

30 September - 4 October 2024

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I. Political and Policy Developments

1. Commissioners-designate hearings to take place first half of November

The European Parliament has scheduled confirmation hearings for commissioners-designate from November 4-12. This means that the new Commission could either take office in December or January, depending on how the hearings play out.

Hearings will start with junior commissioners and conclude with Executive Vice-Presidents (EVPs) on November 11-12. MEPs will send written questions to nominees by October 10, with responses due by October 22.

Each nominee has been assigned to specific committees for the hearings, with additional committees allowed to ask questions but not vote. A complete overview can be found in the table below:

Commissioner-designate	Responsible Committee(s)	Invited Committee(s)
EVP Teresa Ribera (Spain) <i>Executive Vice-President for the Clean, Just and Competitive Transition</i>	Environment (ENVI) Economy (ECON) Industry (ITRE)	Internal Market (IMCO) Employment (EMPL) Transport (TRAN) Regional Development (REGI) Agriculture (AGRI)
EVP Henna Virkkunen (Finland) <i>Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy</i>	Industry (ITRE) Internal Market (IMCO)	Civil Liberties (LIBE) Legal Affairs (JURI) Foreign Affairs (AFET) Culture and Education (CULT)
EVP Stéphane Séjourné (France) <i>Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy</i>	Industry (ITRE) Internal Market (IMCO) Environment (ENVI) Economy (ECON)	International Trade (INTA) Employment (EMPL) Budgets (BUDG) Legal Affairs (JURI)
HR & VP Kaja Kallas (Estonia)	Foreign Affairs (AFET)	Development (DEVE) International Trade (INTA)

<i>High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy</i>		Women's Rights (FEMM) Security and Defence (SEDE) Human Rights (DROI)
EVP Roxana Mînzatu (Romania) <i>Executive Vice-President for People, Skills and Preparedness</i>	Employment (EMPL) Culture and Education (CULT)	Women's Rights (FEMM) Civil Liberties (LIBE)
EVP Raffaele Fitto (Italy) <i>Executive Vice-President for Cohesion and Reforms</i>	Regional Development (REGI)	Transport (TRAN) Budgets (BUDG) Agriculture (AGRI) Fisheries (PECH) Employment (EMPL) Economics (ECON)
Maroš Šefčovič (Slovakia) <i>Trade and Economic Security, Interinstitutional Relations and Transparency</i>	International Trade (INTA) Constitutional Affairs (AFCO)	Foreign Affairs (AFET) Internal Market (IMCO) Petitions (PETI) Development (DEVE) Legal Affairs (JURI)
Valdis Dombrovskis (Latvia) <i>Economy and Productivity, Implementation and Simplification</i>	Economy (ECON) Legal Affairs (JURI)	Budgets (BUDG) Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) Employment (EMPL) Internal Market (IMCO) Tax Matters (FISC)
Dubravka Suica (Croatia) <i>Mediterranean</i>	Foreign Affairs (AFET)	Employment (EMPL) Civil Liberties (LIBE) Human Rights (DROI)
Olivér Várhelyi (Hungary) <i>Health and Animal Welfare</i>	Environment (ENVI) Agriculture (AGRI)	Industry (ITRE) Public Health (SANT)
Wopke Hoekstra (Netherlands) <i>Climate, Net-Zero and Clean Growth</i>	Environment (ENVI) Industry (ITRE) Economics (ECON)	Employment (EMPL) Transport (TRAN) Tax Matters (FISC)
Andrius Kubilius (Lithuania) <i>Defence and Space</i>	Foreign Affairs (AFET) Industry (ITRE)	Transport (TRAN) Security and Defence (SEDE)
Marta Kos (Slovenia) <i>Enlargement</i>	Foreign Affairs (AFET)	Civil Liberties (LIBE) Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) Human Rights (DROI)
Jozef Síkela	Development (DEVE)	Foreign Affairs (AFET)

