



Alyn
Smith
April 2013

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the April edition of my newsletter, covering some of the work I have been doing in Scotland, Brussels and Strasbourg.

Since my last newsletter I'm proud to say that I have been selected to stand as one of six SNP MEP candidates for the forthcoming European election in May next year. This is an honour and a privilege.

Coming just a few short months before our independence referendum, the election will serve as a precursor to that ongoing debate.

I am determined – as I know the whole of the party is – to see the SNP receive the largest number of votes, just as we did in 2009.

This will be my third successive euro campaign as a candidate, being elected to the European Parliament on each previous occasion and I'd like to again thank those delegates at SNP spring conference in Inverness for giving me the opportunity to fly the flag for Scotland in Europe once again.

Thank You!

I've been continuing to fight the corner for Scotland in Brussels and Strasbourg since my last edition of this newsletter, and have had some hugely productive visits and meetings across Scotland and in the Parliament.

With everywhere I go and with everyone I speak to, I am a little more confident that we will win that vote in September next year.

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This is backed up by polling data showing that the gap between 'yes' and 'no' is narrowing continuously. The Better Together campaign appears to be in a nosedive with allegations of dodgy donations and their attempts to censor the national collective completely backfiring.

They can try and distort the debate all they want, but they cannot distort our vision for a better, fairer, more egalitarian Scotland. And they cannot distort the ambitions of the Scottish public.

We can't allow any complacency, we still have a tough fight ahead but it is one that we can win.

I hope you find this newsletter useful and, as always, please do not hesitate to get in touch. All the contact details are on the back page, as well as my website, facebook and twitter accounts.

And don't forget you can register for regular updates at alynsmith.eu!

Yours for Scotland

Alyn Smith MEP



The Greens | European Free Alliance
in the European Parliament

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SNP select candidates ahead of 2014 Euro Election!

Delegates to the party's spring conference in Inverness selected six candidates – to fight next year's European election – from a strong field of fifteen who wish to represent the party in Brussels and Strasbourg.

The SNP's two sitting MEPs, Alyn Smith and Ian Hudghton, are joined by four others who will be ranked by party members in the next few months.

Alyn said on being reselected:

"I am delighted and grateful to have been reselected to fight next year's European election for the SNP.

On the message that he will be taking to doorsteps over the next year, Alyn added:

"What I and the SNP will be doing between now and then is showing how our work in Europe is delivering for Scotland now. From winning a better deal for our farmers to ensuring our universities have fair access to research funding, we've been able to do a lot for Scotland but we would be able to do so much more as a full Member State in the European Union.

"I look forward to delivering that message on the high streets and doorsteps across Scotland with my fellow candidates between now and next year."



Alyn addressing delegates at SNP conference

European Parliament restricts bankers' bonuses

Unfortunately, and hugely incorrectly, the European Parliament and the EU as a whole is given a bad name for being caught in bureaucratic tape and not really delivering much for everyday citizens.

This week, however, there was a fantastic example of the good work done by Euro parliamentarians when the European Parliament voted overwhelmingly for a banking reform package that will cap bankers' bonuses.

Member States, particularly the UK who fought this move vigorously in the Council of Ministers, have failed consistently to reign in the banking sector and finally the EU has taken action, which I'm sure is supported by the vast majority of citizens in Scotland and across Europe. As Alyn says:

"This is a win-win for everyone in Scotland.

"Finally we are seeing some much-needed regulation of the banking sector, despite the opposition of the UK Government.

"Capping bonuses for bankers' is simply common-sense given the perverse incentives to take unnecessary risks implicit in pre-crisis remuneration structures, and should have happened a long time ago.

Included in the reforms was also good news for small and medium sized businesses, as Alyn explains:



MEPs voted to cap bankers' bonuses during the last plenary session

"The vote today will not only restrict bankers' bonuses, however; by introducing a derogation from the capital requirement rules it will be easier for SMEs to borrow from the banks and boost local economies across Europe.

"Despite the UK dragging its heels, this is a fantastic example of how working with the EU can create that fairer and more equal society that we all want to see."

News in Brief

Graduate driving licences discussed at SNP conference fringe

Last month at SNP Conference in Inverness, Alyn chaired a fringe meeting on improving road safety and, in particular, the concept of graduated driving licences for young people. There was a great panel consisting of speakers from the Young Scots for Independence, ROSPA and Mark McDonald MSP which resulted in an interesting debate.

Graduated driving licences include a two-year novice period when you can drive independently but with restrictions. We also discussed alternative options including a late-night driving curfew, zero tolerance drink-drive limits and mandatory 20 mph speed limits in residential areas.

Boost for renewable energy sector with US firm to establish a base in Scotland.

Scotland's renewables potential was given another stamp of approval this month with US tidal power company, ResHydro, announcing that they are to be the first US renewable energy company to provide inward investment in the country.

Alyn said:

"With a quarter of Europe's potential tidal energy resource and ten percent of its potential wave resource in Scotland's waters, it is no wonder that ResHydro chose to invest here."

The company will be supported by a £100,000 SMART:SCOTLAND award from Scottish Enterprise and will work in partnership with the University of Strathclyde.

Final CAP negotiations underway in Strasbourg

The final discussions on the shape of the CAP 2014 – 2020 have commenced, with Alyn leading negotiations for the his political group on the rural development portfolio of the reform.

Alyn has been meeting with fellow shadow rapporteurs from the Parliament, plus representatives from the Council and the Commission, in order to formulate an agreed position between the three institutions on remaining points of conflict.

Meetings so far have discussed advisory services for producers, basic services for the EU's rural communities, matters related to forestry within the CAP and investments.

Speaking about the negotiations, Alyn said:

"I hope to see the deal improved for Scotland's farmers in these final meetings. It's been frustrating doing this without support from the UK Government and sad that they have sometimes opposed our work outright. I will continue to put Scotland and our producers first, last and always."

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New Zealand becomes thirteenth nation to legalise same-sex marriage

Lawmakers in Auckland backed equal marriage by 77 votes to 44, making it now legal for same-sex couples to wed in the country.

Alyn, who is Honorary President of LGBT Youth Scotland, spoke of his delight at the news:

"A huge congratulations goes from Scotland to our friends in New Zealand."

Alyn also said that he doesn't believe that Scotland will be too far behind also cementing equal marriage in law:

"Marriage is, for me, about two people who love each other and I'm delighted that New Zealand's politicians have voted on the same basis. While I will not myself have a vote on the legislation when it comes before the Scottish Parliament, I have faith in the good sense of our MSPs to decide, as our representatives, what sort of arrangements we want to live by."

Glasgow shortlisted for European Green Capital award.

Scotland's largest city has been shortlisted to become the 2015 European Green Capital, and could be the first UK city to hold the title.

The European Green Capital Award promotes and rewards efforts to tackle environmental challenges facing society, and the commitment and progress made by local authorities.

Glasgow is now on the final shortlist, along with Bristol, Brussels and Ljubljana. The winning city will be announced in June in the current European Green Capital, Nantes.

Getting in Touch



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