

MLP vigilance board stops Sharon Ellul Bonici's Euro election bid

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Sharon Ellul Bonici, the former No2EU campaigner vying for one of the eight Labour Party candidatures for the European Parliament elections has had her bid turned down by the MLP Vigilance Board.

The decision was the second blow in as many weeks for Ms Ellul Bonici's aspirations to grace the seats of the European Parliament. Former deputy leader George Vella had also refused to endorse her candidature, MaltaToday can reveal.

The Vigilance Board seems to have objected to declarations made by Ms Ellul Bonici in the past that the MLP should join the eurosceptic EDD grouping in the European Parliament rather than the European Socialists. They also sought clarifications on Ms Ellul Bonici's ties to other eurosceptic organisations such as No2EU and TEAM, in which she held official posts. However, Ms Ellul Bonici has appealed the decision of the Vigilance Board MaltaToday has learned. She is being represented by lawyer and Labour MP Anglu Farrugia. Yesterday both Ms Ellul Bonici and Dr Farrugia were seen leaving the Labour headquarters minutes before the start of a press conference in which the media were given details of the general conference to be held next Tuesday to select the official Euro-MP candidates.

Many in the party's national executive and administration are uncomfortable with Ms Ellul Bonici's candidature.

They fear that if elected to the European Parliament, Ellul Bonici will end up flirting with the EDD group rather than working within the Party of European

Socialists.

However, Sharon Ellul Bonici's woes started before the vigilance board investigations got under way this week.

The prospective MLP candidates had until last Tuesday to submit their application to be considered as contestants for the eight vacancies on the Labour ticket for the June election.

Each application had to be endorsed by a number of delegates. Former deputy leader George Vella endorsed most of the candidates, however he adamantly refused to endorse Sharon Ellul Bonici's, MaltaToday has learned. Meanwhile, on Tuesday evening the party accepted a late application filed by Fgura Mayor Anthony Degiovanni, raising the number of candidates to 11. Mr Degiovanni was abroad and had informed the board that he intended to file his application.

The other 10 prospective candidates are: former secretary general Jimmy Magro, former Air Malta chairman Louis Grech, maltastar.com editor Joseph Muscat, Super One head of news Gino Cauchi and journalist Glenn Beddingfield, former party president Manuel Cuschieri, former MP Sandro Schembri Adami, MP and former minister John Attard Montalto, Gozitan Anton F. Attard and Sharon Ellul Bonici.

If approved by the administration and national executive, the prospective candidates have to be endorsed by not less than 70 per cent of voting delegates in the extraordinary general conference to be held next Tuesday. The Labour Party has decided to cap its number of candidates for the EP elections at eight. If more than eight candidates make it beyond the 70 per cent threshold it is the eight who get most votes that will make it on the MLP ticket in June.

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