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Press release | 20.10.2010

SNP vote against EU budget increase

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

SNP MEPs **Alyn Smith** and **Ian Hudghton** have today (Wednesday) voted to freeze the EU budget for 2011 in a fraught vote in Strasbourg which saw the amendment overwhelmingly defeated with 92 votes in favour of freezing the budget, with 564 in favour of increase.

The already programmed multiannual increase was approved by a majority of MEPs by a similarly massive margin. The SNP duo voted against increases in budget lines which could stand a harder economic analysis of their value, and supported a range of money saving measures, including the abolition of the ill starred EU Galileo satellite project, agricultural export refunds and public support for the wine and alcohol industry.

Ian Hudghton MEP said:

"The budget votes are always complicated, but while we are approaching the end of a budget cycle we must surely recognise that the global economic picture has changed markedly, and some EU budgets could take a bit of squeezing. The process of reforming the EU's budget long term has only just commenced, and to vote through an increase today while this process is ongoing is premature, and sends a signal that MEPs are out of touch with the concerns of the people who elected them."

Alyn Smith MEP added:

"Freezing the budget for next year would indeed be inconvenient for a number of projects, but some projects could do with a bit of a harder analysis and a number are in trouble in any event because of problems over domestic co-financing. Freezing the budget would also not prejudge how the long term negotiations on the budget will go, and these are only now beginning in earnest.

"It should be remembered that this is towards the end of a multiannual budget planning, so many of the figures being bandied about are not in fact increases, but increased allocations compared to last year, but still well within the overall financial perspectives. However, at a time when budgets in all areas of public life are being squeezed the EU should certainly not be immune."

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