

Introduction of the new European Commission

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Introduction

The **new European Commission** began its activities on 1 November under the leadership of Luxembourg's former Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker. After 10 years, Juncker has replaced José Manuel Barroso, who served two terms as European Commission chairman from 2004 to 2009 and 2010 to 2014 and mainly had to deal with the economic crisis in 2008, followed by problems experienced by banks in the Eurozone.

The European Parliament approved the new European Commission on 22 October 2014. Juncker's new team **received support from 423 European Parliament members**, while **209** lawmakers **opposed** the nominated commissioners, and 67 abstained from the vote. The new European Commission and its 28 members now awaits a five-year term, which should end in 2019.

European Commission's priorities

Although the worst of the economic crisis is probably already behind us, the new European Commission will not have it easy. A lot of important **political** and **macroeconomic tasks** await it.

Juncker's team's **main priorities** include **establishing** and **maintaining growth, increasing investments** (mainly in the areas of energy and transport infrastructure, investments into education, research and investments into projects to help young people on the labour market and support for them) and related **improvement of the situation on the labour market**. Job creation should be sustainable and mainly without additional costs and debts arising.

Another tasks awaiting the European Commission is creation of a **unified digital market**, which will support both job creation and a society based on the knowledge economy and other market opportunities. Another very important task awaits the European Commission. It is the **reduction of energy dependency** on imports of fuels and natural gas. The path to energy independence is expected to be helped by the creation of a European energy union, which will involve sharing of resources, connection of networks, etc. The EU is also expected in the foreseeable future to become the world leader in renewable energy and thereby reduce its dependence on imports as well as help reduce negative impacts on the environment.

News and changes in the European Commission

However, the road to starting its activities and the European Parliament's prior blessing of it has not been entirely easy for the European Commission. In the case of candidates proposed for European Commissioner positions, public hearings and several hours of defence of candidates for commissioner posts before the European Parliament have been required.

The fact that this is not merely a formality is evidenced by, for example, the change of post in the case of a Slovenian candidate for commissioner, former Prime Minister **Alenka Bratušek**. She withdrew her candidacy following an unsuccessful hearing before European Parliament members, where she did not defend her position as Commission Deputy Chairwoman for Energy Union. Since she did not survive the grilling questioning, it became necessary to find a replacement for her. That replacement is **Violeta Bulc**, a Slovenian businesswoman and politician and Slovenia's minister without portfolio. However, Bulc did not win the unoccupied position of commissioner for the **Energy union**. That position was won by Slovak politician **Maroš Šefčovič**, who is not new in the Commission (in Barroso's previous teams, he was deputy chairman for institutional relations and administration, and prior to that he served as commissioner for education, professional preparation, culture and youth). The vacated transport position, which Maroš Šefčovič was originally expected to hold, has been occupied by Slovenian politician Violeta Bulc.

Even Czech candidate **Věra Jourová** did not avoid certain complications and went through "grilling" twice. However, that did not change anything, and the former minister for Regional Development will be responsible for the newly created strong portfolio of **consumer policy**. Consumer policy will no longer be divided among various portfolios, but will have its own prioritised position within the portfolio of the commissioner for justice, consumer protection and gender equality.

However, the changes did not occur only at a personnel level, but compared to the previous Commission there have been other changes and even completely new situations in certain parts of the Commission. The first deputy chairman, **Frans Timmermans**, will be responsible for tasks including **improving legal regulation**. The first deputy chairman will serve in all of the Commission's activities as a supervisor over compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and the rule of law.

