



# Alyn Smith MEP

Your voice in Europe

Annual Report 2010



Welcome to my annual report, which outlines some of the work I've been doing on your behalf as a Member of the European Parliament.

The 2009 European Parliament election was hailed as the biggest trans-national election in history, with voting taking place over four days. On 4 June 2009, Scotland spoke and made its own mark in the history books. The SNP vote surged by 10 points - the only party in the UK to record a major advance at the expense of Labour. This

was the biggest increase in any party's share of the vote in the history of the European elections in Scotland, and one of the largest increases in any Scottish election. The European election results are a positive endorsement of the SNP and a positive vote for our record in government. I am delighted and honoured to represent Scotland in Europe again. As Scotland's mouthpiece, I intend to protect and promote the interests of Scottish people on the European stage and further the case for an independent Scotland in Europe.

Last year, I was confirmed as the sole Scots voice on an influential committee of inquiry established by the European Parliament to look into the causes of the global financial crisis and recommend cures to ensure it does not repeat. I was also delighted to have been nominated for Politician of the Year in the Green Energy awards and MEP of the Year and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support. This report serves as a reflection on a busy year and provides a flavour of just some of the work and campaigns I've been involved with in 2009. Wishing you all a very happy and prosperous 2010.

## ABOUT ALYN

Born in Glasgow in 1973, Alyn grew up in Scotland and Saudi Arabia, returning to Scotland in 1986. He studied Law and European Law at Leeds University and spent an Erasmus year studying at Heidelberg in Germany. He graduated from Nottingham Law School in 1996. Alyn also gained a Masters degree in European Studies from the College of Europe in Warsaw. After a year teaching English in India and working with Scotland Europa in Brussels, Alyn moved to London where he qualified as a lawyer with commercial law firm Clifford Chance.

Elected to the European Parliament for the first time in 2004 and re-elected in the SNP victory in the 2009 election, Alyn is Scotland's youngest MEP and is Honorary President of both the youth wings of the SNP, the Young Scots for Independence and the Federation of Student Nationalists, as well as a member of the SNP's National Executive Committee.

Alyn is single and lives in Edinburgh.

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[www.alynsmith.eu](http://www.alynsmith.eu)

## Smith Crowned 'Champion Of Champions'



In June, Alyn was delighted to win the prestigious Scottish Farmer Magazine award for Outstanding Contribution to Scottish Agriculture, as well as the Scottish Farmer "Champion of Champions" award chosen by the judges from amongst the other award winners. He was also presented with a silver salver from the National Sheep Association for outstanding service to the sheep industry.

Smith said: "I'm just delighted by these awards, for a politician to be nominated at all was unusual, but to actually win, and then win the Champion of Champions as well was totally unexpected!

"We certainly have a lot to do, with Common Agricultural Policy reform rocketing up the agenda in

Brussels, as well as LFA reform, potential new rules on animal transport, animal by products, and a host of other issues to keep an eye on. I'll need all the support I can get in fighting Scotland's corner but I'm sure Scotland's representatives will have all the support we need."

**Download the interview here:** [www.thescottishfarmer.co.uk/royalhighlandshow/](http://www.thescottishfarmer.co.uk/royalhighlandshow/)

## SMITH HAILS REAL ACHIEVEMENT ON FARM PRICES

In October, SNP MEP member of the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee Alyn Smith hailed a vote by the full Parliament in Strasbourg to back his proposal for the creation of a "European Farm Prices and Margin Observatory" with a budget of 1.5 million Euro to report upon the gap between the prices consumers pay for food and the price the farmer receives.

Smith initially proposed the creation of the Observatory with a budget of 3 million Euro in the Agriculture Committee, and having gained the approval of that committee, was delighted to see the proposal supported by the Budget Committee, albeit with a reduced budget of 1.5 million Euro. Amendment AGRI/5255 on budget line 05 02 17 02 was approved today, and the Observatory will now be created.

Smith said:

"I was hopeful this would go through and it turns out I was right to be. This is great news, and real action over an issue we have been talking about for too long without really addressing it.

