



Welcome to my final enewsletter before the Summer break.

Wales to get cash terms increase in EU Funds

Along running campaign to ensure that Wales does not miss out on valuable EU investment in jobs and growth has paid off as it was confirmed that Wales receive around £2.1 billion in Structural Funding between 2014-2020. West Wales and the Valleys will benefit to the tune of £1.7 billion with East Wales receiving £348million.

David Cameron has consistently gone into the European negotiating chamber and ignored the needs of Wales preferring instead to placate his backbenchers with headline cuts that fail to take into account consequences felt on the ground. The failure of his government to fight for a safety net for UK regions to mitigate against any reduction when other Member States were fighting their own cause is unforgivable. This would have meant, in practice, a cut for Wales of around £400m in Structural funds post-2013.

Working closely with the Labour Welsh Government, I have lobbied for the reallocation of Structural Funding between UK regions in order to benefit the poorest areas such as West Wales and the Valleys, an argument that has been accepted by the UK Government. If we take into account the other EU funding mechanisms that Wales can access for territorial cooperation, Connecting Europe and the European Youth Guarantee fund, I am hopeful that we can continue to make the most of the EU investment available.

Following difficult negotiations between the European Parliament and Member States, a final deal was struck last week between the President of the European Parliament and the Irish presidency. The deal means that there will be more flexibility on how funds are used during the programme, allowing money to be used as a priority in the first few years to help fight youth unemployment and prioritising funds for research and innovation. The deal will see a cash terms increase in Structural Funding for Wales of around £131 million over the next seven years and this funding will be used to generate jobs, growth and training across the country. I am disappointed, however, that I was only Welsh MEP to support this deal. Voting against this vital funding could lead to a delay in releasing EU money and would, without doubt, have a detrimental effect on the development of jobs and growth across Wales.

Mobile phone roaming charges down this summer!

The cost of using your mobile phone abroad to call, text or download data has this week been cut. This is a welcome move for consumers planning to travel to other EU countries this summer and it's an important step towards scapping roaming charges altogether. The EU has been working to reduce high roaming charges since 2007. This weeks changes will mean a fall in charges of 17% when making a call and 12% when receiving a call. The cost of a text message will be 11% cheaper and downloading data will be 36% cheaper. The maximum price for making a call will be 20p per minute and to receive a call, 6p per minute. The maximum price for a text message will be set a 7p and for downloading and browsing the internet the cap will be set at 38p per megabyte.

Written Declaration on TB

This month I signed a Written Declaration on the threat of drug-resistant tuberculosis in the European area. TB may be seen as a disease of the past, but the sad truth is that it remains a very serious risk to public health. Strains of drug-resistant TB are particularly high in Europe, where seven people are killed by the disease every hour. Not only this, but the financial burden to the EU is around €750m a year. However, with proper financial and political backing, this is a battle that can be won. If this Written Declaration attracts enough



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signatures, it will be forwarded to the European Council and Commission in the hope of persuading them to support the World Health Organisation's plan to fight drug-resistant TB in the European region, and will hopefully prove a vital first step in the fight against this severe threat to global health.

Report on protecting the EU's finances

Last week I was pleased to see a report that I have been working on for the Parliament's Budgetary Control committee over the last year voted in Strasbourg. The report looks at EU budget spending and revenue collection, an issue which is especially important at a time when national and regional budgets throughout Europe are experiencing cuts.

94% of the EU budget goes straight back to be invested in Member States, so measures to combat fraud in EU spending must be taken very seriously to ensure that this money is well spent. It is currently estimated that around 0.2% of the EU budget is affected by fraud, but in my report I call for a standard method for Member States to collect data on fraudulent activity in the spending of the EU budget, so that we get a better idea of how much money is lost to fraud each year.

There are a lot of good initiatives underway to tackle revenue fraud, such as at customs or through tax evasion but more needs to be done. One staggering statistic about the loss of resources at national level estimates that €1 trillion in public money is lost due to tax fraud and tax avoidance every year in the EU. This is approximately €2000 for every European citizen. In my report I highlight the importance of tackling tax evasion and fraud at EU and national level, especially now that budgets are being squeezed and it is more important than ever to ensure that public money is well spent in ways that can boost our economy and create jobs.

Cooperatives and social enterprises

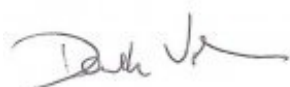
In Strasbourg last week the Parliament voted on a report that looked at the contribution of cooperatives and social enterprises to overcoming the crisis. I supported this report because it stresses how cooperatives in the EU make an important contribution to society, the economy and employment. Cooperatives and social economy enterprises should benefit from a more coherent legislative framework in order to ensure that they receive the support needed to continue to grow. In Wales, cooperatives and social enterprises bring massive benefits to communities and it's good to see that this is recognised throughout Europe. Efforts must be sustained in order to develop these cooperatives further so that they can continue to help tackle ongoing issues such as social and economic exclusion in Wales.

UKIP

I have recently received a number of enquiries asking for information about UKIP policies and their activities in the European Parliament. I have **compiled a brief report** which I hope will be helpful when you are out and about campaigning.

If you require any further information on this or anything else EU related then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Best Wishes



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