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Jean-Claude Juncker receives the support of the European Parliament



On the 15th of July, the newly elected European Parliament has backed the candidature of Jean Claude Juncker for the Presidency of the European Commission. The candidate of the Centre-right EPP group is now certain to lead the European executive from the 1st of November for the next five years, thanks to the support of the Socialist and the Liberal families within the EP. The Luxembourgish politician gained their support following many openings towards their own political priorities.

Juncker was confirmed as European Commission President with a clear majority of 422 votes in favor. The 59 year-old delivered a passionate speech in which he vowed to revive Europe's economy. In this speech, **Juncker promised to be “as ecumenical as possible” and presented to the European Parliament his project for priorities of the European Commission for the next five years.**

The group of the Socialists and Democrats (S&D) praised the fact that the plan in question includes a “Job, Growth and Investment Package” to be presented **within the first three months of the new President’s mandate with the aim to generate an extra € 300 billion in investment over the next three years.**

At certain points, Juncker, who in his previous capacity has been part of the decision-making addressing the Eurozone crisis, appeared self-critical and an advocate of a more socially-oriented approach to the effort to impose austerity on overspending economies. **The future President of the EU Commission said that the rescue of the euro “was necessary, but was weak on the social side”.**

“It is unacceptable to me that workers and retired people had to shoulder the burden of structural reform programmes, while ship owners and financial speculators became even richer. In the future, we need a more democratically legitimate replacement for the Troika, and thorough social impact assessments for any new support programmes,” he said, applauded by the Socialist MEPs.

Without mentioning Russia, the future Commission President also signalled his intention to make sure that energy will not be used as a political tool, and that the energy dependence of several Member States would be reduced. *"It's time Europe stood tall on its own feet, pooling our resources, combining infrastructures, and uniting our negotiating power,"* Jean-Claude Juncker said.

Some of the statements by Juncker could be interpreted as signals to London that he too would push for a less bureaucratic Union. **"SMEs are the backbone of our economies, creating 85% of new jobs in Europe – we can't bury them in paperwork. We must unshackle them from burdensome regulation,"** Juncker said, adding that he wanted to work for a Union *"that is not meddlesome, but works for its citizens, rather than against them"*. Juncker also revealed some of his plans for the future architecture of the Union. **He said that his firm conviction was that all EU countries should not move forward necessarily at the same speed.** He also said that he was in favour of a separate budget for the Eurozone countries.

Regarding enlargement, Juncker said that no new countries were expected to join the Union over the next five years, but that ongoing accession negotiations would continue. He also said that Europe should be proud of its reunification, and that it was time to stop calling countries "old" and "new" members.

Following his election, Juncker has sent official letters to the Member States' leaders, inviting them to propose their candidates for the College of Commissioners. Answers must be received by the end of August. Once the new College of Commissioners will be formed, it will have to gain the support of the European Parliament during a vote in plenary session. So far, the outcome of the vote in question is quiet uncertain. As the candidates proposed by the Member States are mostly men, we still don't know in fact how the Luxembourgish President will manage to form an executive composed of at least 9 women as publicly required by Martin Schulz. *"Parliament will not accept a gentlemen's club,"* the EP president said, addressing Heads of State and Governments at the start of a Council summit on Wednesday 16 July.

French government wants to liberalise the market of the regulated professions – UNAPL reacts



In the context of the French government's efforts to relaunch its economy, Arnaud Montebourg, French Minister of Economy, has proposed to reform some regulated professions in order to lower the prices of their services and thus raise the purchasing power of French citizens. UNAPL, CEPLIS' French interprofessional member, has already manifested its opposition to this project.

Recently the French financial newspaper "*Les Echos*", has in fact published extracts of an alleged report drafted by the *Inspection Générale de Finances* (IGF - France's top financial watchdog). In that, it appeared that several regulated professions such as notaries, lawyers and chemists could be forced to reduce their current fees by 20 per cent. According to the authors of the "report", these professions are making heftier than deserved profits, often thanks to a closed-shop set-up, surveys showed that their level of customer service was "*seriously questioned by users*". For example, one out of two French citizens participating in an alleged survey declared that they have used the services of a lawyer but that only 23 per cent of those users were satisfied.

