

## **Beware of Eurocrats bearing gifts**

Local community media is the new battlefield for hearts and minds being waged by the European Union. This is made apparent by a report that was passed by the European Parliament last week; the "Community Media in Europe" report written by Karen Restarits, and Austrian MEP.

She is calling for the EU to provide financing for local radio stations - such as hospital and other community resources.

"At first glance this seems an excellent idea, providing funds to cash strapped minority media", said Godfrey Bloom, UK Independence Party MEP for Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire, "but people should be wary of accepting the largesse".

Mr Bloom pointed out that any such funding comes with a political agenda. "Even a small sum like £20,000 per year would mean that a radio station could employ a member of staff. However who would be willing to sack that member if the Commission withdrew the funds? In this way editorial independence and integrity could easily be compromised for a paltry sum".

"The European Commission is alarmed by the rapid growth of small independent radio stations, which are generally more trusted by the citizen than national media. They want a part of the action and are prepared to spend our money to get it", he said

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A6-2008-0263+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

The Restarits report

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