Movers and Shakers | 22 January 2018

Written by Ifigenia Balkoura on 22 January 2018 in News

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Today's Movers & Shakers are about: the MEPs who are leaving their seats in the Parliament, MEPs' news, highlights from last week's plenary session, appointments in the European Commission and public affairs, the new Romanian prime minister, the resignation of the Czech minority government, Brexit and more.

European Parliament:

Outgoing:
Viorica DĂNCILĂ (S&D, RO) is leaving her seat in the European Parliament to become prime minister of Romania following the resignation of Mihai TUDOSE. DĂNCILĂ has been an MEP since 2009 and is a Vice-Chair of the committee on agriculture and rural development (AGRI). Get to know her in 5
questions [1]. For more information on the Romanian cabinet see the news in a nutshell.

Tatjana ŽDANOKA (Greens/EFA, LV) also announced her intention to stand down as European deputy in March, to focus on her party's campaign for the upcoming general elections in October. An MEP since 2004, Mrs ŽDANOKA is currently a Vice-Chair of the delegation to the EU-Kazakhstan, EU-Kyrgyzstan, EU-Uzbekistan and EU-Tajikistan parliamentary cooperation committees and for relations with Turkmenistan and Mongolia (D-CAS). Miroslavs MITROFANOVS is expected to replace her in Brussels.

Josu JUARISTI ABAUNZ (GUE/NGL, ES) announced that he will step down as an MEP on 28 February.

New special committee:
The conference of presidents backed the establishment of a new special committee that will assess the authorisation procedure for pesticides in the EU [2]; potential failures in how substances are scientifically evaluated and approved; the role of the European Commission in renewing the glyphosate licence; possible conflicts of interest in the approval procedure; and the role of EU agencies, and whether they are adequately staffed and financed to fulfil their obligations. The proposal will be voted in February's plenary session.

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Appointment of rapporteur:
Herbert DORFMANN (EPP, IT) was appointed as rapporteur on the future of the common agriculture policy.

MEPs' news:
Róża THUN (EPP, PL) has threatened legal action against fellow deputy Ryszard CZARNECKI [4] after he allegedly called her a “szmalcownik,” a term denoting people who blackmailed Jews hiding from the Nazis or informed on them to the occupying forces under German occupation in Poland during World War II. CZARNECKI also faces calls for him to be stripped of his vice presidency role in Parliament. However, the decision by the conference of presidents has been postponed until 1 February.

Terry REITNKE (Greens/EFA, DE) has voiced her interest in running in next year’s European elections.

Bill ETHERIDGE (EFDD, UK) resigned as a member of UKIP leader Henry BOLTON’s spokesman team. The MEP also called for the party’s members to petition the national executive committee for BOLTON’s removal.

Jonathan ARNOTT (EFDD, UK) also resigned as UKIP MEP.

Composition of the committees and delegations:
Members:
Wolf KLINZ (EPP, DE) joined the committee on budgetary control (CONT), replacing Hannu TAKKULA (ALDE, FI).
Michael DETJEN (S&D, DE) joined the committee on employment and social affairs (EMPL).

Nicola CAPUTO (S&D, IT) joined the delegation for relations with the People's Republic of China (D-CN).

Simona BONAFE (S&D, IT) switched from substitute to member of the delegation for relations with the United States (D-US)

Substitutes:
Svetoslav Hristov MALINOV (EPP, BU) left the committee on industry, research and energy (ITRE) and joined the committee on economic and monetary affairs (ECON).

Fulvio MARTUSCIELLO (EPP, IT) joined the committee on industry, research and energy (ITRE).

Frank ENGEL (EPP, LU) left the committee on economic and monetary affairs (ECON).

Nicola CAPUTO (S&D, IT) switched from member to substitute of the delegation for relations with the United States (D-US).

Simona BONAFE (S&D, IT) switched from member to substitute of delegation for relations with the People's Republic of China (D-CN).

Fabio Massimo CASTALDO (EFDD, IT) joined the delegation to the EU-Armenia and EU-Azerbaijan parliamentary cooperation committees and the EU-Georgia parliamentary association committee (D-SCA).