The impression is that the customer is being unfairly charged in France in a number of areas, and the IGF's "report" states that 37 regulated professions are making more than twice the profits of any other economic sector, demanding inflated fees. The professions singled out are notaries, pharmacists, driving instructors, bailiffs, lawyers, and several other professions of law. According to *Les Echos*: "*The higher the level of regulation surrounding a sector, the higher the economic profit for the sector in question*".

The report was allegedly commissioned by Pierre Moscovici, the previous finance minister who was ousted in a reshuffle, but was never made public. In all it details 30 measures that could help the government save consumers €6 billion.

Indeed, **Arnaud Montebourg** has recently suggested that France's Finance ministry was considering targeting certain professions that were cashing in on a lack of competition. "**Many professions are in a monopoly position and set their prices at a level that hits the purchasing power of households,**" the French Minister said.

"We don't want to prevent them from making a living. But they must understand that in a moment when everyone is making an effort, they can make one too," **Thierry Mandon**, Secretary of State for government reform told i-Télé news. *"Several options are possible, particularly the reintroduction of a bit of competition because competition lowers prices."*



Even though nobody knows what will be the final outcome of the reform intended by the French government, **UNAPL has already warned that such a reform could heavily harm the quality of services provided by French liberal professions.**

UNAPL has in fact regretted the wording used by the French Minister as well as the message behind these intentions: *"Liberal Professions should be the ones to blame for the lack of growth in France"*. To demonstrate the simplicity and populism of such a conclusion, **UNAPL also pointed out that liberal professions, far from being privileged by the current system, often risk their own savings in order to launch their affair, without receiving any support from the State's financial institutions.**

Our Secretariat will keep you posted on the evolution of this reform in the coming months.

Spain: The government plans to reduce the number of Professional Bodies – UP reacts

The Spanish government plans to reduce the scope as well as the number of Professional Regulatory Bodies. According to these plans, the number of Liberal Professions with an obligation for professionals to register prior to practicing will be reduced from 80 to 38 and the registration fees will decrease. This reform is aiming at facilitating access of young graduates to Liberal Professions and at reducing the final price paid by the consumers of their services. Union Profesional (UP), our Spanish interprofessional colleague, has already made his opposition to this bill public.



The Spanish Government is finalizing its bill on “Professional Bodies and Professional Services”. According to *El País*, a big daily newspaper of the country, the text will restrict the compulsory registration for several legal, health and technical activities. Among the professions for which compulsory registration will remain are : doctors, dentists, pharmacists, veterinarians, nurses, physiotherapists, podiatrists, opticians, optometrists, biologists, physicists, chemists, geologists, psychologists, architects, technical architects, lawyers, solicitors, employment consultants, and notaries as well as engineering and technical engineering.

In addition to reducing the cost of membership to the Regulatory Bodies, the new Legislative proposal designed by the Executive aims at strengthening the rights of

the members within their Professional Body. The implementation of the text in question has also the objective to improve the corporate governance of these bodies and to increase their independence and transparency.

In order to lower the fees, it will now be prohibited to ask for registration fees when the membership is compulsory. In addition, the periodic fee may be used only to support public services and mandatory functions of the Professional Body, setting a ceiling of € 240 per year. However, the new legislative proposal states that such a ceiling might be removed if three-fifths of the Professional Body's Assembly decides to do so. Professional Bodies will also have to offer a cheaper mandatory membership fee for unemployed professionals. Also, the Professional Body will not be able to require the hiring of their insurance by their members no more.

Union Professional, our Spanish Interprofessional member has already reacted to the Government's proposal. Our Spanish Colleagues have underlined the positive role played by Professional Bodies for the protection of the Consumers as well as for guaranteeing the quality of the services provided to Spanish citizens.



