

EP member tries block polarizing speaker

by UPI

BRUSSELS -- A German politician is trying to prevent the opening session of the European Parliament from being overseen by a man accused of minimizing the Holocaust.

Martin Schulz, a member of the European Parliament, has asked that the European Union's internal rules be changed to prevent Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of France's far-right National Front who has described Auschwitz as a "detail of history," from opening the session this summer, the EU Observer reported Wednesday.

Under the rules, the oldest member of the European Parliament opens the inaugural session of the new legislature, scheduled for July 14 in Brussels

"It is not imperative that the oldest MEP presides over the inaugural session," Schultz said, suggesting the situation would be "unacceptable."

Le Pen, an EP member since 1984, will celebrate his 81st birthday after the June European elections, in which he is expected to be re-elected, the EU Observer said.

Under the parliament's rules, changes must first be passed by the constitutional affairs committee, then by a majority of its members.

Le Pen called the situation "imbecilic."

"This is just a hypothesis, perhaps I will not be (re-elected)," he told a French media outlet. "I think they are scared of me. I am still demonized."

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