This short briefing for MSPs provides details of the composition of the new European Parliament following the European Parliamentary elections and the new European Commission to be led by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker.

European Parliament Chamber (Courtesy of the European Parliament)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Both the European Parliament and the European Commission begin new five year mandates in 2014. In the case of the European Parliament this follows the elections in June, and in the case of the European Commission it follows the expiry of the mandate of President Barroso’s second Commission.

The European Parliament elections held in June 2014 saw 751 members elected from across the European Union’s 28 Member States.

The Members of the European Parliament sit in political groups – they are not organised by nationality, but by political affiliation. Following the election there are seven political groups in the European Parliament. The largest political group is the European People’s Party with 221 seats followed by the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in Europe with 191 seats.

Six members were elected in Scotland out of a UK total of 73. The Scottish membership comprises 2 SNP MEPs, 2 Labour MEPs, 1 Conservative MEP and 1 UKIP MEP. Ian Hudghton and Alyn Smith were both re-elected for the SNP, and David Martin and Catherine Stihler were both re-elected for the Labour Party. As a result of Struan Stevenson stepping down, the Conservative Party had a new representative with Ian Duncan being elected for the first time. David Coburn was elected to become Scotland’s first UKIP MEP.

Following the election, analysts have suggested that the parliament may become more polarised and it may require more cooperation between the two largest political groups (the European People’s Party and the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in Europe) to make progress in agreeing legislation.

It has also been suggested that the “anti-European” parties elected (predominantly involved in the Europe of Freedom and Democracy group and the non-attached members) may look to make progress on issues such as immigration.

The European Commission is the executive of the European Union. It consists of 28 appointed members, one from each member state. The Members of the Commission are generally known as “Commissioners”. As Members of the Commission they are committed to acting in the interests of the Union as a whole and not in the interests of their own national governments. A new Commission is appointed every five years, within six months of the elections to the European Parliament.

The European Commission will be headed by the new President, Jean-Claude Juncker the former Prime Minister of Luxembourg. He was elected using the approach set out in the Treaties (which is also known as the Spitzenkandidaten system) whereby the nominated candidate of the largest grouping to emerge following the European Parliamentary elections was endorsed by the European Parliament and subsequently by Member State Governments in the European Council.
Following his nomination, the Commission President confirmed his college of commissioners. The college includes 19 male and 9 female nominations. The new Commission includes 5 former Prime Ministers, 4 Deputy Prime Ministers, 19 former Ministers, 7 returning Commissioners and 8 former Members of the European Parliament.
THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The European Parliament is the only directly elected body in the EU. It represents the people of the EU and, shares legislative and budgetary power with the Council of the European Union. The European Parliament has been directly elected by the citizens of the member states since 1979. Elections by universal suffrage take place every five years. The last European Parliament elections took place in June 2014.

The Treaty of Lisbon stipulates that the European Parliament shall not exceed seven hundred and fifty in number, plus the President – so 751 members in total. The European Parliament sits in Strasbourg and Brussels and the Parliament’s Secretariat is located in Luxembourg. The Parliament meets in plenary session for twelve four-day part-sessions in Strasbourg and six additional two-day part-sessions in Brussels. Two weeks a month are devoted to meetings of parliamentary committees and inter-parliamentary delegations, whilst one week a month is set aside for political group meetings. MEPs are also allocated four weeks a year where they can concentrate exclusively on their constituency work.

The European Parliament has a representative office in all EU member states and it also has a representative office based in Scotland.

Scotland currently has 6 MEPs who form part of a United Kingdom total of 73 Members (European Parliament 2014a).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Seats in the European Parliament by Member State</th>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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The European Parliament plays a major role in the agreement of nearly all legal acts of the union. Under the Ordinary Legislative Procedure\(^1\), the European Parliament is required to jointly agree legislation with the Council of Ministers.

**COMPOSITION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 2014-2019**

The Members of the European Parliament sit in political groups – they are not organised by nationality, but by political affiliation. There are currently seven political groups in the European Parliament. The pie chart below (EU Issue Tracker 2014a) shows the composition of each of the parliamentary groups following the European Parliament election in May 2014.

