

The new EC College to take office in February 2010, analyst Piotr Kaczynski predicts

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Jose Barroso is to decide whether the new European Commission will be "neutral" or "politicized", leading political observer Piotr Kaczynski told Europe Gateway's readers in an online-chat.

The re-election of Jose Barroso as European Commission's President by the MEPS was a personal success for Mr. Barroso. The vote was much more difficult than 5 years ago, leading political analyst Piotr Kaczynski thinks.

Mr. Kaczynski, who is research fellow at the Center for European Political Studies (CEPS) in Brussels, was special guest of Europe Gateway's readers from all across Europe in an online-chat – part of the [project "Interacting with the European Parliament"](#).

The topic of the online-discussion, held on Europe Gateway on Thursday, was, The political dimensions of the election of a new European Commission by the EP.

"Mr. Barroso was a compromise proposal 5 years ago, while this year, many left-wing politicians across Europe campaigned against him", Kaczynski noted, commenting the vote in the European Parliament on September 16.

The political analyst predicted that Mr. Barroso would not manage to put together the new EC College and pass it through the EC easily and quickly. "It will take some time, I expect the new College to take office in February 2010", he wrote.

Kaczynski commented that the re-elected EC President could either try to maintain the EC as neutral as possible, or to face the reality, "which is that he and whatever College he will have - is supported by a center-right majority both in the Parliament and in the European Council."

The EC can only fail if it wants to keep its neutrality because it risks losing support of the Conservatives, and the Socialists will not support it anyway. According to the CEPS research fellow, Jose Barroso may easily alienate almost all political groups while not gaining support of any new people. A very likely scenario would be that the EC could become politicized, i.e. to reflect the political majorities in

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Europe's Member States, Kaczynski thinks. He told Europe Gateway's chat participants that this might be a positive development for Europe, because it may create more interest among Europeans about the European politics.

"Politically speaking, there is almost no one who would "love" Mr. Barroso and there are many who - politically - dislike him a lot", Kaczynski wrote, answering readers' questions.

Commenting on the Lisbon Treaty entering into force and the consequences on the EC functioning, Piotr Kaczynski said that the Commission might be strengthened, but it might be the other way round as well, depending on how the personalities will be working together: "The Lisbon Treaty creates new functions of permanent European Council President and High Representative for CFSP, who would be Mr. Barroso's deputy", he explained.

Kaczynski's opinion is that the most important change brought by the Lisbon Treaty is the change of the political mood in Europe. Logically, with the Lisbon Treaty, enlargement can be restarted, especially when it comes to the Western Balkans, not to speak of Iceland and Croatia, which are fully on track to become Member States already, Europe Gateway's online-guest thinks. The Lisbon Treaty equips the decision-makers with better tools to react to the constantly changing world; however "this is not a revolutionary treaty, like the Maastricht one for example", Kaczynski noted.

German parliamentary elections will massively affect the European politics, Europe Gateway's online-guest believes.

"I think actually that for the current decision-making, not the mid-term geopolitical games, the German elections this year are much more important than even the Irish referendum" - Kaczynski said, answering a reader's question of the forthcoming Bundestag elections, scheduled for 27 September.

The CEPS research fellow explained that since 2005 there is a grand coalition in Germany, which in most cases means has been limiting Berlin's capacity of decision-making. Kaczynski expects for a clear majority to come into power in Germany after the September vote. He thinks that many European nations or institutions "do not look constructively and in entire complexity at Europe". As examples, he pointed to France and Germany. In his words, Germany "is still stuck with the grand coalition". Concerning France, "between 2005 and 2007, Paris was absent from political thinking in Europe and only the arrival of President Sarkozy changed things there", Kaczynski noted and concluded that in general 2009 is an electoral year, "so the indecisiveness is even greater than before".

"When France or Germany have internal problems: they are European ones, too", Piotr Kaczynski said.

Two new online-discussions within this same series are already scheduled, the moderators' team announced.

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The next chats on Europe Gateway, which are part of the ["Interacting with the European Parliament" project](#), are with former EP President Hans-Gert Poettering (on 30 September, 15.30 hours Brussels time) and with former European Commissioner on Regional Development Danuta Hübner (on 24 September, 12 hours Brussels time).

Full discussion's script available [HERE](#).