

## Movers and Shakers | 29 March 2019

Written by Dods People EU on 29 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: **Highlights from this week's plenary session, a Polish MEP joins ECR, French Minister steps down to run in the European elections, wave of government resignations in Bulgaria, the latest appointments in the European Commission and public affairs, Brexit and more!**

### European Parliament

**Jørn DOHRMANN (ECR, DK)**, has had his immunity from prosecution lifted. **DOHRMANN** is currently being investigated for an incident that occurred in 2017 in which he wrestled a camera from a television cameraman, in the process damaging it.

### *Political groups*

**Jacek SARYUSZ-WOLSKI (PL)** is no longer a non-attached Member and has joined the European Conservatives and Reformists.

Despite their suspension from the European People's Party, Fidesz MEPs will continue to sit with the group in the European Parliament. **József SZÁJER** will also continue in his current position as vice-chair of the Group, and effective Chief Whip.

Vice-President of the Greens/EFA group, **Julia REDA (DE)** has resigned from the German Pirate Party (Greens/EFA). The decision comes after the party made her former parliamentary assistant number two on its EU election list even though she fired him over allegations of sexual harassment. As it stands, **REDA** remains a member of the Greens/EFA group in Parliament.

**Maria GRAPINI (S&D, RO)** will run in the European elections with Romania's Social Democratic Party (S&D). **GRAPINI** is currently a MEP with Romania's Humanist Power Party.

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### *Plenary session highlights*

A legislative process that began in 2016 has finally been brought to a close as MEPs adopted the European Copyright Directive in plenary on Tuesday with 348 votes in favour, 274 against and 36 abstentions. The directive aims to ensure the longstanding rights and obligations of copyright law, which also applies to the internet.

On the same day, MEPs voted to end the practice of adjusting clocks by an hour in spring and autumn, however this will not come into effect until 2021, two years after the 2019 date the Commission had originally proposed.

On Wednesday, Parliament approved a new law banning single-use plastic items such as cutlery, plates, cotton-bud sticks and straws with 560 MEPs voting in favour, 35 against and 28 abstentions.

Plans to reduce greenhouse-gas emission from cars and vans by 2030 were also greenlighted by MEPs on Wednesday. The legislation sets a higher target of 37.5% to reduce EU fleet-wide emissions for new cars as well as setting a CO2 reduction target for new vans of 31%.

On Thursday, Parliament called for the tripling of the Erasmus+ budget for 2021-27 and approved proposals to improve the quality of drinking water, a move that hopes to encourage more people to drink tap water rather than bottled water.

### **European Elections**

**Emmanuel MACRON's** 'Renaissance' has unveiled a somewhat motley crew of personalities from diverse political, social and economic backgrounds for its EU election list, which also includes two non-French citizens, Italian **Sandro GOZI** and Franco-Greek **Chrysoula ZACHAROPOULOU**. The list is led by France's outgoing Minister for European Affairs, **Nathalie LOISEAU**.

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**Would you like essential European Election updates as they happen? [Get in touch](#) [2] to find out more.**

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## **European Commission**

### Directorates-General

#### Spokesperson Service

**Inga HÖGLUND** has been appointed as a Press Officer covering the Digital Single Market. She replaced former Acting Press Officer **Joseph WALDSTEIN**.

#### Commissioner Cabinets'

##### Cabinet of President Jean-Claude JUNCKER

**David O'SULLIVAN** has been appointed as a Special Adviser to Commission President **Jean-Claude JUNCKER** on EU-US relations. **SULLIVAN** was previously the EU ambassador to the United States; leaving that position earlier this year.

##### Cabinet of Miguel Arias CAÑETE

**María García RODRÍGUEZ** has been appointed as a Special Adviser in the Cabinet of **Miguel Arias CAÑETE**; with her portfolio being energy and climate change issues.

##### Cabinet of Christos STYLIANIDES

**Demetris MILI** has been appointed as a Special Adviser to the Cabinet of **Christos STYLIANIDES**; advising the Commission on the engagement of the private sector in Humanitarian Aid and Development.

**Sofronis CLERIDES** is no longer a special adviser.

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## **Public Affairs**

### Paris Peace Forum

**Justin VAISSE** is the new director general of the Paris Peace Forum. Previously, he was head of the French foreign ministry's think tank, CAPS.

### European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA)

**Sergio ÁLVAREZ CAMIÑA** has been elected a new member of the Management Board.

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## National News

### *Brexit*

On Monday, MPs [seized control of the Brexit process](#) [5] after approving an amendment introduced by **Sir Oliver LETWIN** that took parliamentary control away from government on Wednesday afternoon for a series of indicative votes on possible Brexit solutions. However, none of MPs' eight proposed Brexit options secured a clear majority. The closest two options to getting a majority in parliament were a proposal for a Customs Union and a proposal to put whatever deal, if any, is eventually agreed to a public vote. The House of Commons did approve the statutory instrument confirming the agreed extension to Article 50.

Prime Minister **Theresa MAY** told Conservative backbench MPs on Wednesday that [she plans to resign after getting her Withdrawal Agreement through Parliament](#) [6], with someone else handling the next change of negotiations with the European Union. Her preferred timetable would be to resign after the G20 meeting in June, with a new Conservative leader and Prime Minister installed by mid-July.

MPs will vote today on the Withdrawal Agreement, with the government hoping that not voting on the political declaration for a future relationship will convince some Labour MPs to vote in favour of the deal.

### *Bulgaria*

**Tsvetan TSVETANOV**, deputy leader of the ruling GERB party has quit parliament whilst Justice Minister, **Tsetska TSACHEVA**, has resigned following a scandal involving the purchase of luxury apartments. Media reports allege that **TSACHEVA** and two other deputy ministers bought luxury apartment at well below market price. While **TSVETANOV** denies any involvement, his decision intends to quell speculation that he might use his powers to impede ongoing investigations.

### *France*

Three members of the French government have quit their jobs ahead of campaigns for European Parliament elections next month and municipal elections in France next year. **Nathalie LOISEAU** will stand down as Minister for European Affairs after being selected to lead the 'Renaissance' list at May's European elections. Digital policy minister **Mounir MAHJoubi** and government spokesperson **Benjamin GRIVEAUX** have both announced their intention to run for Paris mayor in 2020.

### *Romania*

**Laura Codruta KÖVESI**, one of the lead candidates for the new role of EU Public Prosecutor and former anti-corruption chief in Romania, has been indicted on corruption charges by the Romanian government. This move prevents **KÖVESI** from leaving the country, and she claims that the indictment is a politically motivated move to silence critics.



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