

Failing to defend British interests: UKIP MEPs

- 1. UKIP let down their supporters.** They returned 12 MEPs in 2004, but completely wasted their big opportunity. Their MEPs have been characterised by in-fighting and scandal; as a result, one third of their MEPs have left or been expelled.
- 2. UKIP badly let down British fishermen** when they failed to oppose a plan put forward by Spanish and French MEPs to scrap the Shetland Box – a protected fishing zone for British vessels and one of the most sensitive marine conservation areas around Britain.
- 3. UKIP have failed to crack down on EU fraud and corruption** – one UKIP MEP has been sent to prison for benefit fraud and another is under investigation by the police over fraud allegations.
- 4. UKIP have failed on their promises** – they said they opposed new countries joining the EU from central Europe because it would lead to a 'flood of migrants' that would be 'bad for Britain'. But their former Leader Roger Knapman MEP was revealed by the *Sunday Times* to be employing Polish builders to renovate his home.
- 5. UKIP have failed to oppose barmy EU regulations** – for example, they did not vote to strike down a proposal to force companies to monitor whether their employees were exposed to too much sunlight (and provide them with t-shirts and sun cream if they were), so it went through by just six votes.

- **6. UKIP let down small firms** when they failed to support plans to cut EU red tape for small business and to exempt the smallest firms from EU regulations altogether.
- **7. UKIP have failed to convince their own supporters** – Robert Kilroy–Silk joined UKIP in 2004, but left a year later, describing the party as ‘a joke’ that he was ‘ashamed’ to belong to. Of UKIP’s MEPs he said: “Frankly I don’t rate any [of them]...I was embarrassed at their behaviour, their naivety and their immaturity and their stupidity.”
- **8. UKIP have failed to promote British business** – for example, they have voted against an initiative to ‘name and shame’ countries that fail to apply the common rules of the EU’s Internal Market (and so disadvantage British business and consumers) and against calls to open up global markets with a new world trade deal.
- **9. UKIP’s leadership have failed** – The former chairman of UKIP in Wales has said: “the moral integrity of a number of people at the top left much to be desired. It does not give me any satisfaction to realise that the old saying ‘a fish rots from the head down’ may have more than a cursory resemblance to UKIP.”
- **10. UKIP have failed to stick to their guns** – UKIP leader Nigel Farage surprised many people when, in a debate in the European Parliament with Tony Blair, he said: “If you can reform the European Union, Mr Blair, then I may even change my mind. I may even think it is worth us staying.”