

Manfred Weber hits back at criticism of his suitability to be next European Commission president

Written by Martin Banks on 6 June 2019 in News
News

EPP Lead Candidate insists he has “strong support” for EU’s top job.



Manfred Weber | *Photo credit: EPP Group*

Weber, the candidate for the European People’s Party (EPP), which emerged from the European elections as the biggest single party in the European Parliament, also made a robust defence of the Spitzenkandidat (Lead Candidate) process.

Under this system, the outcome of the European Parliament elections must be taken into consideration by EU heads of state and government in deciding the next European Commission president.

Weber's comments come against a backdrop of growing calls from senior political figures for an alternative candidate for the EU's top job.

RELATED CONTENT

- [Horse trading on EU's top jobs begins](#) [1]
 - [Alliance building in new European Parliament will be "complex and cumbersome", says EU Think Tank](#) [2]
 - [New balance of power in Parliament requires Commission President that "goes beyond partisan lines"](#) [3]
 - [Liberals and Greens set to extract concessions from EU Parliament's centrist parties](#) [4]
 - [Euro-sceptic Brexit Party storms to victory in UK's European elections](#) [5]
 - [Surfing the Green Wave in Europe: The new kingmakers](#) [6]
-

Recent comments by Denis MacShane, a former Europe Minister in the UK, are typical of those saying Weber has insufficient experience for such a high-profile job.

MacShane, who served under UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, said, "Weber has no record as a minister at even regional level. He also covered for Orban for years."

This was a reference to Weber's perceived support for Viktor Orban, the controversial Hungarian prime minister.

MacShane also rubbished the Spitzenkandidat process, telling this website, "The European Parliament as a whole has to accept that the Spitzenkandidat system has not worked however well-intentioned. Also, it's worth highlighting that the EPP got under 25 percent of the vote."

But, speaking at a news briefing in parliament on Wednesday, Weber said he had "strong support" within the EPP and defended the Spitzenkandidat system, saying, "This is the concept backed by this parliament. The principle must now be respected by member states."

"The EPP has lost seats but it is still number one in terms of size and that has to be the starting point. [The Spitzenkandidat system] is the concept backed by this parliament. The principle must now be respected by member states" **Manfred Weber**

He told reporters that talks had already started with other mainstream groups about forming a possible working alliance in the European Parliament, adding, "The EPP has lost seats but it is still number one in terms of size and that has to be the starting point."

The centre right EPP has 179 MEPs and is, for the fifth time in a row since 1999, the largest grouping. It is unlikely that a "pro-European" majority could be forged in the European Parliament without its support.

Weber also pledged to "exclude" from any such discussions those parties "that do not believe in the EU. "We are ready to cooperate, and compromise, with all others."

Weber was speaking after the Parliament's EPP grouping held its first constitutive meeting following

the May elections where he was confirmed as the group's parliamentary leader, a position he held in the last mandate.

He said, "We must listen to what the public have voted for and that is change. The EU has to change to keep it strong. We now have to deliver on our promises."

Priorities for the EPP, he said, include tackling migration, terrorism, job creation and economic growth." He also added that, given the electoral successes of the Greens, the climate action issue was also a "key priority".

About the author

Martin Banks is a senior reporter at The Parliament Magazine

Tags

[EU Election 2019](#) [7]

[European Commission](#) [8]

Categories

[European elections](#) [9]



Site Sections

- [Home](#)
- [Content](#)
- [Policy](#)
- [Magazines](#)
- [PM+](#)
- [Thought Leader](#)
- [EU Elections 2019](#)
- [Editorial Calendar](#)
- [Policy Events](#)
- [Event Coverage](#)
- [MEP Awards 2019](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Services

[Dods PeopleDods](#)
[MonitoringDods](#)
[ResearchDods](#)
[EventsDods](#)
[Training](#)

Media & publishing titles

[Politics Home](#)
[The House](#)
[The Parliament](#)
[Magazine](#)
[Holyrood](#)
[Total Politics](#)
[Public Affairs](#)
[News](#)
[Civil Service](#)
[World](#)
[Public](#)
[Technology](#)
[Training](#)
[Journal](#)
[Dods](#)
[Parliamentary](#)
[Companion](#)
[Vacher's](#)
[Quarterly](#)
[The European Union and](#)
[Public Affairs](#)
[Directory](#)

Dods events

[Westminster](#)
[Briefing](#)
[Digital Health & Care](#)
[Scotland](#)
[MEP Awards](#)
[The Skills Summit](#)
[Scottish Public Service](#)
[Awards](#)
[Public Sector Procurement](#)
[Summit](#)
[Public Sector](#)
[ICT Summit](#)
[Cyber Security Summit](#)
[Cyber Security 2017](#)
[Training](#)
[Journal Awards](#)

Partnership events

[The Health and Care Innovation Expo](#)
[Civil Service Live](#)
[Civil Service Awards](#)
[Chief Nursing Officer for England's](#)
[Summit](#)
[Women into](#)

[Leadership](#)
[The Youth Justice Convention](#)
[Socitm Spring Conference](#)
[NHSCC Annual Members' Event](#)
[Dods at Party Conference](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)[Terms & Conditions](#)[Advertising](#)[Sponsorship](#) [Subscriptions](#)

Source URL: <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/manfred-weber-hits-back-criticism-his-suitability-be-next-european-commission>

Links

- [1] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/horse-trading-eu-top-jobs-begins>
- [2] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/alliance-building-new-european-parliament-will-be-complex-and-cumbersome%E2%80%9D-says-eu>
- [3] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/new-balance-power-parliament-requires-commission-president-goes-beyond-partisan-lines>
- [4] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/liberals-and-greens-set-extract-concessions-eu-parliament%E2%80%99s-centrist-parties>
- [5] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/eurosceptic-brexit-party-storms-victory-uk%E2%80%99s-european-elections>
- [6] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/surfing-green-wave-europe-new-kingmakers>
- [7] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/eu-election-2019>
- [8] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/european-commission>
- [9] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/european-elections>