New European Commission

Overview of the Juncker Commission by Member State

This document includes a short biography of each member of the new European Commission with their allocated portfolio.

Please note that the European Parliament will hold hearings with the nominated Commissioners in order to approve their appointment and the new Commission’s mandate is due to begin on 1 November 2014.

Here is the link to the full Commission organigramme:
http://ec.europa.eu/about/juncker-commission/structure/index_en.htm
**List of countries:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Poland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Slovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Johannes Hahn (born Vienna, 2 December 1957) returns to the Commission for a second term, having managed the Regional Policy portfolio in Barroso II. Hahn was a surprise choice from Austria, with his initial nomination a result of him being a compromise candidate put forward by Austria’s coalition government.

Hahn was active with the Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP; EPP) for over four decades, holding various positions including becoming Chair of the Vienna group in 2005. He was elected to the Vienna Council in 1996 and was a member of its executive from 2003 to 2007, when he was appointed Federal Minister for Science and Research.

Hahn’s non-political career was spent in managerial roles in the private sector, including Secretary-general of the Austrian Manager’s Association. He also held a seat on Novomatic’s supervisory board and allegations against the online gambling company threatened to scupper his initial Commission hearing. Hahn has also faced accusations of plagiarism regarding his Philosophy PhD thesis, which he denies.

Kristalina Georgieva (born Sofia, 13 August 1953) was re-nominated as Bulgaria’s Commissioner, having been Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Civil Response in Barroso’s second college.

Georgieva, who is affiliated with the Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB; EPP), has a PhD in Economics and has lectured at universities such as Harvard, Yale, MIT, LSE and Australian National University. Before joining the European Commission in February 2010, Georgieva held various positions at the World Bank, including Vice President and Corporate Secretary.

She was named Commissioner of the Year in 2010 by European Voice due to her leadership and active involvement in crisis regions such as Haiti, Pakistan and Chile.

Despite of never having held a government function in Bulgaria, Georgieva is considered one of the few leading political figures in Eastern Europe. Given her occasional involvement in Bulgaria’s highly polarised national politics, she has, however, been criticised as a partisan actor.
Marianne Thyssen (born Sint-Gillis-Waas, 24 July 1956) is a politician of the Belgian Flemish Christian Democrats (CD&V; EPP). After obtaining her law degree and being an assistant at the Faculty of Law in Leuven, she joined the Belgian organisation for entrepreneurs, self-employed and SMEs (UNIZO) as a legal advisor and later became head of its research department.

She entered the world of politics in 1986 as a legal advisor for the then Belgian Secretary of Health and became the first female Chair of CD&V in 2008. After a large electoral loss she resigned as Chair in 2010.

She was elected to the European Parliament in 1991 and became Chair of the Belgian EPP delegation in the Parliament in 1999 and Vice-President of the EPP group in 2004. Being interested in economic affairs and entrepreneurship, she was rapporteur for, amongst other things, the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base and the report on specific tasks for the ECB on policies relating to the prudential supervision of credit institutions.

She was the President of the European Parliament’s beer club and board member of the Liaison agency Flanders-Europe and Markant, a Flemish network that supports entrepreneurial women.

Neven Mimica (born Split, 12 October 1953) was re-nominated by Croatia for a new term. He was assistant Minister, then Deputy Minister for Economic Affairs, Chief negotiator for the Stabilization and Association Agreement and WTO accession from 1997 to 2001.

In 2001, he became Minister of European Integration, a post he held until 2003. From 2004 to 2011, he was member of the Parliament for the Social Democratic Party (SDP; PES); during with he was Deputy Speaker of Parliament and Chair of the European Integration Committee in 2008-2011.

Before his nomination as Commissioner in charge of Consumer protection in July 2013 when his country jointed the EU, Mimica was Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration. His training and professional background as diplomatic adviser and economist leaves him well versed on foreign affairs, trade and European integration issues. He held the position of national coordinator of the Decade of Roma Inclusion initiative, a job which made him popular among the Roma community.

