

European Parliament 2019/2024 – Key Committee Chair Biographies

GRAYLING BRIEFING, July 2019

Pascal Canfin (Renew Europe, France)

Chair of the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) Committee

Background

- Pascal Canfin previously served as MEP for Europe Écologie, a French green party, between 2009 and 2014. His last mandate was characterised by a focus on financial regulation and the Common Agricultural policy (CAP).
- He left the European Parliament in May 2012 when François Hollande appointed him to the post of Minister Delegate for Development at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- In preparation for the Paris Climate Conference, he was appointed to serve from July 2014 to December 2015 as Senior Advisor for Climate at the World Resources Institute (WRI). In November 2015, he was appointed Director of the environmental NGO WWF France.
- In 2010, Canfin lead efforts to create an NGO for the assessment of activities conducted in the financial markets, involving around 100 MEPs in the call to action. As a result of this effort, the NGO Finance Watch was created.
- Pascal Canfin is the author of a dozen or so publications on environmental issues, including: *'Green Economy Explained to Those Who Do Not Believe in It'*; *'The Ecological Contract for Europe'*; *'Our challenge: inventing Sustainable Social Development and Climate'*.



Role and influence

- Canfin represents French President Macron's aim to strengthen the climate credentials of La République En Marche! (LREM), which now sits as part of the liberal Renew Europe grouping in the European Parliament.
- He returns to parliament with a lot of legislative experience, as well as a great deal of respect from his fellow MEPs. He is well known amongst French MEPs for his role in leading WWF France, whilst his colleagues from other EU countries will remember him for his crucial contribution on financial regulation in the immediate post-crisis period.
- President Macron is reportedly targeting a Commissioner portfolio in the energy and environment sphere. If the French President is successful, Mr Canfin could benefit from a fellow LREM member setting the agenda in the Commission. In his new position, Canfin will oversee legislation on climate targets, plans for EU-level health technology assessments and efforts to build on the circular economy package.
- However, much still depends on the coalition forming process in the European Parliament. If agreement can be forged between the EPP, S&D, Renew Europe and the Greens/EFA, then Canfin's Renew Europe grouping will be well positioned to set the environmental agenda. Canfin will help to secure legitimacy with MEPs from S&D and the Greens/EFA, such as ENVI's elected Vice-Chairs Bas Eickhout (Greens/EFA, Netherlands) and Seb Dance (S&D, United Kingdom). For Mr Canfin, who represents a highly ambitious EU climate policy, the greater challenge resides in securing consensus with EPP colleagues like elected ENVI Vice-Chair Cristian-Silviu Buşoi (EPP, Romania).

Bernd Lange (S&D, Germany)

Chair of the International Trade (INTA) Committee

Background

- Mr. Lange has been re-elected as Chair of the International Trade (INTA) Committee for another 2.5-year term. Having first been elected to the position in 2014.
- Prior to being appointed as INTA Committee Chair he was the centre-left Socialist and Democrat Group's (S&D) trade policy coordinator.
- Mr. Lange was the rapporteur for the European Parliament's position on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the now defunct EU/US negotiations.
- From 2005-2009 Mr. Lange was Head of the Economics, Environment and European Affairs section of the German Trade Union Federation for the Lower Saxony-Bremen-Saxony/Anhalt region.
- Mr. Lange's first served as an MEP from 1994 to 2004, during which he held the position of Vice Chair of the Committee on Research, Technological Development and Energy (ITRE). As Vice-Chair Mr. Lange was particularly active on industrial research policy and the future of the automotive economy. Other committee responsibilities have included the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) Committee and the Delegation to South Africa.
- Mr. Lange retains strong links with the SPD domestically in Lower Saxony having held the post of Chair of the local branch of the SPD in Burgdorf from 1992-2013.

