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'We must see more seriousness from the UK'

Quote on Brexit from EFA MEP Alyn Smith (Scotland)

Speaking in today's debate in the European Parliament on the state of play in the Brexit negotiations, SNP MEP Alyn Smith said:

"I am struck as ever by the unity of purpose across the Council and the Member States, and indeed across this House, amongst the EU 27. I commend our coordinator, Mr Barnier, for keeping that unity in check. But where the EU is united against the UK, I assure you the UK is anything but united.

"I represent Scotland within this House. We desire to remain within our family of nations; 48% of the UK population want to remain.

"The idea that Theresa May leads a united government is a risible proposition, as we see on a daily basis from our own colleagues who are treating her as a Viking longship that they are going to float out into the North Sea, having piled as much nonsense onto it as possible, and then they'll set fire to it.

"They're fighting amongst themselves like ferrets in a sack, while the UK's national interest, however we define it, is ignored by them utterly. Shame on them. It is not good enough for Europe, it is not good enough for the UK either.

"And from Scotland, we agree with the tone and content of this resolution. We have seen nowhere near enough progress on citizens' rights, on Ireland or in the financial settlement. On citizens' rights, I am receiving emails on a daily basis that would break your heart – people who have made choices about their lives, about their residence – on the basis of rights which they face having taken away. Our first duty in this House is to them.

"On Ireland, north and south, Scotland's close neighbours and friends, solutions are possible; solutions could be found, but we need to see a lot more seriousness from the UK government than we have seen to date. The Good Friday Agreement is fragile; it must be respected. We need to see seriousness from the UK administration.

"And on the financial settlement, it says just how far the UK's reputation has been trashed, that the idea that the UK will meet its financial obligations is news. If Global Britain's first act is to walk away from international financial contributions, it is just not a serious prospect. I fear for the future unless we see some real seriousness in these discussions. Scotland wants to find solutions, colleagues. We must see more

seriousness from the UK in that endeavour."

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