

## Movers and Shakers | 22 March 2019

Written by Dods People EU on 22 March 2019 in News  
News

Keep track of developments in the European institutions and public affairs with our movers and shakers column.



Today's Movers & Shakers are about: **ALDE announce 'Team Europe' for May's elections, turbulence at the EPP as Fidesz suspended, highlights from the 15th annual MEP Awards, the latest appointments in the European Commission and Committee of the Regions, Dutch provincial elections tip the balance of power, Brexit and more!**

### European Parliament

#### *Political parties*

Short of being expelled, **Viktor ORBAN's** Fidesz was suspended from the EPP on Wednesday with 190 votes in favour and three against. This decision means that Fidesz will no longer take part in EPP meetings, vote on EPP decisions or propose candidates for EPP posts. Although intended to

demonstrate to voters their critical stance on Budapest's rule-of-law record, in reality the EPP's decision leaves the door open for Fidesz to regain full membership in the future.

#### Composition of political groups

**Claudiu Ciprian TĂNĂSESCU (S&D, RO)** will run in the European elections in May with **Gabriel OPREA**'s National Union for the Progress of Romania. **TĂNĂSESCU** was formerly with the Social Democratic Party (S&D).

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#### **MEP Awards**

MEPs were once again recognised for their hard work and dedication at the 15<sup>th</sup> annual MEP awards, which took place on Wednesday evening in Brussels' Concert Noble.

The ceremony was hosted by **Seb DANCE**, Deputy Leader of the British S&D Delegation.

Across 15 categories, 45 MEPs were nominated. [For full coverage of the event and a complete list of those who took home the coveted awards, see here](#) [2].

#### **European Elections**

ALDE have announced EU competition chief **Margrethe VESTAGER** and **Guy VERHOFSTADT** as their lead candidates for May's elections. In what has been called a delegitimization of the *Spitzenkandidat* system, ALDE have instead chosen to name a raft of lead candidates, dubbed 'Team Europe'. In addition to **VESTAGER** and **VERHOFSTADT** 'Team Europe' includes ex-Commissioner **Emma BONINO**, **Nicola BEER**, **Luis GARICANO**, Commissioner **Violeta BULC** and **Katalin CSEH**.

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**Would you like essential European Election updates as they happen? [Get in touch](#)** [3] **to find out more.**

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#### **European Commission**

##### Directorates-General

##### Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW)

**Nikita STAMPA** has left the position of Head of Unit G4 (Innovating and e-procurement); with **David BLANCHARD** serving as Acting Head of Unit.

##### Human Resources and Security (DG HR)

**Christian ROQUES** becomes the new Director of Directorate D (Health & Wellbeing = Working Conditions), replacing former Acting Director **Marco-Umberto MORICCA**. **ROQUES** therefore departs the position of Head of Unit E1 (European Civil Service Law & Social Dialogue), being replaced

in an acting capacity by **MORICCA**.

*Office for the Administration and Payment of Individual Entitlements (DG PMO)*

**Victoria GAFFEY** leaves the position of Director, with **Giuseppe SCOGNAMIGLIO** becoming Acting Director.

*Secretariat-General (DG SG)*

**Pia AHRENKILDE-HANSEN** has left the position of Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Secretary-General; with the position becoming vacant.

**Veronica GAFFEY** has been appointed Chair of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board, previously a vacant position.

*Commissioner Cabinets*

*Cabinet of Jean-Claude JUNCKER*

**Alexander ITALIANER** has left the position of Special Adviser.

*Cabinet of Karmenu VELLA*

**Kathiana BONELLO GHIO**, Deputy Head of Cabinet, is on maternity leave from 16 March to 16 August. Her responsibilities will be shared by two people: **András INOTAI** will serve as Acting Deputy Head of Cabinet as well as retaining her advisor position, while **Barbara STEFFNER** has become a Member of Cabinet.

