

## Minority Ethnic Matters Overview+

*MEMO+ is an occasional series of briefing papers on topics of interest to minority ethnic communities in Scotland.*

*It is produced by the [Scottish Council of Jewish Communities](#) in partnership with the [Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland](#), and is supported by the Scottish Government.*

# Briefing: European Parliament Election The Parties and their Policies

**The European Parliament election will take place on 4 June 2009, and it is important that as many people as possible vote to ensure that the views of Scottish people are represented in Europe. Please circulate this issue of MEMO+ among your membership and encourage everyone to vote!**

The European Parliament consists of 736 MEPs, of whom 72 come from the UK. The UK is divided into [twelve electoral regions](#) each of which elects between 3 and 10 MEPs. The whole of Scotland is a single electoral region, and will elect 6 MEPs (one fewer than at the last European Parliament election) by a system of proportional representation.

*For information about how MSPs are elected see [MEMO+ Voting in the 2009 European Parliament Election](#).*

*Note that the voting system favours fringe parties if there is a low poll, so staying away could result in people whose views you strongly oppose being elected.*

Each of the political parties has published a manifesto describing what they would do if they won the election. Key policies are listed below and you can read the complete manifesto by clicking on the relevant link.

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#### Party websites and manifestos

<a href="#">Economy</a>	<a href="#">Business</a>	<a href="#">Employment</a>
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# Political Parties

A total of [72 candidates](#) are standing in Scotland representing the following parties:

<b>Scottish National Party</b>	<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">Manifesto</a>
<b>Labour Party</b>	<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">Manifesto</a>
<b>Conservative Party</b>	<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">Manifesto</a>
<b>Liberal Democrat Party</b>	<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">Manifesto</a>
<b>Green Party</b>	<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">Manifesto</a>
<b>British National Party</b>	<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">Manifesto</a>
<b>Christian Party</b>	<a href="#">Website</a>	<i>Manifesto not online</i>
<b>Jury Team</b>	<a href="#">Website</a>	<i>Manifesto not online</i>
<b>No2Eu: Yes to Democracy</b>	<a href="#">Website</a>	<i>Manifesto not online</i>
<b>Scottish Socialist Party</b>	<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">Manifesto</a>
<b>Socialist Labour Party</b>	<a href="#">Website</a>	<i>Manifesto not online</i>
<b>United Kingdom Independence Party</b>	<a href="#">Website</a>	<a href="#">Manifesto</a>

There is also one **Independent Candidate** who is not affiliated to any political party.

(**Note:** this list is in order of the size of the parties' representation in the Scottish Parliament, followed by the others in alphabetical order. In the sections below the represented parties are in random order followed by the unrepresented parties in random order.)

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*Not all manifestos include information on all topics, especially those for which the European Parliament has no particular remit.*

## What do the parties say about the economy?

### Labour Party

- Supports the development of an ambitious and coordinated European recovery plan to deal with the current economic conditions.
- Will call for organisations such as the United Nations and the World Bank to be reformed.

### Conservative Party

- Will work with the EU to help our economy recover, not hinder it with more red tape or protectionism.

### **Green Party**

- Will promote EU and global regulation of big banks, and provide support for mutual ownership and community banking.

### **Liberal Democrat Party**

- Believes it is in Britain's long-term interest to be part of the euro because membership of the single currency would help Britain improve economic stability and boost trade and investment.

### **Scottish National Party**

- Will take forward proposals to allow investment from the European Investment Bank to support growing Scottish businesses in partnership with the recently announced Scottish Investment Bank.

### **United Kingdom Independence Party**

- Will replace VAT with a local sales tax for the use of Local Councils.

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## **What do the parties say about the business?**

### **Liberal Democrat Party**

- Will work with Europe to create new jobs by breaking down trade barriers across Europe and boosting support for green jobs, and will encourage other European countries to do the same.
- Will support open markets in Europe in order to force down the costs of everything from medicines to mobile phone bills, meals and machinery.
- Will continue its campaign to extend the single market in the areas of energy, financial services and transport .

### **Green Party**

- Will ensure that no goods sold in Europe or produced by European companies are made by workers paid less than a basic living wage or forced into labour.

### **Scottish National Party**

- Will work with the European Investment Bank to maximise opportunities for investment in Scotland..

### **Labour Party**

- Will support UK firms in developing the goods and services necessary to meet environmental targets and to export goods.
- Supports a new consumer rights directive providing for high standards of consumer protection no matter where you are buying from in the leave and cleaner beaches.
- Will work to secure stronger rights for on-line buyers.

