

## Movers and Shakers | 10 May 2019

Written by Dods People EU on 10 May 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: **Top Spitzenkandidat announces new Parliament group, Spanish Prime Minister enters post election negotiations, Greek Prime Minister faces fifth Vote of No Confidence, the latest European Commission and public affairs appointments and more!**

European Parliament

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## European Elections

Debates between those vying for the European Commission's top job continued last Thursday in Florence with the candidates from the four-leading pro-EU political families, **Manfred WEBER (EPP, DE)**, **Frans TIMMERMANS (S&D, NL)**, **Guy VERHOFSTADT (ALDE, BE)** and **Ska KELLER (Greens/EFA, DE)** taking part. This debate marks the first time that the three biggest players in the race, **WEBER**, **TIMMERMANS** and **VERHOFSTADT** have debated together on the same stage, and sparks were evident especially between **WEBER** and **TIMMERMANS**, the former who came under fire for his relation to controversial Hungarian Prime Minister **Viktor ORBÁN (EPP, HU)**, as well as his stance on austerity.

**VERHOFSTADT** used his platform to announce that the ALDE, as we know it, will be dissolving post-elections and will reform as a new centrist political group together with **Emmanuel MACRON** and candidates on his 'Renaissance' list. Former French European affairs minister, **Nathalie LOISEAU** has been penned as the figure most likely to lead this new group in the Parliament.

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## European Commission

### Directorates-General

#### International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO)

**Anders HENRIKSSON** leaves the position of Principal Advisor for the Task Force on Knowledge, Performance and Results.

**Mario RONCONI** is the new Head of Unit B2 (Resilience, Fragility) replacing former Acting Head of Unit **Patrick RABE**.

#### Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO)

**Marek TEPLANSKÝ** has been made permanent Head of Unit 03 (Inclusive Growth, Urban and Territorial Development), after previously serving as Acting Head of Unit.

#### Secretariat-General (DG SG)

**Thomas ANDREOU** is the new Head of Unit SRSS.08 (Planning, Evaluation & Coordination of Support), filling a vacant position.

#### Spokesperson Service

**Elena GONZALEZ VERDESOTO** has been appointed as a Press Officer covering the area of International Cooperation and Development.

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## **Public Affairs**

*Committee of Professional Agriculture Organisations in the European Union and General Confederation of Agricultural Co-operatives in the European Union (COPA-COGECA)*

**Lone ANDERSEN** has been elected as the new Chair of the Working Party on Organic Farming alongside two newly elected Vice-chairs - **Luigi TOZZI** and **Heinrich VON BASSEWITZ**.

*American Chamber of Commerce to the European Union (AmCham EU)*

**Elizabeth KRAHULECZ**, Director and Head of the Brussels Office, EMEIA Public Policy, Ernst & Young (EY), was elected to the position of Chair of the Gender Initiatives Task Force for a two-year term beginning at the end of April this year.

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## **National News**

### *Brexit*

**Theresa MAY**'s de facto deputy, **David LIDINGTON** [has officially confirmed that the UK will be participating in the EU elections](#) [5], taking place in just a few weeks' time stating that efforts to reach a cross-party compromise and ratify a Brexit deal would not come to fruition before this time.

[Talks between the Conservative and Labour parties](#) [6] resumed on Tuesday. After voters rejected both main parties in local elections, **Theresa MAY** is urging **Jeremy CORBYN** to sit down with her while her officials are drafting a new law in preparation for a deal between the two sides. Pressure continues to mount within the Labour party to support a second referendum.

### *Finland*

Following elections held last month, coalition negotiations between the Social Democrats (PES), Centre Party (ALDE), Green Leagues (EGP), Left Alliance (PEL) and the Swedish People's Party (ALDE) commenced on Wednesday. Incumbent Prime Minister **Juha SIPILÄ** is incredibly unlikely to lead the government due to his Centre Party finishing fourth in the election, with the likely Prime Minister being Social Democrat leader **Antti RINNE**.

### *Greece*

Prime Minister **Alexis TSIPRAS** will face a Vote of No Confidence in the Greek Parliament on Friday; with defeat likely to force earlier Parliamentary elections, currently scheduled for 20 October. This is the fifth confidence vote that **TSIPRAS** has faced since becoming Prime Minister in 2015.

### *Italy*

Prime Minister **Giuseppe CONTE** has sacked deputy minister for transport from the League party (ENF), **Armando SIRI**, amid a corruption probe. **SIRI** has been accused of accepting a €30,000 bribe, however denies any wrongdoing. Leader of the League party, **Matteo SALVINI** has strenuously defended **SIRI** and the case has caused much tension within Italy's already fragile coalition

government.

### *Spain*

Prime Minister **Pedro SÁNCHEZ** of the Socialist Worker's Party (PES) met with the leaders of three other parties – the People's Party (EPP), Citizen's (ALDE) and We Can (MLP) – in Madrid this week to discuss the results of last week's election. **SÁNCHEZ** stated his preference for governing as a single party without a coalition partner, however We Can leader **Pablo IGLESIAS** stated that he felt it'd make the government vulnerable and that he wanted to enter government. People's Party leader **Pablo CASADO** and Citizens' leader **Albert RIVERA** stated their intention to not work with the Socialists, and that they planned to enter opposition since no right-led government looked viable.

**Carles PUIGDEMONT** successfully appealed the decision made by the Spanish central electoral commission which banned him from participating in this month's European Elections. Three courts in Madrid upheld an earlier Supreme Court opinion that **PUIGDEMONT** and two other former Catalan government officials – **Toni COMÍN** and **Clara PONSATÍ** – had been wrongly barred from running in the European Elections due to their involvement in the running of the illegal independence referendum last year.



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