

Angry Cameron warns European leaders of 'consequences' for giving 'Cognac for breakfast' Brussels fixer Jean-Claude Juncker the EU's top job

- **Prime Minister said he was 'completely unapologetic' about fighting Juncker**
- **Tells EU leaders there will be 'consequences' of ignoring Britain's opposition**
- **But Cameron told to 'wake up and smell the coffee' by Finland's premier**
- **Fears among other European leaders that vote could force UK out of Europe**
- **UKIP says 'humiliated and defeated' Cameron 'Johnny No Mates of Europe'**
- **Labour claim Prime Minister has united Europe against the United Kingdom**

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David Cameron has warned fellow EU leaders of 'consequences' if they press ahead with plans to elect 'arch federalist' Jean-Claude Juncker as the president of the European Commission.

The Prime Minister insisted this morning he was 'completely unapologetic' about his outspoken opposition to the former Luxembourg premier which has left him isolated at a two-day summit of the European Council.

Mr Juncker's nomination to the EU's top job is expected to be confirmed in an unprecedented vote in Brussels today. But the Prime Minister's warning left European leaders urging him to 'wake up and smell the coffee' that leaving Europe would be disastrous for Britain.



The current European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso (right) held talks with the Prime Minister during the summit in Brussels today. EU leaders are set to nominate former Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker to become the 28-nation bloc's new chief



David Cameron, arriving in Brussels this morning, is facing a humiliating defeat in his bid to block Luxembourgier Jean-Claude Juncker becoming the next European Commission president



The Prime Minister this morning claimed he was 'completely unapologetic' about his public attacks on Mr Juncker



CAMERON 'DEFEATED LIKE WAYNE ROONEY'... BUT MERKEL DID NOT WANT JUNCKER EITHER, GERMAN PRESS CLAIMS

German Chancellor Angela Merkel never wanted hard-drinking Jean-Claude Juncker to become the next European Commission President, it was claimed today.

Der Spiegel magazine in Germany said that despite her repeated public support for the controversial former Luxembourg premier she was always lukewarm on him.

The magazine listed the allegations levelled against Mr Juncker in British and German media which have cast doubt on his suitability for the top EU job.

'The man from Luxembourg quite likes drinking, we read, on top of that he is lazy and drained.

'He gives speeches to lobby groups for lots of money and his father was a crazy Nazi.... Even the worst and wrong rumours about him are socially acceptable in Europe,' the magazine wrote.

Despite the criticism, Mrs Merkel repeatedly backed him as her preferred candidate for the post. She recently dismissed speculation that she would have preferred another candidate.

However Der Spiegel said that with Mr Jucker as EU Commission President, Angela Merkel was getting a 'commission president she actually didn't want.

'Like other EU leaders, she knew exactly what Mr Juncker's weaknesses were but that they did not perturb them because they wanted a compromise candidate.

'Europe's master female strategist has miscalculated. Next time more capable candidates will run for the job,' it added.

Der Spiegel had previously backed Mr Juncker. It accused Britain of trying to strongarm the EU with its opposition to him: 'Join in or drop out – the European Union should not allow itself to be blackmailed by Great Britain any longer', it said earlier this month.

Powerful Germany daily Bild wrote yesterday that David Cameron would return from the Brussels summit 'like Wayne Rooney – defeated.'

UKIP said Mr Cameron had been 'humiliated, defeated and ridiculed' by fellow EU leaders, while Ed Miliband accused the PM of a 'total failure'.

But asked today whether there could be consequences if the other 27 leaders ignore Britain's opposition to Mr Juncker, the Prime Minister said: 'Everything has consequences in life.'

Arriving at the summit today, Mr Cameron said: 'It's the wrong person. Jean-Claude Juncker has been at the heart of the project to increase the power of Brussels and reduce the power of nation states for his entire working life. He is not the right person to take this organisation forward.'

'So I'm very clear about the right thing to do. I know the odds are stacked against me, but that doesn't mean you change your mind - it means you stand up for what you believe and you vote accordingly.'

Mr Cameron added: 'There are times when it's very important that you stick to your principles and you stick to your convictions, even if the odds are heavily stacked against you, rather than go along with something that you believe is profoundly wrong. And today is one of those days.'

'The European elections showed that there is huge disquiet about the way the European Union works, and yet the response, I believe, is going to be wrong on two grounds - on the grounds of principle - it is not right for the elected heads of government of European countries to give up their right to nominate the head of the European Commission, the most important role in Europe - that is a bad principle. And it's the wrong person.'

The PM's warning came amid widespread reports that Mr Juncker's liking for 'a cognac at breakfast' were causing concerns in Brussels.

One European diplomat said: 'His alcohol consumption has been raised by a number of leaders since the (European) parliamentary elections.'

During last minute talks today, the Prime Minister told Mrs Merkel the election of Mr Juncker was a 'worrying moment for Europe and Britain'.

In the 10 minute meeting, Mr Cameron said the Commission chief should be chosen by national leaders and not by the European Parliament.

He said: 'Nobody will leave today unsure that when the Prime Minister says something he means it and when he says something is a principle he sticks to it.'

