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The 736 newly elected Members of the European Parliament will meet for the first time on 14 July in Strasbourg.

Their first job will be to form themselves into trans-national political groups and then to elect a President and 14 Vice-presidents who will serve for the next two and a half years. New Members may also probably have to vote on whether to give Jos  Manuel Barroso another 5 year term as president of the European Commission.

Discussions about which group each national party will enter will have already started in earnest as soon as the election results became clear. For some parties they already have a natural home in the Parliament although others have decided to shift allegiances - the most notable being the 25 British Conservatives who are leaving the European People's Party.

To form a recognised political group - with all the access to the parliament's agenda that goes with it - requires 25 Members from 7 different countries. The Strasbourg sitting of 14-16 will see Members take their seats from the very first day.

The opening session also sees the formation of the Parliament's Bureau which comprises the President, the 14 Vice-presidents and 6 Quaestors who look after financial matters concerning Members.

Commission President Barroso - will MEPs back a second term?

Leaders of EU countries will next week hold their first summit on 18-19 June since the voters gave the centre-right a clear mandate on the European elections. At that summit they must divide who to nominate for the key position of European Commission President.

The incumbent, former Portuguese Prime Minister Jos  Manuel Barroso, is already the favourite having secured the verbal backing of many European leaders.

However, to be appointed a majority of MEPs must vote to support his nomination. Although the liberals and Greens have publicly opposed Barroso the victory of the centre-right at the European elections has also strengthened his position. The vote for Mr Barroso's candidacy is provisionally scheduled to take place on 15 July.

The rest of the college of Commissioners will be chosen later in the autumn. Parliament's 20 Committees - on everything from Foreign Affairs to Fisheries - will meet in the weeks after 20 July.