

12 March 2009**LEADING MEP EDWARD MCMILLAN-SCOTT DROPS LANDMARK LEGAL ACTION
AGAINST CONSERVATIVE PARTY AND JOINS LIBERAL DEMOCRATS**

Mr Edward McMillan-Scott MEP, Vice-President of the European Parliament and a Conservative Party member for 42 years has withdrawn his appeal against the decision to expel him from the party and today joined the Liberal Democrats.

Mr McMillan-Scott's expulsion from the party followed his criticism of the extremist views of one of the Conservative Party's new European allies.

Background

- McMillan-Scott was re-elected a Conservative MEP in Yorkshire & The Humber on June 7 2009 and was re-elected a Vice-President of the European Parliament on July 14 2009.
- He stood for Vice-President against the Polish MEP Michal Kaminski, a candidate from the European Conservatives and Reformists Group which was created by David Cameron after the European Elections in June 2009.
- McMillan-Scott described Kaminski at the time as an 'inappropriate and unsuitable candidate' because of Kaminski's 'anti-Semitic, homophobic and racist links'.
- Following McMillan-Scott's stand Timothy Kirkhope (Yorkshire & The Humber), leader of the Conservative MEPs, withdrew the whip.
- On September 15 2009, without prior notification, McMillan-Scott was expelled from the Conservative Party after 25 years as an MEP, four years as leader of the MEPs, and three years on the Party's Board. Mr McMillan-Scott appealed the decision.

Paul Daniels, a partner in the award-winning Employment Team at Russell Jones & Walker, the solicitors, represented McMillan-Scott at his appeal hearing at CCHQ. He commented:

"Mr McMillan-Scott's permanent expulsion from the party was unconstitutional and plainly against all principles of natural justice. No warning of impending expulsion was given, no hearing was afforded to our client prior to the expulsion and no formal reasons were given for the decision. The party acted grossly in breach of natural justice on any view.

"Our client had a strong appeal, which was surprisingly rejected, and a clear claim in the High Court.

"The High Court action was expected to be a landmark case which would rule on the circumstances in which political parties can regulate or expel members.

"However, the Conservative party refused this week to disclose documents relevant to his appeal or to allow Mr McMillan-Scott to postpone his final appeal hearing, scheduled for March 18, until documents had been disclosed as required by the Data Protection Act. This was the last straw for Mr Mcmillan-Scott.

"It has become clear to us that he will not receive a fair hearing from the Conservative party."

"Mr McMillan Scott has therefore written to David Cameron today explaining the reasons for his decision to join the Liberal Democrats, which he has concluded is now the party more in tune with his values and, he believes, those of his electorate.

Our client has thus ended his appeal and the related High Court legal action."

- ENDS -

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Notes to editors:

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