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**For immediate release**

**STUC CONCERNED AT WORKING TIME SCAREMONGERING**

The Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) has expressed concern at attempts to overturn the European Parliament's welcome decision to end the United Kingdom opt out of the European Working Hours Directive and questions the motives of those who have played their joker, using the falsely reported example of retained fire fighters to argue against United Kingdom workers enjoying the same protection under working time regulations as their European counterparts.

Ian Tasker, STUC Assistant Secretary said

"It is absolutely appalling that some politicians and employers play an emotional card and wrongly raise the spectre of reduced fire cover in an attempt to exploit the rights of British workers.

"This is quite clearly an erroneous and misguided attempt to persuade the public that we should continue to work longer hours in the United Kingdom than other European countries and, at the same time have less entitlement to holiday than our European colleagues.

"The minor difficulties in the current opt out being scrapped in respect of retained fire-fighters ability to provide emergency cover can be resolved through effective rostering and dialogue with the Fire Brigades Union.

"Our concern is that this is purely a smokescreen to hide the real motivation behind this nonsense which is to try and prolong the inevitable that the opt-out has to go. We will be urging MSPs and MPs to ignore lobbying attempts by any employers organisation that's seek to use scaremongering to argue their cause without presenting the truth behind the working hours directive as it applies to emergency services.

“Reports that CoSLA are widening the examples to local government generally – not just retained fire-fighters, will further strengthen resolve in opposing any attempt by employers to circumvent the Working Hours Directive.”

Ends

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