Neven Mimica was a successful candidate to the European elections of May 2014 but decided not to take his seat. Often described as a technocrat who built his political career on expertise rather than charisma, Mimica is perceived as being serious, hardworking and trustworthy.
Christos Stylianides (born Lefkosia, June 26 1958) was elected to the European Parliament in the 2014 elections. A qualified dentist, Stylianides was a member of the Cypriot parliament between 2006 and 2014.

Aside from dentistry, Stylianides also has an MA in political science, international relations and European studies. In recent years he has been a close ally of Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades and worked for the Democratic Rally Party (DISY; EPP) as a Government Spokesperson between 2013 and 2014. A committed European, he chose to leave this position in order to seek election to the European Parliament.

Stylianides had previously held the position of Government spokesperson in 1999, but resigned in protest at the perceived corruption of the government. During his time in Cypriot politics, he performed numerous roles including Chair of the House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs and was a member of Standing Committee on Labour and Social Insurance.

Stylianides is well respected in Cyprus for both his competence and clear set of values. He is known to be a very pro-European figure, who has defended the Cypriot membership of the EU throughout the financial crisis and subsequent bailout programme.

Margrethe Vestager (born Glostrup, April 13 1968) has been a Social Liberal Party (RV; ALDE) Member of the Danish Parliament since 2001. In 2007 she was appointed parliamentary group leader and in 2011 she became the political leader of the party.

Before her nomination to the European Commission Vestager held the position of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Economic Affairs and the Interior under the centre-left coalition government of Helle Thorning-Schmidt since 2011. She has previously held the position of Minister for Education (2000-01) and Minister for Education and Ecclesiastical Affairs (1998-2000).

Before her political career, Vestager was head of the secretariat of the Agency for Financial Management and Administrative Affairs, a special consultant with the same agency and head of section at the Ministry of Finance.

Given her domestic political weight and her wish not to take up any international role, her nomination as the next Commissioner came as a surprise. While Vestager is very well respected for her competences in Denmark, in July 2014 she became subject of attention as her ministry published the ID numbers (CPR) of 900 000 citizens on the internet by mistake.
Věra Jourová (Born Třebíč, 18 August 1964) has been a member of the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD; S&D) and more recently Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO; ALDE) parties. Her career has been dominated by regional development policy positions, both at national and local government level – and for a brief time – doing private consultancy work between public posts.

Her official appointment as the Czech candidate was deemed a political one by insiders, rather than one of merit, as her candidacy was said to have emerged to break a deadlock between coalition leaders who both wanted someone else for the position. Jourová benefits from Commission President-designate Juncker's demand for more female candidates, which has also not gone unnoticed by her critics.

Her national career has been sedate but was blighted by the 2006 Budišov corruption case from which she was later awarded €175,000 in damages. The case revolved around the alleged misappropriation of regional funds during which she spent a month under investigative custody and, as she discusses in her autobiography, drove her to attempt suicide. She has said that, as Commissioner, she expects to maintain good relations with the S&D and ALDE groups.

Andrus Ansip (born Tartu, October 1 1956) was the longest serving Prime Minister in the European Union until his resignation in March. A chemist and a former Communist Party official before the break-up of the Soviet Union, Ansip was elected as mayor of Tartu, the second largest city of Estonia, in 1998.

In 2004 he became chairman of the Reform Party (ER; ALDE), and took up the position of Minister of Economic Affairs and Communications the same year. He only held the post until the next year, when the President charged him with forming a new government following the resignation of his predecessor. He was re-elected both in 2007 and 2009, serving as Prime Minister until stood down this year to enable his successor to lead the party into the 2015 general elections.

During his time in power, Estonia successfully fought the economic crisis with austerity measures and joined the Eurozone in 2011. He enjoys international acclaim for digitalizing a significant part of public services in Estonia and moving his country towards e-democracy by introducing online voting.

His achievements are somewhat overshadowed by party-funding scandals and a decline of support for his party towards the end of his office. However, he was elected to the European Parliament with the highest number of preferential votes in May. Following the elections, he was appointed Vice-Chair of the ALDE group and member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy.
In Brussels Günther Oettinger (born Stuttgart, October 15 1953) is already a well-known politician. A lawyer by profession he, served as Commission Vice-President and Commissioner for energy during the last EU legislative cycle.

