



The 2010•2014

# European Commission

## Mid-Term Review

Year: 2010•2012

Report of:

*Barroso II*  
*November 2012*

*How do you think  
they've done?*

# Introduction

To mark the Barroso II Commission's first anniversary in office in February 2011, Burson-Marsteller Brussels asked actors from across the world of EU policy-making to tell us how they thought the Commission as a whole and individual Commissioners were performing.

As a reference point we used the commitments that individual Commissioners-designate made before the European Parliament prior to taking up office and asked how the Commissioners were living up to those commitments. This first report received wide public interest, as well as broad media coverage. This level of interest led us to commit to undertake the exercise again, this time with EurActiv, for a 'Mid-term Review'.

This new survey received nearly three times the number of responses provided to the first survey, with 811 people taking part. A lively viral Eurosceptic campaign in The Netherlands resulted in more than 4,000 Dutch respondents 'polljacking' the survey. We decided to withdraw these responses from the core results in order to avoid distorting the survey and to maintain a fair country representation. This resulted in Dutch responses forming eight per cent of the total number of analysed responses, in line with the other member states and Dutch participation in 2011. Full details concerning methodology are available at [www.bmbrussels.eu](http://www.bmbrussels.eu).

Compared to our 2011 scorecard, more respondents to this survey work for the European institutions (up from 24.7 per cent to 29.6 per cent) and, possibly related to this, the average age is slightly higher.

As you will see in the results of this Mid-Term Review, the Commission is widely criticised for not performing well enough. Indeed, no less than a third of respondents judged the overall performance of the Commission in tackling the economic and financial crisis as "poor". Less than one per cent of respondents give the Commission full marks.

The message for the Commission as a whole – and also for individual Commissioners - is that they need to do a lot better!

Looking ahead, this Mid-Term Review also reveals (not surprisingly) that the principal policy challenge for the remainder of the mandate of the Barroso II Commission is the economic and financial crisis. Looking further ahead, our survey suggests a clear desire for the next President of the European Commission to be a 'big-hitter'. The final pages of this Review consider some of the findings regarding who might be in the running for the job of Commission President in 2014.

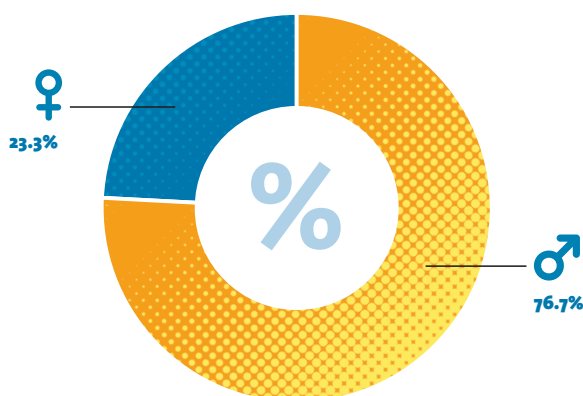
The survey results are available in this summary report - *The European Commission – Mid Term Review* - and in full detail on our web site: [www.bmbrussels.eu](http://www.bmbrussels.eu). A compilation of responses to open-ended questions is also available on our website.



