



EUROPARL



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IN BRIEF

The European Parliament resumed its meeting schedule on August 25 after the summer recess. The first week included meetings of the political groupings in preparation for a plenary session in Strasbourg in September.

During the recess Ian Hudghton MEP joined Party Leader John Swinney MSP and Brian Adam, MSP for Aberdeen North, in a visit to a major fish processor at Bridge of Don. Accompanied by Aberdeen Council SNP Group Leader Kevin Stewart, the group were briefed on the current challenges facing this important sector within Scotland.

Ian Hudghton will be part of an EP Fisheries Committee delegation of MEPs to Scotland between 10-12 September. The group will meet in Edinburgh with politicians and industry sector leaders before traveling to the Oban area for a series of visits and briefings with West Coast fisheries interests.

North East Endorsement for MEP

Arbroath was the venue for one of eight first-round heats in the SNP's selection process for candidates to contest the 2004 European Parliament elections. Ian Hudghton MEP was nominated and unanimously endorsed by all nine constituency associations in North East Scotland. The SNP MEP's European credentials stretch back to the early 1990s when he was election agent to Allan Macartney in his victory in the then North East constituency. Following the death of Dr. Macartney in 1998, Ian was victorious in the ensuing by-election. Commenting after the meeting Ian said:

"In June next year, when every single vote from every part of Scotland will count equally, we have an outstanding opportunity to highlight the misrepresentation of Scotland's interests by Westminster governments, and to demonstrate how much better Scotland could fare in Europe as an independent nation, with the automatic rights of representation which only independence brings."

Also speaking at the packed gathering of delegates, who had travelled from all points between Portsoy and Dundee, SNP Leader John Swinney MSP said: "The SNP has a consistent record of achievement in European electoral contests and can, with hard work over the next few months, out-poll the other Parties. In the campaign we will illustrate how Scotland is short-changed by being part of the UK, while small, land-locked, countries like Luxembourg, with the right to vote in the Council of Ministers, have more influence on Scotland's fisheries than we ourselves have!"



Following the Regional Association meeting, some of the delegates, pictured above, took the opportunity to visit the new office base of Arbroath & District Branch SNP, prominently located in the heart of the Angus town.

Hudghton Supports Scottish Tourism

Ian spent part of his family break during the summer visiting various areas of Scotland including Wigtown, Girvan, Ayr and Lochearnhead before continuing on to Mallaig, Skye, Lewis, Ullapool and Ballater. Commenting he said:

"Although I travel extensively throughout Scotland as an MEP, my timetable is usually so tight that it is not possible to visit local attractions, so it was a pleasure to travel at a tourist's pace through some of the most attractive and interesting parts of Scotland from the 'book-town' of Wigtown to the historic Brochs and Stone Circles of the Western Isles."

SNP Battles On in Defence of Scotland's Fisheries

The European Parliament, in each of its 17 specialist Committees, is formulating its views on the draft EU constitution recently published. At the Fisheries Committee in early September, Ian Hudghton MEP will table a number of amendments, including a call for the deletion of a reference to any part of Fisheries Policy as an "exclusive competence" of the European Union.

"Typically, the UK government has to date ignored our calls for support in making this crucial change. I am calling upon all of Scotland's MEPs to support my amendment, to keep pressure on Westminster to give due priority to this issue which is so important to so many fishing dependent communities around Scotland."



SNP TEAM VISIT CRAIBSTONE

Local SNP MSP Brian Adam arranged for Ian Hudghton MEP and SNP Leader John Swinney MSP to visit the Craibstone campus of the Scottish Agricultural College. The trio (above with union rep Tom Robertson) had meetings with managers and staff to discuss the threatened closure of the facility. Commenting, Ian Hudghton said: "I support the fight to retain this high quality educational establishment, whose staff are so impressive and dedicated."

HUDGHTON WELCOMES SCAPA FLOW REPORT

Ian Hudghton, SNP MEP, is supporting plans to establish a major transshipment hub container port in Orkney's Scapa Flow, which could prove beneficial not just to Orkney but to the whole of Scotland. Welcoming a report on the economic impact of bringing such a facility to the Northern Isles, Mr. Hudghton said: "The strategic position of Scapa Flow and its natural deep water assets are world renowned. Plans to develop a hub port at Scapa Flow are in line with current EU proposals to develop high capacity north-south and east-west sea corridors to facilitate trade across the enlarging European Union. A container hub terminal in Orkney would increase the choice of sea routes available to Scottish business for the import and export of bulk materials and goods, with ports around Scotland and beyond being able to handle shipments to and from the hub at Scapa Flow."

OXFAM TO MEET MEPs

A delegation from OXFAM is to meet with MEPs, including Ian Hudghton, in Strasbourg during September to highlight the forthcoming WTO talks at Cancun, Mexico. OXFAM are seeking support for their Make Trade Fair campaign, including calls for more consideration to be given to the rights of developing countries to protect their agriculture producers against dumping, and to phase out EU export subsidies.

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IAN HUDGHTON'S DIARY

25-28 AUGUST

Group meetings, Brussels

31 AUGUST

North Tayside CA, Blairgowrie

1-4 SEPTEMBER

Plenary Session, Strasbourg

5 SEPTEMBER

Meeting & discussion with Breadalbane Academy students, Aberfeldy, with Pete Wishart MP

7 SEPTEMBER

Kirkin' of Angus Council, Forfar

8-9 SEPTEMBER

Fisheries Committee, Brussels

9-12 SEPTEMBER

EP Fisheries Committee delegation visit to Edinburgh & Oban areas

12 SEPTEMBER

Perth & Kinross Council Elected Members Forum, Perth

13 SEPTEMBER

SNP National Executive Committee, Edinburgh

15 SEPTEMBER

Visit to Mearns Academy, Laurencekirk

15-18 SEPTEMBER

Group meetings, Brussels

19 SEPTEMBER

Briefing meeting - Forth Valley Enterprise, Stirling

23 SEPTEMBER

Q & A with senior pupils at Plockton High School

24-27 SEPTEMBER

SNP Annual Conference, Inverness

29 SEPT—3 OCT

Committee meetings, Brussels



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