

Greens to support rally at Holyrood to support EU citizens

The Scottish Greens will today speak up for EU citizens living in Scotland, and urge the Scottish Government to keep all options open in an effort to keep Scotland in Europe.

A petition launched by the Scottish Greens on Friday morning in light of the EU referendum vote has so far gathered almost 40,000 signatures. It calls for Holyrood to examine and exhaust every option for continuing Scotland's close ties with Europe.

The party has also organised a rally outside Holyrood at 1pm today to give people a chance to make their voice heard.

In the Parliament chamber from 2pm Green MSPs will respond to a statement from the First Minister and take part in a debate on the issue. The Green group expects to support the Government motion.

 Patrick Harvie MSP, Co-convener of the Scottish Greens, said:

“Following the UK vote to leave the EU, European citizens living in Scotland have understandably expressed concerns about their status. The anti-migrant rhetoric by the Leave campaign and its backers has shamefully fuelled hostility.

“The message from the overwhelming majority of Scotland's people and its parliament must be made clear: we are a welcoming nation and deeply value citizens of other countries living here. The right to free movement is vital to the success of our nation, and we utterly reject the intolerant attitude of many Leave campaigners.”

Ross Greer MSP, Europe spokesperson for the Scottish Greens, said:

“The strength of feeling in Scotland is shown by this huge and growing support for our petition. Holyrood must explore every option for keeping Scotland in Europe, as this is the clear will of the people who have elected us.

“Scottish voices in UK-EU negotiations will be vital but in the meantime the Scottish Government is right to begin preparations for a potential future independence referendum. When life-long opponents of independence say they are changing their mind, the response of those of us who voted Yes in 2014 must be to welcome that change and continue to build the case for an independent Scotland which can play its full part in Europe.”