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Single Seat for the European Parliament: Countdown for change

Following a year of internal research and studies by the cross-party informal [Brussels-Strasbourg Seat Study Group](#), its Chairman has today announced new initiatives to urge governments to allow MEPs to decide how to end the controversial two-seat arrangement:

- Launch of Single Seat Pledge for midterm EP elections
- The Single Seat campaign going public
- French court cases; today the ECJ had not received support from any other Member States in the case of France against the European Parliament, apart from Luxembourg. Please find attached a Q&A document on the ECJ cases.

Mr Edward McMillan-Scott (ALDE, UK) European Parliament Vice-President responsible for Democracy and Human Rights, today [20 September 2011] called at a Press conference in Brussels for MEPs to be given the right to decide where and when parliament meets. He was joined by Alexander Alvaro MEP (ALDE, DE) Chairman of the [OneSeat](#) campaign and Stephen Kinsella, a partner of [Sidley Austin LLP](#), the international law firm which is giving pro bono advice to the Study Group.

The MEPs launched a new campaign under the title Single Seat, together with a [website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts. They pointed out that in a June 8 resolution 373 - 285 MEPs had voted in favour of a Single Seat - an absolute majority, but the official seat could only be changed by treaty.

Commenting on the legal action being taken in the European Court of Justice by the French government against the parliament's decision in March to cut a week in Strasbourg from its 2012 and 2013 calendars, English solicitor, Stephen Kinsella, said that the parliament "had a very strong case".

McMillan-Scott, announced that: "Any MEP standing for either a Parliamentary or political group position at the mid term in January 2012 will be asked to pledge his or her support for the proposition that MEPs should have the right to decide when and where to meet." He pointed out that Martin Schulz, leader of the S&D Group, who failed to vote in June on the subject, had already announced his candidacy for the presidency of parliament and that his likely replacement would either be Stephen Hughes MEP or Catherine Trautman, a former mayor of Strasbourg. McMillan-Scott has been re-nominated by his UK colleagues to stand again as Vice-President and Alexander Alvaro has been nominated as leader of the German liberal MEPs from January: both pledged to continue their campaign for a Single Seat.

Alvaro, Vice-Chairman of parliament's Budget committee and Chairman of the Campaign for Parliamentary Reform and Chairman of the One Seat campaign, said: "We hope that the European public will recognise that the extra cost of Strasbourg is some €180 million a year and 19,000 tonnes of CO₂ each year. We hope that they will encourage their MEPs to back a resolution to change the treaty and give the parliament the choice of when and where it meets."

ENDS