![Pie chart showing the composition of the European Parliament groups](image)

- **EPP** - European People’s Party (Christian Democrats)
- **S&D** - Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in Europe (centre-left)
- **ALDE** - Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (liberal)
- **EUL/NGL** - European United Left-Nordic Green Left (left-wing)
- **Greens/EFA** - Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens and regionalists/nationalists)
- **ECR** - European Conservatives and Reformists Group (right-wing)
- **EFD** - Europe of Freedom and Democracy (Eurosceptic)
- **NI** - Non-attached (MEPs not part of any group)

**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PRESIDENTS AND VICE-PRESIDENTS**

One of the first tasks the newly elected Members of the European Parliament undertook was to elect a new President and 14 Vice-Presidents. According to Scotland Europa:

“Following negotiations between the two largest groups, German Socialist Martin Schulz became the first ever MEP to take up the Presidency for a second two and a half year term. He will likely be replaced by an EPP candidate at this mid-term point. Notable amongst the Vice-presidents are Antonio Tajani and Oli Rehn, both of whom recently

\(^1\) The ordinary legislative procedure is the main legislative procedure for the European Union. It is used to agree legislation in most areas of Union competence. Formerly known as co-decision, it was introduced by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and requires both the European Parliament and the European Council to agree on a Commission proposal, including agreement on any amendments, before it can become law.
stepped down as European Commissioners to take office as MEPs.” (Scotland Europa 2014)

UK REPRESENTATION WITHIN THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

MEPs from the United Kingdom are represented in six of the seven parliamentary groups. (EU Issue Tracker 2014b) The full breakdown of group membership is provided below.

- 20 Labour MEPs are members of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats.
- 19 Conservative MEPs and 1 Ulster Unionist MEP are members of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group.
- 2 Scottish National Party, 3 Green Party and 1 Plaid Cymru MEPs are members of the Green and European Free Alliance group in the European Parliament.
- 24 United Kingdom Independence Party MEPs are members of the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group.
- 1 Liberal Democrat MEP is a member of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe.
- 1 Sinn Fein MEP is a member of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left Group and 1 Democratic Unionist MEP is not aligned to any parliamentary group.
- There are no representatives from the United Kingdom in the European Parliament’s largest grouping – the European People’s Party.

SCOTLAND’S SIX EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT REPRESENTATIVES

Scotland elects six Members to the European Parliament. The 2014 election in Scotland resulted in 2 SNP, 2 Labour, 1 Conservative and 1 UKIP candidate being elected. Ian Hudghton and Alyn Smith were both re-elected for the SNP, and David Martin and Catherine Stihler were both re-elected for the Labour Party. As a result of Struan Stevenson stepping down, the Conservative Party had a new representative with Ian Duncan being elected for the first time. David Coburn was elected to become Scotland’s first UKIP MEP.

THE 20 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT COMMITTEES

There are 20 parliamentary committees (European Parliament 2014b):

- Foreign Affairs
  - Human Rights
  - Security and Defence
- Development
- International Trade
- Budgets
- Budgetary Control
- Economic and Monetary Affairs
- Employment and Social Affairs
- Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
- Industry, Research and Energy
A committee consists of between 25 and 71 MEPs, and has a chair, a bureau and a secretariat. The parliamentary committees meet once or twice a month in Brussels.

**Scottish Representation on the committees**

Scotland Europa (2014) provided details of the Committees each of Scotland’s six MEPs will sit on in the European Parliament.

David Coburn

- Fisheries
- Industry, Research and Energy (substitute)

Ian Duncan

- Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
- Fisheries (substitute)
- Industry, Research and Energy (substitute)

Ian Hudghton

- Fisheries
- Economic (substitute)

David Martin

- International Trade
- Human Rights (sub-committee)
- Foreign Affairs (substitute)

Alyn Smith

- Foreign Affairs
- Agriculture and Rural Development (substitute)

Catherine Stihler

- Internal Market
- Economic and Monetary Affairs (substitute)
POLITICAL BALANCE IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 2014-19

Following the European Parliament elections, Simon Hix, a Professor of European politics at the London School of Economics was quoted on EurActiv.com analysing the composition of the new Parliament:

“Parliament will be much more polarised after the elections due to the rise in populist parties.

“We’re going to see 20% to 25% of the Parliament filled with protest parties, and a considerable polarisation,” he told EurActiv.

“This will lead to a grand coalition on most of the legislation in Parliament.”

However, Hix said that a grand coalition “ironically” means that “the EU will become very conservative”.