Nonetheless, before joining the Commission Oettinger had already been a key political figure in German politics. Working his way up the Baden-Württemberg section of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU; EPP) in the 1970s and early 1980s. He first served as the head of the party’s regional parliamentary group from 1991 to 2005 and thereafter became chairman of the CDU Baden-Württemberg and succeeded resigning Erwin Teufel as Minister-President of Baden-Württemberg. He held these posts until 2009 and 2010 respectively, when he was nominated as German Commissioner by Angela Merkel’s then new conservative-liberal federal government coalition.

During his time as Commissioner Oettinger was criticised, especially by Green European politicians, for favouring the financial interests of big energy companies and counteracting a shift from coal and nuclear to renewable energy sources. He was also noted by others for his continuous efforts and work on the EU’s energy security agenda, including discussions over the Nabucco-pipeline and negotiations with Gazprom during the recent Ukraine-Gazprom energy disputes, and on the completion of the EU’s internal energy market.

Jyrki Katainen (born Siilinjärvi, October 14 1971) is the former Prime Minister (2011-2014) and Minister of Finance (2007-2011) of Finland. He is a member of the National Coalition Party (KOK; EPP) and led the party from 2004-2014.

In his role as Prime Minister, Katainen took on a leading role in saving crisis-torn countries – in particular Greece, giving rise to both criticism and praise. Before handing over the Prime Minister post to Alexander Stubb, Katainen engaged the six-party government in preparing an ambitious administrative reform which would lower the number of municipalities to the third of its current state.

Given the strong engagement of Katainen in EU affairs – and especially economic and monetary affairs – it was hardly surprising that the 42-year old was designed to take up the role as ECOFIN Commissioner when Olli Rehn was elected to the European Parliament.

For many, Jyrki Katainen remains a figure of austerity and fiscal discipline, famous for his efforts to preserve Finland’s prized triple-A credit rating. Speaking to the European Parliament in his initial hearing this July he reaffirmed that “we must pursue with determination the implementation of necessary reforms. Cementing the economic recovery will require relentless effort and the solidarity of European institutions, Member States, stakeholders and citizens.”
Pierre Moscovici (born Paris, September 16 1957) is member the French Socialist Party (PS; PES) with experience both in national and European politics. He holds a Master’s degree in Economics and Philosophy, and graduated from Science Po Paris and the École Nationale d’Administration (ENA).

After his graduation in 1984, he was appointed to the French Court of Auditors. Moscovici has since served as French Minister of Economy and Finances (2012-14), as European Affairs Minister (1997 – 2002) and at one point was even considered as a Potential Presidential Candidate of the French Republic.

In Brussels he has been an MEP (1994-97/ 2004-07) and served as one of the European Parliament’s Vice-Presidents. During his first term, he was a member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and Industrial Policy, and Subcommittee on Monetary Affairs. He also sat on the Temporary committee on employment and in the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy for five months.

His second term saw him working in the Foreign Affairs Committee where he drafted own-initiative reports on Romania accession to the EU and was a substitute in the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and the Committee on Constitutional Affairs.

Dimitris Avramopoulos (born Athens, 6 June 1953) studied Public Law, Political science as well as European Studies. He served as a career diplomat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1980 to 1993. He held various positions including Director of the Diplomatic Office of the Prime Minister of Greece. He was also the Consul of Greece in Liege (Belgium) from 1983 to 1988, and Geneva (Switzerland) from 1992 to 1993.

He resigned from the Greek Diplomatic Service to join New Democracy (ND; EPP) and was subsequently elected to the Greek Parliament in 1993. He was then Mayor of Athens from 1995 to 2002.

In 2004 Avramopoulos was appointed Minister of Tourism Development and following his return to the Parliament in 2007 he was Minister of Health and Social Solidarity until 2009. Having become Deputy Leader of his party in 2010 he was appointed Minister of National Defence in 2011, Minister of Foreign affairs in 2012, and was back at the Ministry of National Defence again in 2013, where he remained until his Commission nomination.