Role and influence

- Mr. Lange is a well-respected MEP and his re-election as INTA Chair was telegraphed well in advance. With the election of more green MEPs than ever before and the S&Ds increasing commitment to ambitious climate change policy Lange's new term as INTA Chair can expect to see the continuation of the ongoing push to include more and more sustainability chapters to trade agreements.
- Indeed, towards the end of the 2014/2019 session Lange was instrumental in forging a coalition of MEPs to issue a negative opinion on the opening of new trade negotiations with the US, using the US pulling out of the Paris Climate Agreement as main justification. Lange has also been vocal publicly in criticising China for intellectual property theft, barriers to its public procurement market and lack of enforcement of international labour rights.
- Looking ahead, Lange's INTA Committee is likely to thoroughly scrutinise these sustainability chapters in the EU's bilateral agreements, including in the recently concluded EU/Mercosur agreement and those under negotiation with Australia and New Zealand. Rather positively the Commission and the European Parliament are largely aligned on this issue with EU/Mercosur linked to the fulfilment of Paris Agreement obligations and on using the EU's trade policy to propagate EU regulatory standards.

Petra de Sutter (Greens/EFA, Belgium)

Chair of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) Committee

Background

- Petra De Sutter is a Member of the Belgian Senate for the Flemish Green Party serving in the chamber since 2014.
- Between 2014 and 2019 she was a Senator in the Parliament of the Council of Europe (an international organisation reuniting Members of national parliaments of the Council of Europe's 47 Member States), representing the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group.
- As member of the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group, she was a member of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons; the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs; the Sub-Committee on Integration; the Sub-Committee on Public Health and Sustainable Development; and the Sub-Committee on Ethics.
- Prior to this, she worked as professor of gynecology at Ghent University and as Head of the Department of Reproductive Medicine at the same institution.

**Role and Influence**

- De Sutter has been very active on highly politicised and sensitive health topics, including surrogacy regulation, the use of new genetic technologies, and bioethics. She has also been vocal on minority rights and has advocated for the rights of the yellow vest movement, trade unions, as well as migrants and refugees.
- It is possible that IMCO will take a more assertive and positive position on healthcare technology assessment under De Sutter's leadership. As an MEP she has vowed to focus on the social, health, and environmental aspects of healthcare goods and services, and ensuring that the sector supports the transition towards a greener consumption model as part of the drive towards a circular economy.

Norbert Lins (EPP, Germany)

Chair of the Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) Committee

Background



- Mr. Lins is a returning MEP, having first served as an MEP from 2014-2019, during which he was a member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) and AGRI, as well as a member of the special committee on the Union's authorization procedure for pesticides (PEST). He has therefore been particularly active on pesticides, as well as biodiversity and agricultural questions more generally.
- Mr. Lins was the rapporteur for the European Parliament's report on the Union's authorization procedure for pesticides, as well as being the rapporteur on the Parliament's position on the proposal on the inclusion of greenhouse gas emissions and removals from land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) into the 2030 climate and energy framework.
- Before becoming an MEP, Mr. Lins worked as head of German EPP MEP Andreas Schwab's office. Prior to this, he served in rural affairs in local government in Germany.

Role and influence

- Mr. Lins is a well-respected MEP with a significant amount of experience in this field. Having grown up in a rural area, he positions himself to have a good understanding of the agricultural sector.
- The election of the final two vice-chairmanships of the committee has been postponed until 23 July, after divisions arose over the pro-EU EPP, Renew Europe, S&D and Green's blocking of the nominations of the Eurosceptic candidates including for the Chairmanship which under the usual formula for allocating positions should have gone to the far-right Identity and Democracy (ID) Group. Following a preliminary committee meeting full of tension, it is likely that Mr. Lins will oversee a fractious and divided committee.
- For Mr. Lins, the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) will be a key priority. With many new MEPs who have worked in the farming industry now sitting in this committee, it is unlikely that this will be an easy file to resolve. In addition, Mr. Lins has a strong position on pesticides, which will likely prove to continue to be a controversial topic following the glyphosate scandal under the previous mandate. Indeed, Mr. Lins has been supporting a pesticide authorisation system which is science based and independent, which for some is seen as a more industry friendly position aimed at promoting innovation in the agriculture sector.

