

ALDE Group Leader Graham Watson has launched his campaign for the presidency of the European Parliament

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ALDE Group Leader Graham Watson has launched his campaign for the presidency of the European Parliament. Speaking about his ambitions for the Parliament's future, Mr. Watson said: "For too long, Presidents of Parliament have been chosen through backroom deals in smoke-filled rooms. Mine will be the first ever public campaign for the presidency: in this I hope that I will set a precedent. "We need a proper debate about the role and priorities of the next President. This is what European democracy should be about.

"I hope that by going public with my campaign I will stimulate debate about the candidates and the issues, and spark a contest which will be decided on merit not convenience.

"I have written to every MEP informing them of my intentions, and next week I will unveil the priorities that would mark out my presidency."

Graham Watson is the UK Liberal Democrat MEP for South West England and Gibraltar. He has served in the European Parliament since 1994, serving on three parliamentary committees, chairing the Justice and Home Affairs Committee. Having led his Group since January 2002, he is the longest-serving Leader of a Liberal Group in the history of the European Parliament.