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What makes a good MEP?

Story

Good negotiating skills, clear values and language skills are just three attributes required to be an effective MEP according to some Members we spoke to recently. They also stressed the need to have a good overview of the state of Europe and be able to listen to other points of view. Given very differing political cultures and approaches to politics across the 27 EU states we asked a random selection of Members from all corners of Europe what they think makes a good MEP.

Young Spanish Member, **Daniel Bautista**, of the centre right EPP-ED group believes Members "should have very good knowledge of not just the workings of the European Institutions but also a good overview of the state of Europe, politically and culturally." He also went on to stress "the importance of having an open character and being able to negotiate with MEPs from other countries and political groups", and "the ability to speak at least one foreign language".

For British Labour party Member **Arlene McCarthy** "a good Euro-MP needs to listen to and take up concerns and issues, identify where Europe can be part of the solution, cut through Brussels bureaucracy and work across national and party political boundaries to get results."

The chair of the Parliament's Internal Market Committee went on to say: "People power can win with the support and advocacy of a good Euro MP. That's how we changed European gun law to help cut crime on our streets and how we have given new rights to consumers from cutting mobile phone roaming charges to improving toy safety."

Swedish Social Democrat **Jan Andersson** chairs the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs: "A good MEP is enthusiastic, stays well-informed about important dossiers and knows how to listen to other people's views. They also have clear values and know what they want, and are not afraid to stand up for their opinion."

He went on to say that they should also have good connections with other MEPs to achieve a good compromise. "It is also good to have a lot of energy since European decision making sometimes can be very hectic."

"Positive approach" stressed

Romana Jordan Cizelj is a Slovenian scientist elected in 2004. She noted that "knowledge of one's subject areas" and persistence in achieving your goals are important.

She also believes that "creativity and diligence" are qualities a good MEP should have. Ms Jordan Cizelj - an MEP for the EPP-ED group - also stresses the importance of being "communicative with people" and above all to have a "positive approach" to one's work.

Paul Rübiger, the Austrian Member of the EPP-ED group who drafted the Parliament's response to new measures to reduce roaming charges for phones told us: "You have to realise problems and then work on their solutions, it is in reality a problem-solving mechanism that

the European Parliament is representing. You need a lot of idealism to keep on building this Europe. It is nice to be part of this history making process and to be part of what Europe is building."

"Important for Members to be active in the House"

Former Estonian Prime Minister turned Socialist MEP, **Andres Tarand**, told us that "the experience of being an MEP was different between so called new and old EU member states." He felt that often "it is better to have younger people as MEPs as they have good language skills and can be more flexible sometimes".

Mr Tarand also stressed that former Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers can offer their expertise especially in areas such as foreign affairs. He also said "it is important for all Members to be active in the House." He also made the point that the Baltic States, Britain and Scandinavia often shared similar political outlooks on many issues.

In just a few weeks the people of Europe will have a chance to decide what they think makes a good MEP when they go to the polls to elect a new European Parliament for the next five years.