(Czech Republic) <i>International Partnership</i>		Women's Rights (FEMM) International Trade (INTA) Civil Liberties (LIBE)
Costas Kadis (Cyprus) <i>Fisheries and Oceans</i>	Fisheries (PECH)	Environment (ENVI)
Maria Luís Albuquerque (Portugal) <i>Financial Services</i>	Economics (ECON)	Internal Market (IMCO) Civil Liberties (LIBE)
Hadja Lahbib (Belgium) <i>Preparedness, Crisis Management, Equality</i>	Development (DEVE) Women's Rights (FEMM) Civil Liberties (LIBE) Environment (ENVI)	Employment (EMPL) Public Health (SANT)
Magnus Brunner (Austria) <i>Internal Affairs and Migration</i>	Civil Liberties (LIBE)	Development (DEVE)
Jessika Roswall (Sweden) <i>Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy</i>	Environment (ENVI)	Internal Market (IMCO) Industry (ITRE) Agriculture (AGRI)
Piotr Serafin (Poland) <i>Budget, Anti-Fraud, Public Administration</i>	Budgets (BUDG) Budgetary Control (CONT)	Civil Liberties (LIBE) Legal Affairs (JURI)
Dan Jørgensen (Denmark) <i>Energy and Housing</i>	Industry (ITRE) Employment (EMPL)	Environment (ENVI) Regional Development (REGI) Internal Market (IMCO) Economics (ECON)
Ekaterina Zaharieva (Bulgaria) <i>Startups, Research and Innovation</i>	Industry (ITRE)	Culture and Education (CULT)
Michael McGrath (Ireland) <i>Democracy, Justice and Rule of Law</i>	Civil Liberties (LIBE) Internal Market (IMCO) Legal Affairs (JURI)	Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) Culture and Education (CULT) Budgets (BUDG) Budgetary Control (CONT) Women's Rights (FEMM)
Apostolos Tzitzikostas (Greece)	Transport (TRAN)	Environment (ENVI)

<i>Sustainable Transport and Tourism</i>		
Christophe Hansen (Luxembourg) <i>Agriculture and Food</i>	Agriculture (AGRI)	Environment (ENVI) Fisheries (PECH)
Glenn Micallef (Malta) <i>Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport</i>	Culture and Education (CULT)	Employment (EMPL) Civil Liberties (LIBE) Legal Affairs (JURI)

2. Growing tensions in von der Leyen's majority

Tensions are emerging in the coalition that helped von der Leyen secure her second term. A centrist deal on job allocation in the European Parliament's research panel excluded the Greens, who responded by backing an unsuccessful European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) motion to overturn it. The European People's Party (EPP) criticised the Greens for aligning with anti-European forces, including The Left and Patriots for Europe (PfE).

Frictions between the EPP, the Socialists & Democrats (S&D), and Renew have also surfaced. S&D and Renew accuse the EPP of aligning with the far-right after it teamed up with ECR, PfE, and Europe of Sovereign Nations (ESN) to block centre-left proposals, such as allowing the ENVI Committee to question incoming Agriculture Commissioner Christophe Hansen.

Internal conflicts have been growing within the EPP. Party leader Manfred Weber and secretary-general Thanasis Bakolas are at odds, with recent rule changes shifting more power to Weber. In retaliation for Bakolas firing his ally, Tom Vandenkendelaere, Weber appointed Vandenkendelaere as the EPP's new chief of staff — a move Bakolas is refusing to implement.

3. New far-right and far-left groupings register as political parties

Two new political parties, the far-right *Europe of Sovereign Nations* (ESN) and the far-left *European Left Alliance for the People and the Planet* (ELA), have officially registered as with the Authority for European Political Parties and Political Foundations (APPF), making them eligible for EU financial support.

4. French PM Michel Barnier unveils his priorities

French Prime Minister Michel Barnier outlined his government's priorities in his [inaugural policy address](#) to the National Assembly on October 1.

Key goals include reducing France's public deficit through cuts in public spending and increased taxes on large corporations and wealthy individuals.

Policy priorities include:

- **Industrial policy:** Creating a new savings mechanism to direct private savings towards strategic industries.
- **Energy:** Supporting the development of new nuclear reactors.
- **Environment:** Supporting biodiversity, circular economy and decarbonisation initiatives. Barnier announced a national conference on water.
- **Agriculture:** Defending farmers' interests in Brussels and simplifying regulations.
- **Health:** Tackling health disparities by leveraging technologies such as AI, and prioritising prevention and mental health.
- **Security:** Expanding the use of AI-driven video surveillance and increasing prison capacity.
- **Migration:** Tightening detention and regularisation rules for migrants and bolstering Frontex.
- **Trade:** Ensuring reciprocity in free trade agreements.

Barnier pledged to ensure France complies with EU budget rules. He also urged MPs to stay informed about developments in Brussels, emphasising that France's influence in Europe relies on their active engagement.

The PM is expected to survive the no-confidence motion the leftist New Popular Front (NFP) will put to a vote next week, as the National Rally (RN) - so far - rules out supporting it. The RN tied its backing of the new government to two specific demands: reducing fiscal pressure and implementing a "migratory, security, and penal wake-up call."

5. Coalition talks kick off in Austria

Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen initiated government coalition talks on 4 October, with uncertainty surrounding the formation process after the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) won the election but failed to secure a majority. Most parties, including the centre-left Social Democratic Party (SPÖ), the Greens, and the liberal NEOS, said they would not join a coalition with the FPÖ. The centre-right ÖVP, which came in second, has signalled openness to collaborate with the FPÖ, but only if its leader, Herbert Kickl, is excluded from the government.

II. Key institutional milestones

Date	Event
4 - 12 November	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