In a brief address to the European Parliament in Strasbourg immediately after the vote, Mr Schulz said: "We must grasp the fact that people in Europe have little time for institutional debates because they are too busy worrying about their future, their jobs, their pensions (...). This Chamber is the place where the interests of the people are defended".

President Schulz warned that "for the first time since it was founded, the failure of the European Union is a realistic possibility" adding that, our interests can no longer be separated from those of our neighbours; on a shared understanding that the EU is not a zero-sum game, in which one person must lose so that another can win. The reverse is true: either we all lose – or we all win. The fundamental basis for this is the Community method. It is not a technocratic concept, but the principle at the heart of everything the European Union stands for!".

Over the past two years summits of the Heads of State and Government, meant "the representatives of the peoples of Europe have essentially been reduced to the role of rubber-stamping agreements reached between governments in backrooms in Brussels: the European Parliament will not stand idly by and watch this process continue", Mr Schulz said, adding that "the intergovernmental agreement on a new fiscal union will be the first test".

"Whoever breaches the values enshrined in our Charter of Fundamental Rights must reckon with us as adversaries. That is our duty as Members of the European Parliament". He also announced the presence of Hungary Prime Minister Viktor Orban tomorrow in plenary to discuss his country's controversial constitutional provisions.

A full version of the President's address will be available via the link next to this article.

Full result of the vote for the President of the European Parliament

Under Parliament's Rules of Procedure, to be elected President, a candidate must win an absolute majority of the valid votes cast, i.e. 50 per cent plus one. Blank or spoiled ballots do not count in calculating the majority required.

The result of the first ballot was as follows:

Votes cast: 699

Blank or invalid votes: 29

Valid votes cast: 670

Absolute majority of votes cast required to be elected: 336

Press release

Votes for the candidates:

Martin Schulz (S&D, DE) 387: Mr Schulz duly elected President of the European Parliament

Nirj Deva (ECR, UK): 142

Diana Wallis (ALDE, UK): 141

Right after the speech by the newly-elected President Schulz, political groups' leaders took the floor to comment on the outcome. Most groups expressed the hope that his presidency would reinforce the Union and Parliament's role, while a few others stressed disagreements with his first speech as President.

On Behalf of EPP, chair Joseph Daul (FR), after congratulating Mr Schulz on his election said "You must, in our view, have three priorities: defending the Community method, advocating the Community method and safeguarding the Community method", stressing that "nothing is more important than showing our citizens that the Euro is a strong and sustainable currency, as long as we do what we should have done at its creation, i.e. provide political and economic governance".

S&D Vice-President Maria Badia i Cutchet (ES), said "There is a great need for the new President to strengthen the role of the Parliament. In the light of the latest discussions around a new inter-governmental treaty, this is of ever greater importance. We need to ensure that any future action is based on the principle of democratic participation and thus the Community method".

Guy Verhofstadt (BE), leader of the ALDE group, said "I want a President who fights in favour of the EU, (...) who explains to Member States the truth, that only through a political economic and fiscal union we can save the Union" with a Parliament able "to show the way out of the crisis and that Europe is the solution".

Rebecca Harms (Greens/EFA, DE), said with regard to the next challenges facing Parliament that "A new approach is needed to press on to the goals set". She suggested that Mr Schulz should "not give in to diplomacy but take that rough along with you when discussing with Barroso, Van Rompuy, Merkel and Sarkozy".

Martin Callanan (UK), on behalf of the ECR group, told Mr Schulz that although "We did not agree with many things you said this morning (...), we will ensure fair cooperation with you", stressing that his first duty will be to represent the Parliament at the next European Summit.

Kartika Tamara Liotard (NL), Vice-Chair of the GUE/NGL group, told Mr Schulz "It is a shame you're not a woman". She added that "Some people elected you because they know you are a tough fighter and I believe Parliament has a big role to play in crisis", urging him to "make sure there is more transparency in these negotiations" on the fiscal compact.

Nigel Farage (UK, EFD), wondered "What kind of President Schulz are we going to get? A calm speaker (...) or the Schulz we got to know: angry, intolerant of everybody with a different point of view, anti-British and who does not like the free market?" He concluded "We want a Europe of trade (...), not a superpower".

The votes to choose Vice-Presidents and Quaestors will take place on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning.

You can follow the ballot live on EP Live and EBS+.

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