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EU commissioners should be as political as cabinet ministers

By Richard Laming

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From Mr Richard Laming.

Sir, It is not surprising that the European Commission has a lame-duck air about it, given the way its members are chosen and the role they are asked to fulfil ("Leadership please", April 14).

Government ministers of cabinet rank are sent to Brussels and asked to give up their party political functions. In the days when the European Commission had to establish its role and identity, this might have been a good idea. But the issues dealt with by the European Union these days are the stuff of day-to-day politics. Members of the Commission ought to be as political as cabinet ministers are in the individual member states.

A more political Commission would give individual commissioners a political stake they currently lack in the success of the Commission programme as a whole and an interest in seeing that programme continued.

You are right to say that it is not in the wider interests of the European Union to have commissioners drifting back to their member states. They should be gearing up to fight the forthcoming European elections, defending their record and seeking a renewed mandate from the voters.

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