### **Conservative Party**

- Will drive forward the Single Market, working to open up new markets, resist protectionism, and oppose all further moves towards harmonised taxes in the EU.
- Will support measures to make it easier for small businesses to take advantage of the Single Market,

- Will keep the UK out of the euro so that interest rates can be used to help businesses in the downturn.

### **Scottish Socialist Party**

- Will harmonise social rights across Europe, for example minimum wages, reduction of work time without wage cuts, pensions and social security.

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## **What do the parties say about employment?**

### **Conservative Party**

- Will negotiate to restore British control of social and employment laws.
- Will work to give British people greater opportunities in the European jobs market

### **Green Party**

- Will create a European living wage unit to ensure everyone gets a decent minimum wage .

### **Liberal Democrat Party**

- Will make it easier to work abroad by making it easier to transfer personal pensions and mortgages between European countries.
- Will create thousands of new jobs by breaking down trade barriers across Europe and boosting support for green jobs.

### **Scottish National Party**

- Will invest £190 million from the European Regional Development fund to support economic recovery with a particular focus on protecting and creating jobs.
- Believes it is more important than ever to have MEPs from Scotland working in Europe to protect and create jobs for communities across Scotland.

### **Labour Party**

- Will continue working in Europe to close the gender pay gap.

### **British National Party**

- Believes that employers should be obliged to provide jobs and training for British workers rather than importing cheap foreign labour

### **Scottish Socialist Party**

- Will legalise all undocumented immigrants.

### **No2Eu: Yes to Democracy**

- Will end the free movement of labour within Europe that allows foreign workers into the UK.

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# **What do the parties say about immigration?**

## **Conservative Party**

- Will oppose harmonisation of policy on asylum, visas and immigration.

## **Green Party**

- Will push for practical and emotional support for the victims of trafficking .

## **Liberal Democrat Party**

- Will not join the Schengen area of open borders in the foreseeable future.
- Will play a more positive role in setting stronger EU policies and common standards to tackle illegal immigration, to ensure the asylum system is fair and not abused and to agree a coherent approach to legal immigration from outside the EU.

## **Scottish National Party**

- Believes that a fair deal for Scottish workers must come hand in hand with the freedom of movement, and the SNP will work in Europe to ensure that the correct balance is reached between a fully functioning single market and justice for all.

## **Labour Party**

- Is committed to improving the EU's effectiveness in fighting crime and improving security, but believes that these are ultimately a matter of national concern and will therefore retain control over UK borders and insist on retaining our right to decide whether to participate in individual EU measures on immigration and asylum.
- Will tackle people-trafficking.

## **No2Eu: Yes to Democracy**

- Will end the free movement of labour within Europe that allows foreign workers into the UK.

## **British National Party**

- Believes that Britain, not the EU, should decide who lives in Britain.

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# **What do the parties say about justice?**

## **Labour Party**

- Will work to secure opportunity for all through closing the gender pay gap, improving living standards, reducing childhood poverty and increasing economic growth.
- Will continue working with European partners to tackle crime, illegal immigration and the threat of terrorism

## **Green Party**

- Will push for every EU country to implement equality laws .

### **Liberal Democrat Party**

- Will work towards greater co-operation between police forces and measures such as the European Arrest Warrant that helps Britain swiftly bring back suspects to face justice in this country rather than wait for the old, lengthy extradition procedures.
- Wants guaranteed privacy safeguards on access to databases by police and intelligence agencies, including when access is given to non-EU countries such as the US.

### **Scottish National Party**

- Supports joined-up action across the EU to combat crime, for example, to ensure criminal databases are shared appropriately between European countries to ensure we are fully aware of the backgrounds of people entering Scotland.

### **Scottish Socialist Party**

- Supports European cooperation in promoting social protection for the unemployed and the poor.

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## **What do the parties say about education?**

### **Scottish National Party**

- Will invest £140 million more through the European Social Fund for education, training and skills.

### **Green Party**

- Will encourage the free movement of students and academics, and increase grant funding for students on exchange programmes.
- Supports the creation of a European Higher Education area to make it easier for students to spend a year or semester abroad.

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## **What do the parties say about health?**

### **Scottish National Party**

- Will ensure that all EU member states provide good quality health care.
- Will ensure that Scottish healthcare is not undermined by EU policy.

### **Liberal Democrat Party**

- Backs the EU Health Card, which gives British tourists the right to claim medical treatment abroad.

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# **What do the parties say about energy?**

## **Liberal Democrat Party**

- Believes that the goal is for Britain to source all energy needs from within the EU by 2030 and become a net exporter of energy by 2050.
- Supports action to stop climate change and protect the environment.

## **Scottish National Party**

- Will continue to promote the concept of a North Sea Supergrid – an electricity interconnector that would allow Scotland to provide secure, competitive, clean energy direct into European markets.

