

# Jean-Claude Juncker



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## Luxembourg

### Prime minister

**Term of office:** 20 January 1995 - 4 December 2013

**Birth:** Redange-sur-Attert, Diekirch District, 9 December 1954

**Political party:** CSV

**Profession:** Lawyer

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## – Presentation

At the beginning of 2014, the Luxembourgish politician made known to his colleagues of the European Popular Parties, of which he was vice-president between 1996 and 1999 that he was available to take the high position in the European Union that had been offered to him a decade ago.

The position he was referring to was the presidency of the European Commission, which according to the Lisbon Treaty was to be elected together by the European Council and the European Parliament taking into account the result of the EP elections. The political parties with political groups will be able to present their candidates to succeed Durão Barroso in the elections to be held in May.

Before making public his aspiration, Juncker waited for the indispensable support of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party presided by Merkel, who despite neither considering Juncker as docile nor well identified with her strict European guidelines, she does recognise his political weight and prestige. Juncker would be able to pose an effective competition to the strong candidate of the social democrat Martin Schulz, a voice often critical with how the European construction and the economic and debt crisis have been managed.

The 24th February 2014, the German Christian democrats of the EPP certified that Juncker was the best candidate that the EPP group could present. Three days later, Juncker made official his candidacy with the presentation of his credentials to the recently elected president of the EPP, the French Joseph Daul.

The 7th March Juncker's candidacy was approved in the EPP congress held in Dublin. The congress was not an act of acclamation, since Juncker had to run against the European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services, Michel Barnier, who insisted on keeping his candidacy until the end, forcing an internal vote. The result was 382 votes for the Luxembourgish and 254 for the French. A third candidate, Vladis Dombrovskis who until recently had been Prime Minister of Latvia, withdrew from the race hours before the congress.

The electoral program of the popular candidate was summed up in the concepts of "Experience, Solidarity, and Future." Unlike Schulz or Verhofstadt, Juncker was neither the head or member of his party's list (CSV) to the European Parliament elections; since Viviane Reading occupied that position.

This absence reinforced the impression that the former Prime Minister could be the hidden name for the designation by the PPE and the CDU of the President of the European Council replacing Van Rompuy in case he would lose against Schulz in the run for the Presidency of the Commission.

He speaks five languages and has received many distinctions, for instance: the great crosses of the Order of Prince Henry and the Portuguese Order of Christ, the French Legion of Honor in the rank of Gran Officer and Grand Cross of the Order of the Star of Romania, among others.

His more recent awards are the Hanns-Martin-Schleyer-Preis of the eponymous Foundation in Cologne (2010); the European Culture Prize of the Europäische Kulturstiftung Pro Europa from Basilea (2011); and the Werner-Bliendert-Preis (2012).

*(Update to April 2014)*