

Liberal Democrats

Friday 12 March 2010

Longest serving Tory in Europe joins Liberal Democrats

Edward McMillan-Scott, the Conservative's most senior MEP, has joined the Liberal Democrats.

The former leader of the Tory MEPs who stood against Tory-backed Michal Kaminski has announced his defection to the Liberal Democrats at the party's spring conference in Birmingham.

Edward McMillan-Scott, the Vice-President of the European Parliament with responsibility for human rights and democracy, was welcomed to the Liberal Democrats by leader Nick Clegg.

Edward McMillan-Scott, MEP for Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire said:

"I have been around the higher circles of the Conservative Party for long enough to fear that on Europe Cameron says one thing in opposition and will do another in government.

"I have long fought against totalitarianism and the extremism and religious persecution it brings. It was wrong of Cameron to associate with MEPs who have extremist pasts in his new European alliance.

"My reasons for joining the Liberal Democrats are that in Nick Clegg they have a leader whom I like, admire and respect. They are internationalists, not nationalists. They are committed to politics based the values of fairness and change.

"From being a liberal Conservative I become a conservative Liberal. Most of my family are liberals: I am pleased to join the Liberal family."

Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg said:

"I am delighted to welcome Edward McMillan-Scott to the Liberal Democrats.

"For many years he has fought for human rights and democracy world wide and he is rightly one of Europe's most respected politicians.

"As someone of principle he has refused to cosy up to right wing extremists, despite pressure from the Tory machine.

“This flies in the face of David Cameron’s claims of a change. It shows that people of principle, who believe in fairness and want real change for Britain are at home here in the Liberal Democrats.”