



Alyn
Smith

Members
Summer 2012

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the latest edition of my new and revamped newsletter. I hope you like it.

This is a hugely exciting time, with the launch of the Yes campaign taking us forward towards the 2014 referendum and independence.

What is happening in Scotland is resonating all over the world – and that’s particularly true of folk in Brussels. The constitutional debate is creating real interest within the EU, with MEPs, officials, journalists and opinion formers there all keen on following events here.

Forget the sterile arguments and plain lies our opponents are spreading about an independent Scotland having to apply again for EU membership. The message from those I talk to in Brussels is plain: of course you’ll stay a member.

We’re an open, democratic nation with international trading links going back centuries and a real desire to be at the heart of Europe.

Plus we have most of the EU’s oil reserves, a massive chunk of its renewable energy resource, a strong history of

entrepreneurship, fantastic universities and a desire to work with others. Who on Earth would want to keep us out?

Being one of Scotland’s MEPs means I’m lucky enough to enjoy a wide and varied workload, from being a member of the agriculture and energy committees to fighting for safety and consumer rights.

This newsletter tells you about some of the things I’ve been involved in of late.

I hope you find it useful. If you’d like to receive regular updates, then please register for future editions on my web site at www.alynsmith.eu.

I look forward to meeting with you as I work around Scotland during the summer.

Yours for Scotland



Alyn Smith MEP

In Winnie’s Footsteps

A landmark educational programme which was founded by veteran SNP politician Winnie Ewing has just celebrated its 25th anniversary...

The ERASMUS initiative has given nearly three million young people and teachers from across the EU and beyond the chance to study and work in each others’ countries since it was founded in 1987.

Alyn – who was himself an ERASMUS student, spending a year at Heidelberg in Germany – said he was “delighted” that the programme had reached an anniversary milestone and pointed out that Scotland welcomed more than 1500 students from European nations every year.

He added: “I want Scotland and Scottish universities to welcome as many overseas students as possible. And I hope more and more Scots students take the opportunity to go abroad themselves and broaden their horizons.”



The Greens | European Free Alliance
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New EU Funding Could Transform Scots Research

Scientists in Scotland's universities will soon have the opportunity to win more funding to work with international partners on important research programmes...

In a speech to Strathclyde University, Alyn outlined the EU's planned new Horizon 2020 programme which he is currently helping to develop. It will involve scientists in academia and industry working together to combat challenges facing humanity.

As the only Scottish representative on the European Parliament's Industry, Research and Energy Committee, he urged Scots institutions to apply for the new funding when it becomes available.

"We could be on the verge of a second Enlightenment – we want to bring Scotland to the world as a nurturing talent," Alyn told his audience.

"We value knowledge, we respect learning and in Scotland, we've won the energy lottery – oil, gas, coal and renewables in every form known to humankind."

Alyn Declares War On Payday Loan Sharks

Thousands of Scots are trapped in the misery of payday loans – but a campaign by Alyn to clamp down on them is starting to bear fruit...

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) has finally agreed to review these controversial financial products. They offer fast cash but charge interest rates of up to 4000 per cent.

News In Brief

Have you ever wondered how Europe works? For many, it can be a bit of an enigma. But Alyn is now unraveling its secrets with a series of short online videos.

His "EU-tube" productions – short and snappy chat sessions recorded on his iPad – are being rolled out under the title "Alyn Explains".

He says: "They're going up on YouTube and are meant to be fun but informative. I want give everyone in Scotland the opportunity to ask anything they'd like to know and to get answers."
www.youtube.com/ASmithMEP

Worries over the £172 million takeover of airline BMI by rival IAG, which owns British Airways, have been expressed by Alyn and other MEPs.

He is concerned that the deal will lead to a lack of choice and competition on services between Scotland and London Heathrow as the two airlines, formerly competitors, merge their operations.



Alyn at the Scottish Association for Marine Science in Oban

Alyn has also backed another opportunity for Scottish researchers and companies to share best practice – a new EU initiative aiming to provide 500 million of the world's poorest people with access to sustainable energy by 2030. This could also lead to more green jobs in Scotland.

Welcoming the move, he said: "There are tough times – people are struggling and a lot are desperate. These payday loans are simply dragging vulnerable people further into debt.

Welcoming the review, Alyn said: "It's taken the UK government far too long to address the scandal of these shoddy deals. I believe these firms are breaking the rules. And even if an investigation finds they're not, then the law needs to be changed to favour the victims."

Alyn has urged the EU to pressure the UN to reverse its appointment of Zimbabwean dictator Robert Mugabe as a global tourism envoy. He said: "This man is an international pariah and to give him this position is bizarre. Europe must have nothing to do with him."

Getting In Touch



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