Secretariat-General:
DG Communication: Neil CORLETT replaced Parliament's head of press, Marjory VAN DEN BROEKE, who has joined the Commission's fake news taskforce.

Plenary session highlights:
Bulgarian presidency: Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko BORISSOV addressed the plenary session and discussed with the MEPs the priorities of the Bulgarian presidency. Among the issues discussed were the Western Balkans and their EU perspective, the environmental protection, the future of young Europeans, the fight against the corruption, the rule of law and the EU budget. BORISSOV was heavily criticised by the Greens for the expansion of the Bansko ski resort in Bulgaria, but he insisted that the works at the park will have a negligible impact on nature.

Future of Europe: On Wednesday, Irish Taoiseach Leo VARDAKAR opened the first debate the European parliament has organised with EU leaders on the future of the European Union, an initiative of the president of Parliament, Antonio TAJANI. Speaking in the chamber he told MEPs that Europe is at a “decisive” moment in its history, facing the “rise of populism and anti-democratic forces.” He also insisted he was committed to safeguarding the British/Irish Good Friday peace agreement and that there will be no hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland after the UK has left the EU.

Debates on the EU presidencies: Speaking in the plenary on Tuesday, co-chair of the Greens groups Philippe LAMBERTS (BE) questioned the viability of such debates given that hardly any MEPs attended Tuesday’s debate on the Estonian Council presidency. He said such debates were often merely an occasion to sing the praises of a country’s success at the helm of the EU.
Rule of law in Malta: A report by a cross party delegation in Malta focused on the possible role of members of the current Maltese government in the Panama Papers scandal found evidence of “systematic and serious deficiencies”. The fact-finding mission, led by Socialist MEP Ana GOMES (PT), was sent to Malta late last year after the 16 October car bomb murder of the investigative Maltese journalist Daphne CARUANA GALIZIA, who had reported on wrongdoing by Malta’s elite.

Energy efficiency: MEPs backed the ITRE Committee’s proposal to set a binding energy efficiency target of at least 35 per cent by 2030 by 485 votes to 132, with 58 abstentions. Miroslav POCHE (S&D, CZ) is Parliament’s rapporteur on the file. The chamber also approved a separate report by the Committee setting a binding 35 per cent target on renewable energy of the energy consumption in the EU in 2030. The MEPs also voted in favour of setting national targets, from which member states would be allowed to deviate by a maximum of 10 per cent under certain conditions. The report was adopted with 492 votes to 88 and 107 abstentions. Jose BLANCO LOPEZ (S&D, ES) is the rapporteur. MEPs can start negotiations with the Council on both files immediately.

Russian propaganda: MEPs and European security union Commissioner Julian KING discussed Russia’s propaganda influence on the EU member states. The deputies raised their concerns about the EU’s limited response to fake news, cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns and called for more media transparency and awareness raising, while they also called on a revision of the EU audiovisual directive in order to enforce zero tolerance of hate speech. Commissioner KING said that the Commission will come up with a fake news strategy in later in spring.

Pulse fishing: MEPs from various groups in Parliament voted by 402 votes to 232, with 40 abstentions to ban so-called pulse fishing as part of a package governing technical measures for European fisheries. Gabriel MATO (EPP, ES) is Parliament’s rapporteur.

European Commission:

High Level Expert Group on fake news: The European Commission has made its appointments to the newly-formed High Level Expert Group on fake news and online disinformation. Professor Dr. Madeleine DE COCK BUNING has been nominated to chair the Group. Other appointments are as follows: Veni MARKOVSKI; Anja BECHMANN; Rasmus NIELSEN; Ilmar RAAG; Clara JIMINEZ CRUZ; Divina FRAU-MEIGS; Oreste POLLICINO; Neringa VAISBRODE; Anda ROZUKALNE; Alina BARGAOANU; Ziga TURK; Noel CURRAN; Kai GNIFFKE; Sonja SCHWETJE; Gina NIERI; Hanna STJARNE; Juraj POLAK; Sarah WHITEHEAD; Monique GOYENS; Olaf STEENFADT; Marc SUNDERMANN; Juliane VON REPPERT-BISMARCK; Alexios MANTZARLIS; Mikko SALO; Gergely DZSINICH; Gianni RIOTTA; Konrad NIKLEWICZ; Claire WARDLE; Dimitar DIMITROV; Raegan MACDONALD; Nicklas LUNDBLAD; Stephen TURNER; Richard ALLAN; Christophe LECLERCQ; Gregoire LEMARCHAND; Stephen RAE; Federico FUBINI; and Wout VAN WIJK.