David Earnshaw  
CEO, Burson-Marsteller Brussels

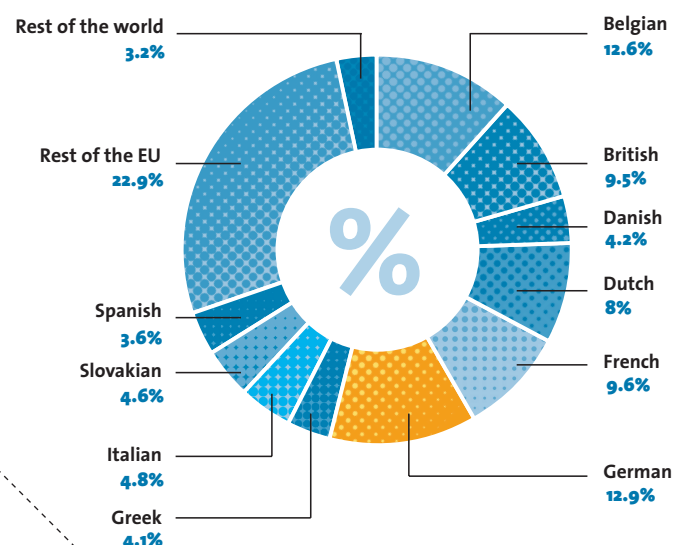
# About the respondents

## Your gender is...

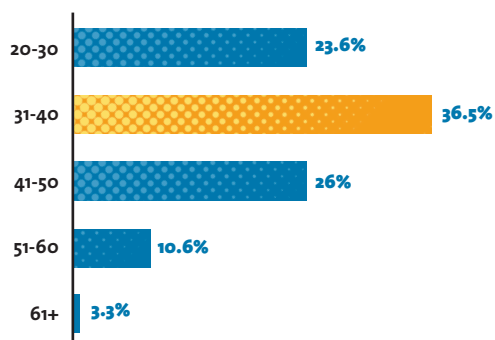


Total responses: 811

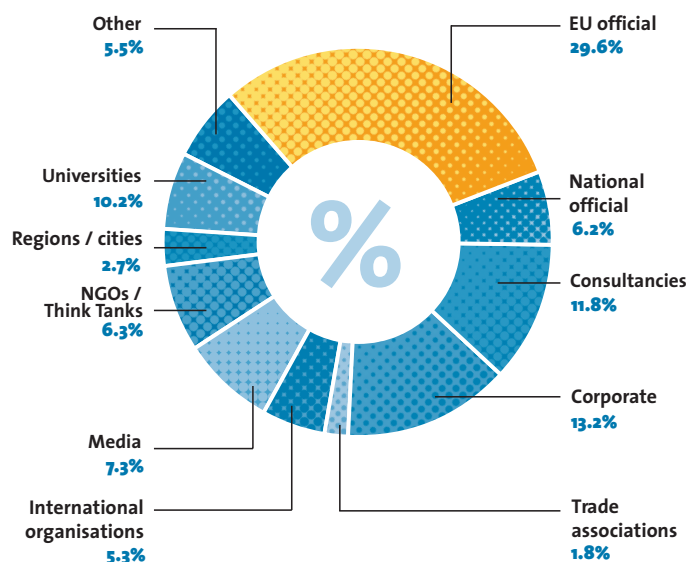
## Your nationality is...



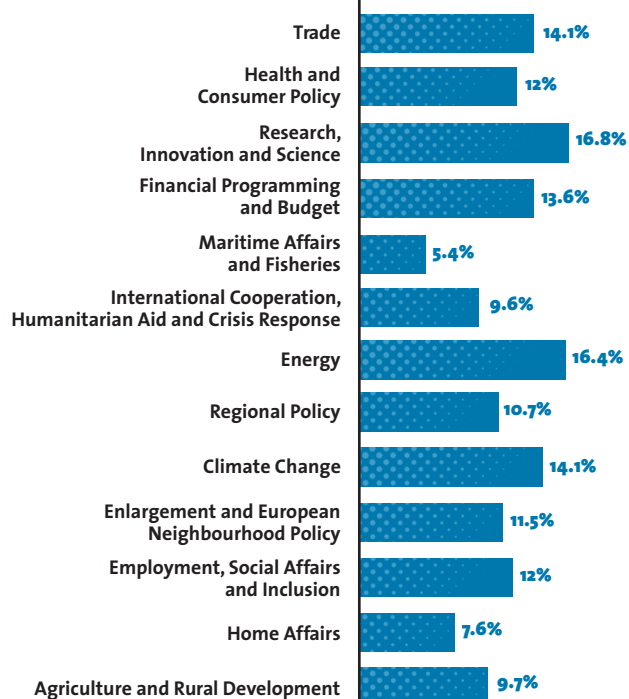
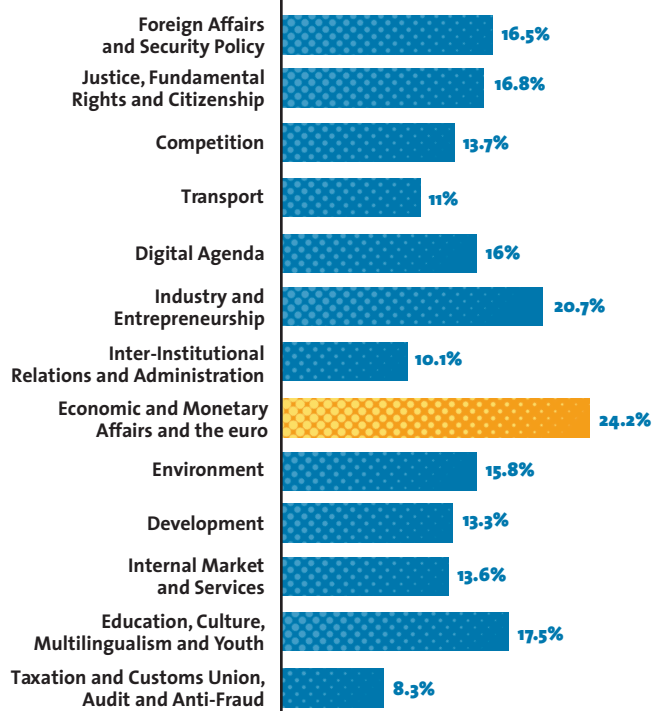
### Your age bracket is...



