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New College of Commissioners voted in by The European Parliament with an historically slim majority – Bumpy road ahead



Following a long and tumultuous process that led to weeks of political infighting among the House's left- and right-wing groups, Ursula von der Leyen's team has been approved modestly by the EU Parliament.

The combined votes of right, centre-right some centre-left groups were enough to allow for the Commissioners-designate to be approved for the first time since 1999 without any country's nominee being rejected. 370 members of the European Parliament voted in favour of the new right-leaning Commission to start their term on 1st December 2024.

Notably though, 282 MEPs voted against and 36 abstained meaning that this College received the approval of 54% of the House: the slimmest majority in history for a new Commission.

The vote, whilst ending weeks of political deadlock, was itself mired by multiple parties and numerous MEPs protesting against several developments such as:

The decision to include Mr Fitto, nominated by the Italian government, as one of the Commission's Vice Presidents which upset S&D and Renew, who rebuked von der Leyen and the EPP for giving the ECR a leadership role. Some lawmakers within the S&D voted against the college, because of the synthesis of the Commission after Fitto's approval and the green light given to Hungary's Olivér Várhelyi: French and German Socialists voted against and abstained, respectively;

Nearly half of the Greens, who supported von der Leyen in July, did not vote in favour of her team as a protest vote against the inclusion of Fitto;

Though von der Leyen's Commissioners lost support from the Greens, Meloni's Brothers of Italy, and Belgium's New Flemish Alliance lawmakers from the far-right ECR supported the Commission despite opposing von der Leyen's second term back in July;



In the weeks prior, all groups spanning from the ECR to the Greens facilitated the approval of all candidate Commissioners in individual screening sessions, as rules required a two-thirds majority thus leading to the College being approved although with deep divisions being very apparent.

This result reveals a considerable discomfort within the European Parliament regarding the new Commission and it is notable that this discomfort is present also within the political families of the centre. It certainly is an omen of potential difficulties in passing Commission-proposed pieces of legislation.

CEPLIS Attends Major European Conference on E-Health



CEPLIS was invited to and present at the IMIconcePTION conference held in Brussels the 21st of this November.

Bringing in experts, researchers and healthcare professionals who discussed of the groundbreaking work they have been pursuing and the next phase of their quest to expand and improve quality of, and access to knowledge for healthcare professionals.

Of the more interesting projects on display was the **Mothers Using Medicines Safely (MUMS)** ran by IMIconcePTION which aims to improve access to reliable and factual information on medicines for pregnant women and new mothers through an online database. Presently, the MUMS database is available only in three languages (English, Italian and Polish) but the intention is to further develop it once funding can be acquired.

In fact, lack of quality and verifiable information, especially on the effects certain medicines have on pregnant and breastfeeding women, and their children, is a pressing issue in maternal and neonatal care, hence the projects in question were understandably followed closely by academics and professionals alike.

Another important project, the **MEDS4MUMS2B** application, which aims to advise pregnant and breastfeeding women was also discussed. This project is still in its infancy as it only contains a fraction of the intended medicines and at present is only available in the United Kingdom.

The Directors of these projects have expressed the wish to meet and share information on the TeleNursing project currently run by the ENC with CEPLIS' support.

For further information please contact our Secretariat.



POLITICO- Von der Leyen is creating a task force to turn Draghi report into reality

According to *Politico*, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen is setting up a team of officials dedicated to making good on Mario Draghi's blueprint for competitiveness.

The task force would aim to turn the former European Central Bank President's recommendations into concrete proposals and potential legislation.

“Draghi's report on competitiveness, published in September, put forward a series of ideas for EU institutions and capitals to combat the "slow agony," as he put it, that Europe risks facing because of a lack of investment in innovation, the fragmentation of financial markets along national borders, and because the manufacture and delivery of some strategic goods and services are too dependent on non-European companies.

Von der Leyen has made Draghi's suggestions the center of her second term as Commission president, incorporating their main conclusions — apart from joint EU borrowing — in the political program she asked the European Parliament to support over the summer.

Presenting her new team before the Parliament on Wednesday, von der Leyen announced the main initiative of the next five-year term will be a "competitiveness compass" to close the innovation gap with the United States, decarbonize the EU economy and increase its economic independence, with each commissioner told to contribute to these goals.

While her words were a little vague, the concrete side of her announcement is the ongoing work to form a group of officials — including figures from the handful who helped Draghi write his study and kept it confidential — to help the Commission's departments keep the report's implementation on track.

The exact nature of the task force is still being worked out, ahead of the next Commission kicking off on Dec. 1. The group is likely to be within the secretariat-general, which would put it at the heart of the EU executive, meaning it could report directly to von der Leyen.”



SME Assembly 2024 – Providing Skills to a Competitive Europe

On November 18-20, Member States representatives, European Commission officials, industry leaders, academics, and civil society organisations, gathered in Budapest, Hungary, for the annual SME Assembly to discuss the priorities of the SMEs for the upcoming EU political cycle. As always, CEPLIS participated in the discussions, represented the year by Policy Advisor Baptiste Deprez.

At the heart of the discussions was the need for the European Union to provide the necessary skills for the growth of its economy. Against the backdrop of the emerging economic competition with China and the USA, all participants agreed on **the urgent need to promote education in various economic sectors and, crucially, on the necessity to remove all barriers to**

intra-EU occupational mobility. As skills shortages represent an ever-growing issue for the Union, automatic recognition of professional qualifications is key to alleviating territorial skill shortages.

Much discussed was also the so-called Draghi Report. Directed by the former ECB President, the document highlights the Bloc's economic troubles and lack of competitiveness. Worried about the EU's lack of economic dynamism, civil society organisations, such as CEPLIS, underlined the need to remove all unnecessary administration on SMEs, hindering their potential.

This event was an opportunity for CEPLIS to bring forward the priorities of liberal professions to National and European decision-makers and to create new relationships with like-minded organisations.

For further information please contact our Secretariat.

