

EUROPARL



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IAN HUDGHTON

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Photo by Ian Paterson, Montrose

Politicians meet Montrose Harbour Board

Trustees of Montrose Harbour Board (pictured above) including local Cllrs. Sandy West and Bill Crowe met Angus MSP Andrew Welsh and MEP Ian Hudghton recently to brief the Parliamentarians on a variety of issues facing the port in particular and the marine transport industry in general.

DUNDEE SHOP STEWARDS IN BRUSSELS TALKS

A deputation of shop stewards from Levi's jeans factory in Dundee met SNP MEP Ian Hudghton, as part of their campaign to keep the Dundee plant open. En route to a meeting with Levi Strauss management at their European Head Office the deputation met MEPs in the European Parliament in Brussels, where Mr Hudghton pledged his support to the workers' bid to keep their jobs. Speaking after the meeting, Mr Hudghton said:

"We had a very productive meeting during which Union officials from the GMB and shop stewards put their case for Levi's to immediately withdraw the redundancy notice they have issued. I support this call wholeheartedly, to allow time for alternatives to the company's plans to be properly consulted on.

"Scotland has had more than its fair share over the last year or two of companies like Motorola being able to shut up shop with apparently increasing ease. The UK Government and Scottish Executive have a lot of catching up to do with our European neighbours as regards protecting workers' rights."

New Responsibilities for Hudghton

At the half-way stage of its five year term, the European Parliament re-constitutes all of its specialist committees. As a result, SNP MEP Ian Hudghton has been elected to serve for the next two and a half years in three of the most important Committees in terms of Scotland's interests.

While continuing as a full member on Fisheries, Mr. Hudghton has gained a full place on the powerful Budgets Committee and is also a substitute on Agriculture & Rural Development. (Substitute members have the right to attend and speak at all meetings.)

Speaking from Brussels Ian Hudghton said:

"I look forward to the continuing challenge of representing Scotland's interests, and the extended range of responsibilities presented by this reshuffle of Committee places.

"The European Parliament has substantial powers over the annual budget setting process of the E.U. and I look forward to the challenge of holding the Commission to account and seeking to achieve good value for public money.

"Fisheries, Agriculture and Rural Development are obviously of major importance to Scotland, and very heavily influenced by European regulation. Scotland's fishermen, farmers and the respective processing industries are producing foodstuffs of the highest quality, and they deserve full political encouragement in order to maintain high standards and extend their marketing possibilities worldwide."

SNP IN ENVIRONMENT BRIEFINGS

Ian Hudghton SNP MEP was joined in Brussels by Bruce Crawford MSP, Shadow Minister for Environment in the Scottish Parliament for an intensive day of meetings with senior officials of the European Commission on subjects including Nuclear Energy and associated Waste Disposal issues, the Water Framework Directive and Competition Law in relation to public services. Ian Hudghton commented:

"Both Bruce Crawford and I found these briefings of immense value. So much of European regulation impacts directly on Scots and it is vitally important for Scots politicians to seek to directly influence European policy-making."

ADVERTISING WARNING TO SMALL BUSINESSES

Ian Hudghton MEP has issued a warning to businesses in Scotland to beware of unsolicited mailings. This follows complaints he has received about the actions of advertising firms like the Liechtenstein-based "European City Guide" and "Tour & Travel Guide". The MEP has written to the European Commissioner for Trade, Erkki Liikanen, demanding that action be taken to tighten up rules on "distance contracts" such as these, which are costing unsuspecting businesses several thousands of pounds.

Explaining the background to his warning, Mr Hudghton said:

"These advertising companies are preying on small businesses. They send out unsolicited mailing which simply looks like a questionnaire and you are encouraged to return it whether or not you wish to advertise in the Guide. What the small print says is that, once you have completed and returned the form, you are tied into very costly and long-term advertising contracts in publications which are of a poor quality and whose effectiveness as a marketing tool is questionable. There is no cooling off period and, even when you write asking to be removed from the Guide, the invoices keep pouring through the letter-box. My advice is simple. Do not take part in these questionnaires, just put them in the bin for recycling."