### Your professional activity is...



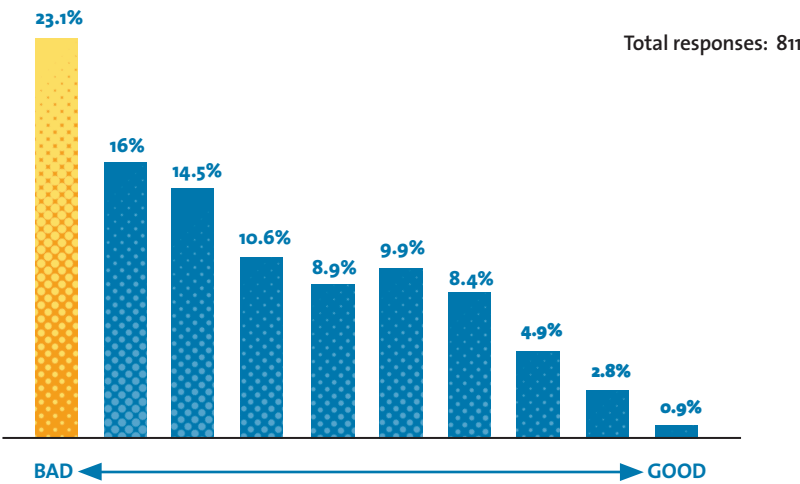
### Your policy expertise includes...



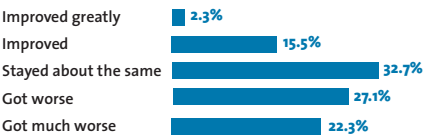


# Barroso II – How has it done so far?

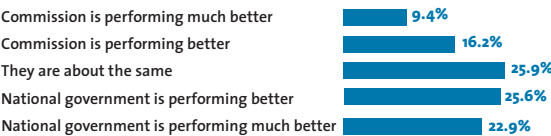
The Barroso II European Commission has been in office for over two years. On a scale from 1 (bad) to 10 (good), how would you assess the performance of the 2010-2014 European Commission so far?



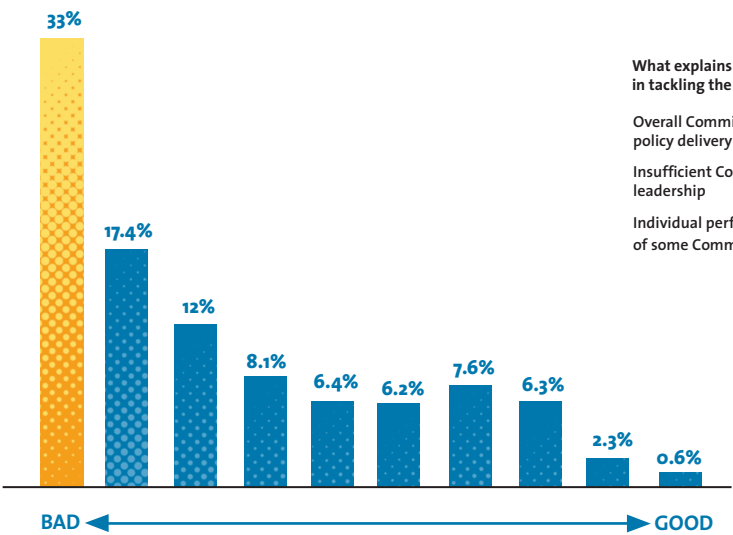
Compared to twelve months ago, do you think the overall performance of the Commission has improved, stayed the same, or got worse?