“It will be very difficult to get anything done. They won’t agree easily on a reform agenda or on deep economic achievement. The EPP wants austerity, the socialists want growth. They differ on liberalising services, too.” (EurActiv.com 2014a)

Corina Stratulat, a Senior Policy Analyst with the European Policy Centre addressed the issue of more “anti-European” party candidates being elected pointing out that these candidates were elected from a “range of parties and groups from the Right and the Left” and suggested that as a result these parties might not be able to form coherent and lasting alliances. However, it was suggested that these parties and groups may be able to make progress on issues such as immigration;

“These MEPs could have the ability to shift the discussions in Parliament, particularly on such subjects as immigration – especially as now they would receive increased speaking time in Parliament and would inevitably assume the chairs of some committees.” (European Policy Centre 2014)
EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The European Commission is the executive of the European Union. It consists of 28 appointed members, one from each member state. The Commission is headed by the new President, Jean-Claude Juncker the former Prime Minister of Luxembourg. It is a politically independent institution that represents and upholds the interests of the EU as a whole and is the driving force within the EU’s institutional system: it is responsible for:

- proposing legislation to the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament
- the administration of EU policies, such as the Common Agricultural Policy
- implementing the decisions of Parliament and the Council
- taking necessary legal action against firms or member governments
- representing the EU in trade negotiations with non-member countries.

The Commission sits in Brussels but has offices in Luxembourg and representatives in all EU member states. It also has a representative office based in Scotland.

The Members of the Commission are generally known as “Commissioners”. As Members of the Commission they are committed to acting in the interests of the Union as a whole and not in the interests of their own national governments. A new Commission is appointed every five years, within six months of the elections to the European Parliament.

APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMISSION PRESIDENT

Traditionally the President of the European Commission was selected by the Heads of State and Government in the European Council and then endorsed by the European Parliament. Article 17(7) of the Treaty on European Union states that:

“Taking into account the elections to the European Parliament and after having held the appropriate consultations, the European Council, acting by a qualified majority, shall propose to the European Parliament a candidate for President of the Commission. This candidate shall be elected by the European Parliament by a majority of its component members. If he does not obtain the required majority, the European Council, acting by a qualified majority, shall within one month propose a new candidate who shall be elected by the European Parliament following the same procedure”. (EurLex 2012)

As a result of this approach set out in the Treaties (also known as the Spitzenkandidaten system), Jean-Claude Juncker was proposed as President of the European Commission. This followed the main political groupings in the European Parliament nominating candidates for Commission President ahead of the European Parliamentary Elections. In essence, the European Parliamentary elections were seen by the political groupings in the European Parliament as also being about voting for a Commission President. With the centre-right grouping of the European People’s Party winning the most seats in the European Parliament at the 2014 elections, they nominated Jean-Claude Juncker to be the next Commission President. This approach was supported by the Party of European Socialists who finished with the second highest number of seats and who were keen to support the Spitzenkandidaten system. At a meeting of the European Council, Member State Heads of State and Government endorsed the choice of Jean-Claude Juncker with the United Kingdom and Hungary opposing the decision.

Before the vote in the European Parliament, Jean-Claude Juncker presented his political priorities. He identified ten policy areas on which his Commission would focus on, these areas
centred on encouraging economic growth. (European Commission 2014) The ten priority policy areas are:

1. A new boost for jobs, growth and investment
2. A connected digital single market
3. A resilient energy union with a forward-looking climate change policy
4. A deeper and fairer internal market with a strengthened industrial base
5. A deeper and fairer economic and monetary union
6. A reasonable and balanced free trade agreement with the US
7. An area of justice and fundamental rights based on mutual trust
8. Towards a new policy on migration
9. A stronger global actor
10. A union of democratic change

APPOINTING THE COLLEGE OF COMMISSIONERS

The process for appointing other members of the European Commission is set out in Article 17(5) of the Treaty on European Union:

“As from 1 November 2014, the Commission shall consist of a number of members, including its President and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, corresponding to two thirds of the number of Member States, unless the European Council, acting unanimously, decides to alter this number.

The members of the Commission shall be chosen from among the nationals of the Member States on the basis of a system of strictly equal rotation between the Member States, reflecting the demographic and geographical range of all the Member States. This system shall be established unanimously by the European Council in accordance with Article 244 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.” (EurLex 2012)

On 10 September 2014, the Commission President confirmed his college of commissioners. The college includes 19 male and 9 female nominations. The nominated Commission includes 5 former Prime Ministers, 4 Deputy Prime Ministers, 19 former Ministers, 7 returning Commissioners and 8 former Members of the European Parliament (European Commission 2014a).