UP also reminded that the exercise of Regulated Professions is often linked to fundamental rights of individuals and sensitive issues that have to do with health, safety, property, property, utilities and the environment. It is for this reason that the Spanish Constitution has established the duty of registration for these professionals. The aim was to enable the Professional Bodies to carry out monitoring and controlling functions. Thanks to this provision, the guarantee of good professional practice and the right of citizens to receive quality services has always been ensured.

Our Spanish member stressed the fact that the freedom of choice of Professional Body would prejudice the rights of the users, especially in the field of healthcare, as

the Professional Body chosen may not be able to carry out the proper control of the professional practice.

Finally, regarding the fees and their decrease, UP has singled out the fact that the government doesn't take into account the differences existing among the Professional Bodies and the services they provide. It would thus be inappropriate to impose a common ceiling to different services.

Our Secretariat will keep you posted on the evolution of this reform in the coming months.

Newly Elected MEP Antonio Tajani : New Commission must prioritise 'internationalisation of SMEs'

Former Commission Vice-President in charge of the European Industry and of the Entrepreneurship, Antonio Tajani (MEP – EPP) will keep on pushing forward the internationalization of European SMEs as EP Vice-President. Here is the complete text he submitted to the European Parliament Magazine the 21st of July.



*Nowadays, economic growth is concentrated in extra-EU markets. It is estimated that by 2020, 70 per cent of world growth will take place in emerging economies. However, this is an opportunity for European companies. To seize this opportunity, EU companies must be able to compete in foreign markets. Large enterprises already do it. **The real challenge is to allow EU small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to compete globally.** But today, too few EU SMEs operate beyond national borders. Only 25 per cent have activities in one or more EU countries other than their own and only 13 per cent are doing business beyond the borders of the European Union. We need to significantly increase these figures. **The internationalisation of SMEs has been one of my priorities over my mandate, and it was also part of the EU's new industrial strategy, adopted in October 2012.***

The 'missions for growth to promising emerging countries' were adopted as a measure to respond to the economic crisis in Europe and the consequent low demand. Since 2011, I have visited 17 different countries. In the Americas I visited the US, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Chile, and Uruguay. In Asia, China, Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand, and in north Africa and the Middle East I visited Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Israel, as well as the Russian federation.

The missions for growth helped create the conditions for win-win situations. On one side, European companies benefit from easier access to external markets. In particular SMEs were helped to internationalise, gain access to foreign markets and influence the authorities of visited countries to eliminate non-tariff barriers, harmonise standards and strengthen the rule of law. On the other side, local actors and authorities have a concrete chance to lure foreign investment. To reach the objectives, the innovative concept behind the missions is that SMEs can take part in political meetings and present their problems and needs directly to the local authorities, participate in business-to-business exchanges to gain insights into foreign administrative and regulatory environments.

Direct contacts between EU entrepreneurs and foreign authorities and companies are also an important part of the strategy to foster durable business relations. These missions bring together representatives of EU businesses and the authorities of third countries, encouraging future cooperation. Since the first mission, I gathered more than 800 participants representing nearly 600 companies and business associations from 26 member states that have embarked on such missions. I signed with my counterparts more than 70 letters of intent and joint declarations to work on common objectives, particularly in the areas of SME policy, tourism, regulatory issues and standards. Implementation measures are already taking shape, including the nomination of SME envoys in countries such as Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru and Uruguay, as well as the transposition of European industrial standards as national standards in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and more. The last mission for growth I led took place in June 2014 in Panama, Argentina and Paraguay.

It is worth noticing that internationalisation does not mean offshoring, as EU companies maintain their base in Europe. Internationalised companies grow even during dire periods for the European economy, and therefore favour growth and jobs in Europe. EU companies which are active outside the EU are also the most innovative and competitive. 25 per cent of EU enterprises which operate abroad have successfully launched at least one new product in their sector. Only eight per cent of the EU companies operating only in their country can boast such a result. The last missions for growth under my mandate have been to Panama, Argentina and Paraguay. Panama has one of the most rapidly growing economies in Latin America.