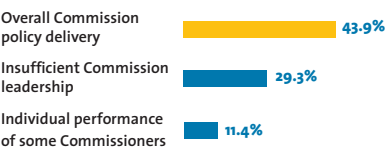
How do you compare the overall performance of the Commission with that of your national government?



On a scale from 1 (bad) to 10 (good), how would you assess the overall performance of the European Commission in tackling the financial and economic crisis?

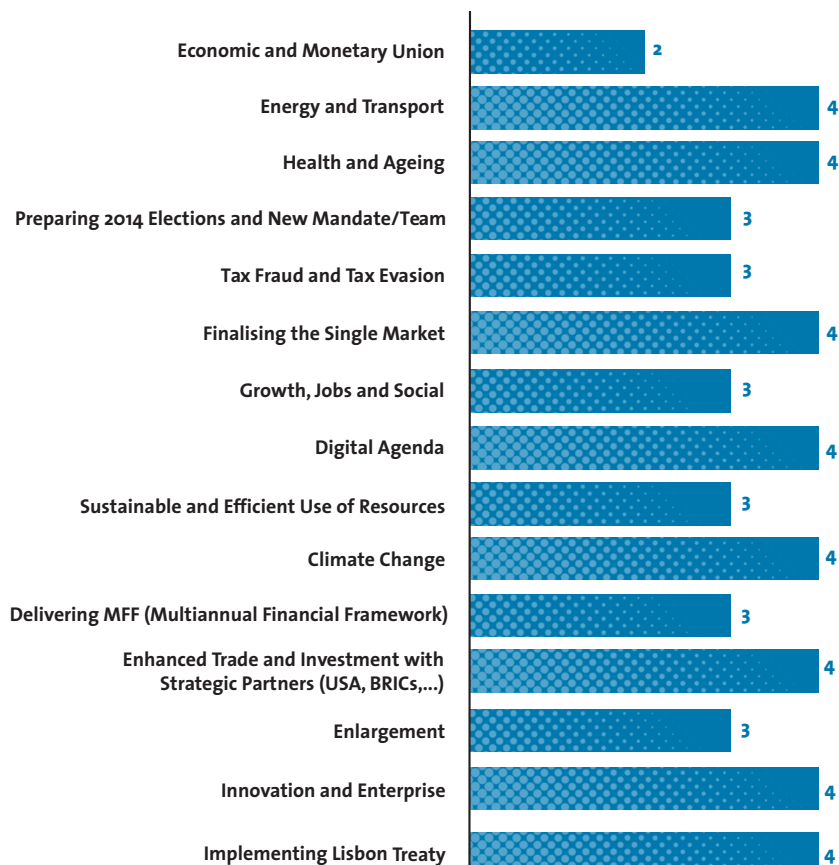


What explains the performance of the European Commission in tackling the financial and economic crisis?





On a scale from 1 (bad) to 10 (good), how would you assess the performance of the 2010-2014 European Commission in the following policy areas?



These results reflect the median response



- Which Commissioner has shown the **BIGGEST IMPROVEMENT** in their performance over the last 12 months?

Neelie Kroes 29.8%



- Which Commissioner has shown the **BIGGEST DETERIORATION** in their performance over the last 12 months?

José Manuel Barroso 53.6%



- When considering communicating with the public, which Commissioner do you think is the **BEST COMMUNICATOR**?

Neelie Kroes 37.4%

# Barroso II and individual Commissioners - How have they done so far?

A year into the mandate of the Barroso II Commission there was a general perception that the Commissioners must do better. Half-way through its mandate this perception has not changed. Indeed, the striking point about this survey is that respondents believe the performance of the Barroso II Commission, both collectively and individually, has deteriorated.

More than half of respondents ranked the overall performance of the Commission as a whole as "poor" (a score of 3/10 or lower), with less than ten per cent of respondents judging the Commission's performance favourably (8/10 and above). When asked how this compared to their perception of the Commission a year ago, the highest proportion of respondents saw no change, while nearly half indicated a deterioration in the Commission's performance. Looking at individual policy areas, there is general disillusion across the whole range of the Commission's activities: the median response rarely gives a score higher than 3/10.

