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PRESS RELEASE

9 April 2009

MEP Chichester calls for youngest MEP to become 'father of the house' in the European Parliament

A row in the European Parliament over the prospect of Jean Marie Le Pen, leader of the far-right French National Front, becoming the 'father' of the Parliament should be seen as an opportunity to replace him with the youngest member said Giles Chichester, Conservative MEP for South West and Gibraltar.

The oldest member of the Parliament is expected to preside over the opening ceremony of the Parliament on 14th July, following the European elections in June. However, Le Pen's views have caused the major political groups in the Parliament to seek to change the rules and prevent him taking the chair.

Giles Chichester said that if Le Pen is to be replaced, the Parliament should call upon its youngest member to take the chair for the opening ceremony - as a gesture of the importance of youth participation in politics.

MEP Chichester said:

"If we are to find a different 'father of the house' why not turn precedent on its head and ask the youngest member to take the chair?"

"Politicians always tell young people that they must engage in the political process. Giving the youngest member of the Parliament the chair would be a symbolic gesture that would show we are serious about involving younger people in the political process."

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Conservatives in the European Parliament