

16 - 20 September 2024

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**I. Political and Policy Developments**

**1. von der Leyen presents new Commission**

On 17 September, Ursula von der Leyen [revealed](#) the list of commissioners-designate and their respective portfolios. The announcement came amid tensions that led to the [surprise resignation](#) of Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton. It also proceeded despite uncertainty surrounding Slovenia’s nomination of Marta Kos, who was only confirmed by her country on September 19.

Below is an overview of the new structure. The revamped lineup includes six executive vice-presidents (EVPs), each managing specific commissioners and their portfolios.

Executive Vice Presidents	Commissioners
<p><b>EVP Kaja Kallas</b> (Estonia) - <a href="#">Foreign Affairs and Security Policy</a> (EEAS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Jozef Síkela</b> (Czechia) – <a href="#">International Partnerships</a> (DG INTPA)</li> <li>- <b>Hadja Lahbib</b> (Belgium) – <a href="#">Preparedness, Crisis Management &amp; Equality</a> (DG ECHO, HERA)</li> <li>- <b>Dubravka Šuica</b> (Croatia) – <a href="#">Mediterranean</a> (DG MEDI)</li> <li>- <b>Marta Kos</b> (Slovenia) – <a href="#">Enlargement</a> (DG NEAR)</li> </ul>
<p><b>EVP Henna Virkkunen</b> (Finland) - <a href="#">Tech-Sovereignty, Security, and Democracy</a> (DG CNECT, DG DIGIT)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Andrius Kubilius</b> (Lithuania) – <a href="#">Defence &amp; Space</a> (DG DEFIS)</li> <li>- <b>Magnus Brunner</b> (Austria) – <a href="#">Internal Affairs &amp; Migration</a> (DG HOME)</li> <li>- <b>Michael McGrath</b> (Ireland) – <a href="#">Democracy, Justice &amp; Rule of Law</a> (DG JUST)</li> <li>- <b>Ekaterina Zaharieva</b> (Bulgaria) – <a href="#">Startups, Research &amp; Innovation</a> (DG RTD, JRC)</li> </ul>

<p><b>EVP Stéphane Séjourné</b> (France) - <a href="#">Prosperity and Industrial Strategy</a> (DG GROW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Maroš Šefčovič</b> (Slovakia) – <a href="#">Trade &amp; Economic Security</a> (DG TRADE, DG TAXUD, OP)</li> <li>- <b>Valdis Dombrovskis</b> (Latvia) – <a href="#">Economy &amp; Productivity; Implementation &amp; simplification</a> (DG ECFIN, EUROSTAT)</li> <li>- <b>Ekaterina Zaharieva</b> (Bulgaria) – <a href="#">Startups, Research &amp; Innovation</a> (DG RTD, JRC)</li> <li>- <b>Maria Luís Albuquerque</b> (Portugal) – <a href="#">Financial Services and the Savings and Investments Union</a> (DG FISMA)</li> </ul>
<p><b>EVP Raffaele Fitto</b> (Italy) - <a href="#">Cohesion and Reforms</a> (DG REGIO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Apostolos Tzitzikostas</b> (Greece) – <a href="#">Sustainable Transport &amp; Tourism</a> (DG MOVE)</li> <li>- <b>Christophe Hansen</b> (Luxembourg) – <a href="#">Agriculture &amp; Food</a> (DG AGRI)</li> <li>- <b>Costas Kadis</b> (Cyprus) – <a href="#">Fisheries &amp; Oceans</a> (DG MARE)</li> <li>- <b>Marta Kos</b> (Slovenia) – <a href="#">Enlargement</a> (DG NEAR)</li> </ul>
<p><b>EVP Teresa Ribera</b> (Spain) - <a href="#">Clean, Just, and Competitive Transition</a> (DG COMP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Wopke Hoekstra</b> (Netherlands) – <a href="#">Climate, Net Zero &amp; Clean Growth</a> (DG CLIMA, DG TAXUD)</li> <li>- <b>Dan Jørgensen</b> (Denmark) – <a href="#">Energy &amp; Housing</a> (DG ENER)</li> <li>- <b>Jessika Roswall</b> (Sweden) – <a href="#">Environment, Water Resilience &amp; Competitive Circular Economy</a> (DG ENV)</li> <li>- <b>Olivér Várhelyi</b> (Hungary) – <a href="#">Health &amp; Animal Welfare</a> (DG SANTE, HERA)</li> </ul>
<p><b>EVP Roxana Mînzatu</b> (Romania) - <a href="#">People, Skills, and Preparedness</a> (DG EMPL, DG EAC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Glenn Micallef</b> (Malta) – <a href="#">Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture &amp; Sport</a> (DG EAC)</li> <li>- <b>Hadja Lahbib</b> (Belgium) – <a href="#">Preparedness &amp; Crisis Management; Equality</a> (DG ECHO, HERA)</li> <li>- <b>Olivér Várhelyi</b> (Hungary) – <a href="#">Health &amp; Animal Welfare</a> (DG SANTE, HERA)</li> <li>- <b>Dubravka Suica</b> (Croatia) – <a href="#">Mediterranean</a> (DG MEDI)</li> </ul>

