

EUROPARL



THE REGULAR NEWSLETTER OF SNP EURO-MP
IAN HUDGHTON

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SNP IN GM CROP PLEA

SNP Members of the European Parliament, Ian Hudghton and Neil MacCormick, are urging the EU to back down on plans which could open the door to new GM product approvals. Their plea, in a letter to President Romano Prodi comes just before the October deadline for member states to implement a Directive regulating the deliberate release into the environment of GMO's, (Directive 2001/18/EC). So far only one out of the 15 member states – Denmark – has implemented the legislation, raising fears that new GM products could be approved without crucial bio-safety regulations being in place throughout most of Europe.

The SNP's stance on GMOs is, of course, in sharp contrast with that of the Scottish government. Despite the Lib Dem's Scottish conference recently voting for a moratorium on field trials of GM crops, Environment Minister Ross Finnie has been happy to follow the line handed down from London Labour. As public concern rises - and new studies repeatedly call into question the safety of GM crops - Finnie is more concerned with hanging onto his ministerial car than protecting Scotland's precious environment.

The issue also highlights the differences between the SNP and the unionist parties with regard to their attitude to Europe. The only occasions when the Scottish government has mentioned the EU in relation to GMOs has been when they've tried to claim that European law prevents them from banning GM trials. All this comes despite the fact that other European countries have done exactly that - and the European Environment Agency has condemned the crops growing in Scotland as "high risk".

Ian Hudghton MEP, at an SNP Conference fringe meeting chaired by Rob Gibson, said "The implications of GMOs are causing grave concerns in all the countries of the EU and SNP MEPs are finding common cause with politicians from across the continent. At a time when the politicians of Europe are demanding stricter controls on GM products, it is perversely ironic that the government of Scotland - with one of the cleanest environments in Europe - is wilfully contaminating our countryside."



The Annual Conference of the SNP at Inverness was an outstanding success, providing an excellent launch to the campaign for the Scottish Parliament elections in 2003. Pictured above at the HQ stand in the exhibition marquee Ian Hudghton met up with Bashir Ahmad, and Scots Independent stalwarts Jim Lynch and Ken Fee.

CONFERENCE BACKS FISHING COMMUNITIES

At the SNP Conference Ian Hudghton MEP moved a resolution submitted by Brussels Branch calling on Scotland's Fisheries Minister to fight harder for our interests in the ongoing CFP Reform. Mr. Hudghton said:

"The Reform of Europe's Common Fisheries Policy is at a critical stage. Critical because the 6/12 mile limit and certain other access restrictions expire at the end of 2002, and because the Danish Presidency is seeking a final decision in the Council of Ministers during November. Over the summer the European Commission appears to have given in to heavy lobbying by the Spanish and others. Key areas of reform proposals have been watered down when compared with the Green Paper and earlier drafts.

"For example the reference to permanent protection of the 12 mile zone has been dropped. Relative Stability and the Shetland Box are being challenged in the longer term.

"A group of six Member States are meeting regularly at ministerial level as the "Friends of Fisheries" to further promote the principles of open-access to EU waters. It is high time that the Scots fishing industry had some ministerial friends to strongly resist the drive towards free access and to fight hard on behalf of Scottish fisheries dependent communities."

EUROPE TO HIGHLIGHT DISABILITY ISSUES

Ian Hudghton MEP has encouraged young budding artists to take part in a Europe-wide competition to highlight 2003, the European Year of People with Disabilities. Commenting, Mr Hudghton said:

"The EU has run a competition to preview 2003, designated the European Year of People with Disabilities, to enable young citizens to share their ideas on what can be done to improve the lives of people who have a disability.

"One winning design will be chosen per country and it will be used to create the official national postcard for the European Year of the People with Disabilities 2003."

Commenting on the main themes of the Year of People with Disabilities, Mr Hudghton said:

"The emphasis during 2003 will be on ensuring that people with disabilities are enabled to play a full and equal role in society, including active involvement in taking decisions which affect their lives. When barriers and discrimination are removed, everyone benefits – not just people with disabilities."

Enlarged EU takes shape

Plans for the biggest ever expansion of the European Union were announced recently to MEPs at a plenary session in Brussels. The European Commission recommended that 10 new countries should be accepted as members of the EU in 2004.

Negotiations on accession should be concluded by the end of this year with Cyprus, the Czech republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia. Bulgaria and Romania are pencilled in for membership by 2007.

Welcoming the announcement, Ian Hudgton commented: "I look forward to an Independent Scotland also being welcomed as a normal EU member, with full voting rights in the Council of Ministers."

While attending the Turriff Show, MEP Ian Hudgton met with firefighters from Grampian Fire Brigade, pictured below, who were displaying a restored vintage firefighting appliance alongside their more familiar modern equipment.



Ian Hudgton

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



During the summer Ian Hudgton MEP took the opportunity to attend the annual Atholl and Breadalbane Show at Aberfeldy. Pictured above with the MEP and one of the younger show entrants are locals Les and Janice Mair.

MEPs PAVE WAY FOR NEW "PET PASSPORTS"

The European Parliament's Committee for the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy have unanimously supported proposals to introduce special Pet Passports which would make it much easier for owners to take their pets abroad.

The move was led by Jill Evans MEP, who is leader of Plaid Cymru the Party of Wales, in the European Parliament.

Welcoming the initiative by his EFA Group colleague Ian Hudgton said:

"This report on introducing a special Pet Passport will hopefully help pave the way for new legislation allowing owners to take their pets with them when they travel abroad in the EU.

This would of course be dependent on meeting strict criteria such as ensuring the pets have identification microchips and that they have been vaccinated against rabies—but allowing that freedom of movement would be of great benefit to both pets and their owners alike."



121 TO WIN DUNDEE WEST!

Cllr. Jim Barrie and Ian Hudgton MEP are pictured at Dundee West CA stand at the SNP Conference. The theme of the stand was to highlight the fact that Dundee West is Scotland's most marginal constituency.

IAN HUDGHTON'S DIARY

12 OCTOBER

SNP National Executive, Edinburgh

15-16 OCTOBER

Constituency Visits - Barra and the Uists, with Alasdair Nicholson

18-19 OCTOBER

Constituency Visits - Orkney, with John Mowat

21 OCTOBER

Fisheries Committee Special, Strasbourg

21-24 OCTOBER

Strasbourg Plenary Session

27 OCTOBER

Mid Scotland & Fife Reg. Assoc, Burntisland

29 OCTOBER

Speaking to students at Angus College, Arbroath

SNP Independence Presentation, Forfar

30 OCTOBER

European issues seminar Aberdeenshire Council, Inverurie

4-5 NOVEMBER

Agriculture Committee, Brussels

5 NOVEMBER

Fisheries Committee, Brussels

6-7 NOVEMBER

Plenary Session, Brussels

9 NOVEMBER

SNP Taste of Scotland Event, Banchory

11-12 NOVEMBER

Fisheries Committee, Brussels

13-14 NOVEMBER

Group meetings, Brussels

14 NOVEMBER

SNP National Executive, Edinburgh

18-21 NOVEMBER

Strasbourg Plenary Session

22 NOVEMBER

Meet with Scottish Quality Salmon representatives, Perth

26-28 NOVEMBER