The role of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (created by the Treaty of Lisbon to represent the European Union in foreign and security policy and also given the role as one of the vice presidents of the Commission) went to Italian nominee Federica Mogherini. In addition to the High Representative the Commission will have another 6 vice presidents. Each of the Vice Presidents will steer a project team which will concentrate on different aspects linked to the Commission’s ten priority policy areas (listed above). The full nominated college along with their allocated portfolio is provided below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President of the Commission</td>
<td>Jean-Claude Juncker</td>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy</td>
<td>Federica Mogherini</td>
<td>Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>/Vice-President</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Vice-President, in charge of Better Regulation, Inter-Institutional Relations, the Rule of Law, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Sustainable Development</td>
<td>Frans Timmermans</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-President for Budget and Human Resources</td>
<td>Kristalina Georgieva</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice-President for the Digital Single Market</td>
<td>Andrus Ansip</td>
<td>Estonian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice-President for Energy Union</td>
<td>Maroš Šefčovič</td>
<td>Slovakia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue</td>
<td>Valdis Dombrovskis</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness</td>
<td>Jyrki Katainen</td>
<td>Finland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>Phil Hogan</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climate Action and Energy</td>
<td>Miguel Arias Cañete</td>
<td>Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Margrethe Vestager</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital Economy and Society</td>
<td>Günther Oettinger</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs Union</td>
<td>Pierre Moscovici</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Culture, Youth and Citizenship</td>
<td>Tibor Navracsics</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility</td>
<td>Marianne Thyssen</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries</td>
<td>Karmenu Vella</td>
<td>Malta</td>
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<tr>
<td>European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement</td>
<td>Johannes Hahn</td>
<td>Austria</td>
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<td>Department</td>
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<td>Negotiations</td>
<td>Jonathan Hill</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union</td>
<td>Vytenis Andriukaitis</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Food Safety</td>
<td>Christos Stylianides</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management</td>
<td>Elżbieta Bienkowska</td>
<td>Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs</td>
<td>Neven Mimica</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Cooperation and Development</td>
<td>Věra Jourová</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality</td>
<td>Dimitris Avramopoulos</td>
<td>Greece</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migration and Home Affairs</td>
<td>Corina Crețu</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
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<td>Regional Policy</td>
<td>Carlos Moedas</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research, Science and Innovation</td>
<td>Cecilia Malmström</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>Violeta Bulc</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
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Following the nomination of the Commissioners by the new Commission President, the European Parliament is required to give its consent to the entire College of Commissioners, including the President and the High-Representative Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission. Ahead of the vote, appropriate Parliamentary Committees held hearings with the relevant Commissioner designate.

As a result of the hearings the Slovenian nominee Alenka Bratušek was rejected by the European Parliament after she faced criticism that she wasn’t up to the job of becoming the EU’s first-ever Vice President for Energy Union. Although in theory the Parliament can only reject the whole College, the decision of the Parliament to reject Alenka Bratušek left Commission President Juncker with little choice but to replace her or risk the whole college being rejected. The Slovenian Government chose to replace Alenka Bratušek with another woman, Violeta Bulc which helped to protect the already small proportion of females in the new Commission at 9. The change in Slovenian Commissioner also led to a reshuffle of Commission portfolios with Maroš Šefčovič taking the role of Vice President for Energy Union and Violeta Bulc allocated the transport brief.

On 22 October 2014, the European Parliament voted to endorse the College of Commissioners with 423 votes in favour, 209 against and 67 abstentions. Assuming the new College is endorsed by EU heads of state or government it will begin work on 1 November for a five-year term.

Addressing MEPs ahead of the vote, the Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker confirmed that Frans Timmermans’ remit would be extended to include the horizontal responsibility for sustainable development. He stated:
“As you know, sustainable development is a principle enshrined in the EU Treaties (Article 3 TEU) and should thus be taken into account by all institutions in all their actions and policies. It is also part of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights for which Frans is horizontally in charge. Sustainability and environmental concerns are important to our citizens. We have the tools to address them in the new Commission: with powerful green portfolios that have big budgets and regulatory teeth.” (European Commission 2014b)

COMMISSION ADMINISTRATION

The administration of the Commission is overseen by the Secretariat-General. It has 40 Directorates General (DGs) each headed by a Director General and each Directorate General is divided into directorates headed by Directors. More details on the Commission DGs are available on the European Commission website: http://ec.europa.eu/about/ds_en.htm
SOURCES


