

## David Cameron warns Britain will quit the EU if federalist gets the top job

- PM has voiced opposition publicly to appointment of Jean-Claude Juncker
- But he reportedly told Angela Merkel in private it could force Britain out
- Downing Street sources did not dispute the private attack on Mr Juncker

By [Jason Groves](#)

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David Cameron was accused of blackmail last night after warning Britain could quit the EU if an arch-federalist is appointed to head the European Commission.

The Prime Minister voiced his opposition last week to the prospect of Jean-Claude Juncker being appointed to the role, warning it would enrage Eurosceptic voters across Europe.

Yesterday it emerged that he had gone further in private, reportedly telling German Chancellor Angela Merkel it could lead to Britain's departure from the EU.

Mr Juncker, a former prime minister of Luxembourg, is a veteran enthusiast for the creation of a 'United States of Europe'.

Mr Cameron believes handing him the controls in Brussels would send a provocative message to the millions across Europe who voted for Eurosceptic parties in last month's EU parliamentary elections.

The respected German magazine Der Spiegel said that in private talks with Mrs Merkel, the Prime Minister branded Mr Juncker a 'face from the 1980s' who 'cannot solve the problems of the next five years'.

He is said to have warned that the selection of Mr Juncker 'would destabilise his government to such an extent that the referendum would have to be brought forward and will be likely to lead to the British voting no to EU membership'.

Downing Street sources did not dispute Mr Cameron's reported attack on Mr Juncker last night.

However, one insisted he was making a broader statement about 'stability in the EU' rather than the UK Government. The source insisted there was no threat to bring forward the planned referendum on EU membership from 2017.



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**Mrs Merkel with Mr Juncker: German magazine Der Spiegel said that in private talks with Mrs Merkel, Mr Cameron branded Mr Juncker a 'face from the 1980s' who 'cannot solve the problems of the next five years'**

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Mr Cameron's reported remarks angered Mr Juncker, who has the backing of the European People's Party, the centre-right group in the European Parliament that includes Mrs Merkel's MEPs.

■ **Tony Blair will launch a staunch defence of the EU today, amid speculation that he will make a fresh bid to be president of Europe.**

**The former prime minister will use a speech to the CBI in London to underline his pro-EU credentials – just days after private talks with German leader Angela Merkel in which he reportedly offered to tour Europe with the message 'being in the EU is good for you'.**

**However his office strenuously denied he is after the top job, saying that he 'is not seeking any role'.**

Mr Juncker called on EU leaders not to bow to 'minority' pressure, telling Germany's Bild am Sonntag

newspaper: 'Europe must not allow itself to be blackmailed.'

He said he was 'optimistic about being chosen as the next commission president by mid-July'.

British sources believe it may eventually be possible to persuade EU leaders to back a more reform-minded candidate, not least because France is also unenthusiastic about Mr Juncker.

The post is one of the most powerful in Brussels as the commission has the power to draw up legislation, and will play a key role in Mr Cameron's attempt to renegotiate Britain's relationship with the EU.

Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith indicated yesterday that Mr Cameron could recommend leaving the EU if he fails to win substantial concessions from Brussels after the next election.

He said: 'The key thing is he knows very well that he can't come back with nothing.'

## COULD EUROPE GET ITS FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT?



Glamorous: Helle Thorning-Schmidt

Three women could be in the running for the most powerful job in Europe if David Cameron scuppers Jean-Claude Juncker's bid.

Helle Thorning-Schmidt, 47, the glamorous Danish prime minister, would be a strong candidate to become the European Commission's first woman president.

The former MEP is on the right of her party, the centre-left Social Democrats, and her rolling back of the Danish state has been viewed positively in Europe.

Married to former Labour leader Neil Kinnock's son Stephen, she would probably get Mr Cameron's support.

**Also in the running is Christine Lagarde, 58, the French head of the International Monetary Fund, a conservative and friend of George Osborne.**

**As a former finance minister to Nicolas Sarkozy, however, she is unlikely to win the backing of France's socialist president Francois Hollande.**

**An outside choice is Dalia Grybauskaite, 58, the president of Lithuania, who has served as an EU budget commissioner.**

**Known as the 'Steel Magnolia', she has said she models herself on Margaret Thatcher.**



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