

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT APPROVES BARROSO'S COMMISSION WITH 449 VOTES



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The European Parliament approved Jose Manuel Barroso's revamped executive European Commission by a wide margin on Thursday, ending a three-week political standoff.

The European Union legislature voted by 449 to 149 with 82 abstentions to approve the 25-member Commission, which will take office next Monday after the vote is formally confirmed by EU ministers on Friday.

"I am particularly pleased with today's result because it, once again, proves that the EPP and our parliamentary Group is firmly and decisively behind one of its most outstanding members. Today's broad parliamentary support is a triumph against those who have repeatedly attempted to undermine, either directly or indirectly, President Barroso, Martens said.

Barroso rose to thank the assembly. "I understand this vote of confidence also implies huge responsibility on my part," he said.

While Greens, Communists and the Euro-skeptics voted against the new lineup, Barroso was able to count on the assembly's three largest parties -- the center-right European People's Party, the Socialists and the Liberal Democrats.

Barroso has promised to revitalize the EU's stagnant economic growth through much-needed labor and economic reforms, while maintaining Europe's treasured welfare system. He also has pledged to improve tattered relations with Washington and address growing European apathy toward the EU project, promising to help sell the newly signed EU constitution which must be ratified by all 25 member states before it can be enacted.

Barroso told the assembly his team would "give it our all, to serve Europe, to serve the institutions of the European Union and to serve the citizens.