Prime Minister Antonios Samaras has been accused of naming Avramopoulos as the Greek nominee for party political reasons. The only other name in the frame was another political rival of Samaras’, new Athens Mayor Dora Bakoyannis, but Avramopoulos was considered more of a threat domestically.
Tibor Navracsics (born Veszprém, June 13 1966) is considered both a close ally of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and a representative of the moderate wing of the governing Fidesz party (EPP). The reform of the Hungarian judiciary – a symbol of Mr. Orban’s fight against “the bureaucrats in Brussels” – took place under his watch as minister.

A trained lawyer and a professor of political science, Navracsics moved to politics following the first electoral victory of Fidesz in 1998. He held numerous high level PR and communications jobs during the term, before taking over the leadership of the parliamentary group of Fidesz in opposition, between 2006 and 2010. In the second Orban government (2010-2014) he was appointed Minister of Public Administration and Justice, a post he held until the 2014 election victory when he took over the top job at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Navracsics is an expert on the Western Balkan region and on legal and judicial issues.

Federica Mogherini (Born Rome, 16 June 1973) has a strong background in foreign affairs and has served as Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs in Matteo Renzi’s Cabinet since February this year. In addition to this, she served two terms in the Italian Parliament since her initial election in 2008. Her time in parliament included the position of Head of the Italian Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, as well as roles in the Italian Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Defence and Foreign Affairs committees.

Mogherini has been actively involved in the Italian Democratic Party (PD; PES) since its foundation in 2007. Prior to this, she was a member of the National Council of the Democrats of the Left where she was responsible for international relations, as well as being involved in the Young Left and Italian Communist Youth Federation.

Mogherini’s nomination as EU Foreign Affairs chief was discussed at the July European Council but was criticised because of her comparative lack of experience and perceived pro-Russian sentiment which was not welcomed by some Eastern European EU member states. Nonetheless, Prime Minister Renzi pushed for her nomination, as one of the “Erasmus generation”, and calmed opponents with Rome’s support for tougher sanctions against Moscow due to the situation in Ukraine. Her nomination has been seen as a sign of success for Renzi’s influence in Brussels.
The Irish government underwent a cabinet reshuffle during the summer, when the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan (born Kilkenny, July 4 1960), became Ireland’s Commissioner-designate. Hogan is a thirty-year veteran of local and national politics representing Fine Gael (FG; EPP), holding such positions as chair of the parliamentary branch and Director of Elections.

As Environment Minister, he attracted attention by tackling Ireland’s economic problems with the introduction of unpopular household and water charges. By comparison, his plans to reform local government (implemented in 2014) were designed to save up to €420 million for the taxpayer over the next four years.

Hogan should prepare to put his political experience and hard-headed tactics to the test at his hearing as MEPs have plenty of ammunition to fire. Parliament will likely question his involvement in a dispute over accommodation for a family of Travellers (akin to Roma in Ireland), claims that he signed off on huge external consultancy fees for Irish Water, the new state utility company, not to mention his controversial sexual remarks to a female colleague in 2011.

Former Latvian Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis (born Riga, 5 August 1971) is a member of the Unity Party (V; EPP). Dombrovskis was appointed as a caretaker PM in 2009 and was re-elected twice, serving until his resignation in November 2013 following a supermarket roof collapse, causing the death of 54.

Dombrovskis is widely regarded as the man who saved the Baltic state after its economy shrank by 25 percent during the economic crisis. Dombrovskis followed a rigorous path of austerity, keeping the currency pegged to the euro throughout the crisis, thus paving the way for the introduction of the common currency as of January 1 2014. His commitment to fiscal discipline makes him unpopular on the left of the political divide, with many accusing him of turning a blind eye to social consequences.

Dombrovskis has a bachelor’s degree in economics for engineers and a master’s degree in physics. He held high positions at the Bank of Latvia from 1998 until his appointment as Minister of Finance in 2002. He was Member of the European Parliament between 2004 and 2009, sitting on a Committee on Budgets and being a substitute member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs. He was elected as an MEP again in May.
Vytenis Andriukaitis (born Siberia, August 9 1951) is a prominent figure in Lithuanian politics. His parents had been deported but he was educated in Lithuania and then working there professionally as a surgeon in the 1970s and 1980s.