Task Force on Subsidiarity and Proportionality and ‘Doing Less More Efficiently’: President JUNCKER has also made six appointments to the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and ‘Doing Less More Efficiently’ promised in his September State of the Union Address. The Task Force will work under First Vice-President Frans TIMMERMANS and will produce a report for President JUNCKER by July. The appointments, nominated by the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the EU (COSAC) and by the Committee of the Regions, are as follows: Toomas VISUT; Reinhold LOOPATKA; Kristian VIGENIN; Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ; Michael SCHNEIDER; and François DECOSTER.
Directorates-General:
Justice and Consumers Directorate-General (DG JUST):
Directorate B - Criminal Justice: **Raluca PRUNA** has been appointed Head of Unit B3 (Financial Crime), taking over from Deputy Head of Unit **Despina VASSILIADOU**, who held the role on an acting basis. Ms PRUNA was previously a Minister in the Romanian government.

Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Directorate-General (DG MARE):
Directorate C - Fisheries Policy, Atlantic, North Sea, Baltic and Outermost Regions: **Joost PAARDEKOOPER**, previously Deputy Head of Unit C1, becomes Head of Unit C3 (Scientific Advice and Data Collection), taking over from Deputy Head of Unit **Patrick DANIEL**, who held the role on an acting basis.

Migration and Home Affairs Directorate-General (DG HOME):
**Laura GORNICIOIU** becomes HR Business Correspondent for DG HOME, a position she previously held in an acting capacity.

Research and Innovation Directorate-General (DG RDT):
Directorate C - International Coordination: Adam TYSON, formerly of DG EAC, becomes Head of Unit C2 (North America, Latin America and Caribbean), taking over from **Begoña ARANO**, who leaves DG RDT for DG EAC.
Directorate D - Industrial Technologies: **Vincent FAVREL** becomes Head of Unit D5 (Administration and Finance), taking over from Deputy Head of Unit **Jochen BRODERSEN**, who held the Head of Unit role on an acting basis. Mr FAVREL joins Directorate D from Directorate I, where he was Head of Unit I5. Unit D5 will now also be responsible for the Administration and Finance of Directorates F and H, as their own Administration and Finance Units (F5 and H4) are closed.
A similar restructure has taken place in Directorate E, where Directorate E6 (Administration and Finance) becomes responsible for the Administration and Finance of Directorates G and I, following the closure of Units G6 and I5. Former Acting Head of Unit G6 **A. IATROU** moves Unit E6 as the new Deputy Head of that Unit.

EU plastics strategy:
The European Commission has unveiled its strategy on plastics.[10]. It sets an ambitious target - by 2030, all plastics packaging placed on the EU market should be reusable or recyclable in a cost-effective manner. It says that more than half of plastics waste in general should be recyclable by 2030 (today it is less than 30 per cent). MEPs from various political groups have welcomed the strategy.

Commission’s representations to member states:
**Ladislav MIKO**, formerly Deputy Director-General at DG SANTE, becomes Head of the European Commission’s representation in Bratislava, Slovakia. He replaces **Dušan CHRENEK**, who is leaving the service.

Public affairs:

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**Got any new appointment you would like us to include in our next newsletter?**  
**Contact Ifigenia Balkoura!** [11]
**Association of Passenger Rights Advocates (ARPA):** will officially launch on 31 January at the European Parliament. The event will be hosted by Georges BACH (EPP, LU).