## **Labour Party**

- Is working with EU partners to achieve a global deal on climate change.
- Will support the development of low carbon technologies across the EU.
- Is advancing the development of new renewable energy generation.

## **Conservative Party**

- Will ensure that tackling climate change and moving to a low carbon economy are central priorities for the EU.
- Will strive for a comprehensive global deal on cutting carbon emissions and support EU action to promote greener forms of energy.

## **Green Party**

- Will promote the development of renewable energy sources.
- Will work towards laws that require EU companies to account for all of their carbon pollution wherever it is emitted.

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# **What do the parties say about Europe?**

## **Scottish National Party**

- Will work towards an independent Scotland in Europe to enable the Scottish Government to speak for Scotland and represent Scottish interests in the EU.
- Will work hard to maximise opportunities for study, for investment in research and skills and for employment across the EU.

## **Labour Party**

- Believes that full engagement in the European Union has made an invaluable contribution to the UK's prosperity and is vital for making sure that we come through the current economic downturn stronger.
- Believes that Britain should retain its own independent foreign policy but work together with the EU to agree a common position if we believe it is in our best interest.

## **Conservative Party**

- Will decrease the amount of new EU legislation and roll back redundant regulation.

- Believes that membership gives British people greater opportunities in the European jobs market, and to work, study or draw a pension in another EU country.
- Opposes plans for the EU to acquire additional powers on foreign policy and defence.
- Opposes the Lisbon Treaty and will campaign for a referendum on the renamed EU Constitution.
- Will review the European voting system to consider how individual MEPs can be more closely linked to individual constituencies, while respecting the required element of proportionality.
- Supports the further enlargement of the EU, including to the Ukraine, Belarus, Turkey, Georgia and the countries of the Balkans.

### **Green Party**

- Will push for votes at 16 in EU elections.

### **Liberal Democrat Party**

- Will reform the EU budget to get better value for money.
- Will boost military capabilities to make a stronger European contribution to NATO and to give Europe the capability to act when it needs to.

### **United Kingdom Independence Party**

- Will leave the European Union.
- Rejects European laws about freedom of movement within the EU, and treatment of asylum seekers in order to prevent too many newcomers settling in the UK.

### **No2Eu: Yes to Democracy**

- Opposes the Lisbon Treaty

### **British National Party**

- Will Withdraw from the EU.

### **Socialist Labour Party**

- Will leave the European Union.

### **Jury Team**

- Believes that referendums should be called across the EU whenever requested by 5% of the EU's electorate.

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## **What other policies do the parties have?**

### **Scottish National Party**

- Will press for legislation to raise the current minimum level of animal welfare regulations.

### **Green Party**

- Will call for fairer global governance, including a stronger voice for developing countries in the UN, the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.
- Supports a ban on genetically modified crops.
- Will support the addition of minority Scots languages including Doric and Lallans to the list of recognised languages in Europe.

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## Useful Links

- **European Parliament**  
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/default_en.htm)
- **Election information from the European Parliament**  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2009/default.htm?language=en>
- **Elections 2009 (BBC)**  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in\\_depth/europe/2009/election\\_09/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/europe/2009/election_09/default.stm)
- **Electoral Commission**  
<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/elections/upcoming-elections-and-referendums/europe/european-parliamentary-elections-in-june-2009>
- **MEMO+ Voting in the 2009 European Parliament Election**  
[http://www.scojec.org/memo+/2009/09v\\_eu\\_voting.pdf](http://www.scojec.org/memo+/2009/09v_eu_voting.pdf)

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**Please circulate this issue of MEMO+ among your membership and encourage people to register and to vote in the elections on 4 June!**

**If you stay at home, you could let in the candidate you want least.**



*The **Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC)** is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland. It advances public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture and community, and also works in partnership with other organisations to promote good relations and understanding among community groups and to promote equality. (Scottish Charity SC029438)*  
<http://www.scojec.org/>



***BEMIS (the Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland)** is the umbrella body for ethnic minority organisations in Scotland. It aims to strengthen the capacity of the ethnic minority voluntary sector; raise the profile and coordinate the voice of this sector; and take a lead on policy issues to ensure that issues of concern are raised with government and other relevant bodies.*  
<http://www.bemis.org.uk/index.html>



*The **Scottish Government** is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and social justice for all those who live in Scotland. **One Scotland** is the Scottish Government campaign designed to tackle racism. It aims to raise awareness of racist attitudes, highlight its negative impact and recognise the valuable contributions that other cultures have made to our society – and make Scotland no place for racism.*  
<http://www.scotlandagainstracism.com/>