Like last year, there are very mixed views of how the performances of national governments and the European Commission compare. However, in 2012 there appears to be growing support for the idea that national governments are performing better than the Commission.

While not immediately comforting, there might be a glimmer of hope for the Commission. Respondents indicated that it is not only about the need for better leadership and the individual qualities of some Commissioners. The poor performance of the Commission in dealing with the economic crisis could, it appears, be addressed by the current team, through them focusing on better delivery of European policy. This survey demonstrates again that above all the Barroso II Commission needs ambition and focus during its last two years.



José Manuel Barroso



Neelie Kroes



Andris Piebalgs



Catherine Ashton



Antonio Tajani



Michel Barnier



Viviane Reding



Maroš Šefčovič



Androulla Vassiliou



Joaquín Almunia



Janez Potočnik



Algirdas Šemeta



Siim Kallas



Olli Rehn



Karel De Gucht

Perceptions of how Commissioners are performing vis-a-vis the commitments they made during their European Parliament hearings in 2009 and 2010 are unfavourable. Across the board, respondents rated the individual performances of most Commissioners quite poorly.

The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, and the Vice-President and High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, received the highest number of responses, but also the worst ratings by far. By contrast, Commissioners Maria Damanaki (Maritime Affairs and Fisheries), Johannes Hahn (Regional Policy) and Kristalina Georgieva (International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response) were assessed as relatively strong performers by the much smaller number of people who provided an assessment of their performances.

John Dalli resigned as Commissioner for Health and Consumer Affairs while our survey was still open online; we therefore took the results into account. His successor will need to be aware that Dalli's commitment to 'act as the guardian of the consumer' was voted both as his best and his worst achievement so far!

On specifics, implementing policies in the area of the low-carbon economy stands out as a challenge, reflecting poorly on both Vice-President Antonio Tajani (Industry and Entrepreneurship) and Commissioner Connie Hedegaard (Climate Action). Work on the EU Digital Agenda continues to be perceived as a valuable achievement both for Vice-President Neelie Kroes and for President Barroso. Neelie Kroes is exceptional in another sense: she was cited by respondents as the best communicator in the Commission and showed the biggest improvement in individual performance since last year.

Efforts by Catherine Ashton and the Commissioner for Trade, Karel De Gucht, to establish stronger cooperation with third countries, such as the United States, Russia and China, are perceived as their weakest points. Catherine Ashton received some credit for her work establishing the European External Action Service, which is seen as her most successful commitment to date. Having now established the EEAS, the second half of the mandate will be the 'make or break' opportunity for her to prove her many doubters wrong.



5/10

John Dalli



4.5/10

Günther Oettinger



4.5/10

Cecilia Malmström



5/10

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn



5/10

Johannes Hahn



5/10

Dacian Cioloș



3.5/10

Janusz Lewandowski



4.5/10

Connie Hedegaard



5/10

Maria Damanaki



5/10

Štefan Füle



5.5/10

Kristalina Georgieva



4.5/10

László Andor

Total responses: 690  
Grade: 1 (bad) to 10 (good)

These results reflect  
the median response


For the detailed results and  
methodology, please go to:  
[www.bmbrussels.eu](http://www.bmbrussels.eu)

# Individual Commissioners' commitments - How have they done so far?

196 people went on to assess in more detail how the Commissioners have performed on their 2010 commitments. We asked respondents which specific commitment they believed the Commissioner had been most successful and least successful in achieving so far.


Respondents could select as many options as they wished for each Commissioner. The results are shown below with the most successful commitment in black and least successful commitment in red.

There is a clear observation which can be made from the results here: many Commissioners are perceived simultaneously to be both successful and poor at implementing a specific commitment. Clearly, the challenge for many is to communicate their achievements better where these exist.



