



Welcome to the December 2012 edition of my regular enewsletter:

### **Budget**

After months of hard work and difficult negotiations I was very pleased last week to see my report for the EU's Budget for 2013 approved by the European Parliament. I was responsible for the 2013 budget for EU institutions including the European Parliament's own budget. The large real terms cut that I managed to negotiate for the Parliament's own budget was achieved by freezing Members' allowances, cutting travel budgets and reducing spending on buildings. It is vitally important that during these tough economic times that MEPs show responsibility. Also, the savings delivered can be re-focused on creating jobs and growth through important structural funds, rural development and research and development projects, which are hugely important to Wales.

### **EU Steel Industry**

Last week in Strasbourg my Labour colleagues and I voted for a resolution calling for a strategy to improve the competitiveness of the EU's steel industry. The steel industry in Wales is facing significant challenges, with devastating job cuts in plants such as Port Talbot. Europe needs a strong, competitive steel industry and this resolution asks the European Commission to develop an action plan for the steel sector by June 2013. The resolution also includes the vital issue of calling for companies involved in restructuring to act in a socially responsible manner to limit the social hardship for workers and regions.

### **FTT**

The eleven EU member states planning to introduce a Financial Transaction Tax got the go ahead recently from MEPs. These eleven countries account for about 90% of the Eurozone's GDP and will hopefully set an example of what a wider FTT could achieve. Although only some Member States will participate at this stage, I hope that the European Commission will provide a strong proposal to cover as many transactions as possible because the FTT should be a way of ensuring that the financial market takes more responsibility for resolving the crisis that they caused.

### **Charter for Jobs and Growth**



I was very happy this week to sign the TUC's Charter for a Future That Works. Labour MEPs have been campaigning hard to ensure that investments are made in young people and that projects to create work for the unemployed youth are supported. The Charter includes demands for guaranteed paid work or training after a period of unemployment, a requirement on all public bodies to commit to recruiting apprentices and good quality work experience for young people in Britain. The UK Government must take action now to stop youth unemployment from spreading so that generations of young people in Wales, and the rest of the UK, can look forward to a brighter future.

### **Creation of Unitary Patent Protection**

In these straitened economic times it is all the more important to



#### **Contact me :**

4th Floor  
Transport House  
1 Cathedral Road  
Cardiff  
CF11 9SD  
T: 029 20 227660  
Vernon House  
39 Rhosddu Road  
Wrexham  
LL11 2NS  
T: 01978 350052

E: [contact@derekvaughanmep.org.uk](mailto:contact@derekvaughanmep.org.uk)

W: [www.derekvaughanmep.org.uk](http://www.derekvaughanmep.org.uk)

Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/derekvaughanmep](http://www.facebook.com/derekvaughanmep)

Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/derekvaughan>

implement initiatives that encourage growth and entrepreneurship, which is why I voted in favour of the creation of a unitary patent protection system this month. Under the current system businesses and inventors must navigate a bureaucratic and expensive process that requires their patent to be translated and authenticated by all 27 EU Member States, costing about €32,000 in total. When this legislation comes into effect, however, inventors will be able to submit their applications in any EU language, and the patent will be valid in any participating EU country. This simplified procedure will help stimulate innovation and growth and will be of particular benefit to SMEs, who will now be able to enjoy a much more cost-effective way of registering patents.

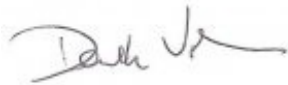
#### **Protection of animals during transport**

This Strasbourg session I voted for a resolution calling for an end to poor transport conditions for animals, which included the possible implementation of an eight-hour limit on journey times. Long journeys to slaughterhouses are distressing and cause livestock to endure unnecessary suffering. As well as being an important step in improving animal welfare guidelines, an eight-hour limit on journeys would also promote local processing by helping ease the decline of smaller, local abattoirs.

As this is my last newsletter of 2012, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your ongoing interest in European issues and wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I look forward to continuing to working on your behalf in the European Parliament in 2013.

Best Wishes



**Derek Vaughan MEP**

**Member of the European Parliament**

**Labour, Wales**

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Derek Vaughan MEP  
4th Floor, Transport House, 1 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9SD, United Kingdom.

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