



Alyn Smith MEP 



EURO NEWS MONTHLY JULY 2008



Alyn with Westminster candidate John Mason (left) and Stirling Councillor Steven Paterson (right) in Glasgow East ahead of this month's by-election.

CAUTIOUS WELCOME TO EU SMALL BUSINESS ACT

Alyn has given a cautious welcome to the Small Business Package unveiled by the European Commission in Brussels last month. The package will see action to make national and local procurement contracts more accessible for small businesses; open the door to lower VAT payments on locally sourced goods and services; and speed up action on late payments.

Alyn said: "This package has been a long time coming, and has a number of welcome ideas in it which should make the EU even more accessible for Scotland's small businesses, which make up the vast majority of the Scots economy.

"Crucially it recognises an issue I have long been working on, the importance of government procurement, worth a massive 18,000 billion euro across the EU. The proposals will relax the rules on locally sourced goods and services which will ensure Scotland's government, local authorities, prisons, schools and others will find it easier to 'buy local' and even put local suppliers at an advantage which is good for the environment as well as the Scottish economy.

"All in all a useful package and we look forward to working on it to level the EU playing field for Scotland's businesses."

ALL GO FOR GLASGOW

Alyn has joined hundreds of SNP activists out on the streets of Glasgow East. As the campaign gears up, Alyn has been spending as much of his time as possible out knocking on doors in the East end of Glasgow.

With a 13,500 majority for Labour, the party is facing a sizeable challenge to convert voters, but it is not a challenge that daunts Alyn. Speaking from Glasgow, Alyn said: "It is great to see the spirit that is being put into this campaign. The sheer number of activists that have been out has been inspiring and show that the SNP stands a real chance of winning the seat.

"Councillor Mason is an excellent candidate with a thorough local knowledge and the determination to pull off what will be an inspiring victory for the SNP. There is no doubt that this will be some battle; Labour will pour every resource that they have available into it, but we have the ambition, the support and the dedication to pull off a historical win here.

"I will be out in the constituency as often as possible in the run up to election day on the 24th and I urge all members to contribute what they can, whenever they can, to this campaign."

The campaign rooms are located at Sherwood Garage, 2 Baillieston Road, Glasgow, G32 0QF. The rooms are open 10am to 9pm Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm on Saturdays and 12 noon to 6pm on Sundays.

ALYN SECURES DIGITAL DIVIDEND FOR REMOTE & RURAL SCOTLAND

Alyn has secured an amendment in a crucial European Parliamentary report that is evaluating all aspects of digital Europe, from broadband to broadcasting.

In the amendment Alyn stated that, "rural and peripheral regions are especially disadvantaged (in promptness, choice and quality) with regard to the rollout of digital services." He further urged that "Member States and regional authorities to do all in their power to ensure that the digital switchover is conducted quickly and fairly for all their citizens."

Commenting on the successful vote, Alyn said: "This is a hugely positive step in the right direction, recognising the rights of remote and rural communities to the same quality and standard of services as urban dwellers.

"My amendment seeks to highlight this injustice and begin the process of addressing the digital divide through utilising the digital dividend."

STOP PRESS!

There will be a break in the sending of newsletters for three months as the Party completes selection processes for the 2009 European election. You can keep in touch with what Alyn is up to on www.alynsmith.eu and his blog at alynsmith.blogspot.com.



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Alyn at Easter Road where he presented Hibernian Defender Chris Hogg with a saltire to accompany Hibs for their travels in Europe.

SALTIRE FOR HIBS EURO CAMPAIGN

Alyn has presented Hibernian Football Club with a Saltire to accompany them on their travels in Europe. This is part of a wider set of presentations that will see Alyn celebrate the qualification of all 5 Scottish league teams into Europe.

Alyn said: "This presentation comes as much to remind ourselves that although the national side may not have participated in the European Championships this year, there are still plenty of quality Scottish teams to be showcased in Europe.

"It is a fantastic achievement to be participating at the top level of European Football, especially when qualification places were so hotly contested. I look forward to watching the games ahead, and I am sure Hibernian FC, like all Scottish teams who qualified, will do a sterling job in representing our nation."

SCOTTISH EUROVISION CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

A non-political campaign group has been set up to campaign for a Scottish entry to the Eurovision Song Contest and calls on supporters to join the campaign to see Scotland represented in Moscow Eurovision 2009. The group of Scots Eurovision fans has launched a campaign website www.scotlandineurovision.eu and invites Scots, and others, to register their support online and encourage Scottish Television to bid to produce the contest.

The group has had support and advice from Alyn, who has identified a legal way for Scotland to be represented and committed himself to assist the campaign. "I have met with the European Broadcasting Union, the organisers of the contest, and they have confirmed to me that it is quite possible for Scotland to enter. I would like to see Scotland enter as an independent state, but we're not an independent state yet. Meantime, I've come up with the "UEFA compromise" whereby Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England could take it in turns to organise the UK's entry, in their own right."

ALYN HAILS EU SCHEME FOR FREE FRUIT FOR SCHOOLS

Alyn has welcomed proposals from the European Commission for the creation of a programme for the free fruit and veg in schools. European funds worth €90 million every year will pay for the purchase and distribution of fruit and vegetables to schools, and this money would be matched by national funds in those Member States which make use of the programme. He commented: "Given increasing concerns over the diet of our children, it is all the more important to use every means at our disposal to encourage them into good habits young."

2011 TO BE THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF VOLUNTEERING

Alyn has pledged his support to calls for 2011 to become the European Year of Volunteering. A written declaration has been put forward by MEPs which Alyn has added his name to. The declaration highlights the huge number of people who take part in volunteering across the EU as well as the positive contributions that volunteers make in so many areas of society, including the estimated 5 percent contribution that volunteering makes to the GDP of national economies.

Alyn commented: "It is high time that we recognise and mark the fantastic contribution that volunteers make in such a variety of different sectors of society. More than 100 million Europeans volunteer for all sorts of things each year and it is about time that this contribution was recognized and applauded.

"There needs to be a more formal infrastructure to complement what already exists. Those volunteering are often the last to ask for thanks or recognition, usually just quietly getting on with the job in hand, so the risk remains that their sterling efforts may be overlooked unless sufficient support is put in place. By making 2011 the European Year of Volunteering we can go just a little way to giving all of Europe's volunteers the thanks that they deserve."



Alyn in Bridge of Allan with Keith Brown MSP, Bruce Crawford MSP and Anne Thompson.

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