**José Manuel Barroso**

- ⊕ EU Digital Agenda and Digital Single Market (33%)
- ⊖ Help recovery of member states with budgetary constraints (67%)



**Neelie Kroes**

- ⊕ Digital Agenda (60%)
- ⊖ Digital Single Market (50%)




**Andris Piebalgs**

- ⊕ Millennium Development Goals (36%)
- ⊖ Millennium Development Goals (47%)
- ⊖ Official development assistance budgets (47%)




**Catherine Ashton**

- ⊕ European External Action Service (63%)
- ⊖ Partnerships with the US, Russia and China (51%)




**Antonio Tajani**

- ⊕ Policy to promote low carbon, knowledge-based economy (25%)
- ⊕ SME test for impact assessments (25%)
- ⊖ Policy to promote low carbon, knowledge-based economy (51%)




**Michel Barnier**

- ⊕ Put transparency, responsibility and ethics at the heart of financial regulation (40%)
- ⊖ Strengthening faith in the internal market: e-commerce and Services Directive (51%)




**Viviane Reding**

- ⊕ Mainstream fundamental rights, including swift accession to European Convention on Human Rights (36%)
- ⊖ Mainstream fundamental rights, including swift accession to European Convention on Human Rights (41%)




**Maroš Šefčovič**

- ⊕ Work with European Parliament to set up a joint register of interest representatives (47%)
- ⊖ Subsidiarity checks (47%)



**Androulla Vassiliou**

- ⊕ Promote quality, mobility and employability in education (44%)
- ⊖ Promote quality, mobility and employability in education (40%)




**Joaquín Almunia**

- ⊕ Cartels and market power (46%)
- ⊖ Encouraging bailed-out banks to pay back state aid loans (38%)
- ⊖ Better dialogue with citizens on competition policy (38%)



**Janez Potočnik**

- ⊕ Resource efficiency and green economy (60%)
- ⊖ Resource efficiency and green economy (44%)



**Algirdas Šemeta**

- ⊕ Maximise effectiveness of OLAF through reform (33%)
- ⊖ Tax, fraud and evasion (42%)





Siim Kallas

- ⊕ Infrastructure and Trans-European Networks investment (33%)
- ⊖ De-carbonisation of transport (38%)
- ⊖ Investment in railways (38%)
- ⊖ Cross-border enforcement of motoring offences (38%)



Olli Rehn

- ⊕ Economic coordination between member states (48%)
- ⊖ Unified EU representation in international financial fora (56%)



Karel De Gucht

- ⊕ Complementing the multilateral system (52%)
- ⊖ Reinforce cooperation with global economies (53%)



John Dalli

- ⊕ Act as 'guardian of the consumer' (35%)
- ⊖ Act as 'guardian of the consumer' (47%)



Günther Oettinger

- ⊕ Energy Infrastructure (42%)
- ⊖ Low-carbon energy promotion (59%)



Cecilia Malmström

- ⊕ Immigration and asylum policy (31%)
- ⊖ Immigration and asylum policy (59%)



Máire Geoghegan-Quinn

- ⊕ European Patent (37%)
- ⊖ Meet R&D target (63%)



Johannes Hahn

- ⊕ Cohesion policy post- 2013 (45%)
- ⊖ Crisis handling (50%)
- ⊖ Civil society involvement (50%)



Dacian Cioloș

- ⊕ CAP reform (36%)
- ⊖ Informing citizens about GMOs (50%)



Janusz Lewandowski

- ⊕ Multiannual Financial Framework (44%)
- ⊖ Multiannual Financial Framework (54%)



Connie Hedegaard

- ⊕ Mainstream climate action in all policy areas (53%)
- ⊖ Low-carbon innovation (62%)



Maria Damanaki

- ⊕ Stakeholders involvement in EU fisheries policies (52%)
- ⊖ Reforming fisheries policies (71%)



Štefan Füle

- ⊕ Advance enlargement and neighbourhood policies (45%)
- ⊖ Pursue existing enlargement policy with Croatia and Turkey (47%)



Kristalina Georgieva

- ⊕ Cohesion and coordination of EU external aid (53%)
- ⊖ Promotion of environmental issues (43%)



László Andor

- ⊕ Communication on vocational training (36%)
- ⊖ New skills for new jobs (38%)

Voted most successful ⊕

Voted least successful ⊖

For the detailed results and methodology, please go to:  
[www.bmbrussels.eu](http://www.bmbrussels.eu)

## Looking ahead...

Looking ahead, the euro crisis was identified by respondents as the principal policy challenge for the remainder of the Barroso II European Commission. It is hardly a surprising choice, given the way in which the crisis has dominated the last few years and the fact that there is little sign of the current difficulties abating.