Europarl is printed, published and distributed by Ian Hudghton MEP and the G/EFA Group, European Parliament





Photo by Brian Cowan, Forfar

ANGUS YOUNG SCOT CARD LAUNCHED

John Swinney MSP and Ian Hudghton MEP (pictured above) attended the launch of a new Angus Young Scot smart card recently in Forfar.

As well as offering access to the hugely popular Young Scot discounts and information the new smart card is pre-programmed to give the user instant electronic access to an expanding range of services and facilities.

In Angus this includes: automatic 50% discount at council leisure facilities, local retailer discounts, use as a library membership card giving access to books, music, DVDs and videos and it also acts as a cashless school meal swipe card.

Speakers at the event included local MP Pete Wishart, and Cllr. Glennis Middleton, Convener of Angus Council's Youth Strategy Group. Cllr. Middleton said:

"Young people from across the county have worked hard to bring the project this far, and that hard work is now being rewarded with over 5,000 of their peers signed up as card carrying Angus Young Scots."

Ian Hudghton

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This newsletter is published by Ian Hudghton and distributed free of charge to keep constituents in touch with developments in the European Parliament and the work of the SNP Euro-MP.



MEPs to investigate Foot and Mouth epidemic

The European Parliament has decided to set up a temporary committee to look into the causes and effects of last year's foot and mouth outbreak in the UK and several other EU countries. MEPs voted in Strasbourg by 390 votes to 155 in favour of the investigation.

The temporary committee will examine the management of the epidemic and recommend action to ensure that a recurrence can be prevented. The 30 strong cross-party committee will look at every aspect of the crisis, including vaccination policy and controls on meat imports from outside the EU.

Irishman elected President

An Irish independent MEP has been elected the new President of the European Parliament. After three ballots, Pat Cox secured an absolute majority with 298 votes, out of a total valid vote of 568. Mr Cox, a former TV journalist and economics lecturer, has been a member of the European Parliament since 1989, representing the constituency of Munster in the Republic of Ireland. His term in office as president will last until June 2004, when the next European Parliament elections will be held.

DUNDEE GATEWAY TO EUROPE

Ian Hudghton MEP has welcomed the expansion of ScotAirways services between Dundee and London. The MEP who frequently commutes to the European Parliament in Brussels or Strasbourg, makes regular use of the Dundee/London flight as the first leg of his journey to Strasbourg. Mr Hudghton commented:

"Many people who live in Dundee and its hinterland travel regularly around Europe. Like me, they will welcome the commitment ScotAirways has shown to the 'greater Dundee' area by expanding services to London.

"Of course, my long-term hope is for Dundee to have direct links to continental Europe. We need to raise our sights higher and not always to assume that journeys furth of the UK have to be channelled through Edinburgh, Glasgow, or London."

BURNS SUPPER SUCCESSES

Recent Burns Suppers attended by Ian Hudghton MEP included Aberdeen City Association and Peterhead SNP Branch. Both events were sell-outs and raised significant funds for the SNP cause.

IAN HUDGHTON'S DIARY

4-7 FEBRUARY
EP Plenary Session, Strasbourg

9 FEBRUARY
SNP National Executive Cttee, Edinburgh

11 FEBRUARY
Visits in Falkirk area with Michael Matheson MSP

12 FEBRUARY
SNP European Liaison mtg, Edinburgh

13-14 FEBRUARY
Constituency Engagements in Scotland

15 FEBRUARY
Fish Market, Peterhead

Visits in Aberdeen North

17 FEBRUARY
SNP Mid Scotland & Fife Reg. Assoc., Perth

18 FEBRUARY
EU Budget Briefing, Brussels

18-19 FEBRUARY
Agriculture & Rural Development Cttee, Brussels

20-21 FEBRUARY
Fisheries Cttee, Brussels

24 FEBRUARY
SNP North East Regional Association mtg, Montrose

25-26 FEBRUARY
Budgets Cttee, Brussels

27-28 FEBRUARY
EP Plenary, Brussels

1 MARCH
Briefing, Sea Mammal Research Unit, St Andrews University

Blairgowrie High School Democracy Panel and Question Time

2 MARCH