"The first step to addressing the imbalances in the food chain and the difference between what consumers pay and what the farmers receive is to gather independent credible data. To date much of the information has been slanted, with pretty well everyone in the debate with a vested interest. I believe there is a wealth of evidence, not just grumbling farmers, that primary producers across the EU are being put out of business by the combined operation of the Common Agricultural Policy and the operation of a global market which leaves them at the mercy of any price decline, but not able to benefit from any rise. This Observatory will allow us to research into those issues with independence and credibility."

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## LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TRANSMISSION TUNNEL

Alyn Smith welcomed the news that the European Commission (EC) has sent a letter to the UK government about the UK transmission charges methodology being discriminatory against the development of renewables in the North of Scotland.

OFGEM, the UK organisation which regulates the gas and electricity networks, operates a pricing structure that ensures electricity generators seeking to connect to the grid pay increased charges the further away from "the market" they are. This leads to electricity generators in Scotland paying considerably higher charges than others further south.

The letter from the European Commission is a direct result of a Parliamentary Question (PQ) lodged by Smith on September 7, calling for the EC to take action against the UK government on the issue.

Smith has the backing of the entire renewables sector, and has identified the charging regime as one of the biggest hindrances to the development of the renewables sector in Scotland. The battle to do away with this discriminatory regime has been long-running and the letter signifies the first big step towards changes.

In the letter, the EC asks the UK government to explain the system and to show it does not discriminate. The letter is not public and it is not clear when the UK government has to send a reply. Only following such an investigation can the Commission determine whether or not infringement proceedings are appropriate.

Smith said:

"This is excellent news for Scotland and I am delighted to hear that this issue is being tackled head on.

"With the new Renewables Directive in place, the Commission now has muscles to flex and clearly they are not scared to show these off; highlighted by the fact that the EC has gone to the unusual lengths of issuing a letter to the UK government asking them to explain their actions

"I am confident the Commission can fix this problem once and for all, so the often talked of broad "energy potential" becomes a reality."

## SMITH CALLS ON EU TO INTERVENE IN MCKINNON ROW

In November, Alyn Smith called on the EU to intervene in the extradition case of Gary McKinnon.

The computer hacker, who has Asperger's Syndrome and who is currently on suicide watch, has been informed that he will be extradited to the USA on charges of breaching US military and Nasa computers.

Alyn wrote to the EU Commissioner for Justice, Viviane Reding, asking her to intervene on Mr McKinnon's behalf.

Smith said:

"This case is the latest in a long line of examples of the UK government kowtowing to the US over the rights of our citizens, and in this case purely to spare the red faces of the US military and Nasa, and all thanks to a legally lopsided extradition treaty which should never have been passed in the first place.

"I have written to the EU Commissioner for Justice to request that she urgently acts to prevent Gary's extradition."

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## ALYN'S ANNUAL WORK EXPERIENCE 09

July was that time of year again for Alyn to get his hands mucky as his annual week of work experience and general hard graft kicked off.

Since his election in 2004, Smith has spent the first two weeks of recess on placements in a variety of trades: at sea on a trawler; as a postman; with the SSPCA; in a distillery, and even a day as a bin man in Glasgow.

This year, freshly re-elected in the SNP's election victory, Smith commenced proceedings Invermark Estate, Brechin where he spent a full day deer stalking. After he dusted off his walking shoes and nursed a few blisters, he then hit the trail to Inverness to turn his hands to lumberjacking, where he assisted with a forest planning exercise at Strathmashie forest at Laggan. Smith topped off his action-packed week by spending a day as a Marshal at Forth Ports on the Thursday working on the Rosyth-Zeebrugge ferry, a vital international link for Scotland. But it does not stop there! In September, Smith saddled up and spent the day horse grooming at Belwade Farm, Aberdeenshire.

Smith said: "I came out of these experiences with more than just splinters and tired feet; but an overall better understanding of the issues affecting some of Scotland's most treasured trades so hopefully I will be more useful to them now I'm back in Brussels."



### CONTACT ALYN

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### Keep in touch

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