Four commissioners will also have to report to von der Leyen directly:

- Poland's **Piotr Serafin**, commissioner for [Budget, Anti-Fraud, and Public Administration](#) (DG BUDG, DG HR, DGT, SCIC, OLAF, IAS, OIL, OIB, EPSO, PMO, EuSA)
- Slovakia's **Maroš Šefčovič**, commissioner for [Trade & Economic Security](#) (DG TRADE, DG TAXUD, OP)
- Latvia's **Valdis Dombrovskis**, commissioner for [Economy & Productivity; Implementation & simplification](#) (DG ECFIN, EUROSTAT)
- Netherlands' **Wopke Hoekstra**, commissioner for [Climate, Net Zero & Clean Growth](#) (DG CLIMA, DG TAXUD).

Overall, the new lineup signals a stronger focus on competitiveness and industrialisation, with health allegedly deprioritised. The new health commissioner-designate, Olivér Várhelyi, is considered relatively inexperienced in the field. The new structure gives von der Leyen unprecedented power. She has silenced her main internal critic, Breton, and can now rely on commissioners reporting directly to her to keep the new team in check. Additionally, she has depleted powerful portfolios by splitting them among multiple people; for instance, state aid now falls under both the Executive Vice President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy and the Executive Vice President for Clean, Just, and Competitive Transition.

The lineup might still be subject to changes as commissioners-designate must undergo parliamentary hearings expected to take place in early November. The European Parliament typically rejects at least one candidate. Due to the leaner and more interlinked structure, more committee hearings of the same commissioners-designate can be expected.

## 2. Hungarian Presidency gives green light to new Commission

On 19 September, the Hungarian Presidency [signed](#) the consent letter to von der Leyen to form the new Commission and [adopted](#) the list of commissioners-designate. This means the Commission nomination process can move forward.

Formal proceedings for the appointment of the new College will begin once the European Parliament receives a formal confirmation letter from the Council of the EU.

## 3. Commissioners-designate to face tough EP hearings

Several commissioners-designate are anticipated to face tough hearings. Notably, Hungary's Olivér Várhelyi is unlikely to secure his appointment as he is widely criticised for his controversial management of the enlargement portfolio and lenient approach to rule-of-law issues. Rumour has it that Budapest has a backup plan with MEP Enikő Győri, should Várhelyi not pass the Environment Committee (ENVI) hearing.

Other controversial picks include Slovenia's Marta Kos, who is scrutinised for alleged ties to police in the former Yugoslavia; Belgium's Hadja Lahbib, due to her mixed record as foreign minister; Bulgaria's Ekaterina Zaharieva, who faces allegations of corruption; and Malta's Glenn Micallef, criticised for his lack of experience.

## 4. European Parliament wants to rebalance relationship with Commission

The European Parliament is seeking to renegotiate its relationship with the Commission. Media reports indicate that Parliament President Roberta Metsola is leveraging the upcoming vote on the next Commission lineup to push for a deal that would rebalance the powers of both institutions. Specifically, Metsola seeks greater scrutiny powers over policy files, such as migration deals, and demands that the European Parliament be the first to be informed about Commission initiatives.

However, the Commission is unlikely to agree to these changes. Internal sources state that it would be inappropriate for an outgoing College of Commissioners to sign off on such a deal.

## II. Key institutional milestones

Date	Event
4 - 12 November (exp)	European Commissioners-designate hearings
25 - 28 November (exp)	European Parliament vote on the new Commission
1 December (exp)	New European Commission takes office
1 December	New European Council President takes office