EU HEADLINES

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OF EUROPEAN DEBATES

Commissioner Unboxing

After quite some back-and-forth, Ursula von der Leyen finally unveiled her new College of Commissioners. We take a look at the key takeaways, which were full of surprises.

European Headlines is a weekly newsletter from the European Movement International highlighting media perspectives from across Europe. Click here to subscribe.



The tide has turned

The team unveiled by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen this week shows her authority as well as the changing balance of power between Member States within Europe, *Le Monde* reports. After weeks of delays and some good old political drama, von der Leyen presented her new Commissioners-designate to Members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg on Tuesday. The creation of the team has been anything but smooth sailing for the Commission President. Not only did the Member State's nominations of candidates leave von der Leyen unable to put together a gender balanced Commission, it did also confirm the rise of far-right political forces. The latest addition of scandals came when von der Leyen had French president Emmanuel Macron withdraw his nomination of Thierry Breton due to personal enmity. Despite the fact that Breton's replacement, Stéphane Séjourné, knows the European machine well, he is new to the economic and industrial fields. In a time where Mario Draghi's report exposed immense investment challenges and the loss of competitiveness in Europe, one can only hope that the tides of Ursula von der Leyen's rule turn in the right direction.

Read the full article



Survival of the fittest

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the climate crisis and the Union's loss of competitiveness against the United States and China in an increasingly geopolitically unstable world, was the backdrop when Ursula von der Leyen presented the Commissioners-designate this week, writes Spanish newspaper *El País*. "Prosperity, security and democracy will be our priorities", said von der Leyen in Strasbourg. Also highlighted was the "commitment" of the new Commission to competitiveness, the great burden of the EU in recent years, as recognised in the recent report by the former president of the European Central Bank Mario Draghi. To tackle these challenges, von der Leyen appointed Teresa Ribera Rodríguez - after Europe's heavy swing to the right, the only Socialist with an important position in the Commission. However, nothing is set in stone just yet: Commissioners will still need to be approved by the European Parliament's committees. Let the games begin.

Read the full article



Go East

The *SüddeutscheZeitung (SZ)* article points to the new Commission's priorities and the shift of power to President von der Leyen, who has created her own "plenary system" - a system in which she is the strong centre of gravity, and everything revolves around her. This was demonstrated by the brutal and scandalous way in which former French Commissioner Breton, the last controversial figure, was removed from office - not a very demure and mindful look, Ursula. In addition to von der Leyen's quest for power and a clear emphasis on competitiveness, the SZ describes the political upgrading of the East as another special feature of the new Commission. Many Eastern and Central European states have been given influential portfolios that in previous mandates were given to Western European states. Only Hungary has been given a lesser portfolio, in what can clearly be seen as a just political punishment for Orban's recent misbehaviour on the international stage. That, on the other hand, is quite a demure and mindful look, Ursula.

Read the full article



And the winner is…URSULA

Like many commentators, the *Irish Times* describes Ursula von der Leyen's unveiling of the new College of Commissioners and the respective portfolios as a very strong show of force to make clear who is in charge for the next five years. According to the Irish newspaper, Teresa Ribera Rodríguez, who will oversee the very important portfolio of the EU's green transition and competition, is one of the few commissioners who could stand up to von der Leyen – hope dies last. The weeding out and swapping of inconvenient candidates, and particularly the messy swapping of French Commissioner Breton for Stéphane Séjourné, a Macron loyalist, is only possible because there is an unprecedented political power vacuum in Europe. This power vacuum is mainly the result of the political instability and weakened position of France and Germany, both of whose leaders have recently suffered unprecedented electoral punishment. The beneficiary of this dramatic development is, who would have guessed, Ursula von der Leyen.

Read the full article

Copyright © The European Movement International, all rights reserved.
The European Movement International
Place du Luxembourg 2, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

This is a weekly newsletter from the European Movement International.
Click here to subscribe.