

Article – Commission changes: MEPs to assess McGuinness and Dombrovskis



The [economic and monetary affairs committee](#) will hold a hearing on 2 October at 9.00 CET with Mairead McGuinness (Ireland) to evaluate whether she is suitable to serve as a commissioner in charge of financial services, financial stability and the Capital Markets Union.

Valdis Dombrovskis (Latvia), who is the executive Vice-President of the Commission, is proposed to assume responsibility for trade and is invited to a hearing on the same day at 13.00. The meeting will be organised by the [international trade committee](#), with the participation of the [foreign affairs committee](#), the economic and monetary affairs committee, the [development committee](#) and the [budgets committee](#). As Dombrovskis is already a member of the Commission, he will only face questions on his suitability for the new portfolio.

After the evaluations are completed, Parliament will vote in plenary on 7 October.

The reshuffle at the Commission comes after the [resignation of trade commissioner Phil Hogan](#) at the end of August.

McGuinness has served as an MEP since 2004 and has been Parliament Vice-President since 2014. Valdis Dombrovskis, a former prime minister of Latvia, has been a Commission Vice-President since 2014.

The procedure in Parliament

Whenever a member of the European Commission needs to be replaced or there is significant reassignment of portfolios, Parliament invites the candidates for the new jobs to hearings so that MEPs can evaluate them.

The procedure is similar to the one for the [election of the Commission](#) at the start of each term. First, the [legal affairs committee](#) examines a candidate's declaration of financial interests to confirm the absence of conflict of interests. This is a precondition for holding a hearing with the candidate.

The hearing is then organised by the committees dealing with the portfolio of each candidate. Before it starts, the candidate needs to answer some questions in writing. The hearing lasts three hours and is streamed live. After the hearing the responsible committee or committees prepare an evaluation letter.

The Conference of Committee Chairs, which includes all chairs of parliamentary committees, will then assess the outcome of the two hearings and forward its conclusions to the leaders of the political groups and the President of Parliament in the Conference of Presidents. The latter are responsible for the final evaluation and decision to close the hearings or request further action. Parliament can then proceed to the plenary vote.

Procedurally, the Parliament has a consultative role on individual candidates for commissioners, while it can approve or dismiss the European Commission as a whole. An agreement between Parliament and Commission requires the Commission president to consider the opinion of Parliament on individual candidates and changes in the composition of the Commission.

As always, when Parliament votes on individual candidates, votes are held by secret ballot. A simple majority of votes cast is required to establish Parliament's position.

Follow the [hearings live on our website](#).