



Welcome to my latest newsletter designed to keep you updated on my work as a Member of the European Parliament.

Written Declaration on introducing a European Disability Card

Last week in Strasbourg I was one of 14 MEPs to launch a **Written Declaration** that, if passed, will make the establishment of a European Disability Card a real possibility. In their countries of residence, people with disabilities enjoy a number of rights designed to improve accessibility in their day-to-day lives, in particular in terms of the right to freedom of choice regarding travel, study and work. There is, however, no common document recognising a person's disabilities at EU level, meaning that benefits offered at Member State level are not always available when travelling to other EU countries. With the number of EU citizens affected by a disability estimated to be around 1 in 6, the introduction of a European Disability Card is long overdue.

Civil law protection for victims

Last week in Strasbourg also saw an **important resolution passed** which will ensure that victims of stalking, harassment or domestic violence who are granted protection in their country of residence will be guaranteed equivalent protection should they travel or move to another EU Member State. As well as assuring their protection, victims will also have access to specialist support services from trained officials. Furthermore, a simplified application procedure will alleviate the stressful process of requesting protection. This is a fantastic example of what cooperation between EU Member States can achieve for victims of crime.

Welsh Seafood Expo

A few weeks ago I was invited to attend the World's largest seafood trade fair in Brussels, at which six Welsh companies were exhibiting their products. The companies based in Anglesey, the Gower peninsula and Bangor were showcasing a wide variety of impressive seafood including shellfish, cockles and mussels and laverbread. The exposition underlined how important the food industry is for Wales and I believe that more research and development into food production will further enhance the food industry in Wales. A staggering 21,000 tonnes of seafood was landed in Wales in 2010-2011, making Wales one of the best performing countries within the European retail market. This annual exposition enables Welsh producers to meet suppliers, buyers and other big players in the seafood industry and creates a platform on which to promote excellent Welsh produce.

Action against tax fraud, evasion and havens

In Strasbourg my Labour colleagues and I voted for **strong proposals calling for action to be taken against tax fraud and evasion**. Labour MEPs believe that we must be tough on those who dodge tax and avoid paying their fair share. We voted to bring greater transparency to multinationals' tax affairs, which would help shed light on the practice applied by companies like Starbucks, Google and Amazon, who don't make a fair contribution to our society. The same cannot be said of the Tories, who refused to support demands for greater tax transparency. UKIP went even further and voted, along with the BNP, against every measure to tackle tax avoidance, evasion and fraud. With the loss of tax revenue across the EU at a staggering €1 trillion a year, nearly double the 2012 combined budget deficit of all member states, tax collection and closing the loopholes must now be taken seriously by national governments. Vital money is lost rather than being invested in our economy; the £9bn lost in the UK each year could pay for more than 600 new schools or over 50 new hospitals or pay the annual salaries of over 330,000 police officers.

EU-US trade

The European Parliament has backed a resolution to allow negotiations to begin on a **EU-US free trade agreement**. Reaching a



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deal on the Transatlantic Investment and Trade Partnership (TTIP) would mean the creation of the world's biggest trading area and could add around £10bn to the UK economy each year. The benefits of a deal with the US would be numerous for EU businesses, workers and citizens, giving a vital boost to job creation and growth. A trade deal with the US is not something that Wales could achieve on its own, but by being part of the EU Welsh businesses have access to bigger markets worldwide. Discussions will start in June this year and MEPs have stressed the need for EU negotiators to ensure that workers and social rights, among other things, are safeguarded in the deal.

UKIP

Whatever they may claim to the contrary, UKIP MEPs consistently proved that they do not have the UK's best interests at heart during last month's Strasbourg session. Not only did UKIP MEPs vote against legislation to combat tax evasion and tax fraud - a sure sign that they are firmly on the side of big business - but they also failed to back the resolution to establish EU-wide protection for victims of harassment and domestic violence, as well as voting against proposals to make high employment standards a priority in the **EU-US free trade agreement**. In a recent interview, UKIP MEP Godfrey Bloom also stated that it was UKIP policy to facilitate substantial job losses, and that he hoped thousands of public workers would lose their jobs, confirming the party's lack of commitment to a jobs and growth agenda.

Labour Movement for Europe

In the UK, information and discussion on Europe is currently dominated by Eurosceptics, with the mainstream media often publishing ill informed, badly researched and biased articles. In the lead up to the European elections in 2014 it's important to ensure that the positive case for the UK's continued EU membership is made. The Labour Movement for Europe (LME) holds events and publishes articles and blogs with the aim of improving the quality of debate about Europe. Their website provides more information <http://labourmovement.eu/> and you can follow them on **Twitter @labour4europe**.

Out and about in Wales

My constituency offices in Cardiff and Wrexham continue to be busy dealing with a wide range of individual cases and requests for information / support with EU related issues. I have also met with a number of constituents, businesses and community organisations as well hosting to two well attended policy discussion events in Neath and Llanelli.

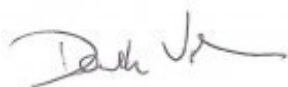
My final EU policy forum, which gives Welsh Labour members a chance to have their say on topical European issues takes place this Friday (7th June) at 7pm in Pontypridd RFC Clubhouse, Sardis Rd, Pontypridd. Entry is free and joining me on the speakers' panel will be Owen Smith MP (Shadow Secretary of State for Wales) and Vaughan Gething AM (Assembly Member for Cardiff South & Penarth). To reserve your place, please contact my Cardiff Office.

Vacancy

I am currently recruiting for a Media & Public Relations Officer (Part-time) to be based in Wales. Full details including a job description and person specification can be found by [clicking here](#). The deadline for applications is Friday, 21st June 2013 with interviews being held on Friday, 5th July in Cardiff.

If you require any further information then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Best Wishes



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Member of the European Parliament

Labour, Wales

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