



**August 2014**

## EU elections

**Martin Schulz** has been re-elected as President of the European Parliament, with 409 out of 612 valid votes. The 58-year-old German MEP from the S & D Group will chair the Parliament until January 2017.

The European Parliament has chosen the former Luxembourg Prime Minister **Jean-Claude Juncker** as the new President of the European Commission on 15 July 2014. In a secret vote, 422 MEPs voted for him. The required absolute majority was 376 out of a total of 751 MEPs. Juncker received support from the political groups of the European People's Party (EPP), the Social Democrats (S & D) and the Liberals (ALDE).



Jean-Claude Juncker, new Commission's President

German MEP **Manfred Weber** will be the Chair of the EPP, biggest group in the European Parliament. Italian MEP **Gianni Pittella** will chair the Socialists & Democrats group. The European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group will be led by British MEP **Syed Kammal**. Belgium's **Guy Verhofstadt** (ALDE) and Germany's **Gabriele Zimmer** (GUE/NGL) will continue to lead their respective groups. The

Greens/ European Free Alliance group will be jointly chaired by Belgium's **Philippe Lamberts** and Germany's **Rebecca Harms**.

The **Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy** has also opted for a co-chairmanship, by Nigel Farage from **UKIP** and David Borrelli from **Italian 5 Stars Movement**.

The French **Front National** failed in reaching the necessary quorum to create an autonomous group. At least 25 MEPs from 7 different national delegations are needed to create an autonomous group within the EP. This has major consequences, as its members will not have key roles in the Parliament, any funding as a political group, very limited speaking slots and restrictive quorums to table amendments. Therefore, the good score of extreme-right parties in European elections will finally affect national politics more than EU decisions.

## European Commission's gender balance unlikely to be achieved

National governments have presented their nominees for the next **Commission College**. Actually, twenty-four members have so far put names forward, while Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark and the Netherlands have missed the deadline of 1 August.

The **European People's Party** group looks to gain the majority of Commissioner posts, with 14 seats out of 28. Currently the socialists have 6 posts and the liberals only 3. If these numbers will be confirmed, the Commission will become even more centre-right oriented.

Coming to the **gender issue**, Jean-Claude

Juncker has stated that he would like to see more women in his team of commissioners, promising heavy portfolios and vice-president posts for member states that put women forward. So far, 19 men and only 4 women have been nominated by national governments. The Italian candidate is current Foreign Minister **Federica Mogherini**, who is running for the post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR). Sweden would like **Cecilia Malmström**, current EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, to be confirmed for the next term.



Cecilia Malmström, Sweden's nominee for the post of Commissioner for Home Affairs

Other women candidates are **Vera Jourová**, Czech Minister for Regional Development, and Bulgaria's **Kristalina Georgieva**, current EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, also running for HR post. Slovenia is the only country which has given Juncker a list of names to choose from, including two women. However, it's expected

that at least Denmark will nominate a woman, possibly **Christina Antorini** (current Minister for Education) or **Connie Hedegaard** (Climate Commissioner).

«At the moment, nine commissioners are women, but Juncker will not be able to match or surpass this number».<sup>1</sup>

On August 30, EU leaders will gather to for a European Council to discuss top jobs. In October, the European Parliament will vote to approve or reject the new Commission College as a whole. Finally, November 1 is the target date for the new Commission to take office.

## Energy efficiency in buildings: Member States held in check by Commission

The Commission has referred **Poland** and **Austria** to the Court of Justice of the European Union for failing to transpose the **Energy Performance of Buildings Directive**. The deadline for transposition was 9 July 2012. By referring these Member States to the Court, the Commission proposed a **daily penalty** of 96,720€ for Poland and 39,592.80€ for Austria. In case of an affirmative judgement of the Court, the daily penalty shall be paid from the date of the judgement until the transposition is completed.

The Commission had sent to Poland and to Austria a letter of formal notice in September 2012. A reasoned opinion followed in June 2013 for Poland and in September 2013 for Austria. Today, in both Member States the transposition of the Directive has still not been completed. The **lack of transposition** concerns, amongst other, measures relating to **energy certificates** (to be delivered to tenants), **minimum energy performance requirements** and nearly zero-energy buildings.

On April 16, **Finland** and **Belgium** have been **referred to Court** under the same Directive. The Commission is currently also examining the situation in other Member States (**Slovenia, the**

1 <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/eu-elections-2014/junckers-commission-looks-become-politically-one-sided-gender-unbalanced>

**Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy and Czech Republic)** to which **reasoned opinions** for incomplete transposition have been addressed. A **letter of formal notice** has been recently sent also to **Germany**, one of the countries that are at the fore-front of energy transition.

**Günther H. Oettinger**, Vice-President of the Commission responsible for energy, highlighted the importance of energy efficiency measures in a press release.<sup>2</sup> Pointing out that 40% of EU energy consumption is in the building, he said that Member States shall take the necessary measures to put in place the existing legislation.

## Open consultations on EU urban agenda

The majority of EU citizens live in cities, and this trend is set to increase in coming years.

For this reason, the European Commission has launched a new consultation, which runs until September 26th.<sup>3</sup>

The Commission's questions revolve around the need for an **EU urban agenda** and its priorities. EU institutions including the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, and the European Economic and Social Committee have called for an urban policy at EU level.

## Meeting with Neven Mimica - EU Commissioner for Consumer Protection

On June 3, IUT and CECODHAS Presidents met the European Commissioner for Consumer Protection, Neven Mimica. Rising rents and final energy prices, the lack of affordable rental housing for young people, one-sided promotion of home ownership were just some of the topics which were discussed during the constructive meeting with the Commissioner. The dossier, prepared by IUT and CECODHAS is

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<sup>2</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-14-813\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-813_en.htm)

<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/consultation/urban\\_agenda/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/consultation/urban_agenda/index_en.cfm)

available on the IUT website.<sup>4</sup>



IUT and CECODHAS Housing Europe delegations in front of the Berlaymont, European Commission, Brussels

## International Tenants Day in Brussels on October 6

The IUT will celebrate the International Tenants Day will be celebrated this year in Brussels, on October 6. Main theme will be tenants' empowerment: to which extent are tenants involved in decisions concerning their dwelling? Are they involved on voluntary basis? Is there a need for enforceable tenants' involvement? These and other questions will be discussed with tenants and landlords representatives, local authorities, housing professionals, national and European stakeholders, and EU institutions. On the same Day, the ERHIN Awards will take place. Best practices in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility in housing will be rewarded by the ERHIN Jury. More information and registration form available at: [www.iut.nu](http://www.iut.nu)

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.iut.nu/EU/2014/CECODHAS\\_IUT\\_Rental\\_TheContext2014.pdf](http://www.iut.nu/EU/2014/CECODHAS_IUT_Rental_TheContext2014.pdf)