**AssArmatori:** was founded by a group of Italian shipowners. Stefano MESSINA, President of Messina shipping group, was appointed as president.

**Committee for European Construction Equipment (CECE):** Enrico Prandini, Managing Director of Komatsu Italia Manufacturing was elected as the new president, after having served as first Vice-President. He took over from Bernd HOLZ for a two-year mandate, starting on 1 January.

**European Association of Cereals, Oilseeds, Animal Feed, Olive Oil, Oils and Fats and Agrosupply Trade in the EU (COCERAL):** liana AXIOTIADES was appointed as the new Secretary-General. She will succeed Teresa BABUSCIO, who will continue as interim in the role until 21 February.

**European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA):** Joachim DREES, CEO of MAN Truck & Bus, was elected to chair the Commercial Vehicle Board of Directors for 2018. He succeeded Preston FEIGHT, President of DAF Trucks.

**International Dairy Federation (IDF):** Caroline EMOND will become the new Director-General, starting on 12 February. She will take over from Nico VAN BELZEN.

**SESAR Deployment Manager:** Nicolas WARINSKO was appointed as General Manager to lead the SESAR Deployment Alliance (SDA), on behalf of the European Commission as of 1 January.

**News in a nutshell:**

**Brexit:** Speaking in the European parliament on Tuesday, both European Council President Donald TUSK and his European Commission counterpart, Jean-Claude JUNCKER [12], said the “door remains open” [13] to the UK remaining in the EU. Their comments come after UKIP MEP Nigel FARAGE recently admitted that a second referendum may be necessary to deal with the issue “once and for all.” However, he then changed his mind and said that he no longer backs the idea anymore. European Parliament’s president Antonio TAJANI became the latest EU chief to hold out an olive branch to the UK [14], by saying that “If the UK wants to change its position on Brexit, we are happy with that.”

Parliament’s ECR group co-Chair and MEP for London, Syed KAMALL, told the European Parliament that voters were watching to see whether politicians were capable of putting the interests of ordinary people ahead of their own [15].

In an open letter to Brexit secretary David DAVIS, 30 cross-party MEPs urged him to keep the charter of fundamental rights, while they also warned that ditching the charter would risk the future relations of the two parts.

A senior appointment took place last week at the UK Permanent Representation to the EU. Hermione GOUGH was appointed as the new director for UK-EU Partnership, replacing Simon CASE. Prior to her appointment, she was minister counsellor in the British Embassy in Paris.
In more appointments news, Jacob REES-MOGG MP was elected as chair of an influential European Research Group of eurosceptic conservative MPs.

Find out more information about “who’s who” in the UK politics with our sister team’s “Dods Parliamentary Companion 2018”.

UK prime minister Theresa MAY will give a speech on her government’s Brexit policy in February according to reports.

UK foreign secretary Boris JOHNSON, who came under fire several times for the £350m figure used on the side of the Vote Leave campaign’s bus during the EU referendum said that the figure was “grossly underestimated” and the campaign should have used a higher one. He reportedly also said that he would much prefer staying in the EU rather than face a soft Brexit.

Meanwhile, in a meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron on 18 January, Boris JOHNSON allegedly suggested a new 22-mile bridge spanning the Channel, to which the French president replied: “I agree. Let’s do it.”

Elsewhere in the UK, Brexit would cost Scotland £12.7bn a year according to a new analysis ordered by the Scottish National Party (SNP). Theresa MAY responded to the report by saying that the UK is far more important than the EU to the Scottish economy.

Czech Republic: The minority government of Andrej BABIS lost a confidence vote on 1 January amid misuse of EU funds by BABIS and resigned.

Romania: Prime minister Mihai TUDOSE tendered his resignation on Monday 15 January. Incumbent defence minister Mihai FIFOR took over as acting prime minister. On 17 January president Klaus IOHANNIS designated socialist MEP Viorica DĂNCILĂ as prime minister.

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About the author
Ifigenia Balkoura is editor of the European Union & Public Affairs Directory (EPAD).

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