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SNP comment on EU maternity package

An EFA press release by MEPs Ian Hudghton and Alyn Smith (SNP)

SNP MEPs **Alyn Smith** and **Ian Hudghton** have today (Wednesday) abstained on proposals to extend EU maternity rights on the grounds that the EU should not play a role in setting domestic social policy, however well intentioned. The controversial package was opposed by the UK government, business and local government organisations on similar grounds, though also that the associated costs of the move would have grave implications for public services and business at a time of economic upheaval.

The eventual compromise package was voted through 390 votes to 192, but in such a format that it is likely the member state governments will reject, or at least water down the proposals substantially.

Alyn Smith MEP said:

"I want to see the people of Scotland with the best maternity and paternity rights in the world, but I want to see that agreed on a sustainable basis by the domestic authorities after a national debate, not introduced via the backdoor in Brussels in a way that will cause resentment of both the rights and the EU itself."

"There are practicalities to this that I am not convinced my colleagues have taken sufficiently into account, and the maternity and paternity rights we already enjoy are by no means the worst in the EU."

Ian Hudghton MEP said:

"This package was ideologically driven to impose common EU standards on an issue that simply does not cross borders, and however much I agree with the sentiment, I am uneasy about certain factions within the EU using issues like this to in effect extend EU competence by stealth."

"Regardless of the views of people on the rights or wrongs of maternity rights, there are few people in Scotland who would agree that the EU should be the parliament to have the final say, with Holyrood and Westminster then obliged to simply implement."

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