Andriukaitis became a leading figure during Lithuania’s transition to independence and consolidation of democracy. In 1989, towards the end of Soviet rule in Lithuania he was a central figure in the reformation of the Social Democratic Party of Lithuania (LSDP; PES), serving as the party’s deputy chairman (1989-1999, 2001) and chairman (1999-2001). He was also a signatory of the 1990 Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania and one of the authors of the Lithuanian 1992 Constitution.

He was a member of the Lithuanian Parliament from the country’s independence until 2004 and then again from 2008 to the present. He was appointed Minister for Health in 2012.

At EU-level, Andriukaitis gained political experience initially as a member of the Lithuanian delegation in the Convention on the Future of Europe (2002-03) but became better known only recently when, during the Lithuanian Council Presidency in 2013. As Lithuanian Minister for Health he was a central figure in the successful conclusion of the political negotiations on the controversial Tobacco Products Directive revision.

Although the final stretch of Jean-Claude Juncker’s (born Redange, 9 December 1954) ascendency to Commission President-elect has been unprecedented, his political career would suggest this was a likely destination.

Having graduated with a Masters in Law in 1979 Juncker entered politics as a parliamentary secretary for the Christian Social People’s Party (CSV; EPP). Aged just 30 Juncker was elected to the Parliament and immediately became Minister for Labour.

Five years later Juncker was Minister of Finance and in 1995 he was elected Prime Minister of Luxembourg, holding the position for almost 19 years. His Government was brought down by a wiretapping scandal which although he did not instigate he was accused of knowing about but not preventing. Juncker denies he ever did anything wrong.

Throughout this time Juncker has been ever-present within the EU, attending Council meetings over four decades and even flirted with becoming his country’s commissioner in the mid-nineties. His stint as EuroGroup President through the Eurozone crisis has meant he is synonymous with austerity policies that have been implemented.

Juncker has built up a strong reputation for finding compromise, which has been evident over the summer as he sought a College of Commissioners that the European Parliament can approve.
Karmenu Vella (born Żurrieq, 19 June 1950) has been a longstanding member of the Maltese Parliament since he was first elected in 1976. Known as “il-Guy”, he has held the positions of Minister for Public Works (1981-1984), Minister for Industry (1984-1987), and Minister for Tourism (1996-1998 and 2013-2014). He has also been a member of Malta’s Labour Party (PL; PES) since 1968, including being involved with its National Executive and running the party’s electoral programme for the 2013 general elections.

Prior to his election to parliament, he began his own private practice as an architect and civil engineer. He also held directorships and chairmanships with various organisations, including Mid-Med Bank, the Libyan Arab Maltese Holding Company (and its subsidiaries) and Corinthia Hotels International followed by Corinthia’s Mediterranean Construction Co Ltd. He is currently Chair of Orange Travel Group, Founding Chair of the Maltese Turkish Business Council and a Director of Betfair Group Ltd.

While being one of the earliest nominations for Commissioners-designate (in April 2014), Labour voters were critical of him being removed as Tourism Minister, while the EU sphere has noted his lack of experience on European issues, although his son John is married to recently elected MEP Miriam Dalli (S&D, MT). Prime Minister Joseph Muscat defended his decision to appoint Vella based on his contact with ordinary people, politicians and multinational corporations.

Frans Timmermans (born Maastricht, 6 May, 1961) is a Dutch Labour Party (PvdA; PES) politician. He studied French literature and European law and started his career as a civil servant at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he trained to become a diplomat. His first posting was in the Dutch embassy in Moscow in 1990, where he was the Deputy Secretary.

Prior to becoming the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs in 2012, he was a member of staff of Commissioner Hans van den Broek, PvdA’s spokesperson for foreign affairs and the Dutch Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs dealing with European cooperation. In 2012, he was also a candidate to become Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe but failed to get elected.