Adina-Ioana Valean (EPP, Romania)

Chair of the Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) Committee

Background

- Vălean has been a member of the European Parliament since 2007. In her most recent mandate, she served as Chair of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI). As Chair, she was particularly active on motor vehicle type approval, environmental chapters in EU Free Trade Agreements, and budgetary rules for EU agencies, such as the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).
- Adina Vălean is a member of PNL (Romanian National Liberal Party) and from 2004 to 2006 she was a member of the Romanian Parliament. Her activities in the National Parliament were focused on market regulation and labour issues. Prior to that, she acted as the Secretary General of the National Liberal Party's youth wing and Secretary of the National Liberal Party Committee on business, privatisation and competition policy. She joined the National Liberal Party in 1999.
- Before becoming a politician, Adina Vălean was a social activist, member of several foundations and associations promoting tolerance, dialogue and a liberal economic market.

**Role and influence**

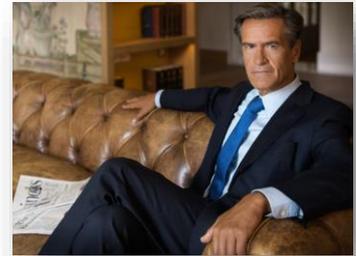
- In the last parliamentary term, former European Parliament President Jerzy Buzek led the ITRE Committee. This time round, the position has gone to another EPP heavyweight. Compared to Jerzy Buzek who was very engaged in energy related issues, Vălean has had more experience on environmental matters. This will be the key to her influence over the next 2.5 year term in respect to the work that she completed as Chair of ENVI and the relationships she forged in that role.
- In her past mandate, Vălean led negotiations on behalf of ENVI when the committee acted in conjuncture with ITRE, on legislation such as CO2 emission standards for cars. In the upcoming term, ENVI and ITRE will inevitably have to work together once more on some of the most controversial topics expected in the 2019/2024 session. Ms. Vălean is well positioned to act as a bridging force between these two highly influential committees.

Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar (S&D, Spain)

Chair of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) Committee

Background

- Doctor Professor Aguilar has been a Member of the European Parliament since 2009. During his first term, 2009/2014, he chaired the LIBE Committee and continued as a member in 2014/2019.
- In 2016, Mr. Aguilar joined the Parliament's Committee of Inquiry into Money Laundering and Tax Evasion (PANA) which was established to investigate the Panama Papers tax avoidance schemes. Also, since 2014 Mr. Aguilar has been serving as Vice-Chairman of the Parliament's delegation to the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific countries)-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. He also took part in monitoring mission for the Ukrainian parliamentary elections in 2012.
- Previously, Mr. Aguilar ran as a candidate to become the President of the Canary Islands Government. Even though he won the regional elections, his majority was insufficient to defeat the opposition.
- Mr. Aguilar has been politically active ever since 1996 when he was elected as a member of the Spanish Parliament. He served as his parliamentary group's spokesperson on home affairs from 1996-2007.



Role and influence

- Mr. Aguilar can be viewed as an expert on civil liberties issues. Throughout his political career he has always specialised in the field of justice and home affairs. Despite his center-left political background (VoteWatch has assessed his loyalty to S&D at 92%), he seems to be rather moderate in his political opinions towards businesses.
- When the new EU visa common policy was adopted in January 2019, Mr. Aguilar said: "After years of negotiating, we managed to reach an ambitious deal to update and simplify EU visa procedures. Our aim is to make legitimate travel for tourism, business and trade easier, whilst reinforcing internal security and establishing mechanisms to prevent abuses." Mr. Aguilar remains sharply attentive to national politics in Spain and is a fierce opponent of Catalan nationalism. During the 2014/2019 parliamentary term, Mr. Aguilar led the fight for privacy sensitive legislation, such as passenger-name records. In this context, Mr. Aguilar is particularly anxious about Member States' resistance to new data-protection rules. Down the line, we could expect that Mr. Aguilar might be inclined towards a revision of the PNR Agreements with the US and Australia.
