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Lukewarm Parliament vote approves EU Commission President

Press Release by SNP MEP Alyn Smith

SNP MEP **Alyn Smith** has today (Wednesday) commented on the approval by the European Parliament in Strasbourg of the appointment by the Member States of the EU Commission President, Jose Manuel Barroso. The Parliament had the power to approve, or reject, his appointment whereupon the member states would have had to find another candidate, but in the event voted 382 voted in favour, 219 against with 117 abstentions. Smith voted against.

Speaking after the vote Smith said:

"This was a pretty lukewarm endorsement given Mr Barroso has had five years already to prove his mettle. I appreciate that most of my constituents will think Barroso is a trendy new wine bar somewhere but the Parliament's approval of his appointment is important, because this is the man who will set the portfolios of the other Commissioners as each Member State appoints them.

"However, Mr Barroso was duly approved in a secret ballot and I wish him well. Personally I voted against, on the grounds that Mr Barroso has continued in his five years with the confusing rhetoric about what the EU, and the European Commission in particular, is actually for. I see the EU as a gathering of states acting together, not, as I suspect Mr Barroso sees it, as an entity in its own right with the states mere hindrances to the integration project.

"His comments in particular on the referendums in France and Ireland, saying that the people made the wrong decision was particularly unforgivable. In a democracy the result is the result, and is by definition the correct one, like it or not. Mr Barroso showed a considerable disrespect to the voters of Ireland then and has continued since. His continued advocacy of the Lisbon Treaty is something I find personally inappropriate for the man who is, at the end of the day, the head of the EU civil service, not an elected politician.

"In any case, he is duly President and we watch with interest as he fashions his team."

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