

Tories' hit by new row over federal Europe

by Toby Helm and Rajeev Syal

David Cameron's new alliance in the European Parliament hit fresh controversy last night when it emerged that its Polish leader had spoken out in favour of the Lisbon Treaty, which the Tories say would be a disaster for Britain and Europe.

The revelation is likely to shock Conservative eurosceptics, who believed that the new European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR), headed by Michal Kaminski, which includes the 25 Tory MEPs, was being set up by Cameron specifically to campaign against the kind of federal Europe that they insist the Lisbon Treaty would create.

But inquiries by the *Observer* reveal that Kaminski, from the Polish Law and Justice party, has praised the treaty as a good deal for Poland and is not opposing its progress into law across the EU.

In a further embarrassment for Cameron, Kaminski has also called for his party to unite with others in Europe in support of the common agricultural policy (Cap), which the Tories regard as the epitome of EU waste, but which many Poles back.

Kaminski's views are expressed on his party's Polish website. In an interview in May this year he stated: "We must be allied with those EU countries that defend the Cap."

High-ranking EU officials say Kaminski's pro-Lisbon leanings were on show at a recent meeting with heads of other political groups in the parliament when he backed the speedy reappointment of the pro-Lisbon José Manuel Barroso as president of the European Commission.

The Law and Justice party fears that indecision would create a political vacuum in the EU, adding to the

chances of a "no" vote on Lisbon in the Irish referendum this autumn. Last night an ECR spokesman was unable to say what Kaminski's, or the ECR's, precise views on Lisbon were. "I don't think we have a position as a group," he said.

Dr Rafal Pankowski, a political scientist at Warsaw's Collegium Civitas, said: "The Lisbon Treaty is an awkward question for Kaminski. Lech Kaczynski, his party founder, personally negotiated it and it was presented domestically as a big success. The majority of Law and Justice MPs voted for the treaty in the Polish parliament. Today Kaminski cannot say that President Kaczynski negotiated a rubbish treaty."

Nick Clegg, the Liberal Democrat leader, said: "David Cameron and



Polish MEP Michal Kaminski, from the Law and Justice party, backs the Lisbon treaty.

William Hague's European policy is now lurching from dogma to farce. Even their own handpicked, anti-European allies disagree with them. Cameron and Hague have become an irrelevant laughing stock in Brussels."

Cameron's decision to split from the pro-integration European People's party and team up with Kaminski's party has already landed the Tories in controversy amid claims that Kaminski has shown homophobic and antisemitic tendencies in his past, out of tune with Cameron's new-look, tolerant Conservatism. *Observer Comment*, page 22