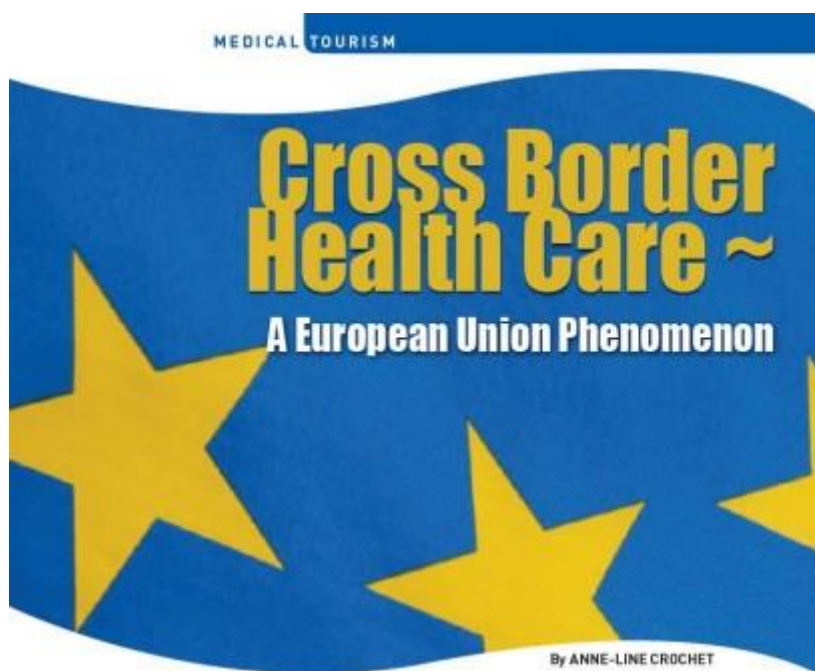
Its annual real GDP growth averaged about nine per cent over the past five years, buoyed by the Panama canal expansion and large public infrastructure projects. Lying at the crossroads of the North and South American continents and the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, Panama is of key international strategic importance. The EU and Panama therefore have genuine interest in increasing bilateral business relations and market integration in mutually beneficial ways to boost strong sustainable growth

and create jobs. The fact that European companies are in charge of the canal's enlargement works highlights the opportunities for European business in this country.

*The visit to Argentina this year can be seen as a follow-up to the very successful mission organised in this country in 2011. Argentina is a long-standing trade and investment partner for the EU. The EU remains Argentina's second export market after neighbouring Brazil. The EU also remains the biggest foreign investor in Argentina, accounting for about half of the foreign direct investments. Paraguay's growth in 2013 – 13.6 per cent – was the third highest in the world and the country has strong economic fundamentals. There is interesting potential for EU investment in Paraguay due to the country's macroeconomic stability, open trade regime, business-friendly government, low taxation and inexpensive energy and manpower. Up to now, the missions for growth have been a success. **I hope that my successor, under the next mandate of the European commission, will consider internationalisation of SMEs as a priority and will go on encouraging business relationships with promising emerging countries and working on diplomatic relations to achieve better bilateral business environment.***

Commission urges 12 Member States to notify full implementation of cross-border healthcare rules

On the 10th of July, the European Commission sent a formal request to Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Finland, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Poland, and the United Kingdom to notify full implementation of the cross-border healthcare Directive (2011/24/EU).



This Directive clarifies patients' rights to choose to receive healthcare in another Member State, and claim reimbursement for it at home. It also requires health systems and healthcare providers to ensure patients are given the information they need to make an informed choice about their treatment in another Member State. The Directive has been partially implemented by Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Greece, France, Austria, Poland, Finland and the United Kingdom, but certain provisions of the Directive still appear to be missing. These range from clear implementation of the rules set down in the Directive for the reimbursement of healthcare received abroad, to an obligation for national contact points to help each other understand invoices. Ireland and Luxembourg have not notified any measures to implement the Directive.

To date, the Member States mentioned above have not at all or not fully turned this Directive into national law, despite being required to do so by 25 October 2013. These countries have two months to inform the Commission of measures taken to implement Directive 2011/24/EU. Failure to notify adequate measures could lead to the Commission referring the cases to the EU Court of Justice.