He speaks 7 languages, including Russian, which he learned during his military service as an intelligence officer and in 2010 he was knighted in the Order of Orange-Nassau. In 2014, he travelled to Ukraine to coordinate the investigation and repatriation of the victims of Malaysian airlines MH17 disaster and gave an emotional speech in the United Nations Security Council following the accident.

He is very active on his Facebook page where he regularly posts pictures and messages of his professional and leisure activities, such as attending sports events.

Before joining politics, Moedas worked in the merger and acquisitions and the real estate sectors. Moedas developed his career at Goldman Sachs Europe (2000-04) and Eurohypo Investment Bank (Deutsche Bank Group). In 2008, he founded his own real estate company (Crimson Investment Management) which he led until 2011.

That year, Moedas joined the centre-right government led by Pedro Passos Coelho. Named Secretary of State to the Prime Minister, he was given a clear mission: coordinating the Memoranda Monitoring Structure (ESAME). This body was created to monitor the Economic Adjustment Programme for Portugal agreed with the Troika. He remained in this position until his nomination as Portuguese Commissioner.

There are rumours that Jean-Claude Juncker preferred the Minister of Finance, Luísa Maria Albuquerque but the Prime Minister did not obtain enough guarantees that she would be given a high portfolio. The main opposition party (Socialist Party) disagreed with Moedas’ nomination as they saw it as “strictly partisan”.

Corina Crețu (born Bucharest, June 24 1967) is a qualified economist. She worked in national industry until 1990, before switching to journalism and working for various Romanian newspapers.

Crețu subsequently worked as a Government spokesperson for the Centre-Left Iliescu government. Prior to entering the Romanian Senate in 2004, she worked as Presidential Spokesperson and Head of the Public Communication Department. Between 2002 and 2004, she was also selected by President Iliescu for the board of the state television company.

Elected to the Romanian Senate in 2002 Crețu worked mainly on foreign policy issues. She was then elected to the European Parliament in 2007 where she has worked on the Development committee and has only drafted one report herself, which concerned local authorities and civil society. She has however contributed to numerous other reports relating to both development policy and active ageing.

Crețu was recently elected as a Vice-President of the European Parliament, reflecting the high standing in which she is held. Her nomination did raise eyebrows in Romania due to her relatively low profile and that she has spent her entire political career working in legislatures. The step up to working for an executive and the more politically neutral role that this could entail is seen as a challenge.
Elżbieta Bieńkowska (born Katowice, February 4 1964) is a Polish politician and a member of Civic Platform (PO; EPP).

Bieńkowska served as the Minister of Regional Development in the Cabinet of Poland’s Prime Minister Donald Tusk (from 2007 to 2013). In November 2013 she was appointed as the Deputy Prime Minister of Poland and Minister for Infrastructure and Development. Bieńkowska is said to be one of the closest allies of Donald Tusk who won the post of European Council President on 30 August.

Bieńkowska’s professional career was focused on EU funds. She began her career working in the Business Department of the Silesian Voivodeship, where she was involved in the local application of the EU’s Phare programme. She holds a MBA from the Warsaw School of Economics and she is regarded to be highly experienced in the management of regional funds.

Before she became Minister of Regional Development Bieńkowska was hardly known in polish politics. However, under her time in office Poland earned a reputation as one of the most efficient beneficiaries of EU funds.

Bieńkowska describes herself as a technocrat and has earned a reputation as a Polish “iron lady”. She is known for her strong character and blunt public responses.

Maroš Šefčovič (Born Bratislava, 24 July 1966) has been in the European commission since 2009 when he replaced Ján Figel as commissioner for Education, Training and Culture. He then stayed on and took on the Interinstitutional Relations and Administration portfolio and became a vice-president of the Commission. He was elected in the 2014 EP elections with the highest number of votes for the Slovakian candidates but did not take up his seat.

Before moving to Brussels, Šefčovič held various positions in the Slovak ministry of Foreign Affairs including Director of the Slovak Ministry for Foreign Affairs office. He was Slovakia’s Ambassador to Israel and subsequently their Permanent Representative to the EU from 2004 to 2009. He studied Economics, International relations and Law and took part in the Diplomatic Training Programme in Stanford University in California.

