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EU Ombudsman says Scotland 'under-represented' in Europe

Press release by SNP MEP Ian Hudghton

SNP President **Ian Hudghton MEP** has welcomed comments from the official EU Ombudsman who described Scotland's 'under-representation' in Europe.

Mr Hudghton said that the comments by the Ombudsman in an interview published in today's (Thursday) Scotsman newspaper showed that the need for greater Scottish representation in Europe was being recognised at the highest levels.

Recently re-appointed EU Ombudsman Nikifouros Diamandouros is responsible for investigating people's complaints about maladministration in the EU institutions. He has been visiting Edinburgh and was trying to explain why Scotland has such a low rate of complaints to the European Ombudsman.

Responding to the EU Ombudsman's comments, Ian Hudghton said:

"These comments from a senior and respected EU official are very significant. Nikifouros Diamandouros may not be a household name but he's a senior figure, widely respected for his integrity and thoughtfulness.

"The fact that he - as an independent figure outside party politics - has now come to this very logical conclusion that Scotland is under-represented in Europe speaks volumes.

"We've seen Scotland grow in stature and influence in Europe in recent years, particularly since the election of an SNP government in 2007. Yet we still have fewer MEPs than countries of a similar size and no automatic right to send ministers to EU meetings where important decisions are made, nor do we have a vote in the Council of Ministers.

"I'm pleased that these inadequacies are now being recognised more and more widely. But they will only be fully addressed by full independence within the EU."

Ends

Notes

EU Ombudsman Nikifouros Diamandouros said in an interview published in the Scotsman newspaper on 18 March 2010:

"... I am inclined to believe that the under-representation of Scotland in the European institutions might make it less likely that Scots relate through their MEPs or their friends in the European Commission to the European

scene ... "

The full interview can be read at <http://thescotzman.scotsman.com/politics/The-EU39s-39invisible-man39-who.6161233.jp>

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Ian Hudghton

Member

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