Structure of the European Commission



Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President



Jean-Claude Juncker
President



Federica Mogherini
Vice-President



Kristalina Georgieva
Vice-President



Andrus Ansip
Vice-President



Valdis Dombrovskis
Vice-President



Jyrki Katainen
Vice-President



Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President



Günther Oettinger



Johannes Hahn



Violeta Bulc



Cecilia Malmström



Neven Mimica



Miguel Arias Cañete



Karmenu Vella



Vytenis Andriukaitis



**Dimitris
Avramopoulos**



Marianne Thyssen



Pierre Moscovici



Christos Stylianides



Phil Hogan



Jonathan Hill



Elżbieta Bieńkowska



Věra Jourová



Tibor Navracsics



Corina Crețu



Margrethe Vestager



Carlos Moedas

**Jean-Claude Juncker (age 59)**

Luxembourg
President

A politician and attorney, who has served as prime minister and minister of finance in Luxembourg

Frans Timmermans (age 53)

Dutch

Better Regulation, Inter-institutional Relations, the Rule of Law, the Charter of Fundamental Rights

The former Dutch minister of foreign affairs

**Maroš Šefčovič (age 48)**

Slovakia

Energy Union

A former ambassador, who is a commissioner responsible for institutional relations and administration, education, expert preparation, culture and youth

**Günther Oettinger (age 61)**

Germany

Digital Economy & Society

A German politician and former federal chancellor, deputy chairman in the previous Commission responsible for energy

**Federica Mogherini (age 41)**

Italy

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Policy & Security

The Italian minister of foreign affairs

**Johannes Hahn (age 56)**

Austria

European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations

A former minister for science and research, who was responsible for regional policy in Barroso's Commission

**Kristalina Georgieva (age 61)**

Bulgaria

Budget & Human Resources

A female politician and commissioner for international cooperation and humanitarian assistance in Barroso's Commission

**Violeta Bulc (age 50)**

Slovenia

Transport

A Slovenian businesswoman and minister without portfolio with a focus on development and strategic projects

**Andrus Ansip (age 58)**

Estonia

Digital Single Market

An Estonian politician and former prime minister

Cecilia Malmström (age 46)

Sweden

Trade

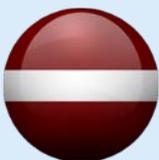
A former minister for European affairs; in the previous two European Commissions she was responsible for internal affairs

**Valdis Dombrovskis (age 43)**

Latvia

The Euro & Social Dialogue

A Latvian politician, who has held the positions of minister of finance, prime minister and member of the European parliament

**Neven Mimica (age 61)**

Croatia

International Cooperation & Development

A Croatian former minister and deputy prime minister (responsible for internal, foreign and European policy); commissioner for consumer protection

**Jyrki Katainen (age 43)**

Finland

Jobs, Growth, Investment & Competitiveness

A Finnish former prime minister; commissioner for economic and monetary union and the euro

Miguel Arias Cañete (age 64)

Spain

Climate Action & Energy

A Spanish politician and former minister of agriculture and environment



**Karmenu Vella (age 64)***Malta***Environment, Maritime Affairs & Fisheries**

A Maltese politician and former minister for tourism

Jonathan Hill (age 54)*United Kingdom***Financial Stability, Financial Services & Capital Markets Union**

A British politician, the chairman of the House of Lords

**Vytis Andriukaitis (age 63)***Lithuania***Health & Food Safety**

A Lithuanian politician and cardiac surgeon, who is a former minister of health

**Elżbieta Bieńkowska (age 50)***Poland***Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship & SMEs**

The former minister for regional development, infrastructure and development

**Dimitris Avramopoulos (age 61)***Greece***Migration, Home Affairs & Citizenship**

A Greek politician, diplomat and minister of defence

Věra Jourová (age 50)*Czech Republic***Justice, Consumers & Gender Equality**

A Czech female politician, the former minister for regional development

**Marianne Thyssen (age 58)***Belgium***Employment, Social Affairs, Skills & Labour Mobility**

A Belgian female politician and member of the European Parliament

**Tibor Navracsics (age 48)***Hungary***Education, Culture, Youth & Sport**

A Hungarian politician and attorney, the former minister of justice, who later served as minister of foreign affairs and trade

**Pierre Moscovici (age 57)***France***Economic & Financial Affairs, Taxation & Customs**

A former minister for European affairs and finance; a former member of the European Parliament