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**Committee of the Regions**

**Willy BORSUS (ALDE, BE)** joins as a member, replacing **Michel LEBRUN**.

**Laurent HACKEN (EPP, BE)** joins as an alternate member, replacing **Anne-Marie CORBISIER**.

**Etienne SERMON (EPP, BE)** joins as an alternate member, replacing **Antoine TANZILLI**.

**Juan Manuel MORENO BONILLA (EPP, ES)** joins as a member, replacing **Susana DÍAZ PACHECO**.

**Alessio MARSILI (EFD, IT)** joins as an alternate member, replacing **Giorgio SILLI**.

**Simon BLACKBURN (PES, UK)** joins as a member, replacing **Paul WATSON**.

**Joanne LABAN (ACRE, UK)** joins as an alternate member, replacing **Suzanne Ellen GROCOTT**.

**Public Affairs**

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**Got a new appointment you would like us to include in our next newsletter? [Click here](#) <sup>[5]</sup> to**

## ***let us know about it!***

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### Cambre Associates

**Aart VAN ITERSON** has been appointed as Acting Public Relations Director, replacing **Fernando ANTON**, who is leaving to become Amazon's Corporate Communications Senior Manager in Spain. **Simos PIPERIDIS** has been named as the new Director of Policy Communications and Media.

### Child Helpline International

**Patrick KRENS** has been appointed as the new Executive Director, replacing **Sheila DONOVAN** who has retired and joined the Board.

## **National News**

### Brexit

Government plans for a third Meaningful Vote on the Brexit agreement were scuppered when **John BERCOW**, Speaker of the House of Commons, stated [his intention to rule such a vote out of order](#) [6] unless "demonstrable changes" were made to it; citing precedent that bars the government from insisting on repeated votes in the same parliamentary session on a motion that the Commons has voted down. There are procedural methods to ensure a vote on the withdrawal agreement if the government has the support to do so.

At Thursday's European Council summit, [a flexible extension to Article 50 was agreed](#) [7] between EU leaders and Prime Minister **Theresa MAY**. If Parliament accepts the withdrawal agreement next week then Brexit will be delayed until 22 May; while if it does not then it will only be extended to the 12 April which is the last day before the UK would have to legally start preparations for the holding of European Parliament elections. European Council President **Donald TUSK** said that he felt that in the latter case all options remained on the table, including a longer-term extension requiring the UK to participate in May's European Parliament elections.

An amendment to the neutral Brexit motion next Monday may allow Parliament to hold indicative votes on a number of theoretical Brexit solutions. The amendment, proposed by a group of MPs led by **Oliver LETWIN** and **Yvette COOPER**, would take parliamentary time from the government for an afternoon to allow for votes on several Brexit solutions such as a second referendum and revoking article 50 and is very similar to an amendment proposed by **Hillary BENN** which failed by only two votes last week.

### Netherlands

Prime Minister **Mark RUTTE**'s People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (ALDE) led government is very likely to lose its overall majority in the Dutch Senate, after the right-populist Forum for Democracy (FvD) party made significant gains in provincial elections. According to preliminary projections, FvD will likely hold the most seats in the Senate, while both the Christian Democratic Appeal (EPP) and Democrats 66 (ALDE), the junior partners of **RUTTE**'s government, saw significant falls in support. The States-Provincial of all provinces will meet on 27 May to formally elect Senators.

### Slovakia

**Zuzana ČAPUTOVÁ** won the largest share of votes in the first round of Slovakia's presidential ballot on Saturday. **ČAPUTOVÁ** won 40.6 percent of the vote ahead of European Commission Vice President **Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ** on 18.7 percent. **ČAPUTOVÁ** and **ŠEFČOVIČ** are the two candidates in the second

round, to be held on the 30 March.

### *Slovenia*

Prime Minister **Marjan ŠAREC** has appointed himself as Acting Minister of Health. He replaces **Samo FAKIN**, who resigned from the position a fortnight ago due to ill health.



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