More than half of those who answered the question identified the 'Financial Crisis and Economic and Monetary Union' as the number one priority for the next two years. It featured among the top three challenges for more than two-thirds of respondents. Other prominent answers related to the economy: growth, jobs and social policy were among the top two priorities for more than a third of respondents; the single market, the Multiannual Financial Framework, tax, and innovation also featured among the top answers.

There were three stand-out preferences for the next President of the European Commission – representing the three main European political parties. Guy Verhofstadt, the current leader of the Liberal Group in the European Parliament, was a top three choice for 17.9 per cent of respondents. From the EPP, the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, was chosen by 19.3 per cent. Tony Blair, a former British premier, was chosen by 16.3 per cent of respondents and was the leading candidate from the centre-left.

The results suggest a clear desire for a 'big beast' to take control at the Berlaymont - even if the top three on respondents' wish-list are unlikely to take on the post for a variety of reasons. Mario Monti, the current Prime Minister of Italy, was named by 12.4 per cent. He was the only other candidate scoring more than ten per cent.

There was bad news for the current President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso. He was named among the top three preferences by less than five per cent of respondents. Among EPP candidates, he fell below the Polish Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Jean-Claude Juncker, the ex-President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, and Viviane Reding, one of Mr Barroso's current vice-presidents.

Mr Barroso also scored less than the British Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, Green MEP Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, and the Danish Prime Minister, Helle Thorning Schmidt.

### Who would you **LIKE** to see appointed as the next Commission President in 2014?



Angela Merkel

EPP, Germany

19.3%



Guy Verhofstadt

ALDE, Belgium

17.9%



Tony Blair

PES, UK

16.3%

### Who do you think is **LIKELY** to be appointed as the next Commission President in 2014?



Guy Verhofstadt

ALDE, Belgium

9.1%



Tony Blair

PES, UK

8.5%



José Manuel Barroso

EPP, Portugal

8.2%



However, there is better news for Mr Barroso. He appears third on the list when the question turns to 'Who do you think is likely to be appointed' as the next Commission President. If the EPP wins the 2014 European Elections, another term for the former Portuguese Prime Minister seems a strong possibility – even if few people are excited by the prospect.

Guy Verhofstadt is the number one tip to take the role, although his federalist views are unlikely to earn support from member states such as the UK. Nevertheless, the use of qualified majority voting, a diminishing British influence, and the fact that he may be seen as a compromise candidate that could win support from Socialists, Liberals and Greens in the European Parliament could help his candidacy.

Tony Blair was named in second place. However, with the European political parties likely to select their candidates for the Commission presidency ahead of the European Elections, Mr Blair's nomination as Socialist candidate seems far less likely than the nomination of Mr Barroso or Mr Verhofstadt by their respective parties.

In addition to those mentioned above, Herman van Rompuy was tipped by more than six per cent of respondents to cross over Rue de la Loi to take on the Commission presidency in 2014, the same year his term as President of the European Council ends.

As for the other members of the next Commission, many nationalities foresaw a return for their current Commissioner - Nellie Kroes from the Netherlands (despite, improbably, many respondents believing that Geert Wilders would be nominated), Cecilia Malmström from Sweden, Maros Sefcovic from Slovakia, Janusz Lewandowski from Poland, Algirdis Semeta from Lithuania, and Kristalina Georgieva from Bulgaria.

Some interesting names were tipped for a return to Brussels in a new capacity: Alexander Stubb (the Finnish foreign minister and a former MEP), and Nick Clegg, another former MEP, seem to be popular and highly plausible predictions. Monica Macovei MEP was suggested as a possible Commissioner from Romania.

Martine Aubry, daughter of former Commission President Jacques Delors, is a front-runner to be France's nominee and would seem to be a logical choice after she lost out in the Socialist presidential primary to François Hollande and then was overlooked by the new President for the role of Prime Minister.

Mario Monti, the Italian Prime Minister and a former Competition Commissioner, is also named.

## Who do you think will be selected as the Commissioner from your country in 2014?

Alexander Stubb  
Geert Wilders  
Mario Monti  
Martine Aubry  
Cecilia Malmström  
Maroš Šefčovič  
Günther Oettinger  
Algirdas Šemeta Janusz Lewandowski  
Nick Clegg  
Kristalina Georgieva  
Monica Macovei

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survey on 13 November 2012 on



#ECSurvey



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