Corina Crețu (age 47)*Romania***Regional Policy**

A Romanian female politician and member of the European Parliament

**Christos Stylianides (age 56)***Cyprus***Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management**

A politician and member of the European Parliament

**Margrethe Vestager (age 46)***Denmark***Competition**

A female former minister of education and religious affairs, deputy prime minister and minister of economics and interior

**Phil Hogan (age 54)***Ireland***Agriculture & Rural Development**

An Irish politician and minister for the environment, communities and local government

Carlos Moedas (age 44)*Portugal***Research, Science & Innovation**

A Portuguese politician, banker and state secretary



A new portfolio has been created for the **Internal market, industry, business and small and medium-sized enterprises**, which will fall under the responsibilities of Polish politician **Elżbieta Bieńkowska**. Small and mid-sized enterprises are also being specifically mentioned for the first time. Something else new is the portfolio for **Economic and financial matters, taxes and the customs union** (which will be headed by **Pierre Moscovici**), which will ensure that tax and customs union policy becomes an integral part of the stable and real economic and monetary union and contributes to smooth function of all of the EU's system for management of economic matters.

The new position of special commissioner for migration will be held by **Dimitris Avramopoulos**, in order to prioritise new **migration policy**, which will focus thoroughly on dealing with illegal migration and on ensuring that Europe becomes an attractive destination for highly talented people.

These changes include combination of the portfolios of **Environment, maritime affairs and fisheries**, responsibility for which has been assigned to Maltese politician **Karmenu Vella**. The same applies to climate and energy policy, which is overseen by Spanish politician **Miguel Arias Cañete**. Boosting the share of energy from renewable resources is not only a matter that pertains to climate change policy. It is also about the imperative of industrial policy, if Europe wants to continue to have affordable energy in the mid-term horizon. The new commissioner for **Financial stability, financial services and the capital markets union** is British former House of Lords chairman **Jonathan Hill**. This portfolio has expert knowledge and responsibilities concentrated in one place, the newly created directorate.

A **Hungarian commissioner** will oversee the portfolio for **Education, culture, youth and sport**. He was originally expected to be responsible for citizenship as well, but that position has been given to Greek commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos (migration, internal affairs and citizenship).

The new Commission under the leadership of chairman Jean-Claude Juncker has seven deputy chairpersons, and each of them is responsible for besides their portfolio also one **project team**, which is comprised of several commissioners. The deputy chairpersons will direct and coordinate these teams (and may even change them based on needs, whether project-related or staffing-related).

These involve the **following areas**: Energy union with progressive policy in the area of climate focused on future challenges, Jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness, a Single digital market and a Deepened and more just economic and monetary union.

Project team

Better Regulation, Inter-institutional Relations, the Rule of Law, the Charter of Fundamental Rights <i>Frans Timmermans</i>		Energy Union <i>Maroš Šefčovič</i>		Jobs, Growth, Investment & Competitiveness <i>Jyrki Katainen</i>	
Digital Single Market <i>Andrus Ansip</i>	Budget & Human Resources <i>Kristalina Georgieva</i>	The Euro & Social Dialogue <i>Valdis Dombrovskis</i>		Europe in the World <i>Federica Mogherini</i>	

Conclusion

And some statistics in conclusion. The new Commission has **28 members**, and the **average age** is **53.4 years old**. The youngest member is Federica Mogherini (41), and the oldest is Miguel Arias Cañete (64). The **number of women** is the same as in Barroso's previous Commission: 9 (including Věra Jourová, who has become the first female Czech commissioner). Although the Commission began its activities only a couple of days ago, it is a team with a lot of experience in European politics. It includes former prime ministers, deputy prime ministers, commissioners from Barroso's previous teams and MEPs.

The team's professional qualifications and experience are indisputable. They will not face the problems that the previous Commission had to tackle during the global economic crisis. However, numerous other tasks await them, both those that they have selected as their **priorities** and others, such as restoration of trust in the EU both institutionally and economically and migration policy as well as foreign policy in general.

The upcoming months and years will prove whether they can achieve their set priorities and individual objectives.