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Comment on launch of far-right group in European Parliament

Press release from SNP MEPs Ian Hudghton and Alyn Smith (EFA)

Commenting on today's (Tuesday) launch of a new far right political group in the European Parliament, SNP President **Ian Hudghton MEP** and **Alyn Smith MEP** have called on former UKIP MEP Janice Atkinson to resign her seat in the Parliament.

Ian Hudghton MEP said:

"It's perhaps not surprising that the far right have managed to cobble together a ragbag of racists and extremists. Last year's European election saw a rise in the right wing vote in many parts of Europe.

"It's also not surprising that a member elected on a UKIP ticket has joined this group. UKIP has been a singularly unpleasant force both in the UK and in the European Parliament.

"This new group will remain on the margins of the parliament's work. It is however important that progressives across Europe remain united in efforts to combat the politics these people represent."

Alyn Smith MEP said:

"She should resign, pure and simple. She was elected on a list, and has no personal mandate to flounce to this new nasty group. Under the rules of the Parliament any group needs seven member states to be valid, and she is the seventh member state.

"Her presence in the group is all the more pivotal, she is facilitating its establishment.

"I have written to her already urging her to resign, more in hope than expectation. However, perhaps she will cave to pressure if enough of her constituents in South East England express their horror at her actions."

NOTE TO EDITORS

The text of Alyn Smith's email to Janice Atkinson is reproduced below:

Dear Ms Atkinson,

I write subsequent to the formal confirmation that you are a member of the "Europe of Nations and Freedom" group to urge you to resign your seat in this house.

You were elected a UKIP MEP, and in my view, and the view of many of your constituents, do not have a personal mandate, rather you were elected as a representative of your former party.

You were assuredly not elected as a representative of the group you are now part of. You will be aware that under the rules of procedure of the house seven member states must be represented in the group, and without you the group cannot be formed.

I would urge you therefore to resign your seat. Presumably this will give you more time to fight the corruption allegations against you.

Yours aye

Alyn Smith MEP

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