

02/03/2010 15:10 by webmaster

[Press conference video](#)

• **UKIP MEP Nigel Farage**, facing demands from European Parliament president Jerzy Buzek to apologise to Herman van Rompuy, the European Parliament, and the 'nation of Belgium', has offered to apologise to any bank clerks who were offended by his remarks.

Speaking after a meeting with Mr Buzek, Mr Farage said that he had been asked to 'apologise to the whole world' simply for speaking his mind and representing the interests of his constituents.

He said, "This is clearly an issue of freedom of speech. The same rulebook that is being thrown at me also contains the guarantee that Members freedom of speech should not be undermined.

"I will appeal any ruling by Mr Buzek, who clearly has a different interpretation of freedom of speech to me."

Mr Farage said that the Belgian Prime Minister, Yves Leterme had in 2006 described French Belgians as 'intellectually incapable' of learning Flemish, and said that all that united his countrymen were the King, football and beer. Mr Leterme was among those demanding that Mr Farage apologise for describing Belgium as a 'non-country'.

Mr Farage said that his comments had sparked a debate about Mr van Rompuy's position as unelected president, and defended his comments as 'realistic, truthful and a necessary part of waking the people up to van Rompuy's plans for an economic government of the EU'.

"Compared to what is said in parliaments across the world, compared to what has been said about me in this parliament, my comments were mild. This is about free speech, the right to say what is not popular with the political elite, and the right to represent my constituents as I see fit.

"After all, unlike Mr van Rompuy, I have been elected."

See also:

[Who are you, Mr President? \(Nigel Farage in plenary, 24.11.2010\)](#)