'That's a very important thing we will take out of today. I think a lot of people in Europe thought that we would be sitting around here at this lunch and we would have done some negotiation or some deal and folded by this point.'

'We haven't, and that's not the way the Prime Minister operates and not the way he will operate in any negotiation going forward.'

'People need to understand that. Will they have grasped that from today? I suspect they will have done.'

Earlier, Mr Cameron made clear that defeat in Brussels would not affect his determination to press ahead with renegotiation of Britain's EU membership, followed by an in/out referendum in 2017, if the Conservatives win next year's general election. Earlier,

'Does any of this mean that we do not get a renegotiation? No. Does it mean we don't get a referendum? No.'

But it is understood that the Prime Minister believes Mr Juncker's election will only fuel euroscepticism in the UK - increasing the likelihood of Britain voting to walk away from Brussels.

One British official said: 'We are realistic that that has an impact on the debate in Britain about the EU. That's what other leaders must realise.'

'What we have been saying to people is: "You need to realise that there is a debate going on in Britain about Britain's role in the EU".'

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'It's not one prime minister, leading one party, with a view. There is a broad debate here, and you need to understand that political reality.'

Victory for Mr Juncker would 'make securing reform and securing renegotiation even more important and will make us even more determined', said the official.



The PM chatted with Lithuania's President Dalia Grybauskaitė (left) and Denmark's Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt (right) in Brussels today



© AFP/Getty Images

Mr Cameron warned there would be 'consequences' of ignoring Britain's objections to Mr Juncker and appointing him anyway



Mr Juncker is seen as an 'arch federalist' by the Government because of his record of wanting more power for Brussels over national Parliaments



The veteran European fixer was the candidate of the largest bloc within the European Parliament - the EPP centre right group which the Tories were members of until Mr Cameron withdrew after becoming Conservative leader

The prospect of Britain leaving the EU in the wake of the vote was acknowledged by other European leaders.

Asked whether defeat for Mr Cameron could make a British exit from the EU more likely, Finnish Prime Minister Alexander Stubb said: 'I think in the UK some people really seriously need to wake up and smell the coffee.'

'The EU is a very good thing for the UK. Over 50 per cent of the trade of the UK goes to the EU. If that were to be cut off, I think the continent would be cut off, seriously.'

Mr Stubb added: 'I think David Cameron is a very principled man and he has felt strongly that Juncker is a little bit too federalist for his liking, but I think we can all make amends, we can all solve the situation.'

Arriving at the Council building in Brussels for the start of the summit's second day, Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt said he was concerned 'about how this should be interpreted in Britain'.

He said: 'It is a core value for us that Britain stays inside the European Union - then we get a politically and economically stronger European co-operation. It's also in the best interests of the United Kingdom, that is my

belief.

'I hope that he is happy with the programme itself. We discussed it at a meeting in Sweden, looking at conditions for trade, for free trade agreements and competitiveness, where we are very like-minded. The programme in itself is more important than the persons elected.

'He and the British people have friends inside the European Union who like British politics, like British people and want them to stay inside the European Union. Maybe we should voice that a little bit more clearly so that they hear us.'



Mr Cameron, attending a memorial service in Ypres yesterday, has clashed with his ally Angela Merkel over the appointment of Mr Juncker



The German Chancellor is said to have privately admitted she had reservations about the former Luxembourg Prime Minister



Mrs Merkel was attacked in Germany for appearing to backtrack in her support for

Mr Juncker, forcing her to eventually publicly support his appointment

German Chancellor Angela Merkel appeared to offer an olive branch to Mr Cameron as she arrived for talks with fellow centre-right leaders ahead of the summit, saying that there was room for a 'good compromise for the UK' in a document setting out the EU's strategic agenda for the next five years.

This consolation prize could involve strong words in the document - due to be signed in Brussels today - on British priorities such as jobs, growth, deregulation, immigration and 'welfare tourism', which might act as a constraint on the actions of an eventual Juncker Commission.

The prime ministers and presidents of the 28 EU states yesterday set aside their differences on the first day of the summit to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War in a ceremony at Ypres, scene of some of the conflict's bloodiest battles.

After a minute's silence at the Menin Gate - where the name of one of his great-great-uncles is inscribed among the war dead - Mr Cameron told the other leaders at dinner that the event reminded him of the central role Britain played in Europe's past and said that he was committed to ensuring it played a central role in its future.

In a reminder of his call for the goal of 'ever closer union' to be scrapped, he stressed the need to respect the role of nation states within the EU and to recognise that not all of them are heading towards the same destination.

Labour accused Mr Cameron of mishandling the issue by 'playing the man, not the ball' in trying to block Mr Juncker.

Shadow foreign secretary Douglas Alexander said: 'Sadly, the handling of these negotiations have turned a Europe divided over Jean-Claude Juncker into a Europe apparently united against David Cameron.'

'What we needed was to work to build an alliance with countries that were themselves unconvinced by Jean-Claude Juncker's candidacy - countries like Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Hungary, Italy.'

'There was an alliance there to be built, but alas it appears that the Prime Minister so badly misjudged his tactics and strategy that that is not going to be the outcome in the next 24 hours.'