Having been in Brussels for a decade, Šefčovič has built up a strong reputation as a diligent and beyond reproach commissioner, and is strongly for EU integration. In his initial hearing Šefčovič was grilled regarding alleged comments he had made that Roma were abusing of the Slovak welfare system. He defended himself arguing that these comments were taken ‘out of context’ and that he could not remember them.
Alenka Bratušek (born Celje, 31 March 1970) is currently the Liberal caretaker prime minister of Slovenia, despite resigning from this position in May 2014. She is due to hand over the role in mid-September.

During her time as Prime-Minister, she was praised for the way in which she dealt with the impact of the financial and economic crisis, particularly the way in which she has prevented Slovenia from a bail-out.

With a master’s degree in management from the Faculty for Social Sciences at the University of Ljubljana, she worked for six years as head of the Directorate for the State Budget at the Ministry of Finance. Following this civil service experience, she entered the Slovenian Parliament in 2011 and subsequently served as the chairperson of the parliamentary Committee for Budget Control.

Bratušek’s party will not be represented in the next Slovenian Government and as such, her self-nomination has been criticised in Slovenian politics and is being investigated by the Slovenian Commission for the Prevention of Corruption. She was rumoured however to be a favourite of Juncker who is believed to have encouraged her nomination.

Miguel Arias Cañete (born Madrid, 24 February 1950) is a member of the Spanish People’s Party (PP; EPP). Arias Cañete has a legal background and his appointment comes after a long political career which started in 1982. He has been Minister of Agriculture twice in two different conservative governments (2000-04 and 2011-14) and was an MEP for over a decade (1987-1999).

Before joining politics, Arias Cañete passed the public examinations to become public prosecutor, a well-respected achievement in Spain and a common practice among conservative politicians. Until recently he enjoyed a high level of approval across the political spectrum as he was seen as a statesman and a negotiator, in particular thanks to his role negotiating the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) as both Minister and MEP.

This image changed during the recent European Parliament elections where, as the People’s Party lead-candidate, Arias Cañete was accused of holding shares in companies which partly operated under public concessions granted by his Ministry. Also, after losing a debate against the female Social-Democrat lead candidate, he made an ill judged comment about the relative intellect of men and women. As a result the Social Democrats withdrew their support for his nomination, making him the first-ever Spanish Commissioner-designate not to be backed by the two main Spanish political parties.
Sweden re-nominated the incumbent Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström (born Stockholm, May 15 1968).

Malmström, who has a PhD in Political Science, has served as the Vice-President of the Liberal Party (FP; ALDE) in Sweden (2007-10) and Minister for European Affairs (2006-10), including the period of Sweden’s Presidency of the European Council.

Before becoming a Minister Malmström was an MEP (1999 – 2006), and was at the forefront of the campaign against the European Parliament’s seat in Strasbourg.

As a Commissioner Malmström has in particular been concerned about resettling refugees and delivering humanitarian visas for Europe. While she is widely appreciated for her work, Malmström has, however, often found herself at odds with member states over migration and security policies.

Malmström is held in high regard in Brussels and having lived and worked in France, Spain and Germany is passionately pro-European.

Jonathan Hill (born London, 24 July 1960) was quickly dubbed “Lord Who?” in Brussels when the Leader of the House of Lords was announced as the UK’s Commission nominee. However, he has a reputation as a good negotiator and perceived as neither too anti- nor too pro-EU.

Having graduated from Cambridge with an MA in History Hill started working his way up the Conservative party’s policy ranks. He was a special advisor to Ken Clarke in the late eighties and head of Prime Minister John Major’s Political Office during the Maastricht Treaty negotiations.

Hill then worked as a lobbyist, first with Bell Pottinger Group before setting up his own company; Quillier Consultants. His private sector career is likely to be highly scrutinised during his European Parliament hearing.

Having strongly opposed Juncker’s nomination as Commission president a high profile or female Commissioner was seen as essential for the UK to secure a top portfolio. As the third largest member state the UK were unlikely to be pushed too far down the list, and as his predecessor Catherine Ashton secured the Foreign Policy portfolio despite her similarly low profile.