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## **Former Polish Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek to head the European Parliament for two-and-a-half years.**

Polish centre-right MEP **Jerzy Buzek** was elected the 14<sup>th</sup> of July as the President of the European Parliament, for a two-and-a-half year term.

**Mr. Buzek** received 555 of 644 votes casted. His only rival, Swedish far-left MEP Eva-Britt Svensson, received 89 votes.

In his speech the new President thanked MEPs who had voted for him and promised to “try to convince” those who had not: “*I intend to work with all of you regardless of political convictions.*”. Mr. Buzek pledged to focus on human rights and reforming the Parliament. He said it was important to bring citizens closer to the EU as they were becoming “more and more indifferent”.



Speaking on the 14th July, the French national holiday commemorating the Revolution of 1789, Mr. **Buzek** said that the Revolution's values of freedom,

equality and fraternity “*ring out today*”. The President noted also that the election of a Polish citizen to the European Parliament’s chair had enormous symbolic value in showing that a once-divided Europe had been reunited.

Mr. **Buzek** said he had once dreamed of being a member of the Polish parliament in a free Poland. Becoming the first President of the European Parliament from a Central/Eastern European country was for him a “*tribute to millions of our citizens who did not bow to a hostile system*” in the countries under communist rule.

Turning to his political priorities for his term of office, Mr. **Buzek** said that citizens expected the EU institutions to “*get us out of the crisis*” and ensure there were jobs. He also stressed the importance of energy security and tackling climate change.

Underlining the significance of the Lisbon treaty, Mr. **Buzek** said it was essential for making the EU more effective, especially on the international stage.

The new President received congratulations from most Political Group leaders, many of whom echoed the symbolic importance of electing someone from Central and Eastern Europe as the president of parliament.

French MEP **Joseph Daul**, leader of the centre-right European People's Party group (**EPP**), said: “*Every member of the house will be overwhelmed with you that we are united.*” He said he hoped people would stop using the terms east and west.

**Martin Schulz**, leader of the centre-left Socialists and Democrats (**S & D**), said Buzek's election was a “*historical moment*” coming 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

**Guy Verhofstadt**, leader of the Liberal and Democrat group (**ALDE**), told Buzek he would have the full support of his Group. He urged him to use this support to “*create a more integrated Europe*” including a single strategy against the financial crisis. Verhofstadt, who used to attend summits of EU leaders when he was Prime Minister, also urged Buzek to use his voice in summit meetings.

**Rebecca Harms**, co-president of the **Greens**, said: “*We share the sense of joy which prevails today*”, adding: “*It's an honour for us to have you as president of the European Parliament.*” She welcomed his commitment to establish closer links with citizens of Europe, a priority the Greens shared.

**Nigel Farage**, leader of the Eurosceptic Europe of Freedom and Democracy group (**EFD**), said that he wanted to congratulate Buzek on his election but that the choice had been the result of a “*stitch-up*” by the big political groups. He said that Buzek had fought for national self-determination for Poland as a member of

the Solidarity trade union but warned that the EU would “turn back into the Union” Buzek had fought against if it ignored the ‘No’ votes to the Lisbon treaty in Ireland, France and the Netherlands..

## Election of New Chairs for the European Parliament’ Committees

**In a final constitutive lap, MEPs on 16<sup>th</sup> of July elected the Chairs and Vice-chairs of the 12 parliamentary committees.**

**After weeks of horse trading among the political groups and national delegations, MEPs selected the men and women who are going to lead legislative work in the European Parliament's eighth legislature since its first elections thirty years ago.**

Possibly as a trade-off for having lost the European Parliament's Presidency and being the second largest delegation within the centre-right European People's Party (EPP), the political family that won the elections in June, Italy was given control of the highest number of committees, followed by France and Germany. A large number of Vice-chairs are also Italian.

Given the results of the European elections, most of the EP committees related to the economy have shifted to the centre-right. The Parliament's third-largest group, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in Europe (ALDE), has managed to secure control of the two parliamentary committees, which will be key in dealing with the economic and financial crisis.

German Liberal MEP **Wolf Klinz** will chair a special committee on the crisis, while British Liberal MEP **Sharon Bowles** will chair the committee on economic and monetary affairs (ECON).

The largest political group, the European People's Party (EPP), will chair the Industry Committee (ITRE), with German Christian Democrat **Herbert Reul**. Also in the EPP camp, the Budget committee, which will be chaired by French member **Alain Lamassoure**.

UK Conservative MEP **Malcolm Harbour** (ECR) has been elected to lead the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee (IMCO) Meanwhile, budgetary control will be lead by Italian ALDE MEP **Luigi De Magistris**.

In a last-minute change, MEP **Mario Mauro**, who had been the leading candidate to head the foreign affairs committee since his withdrawal from the Presidency race, decided to pull out and will head the Italian delegation, possibly to keep his

options open as he is eying the Italian commissioner's job, sources said in Strasbourg.

Italy nonetheless maintained the seat and the chairmanship went to **Gabriele Albertini**, a former mayor of Milan. The foreign affairs committee (AFET), which is one of the institution's most prestigious posts, has limited power under the Treaties, however.

The Social Democrats secured a number of traditionally centre-left portfolios, like Environment, Social Affairs and Civil Liberties. **Pervenche Berès**, a French socialist, will head the Employment and Social Affairs committee (EMPL), while German S&D MEP **Jo Leinen** was elected chair of the **Environment, Public Health and Food Safety committee (ENVI)**, two of the most important committees for FEPI's work. A more specific and detailed article on the members composing the ENVI Committee will follow very soon.



*Pervenche Berès*

Please find here under the complete list of all the Committees of the EP, as well as their Chair persons with their national and political affiliation.

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Chairman/Chairwoman</b>	<b>Political Group</b>	<b>Country</b>
AFET (Foreign Affairs)	Gabriele Albertini	EPP	Italy
DROI (Human Rights)	Heidi Hautala	Greens	Finland
SEDE (Security and Defence)	Arnaud Danjean	EPP	France
DEVE (Development)	Eva Joly	Greens	France
INTA (International Trade)	Vital Moreira	S&D	Portugal

BUDG (Budget)	Alain Lamassoure	EPP	France
CONT (Budgetary Control)	Luigi de Magistris	ALDE	Italy
ECON (Economic and Monetary Affairs)	Sharon Bowles	ALDE	UK
EMPL (Employment and Social Affairs)	Pervenche Beres	S&D	France
ENVI (Environment, Public Health and Food Safety)	Jo Leinen	S&D	Germany
ITRE (Industry, Research and Energy)	Herbert Reul	EPP	Germany
IMCO (Internal Market and Consumer Protection)	Malcom Harbour	ECR	UK
TRAN (Transport and Tourism)	Brian Simpson	S&D	UK
REGI (Regional Development)	Danuta Hübner	EPP	Poland
AGRI (Agriculture and Rural Development)	Paolo De Castro	S&D	Italy
CULT (Culture and Education)	Doris Pack	EPP	Germany
JURI (Legal Affairs)	Klaus-Heiner Lehne	EPP	Germany
LIBE (Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs)	Fernando Lopez Aguilar	S&D	Spain
AFCO (Constitutional Affairs)	Carlo Casini	EPP	Italy
FEMM (Women's Rights and Gender Equality)	Eva-Britt Svensson	GUE/NGL	Sweden
PETI (Petitions)	Erminia Mazzoni	EPP	Italy
Temporary Committee on the Economic Crisis	Wolf Klinz	ALDE	Germany
EU-China delegation	Graham Watson	ALDE	UK
EU-ACP delegation	Louis Michel	ALDE	Belgium