



Welcome to the September 2012 edition of my regular enewsletter designed to keep you up to speed on the latest events in the European Parliament.

Meeting with Commissioner Almunia



Labour MEPs last week met with Commissioner Almunia (above) to continue their campaign to ensure that changes to the EU State Aid rules on regional aid after 2013 don't have a negative impact on UK regions. The current rules on State Aid set the framework for financial assistance to companies and this aid is vital to creating jobs and rebalancing the economy. If adopted, recent Commission proposals on post 2013 EU State Aid would severely constrain some financial support, which could undermine some programmes for economic recovery that are ongoing in some parts of Wales. I am determined to continue to work closely with my Labour colleagues on this campaign.

Funding for far right

Last week the European Commission proposed changes to the transparency, recognition and accountability of the EU's political parties, including proposals to withdraw funds from far right parties that do not respect the values on which the EU was built. Labour MEPs have been leading the opposition to a proposal to give funding to a Europe-wide federation of far right political groups and the Commission's draft regulation is a welcome step in the right direction to ensuring that funding isn't given to parties that are intent on spreading racism.

Alun Davies in Strasbourg

Wales' Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food & European Programmes visited the European Parliament this week. Alun Davies was in Strasbourg to meet with several MEPs representing different EU countries and political groups to discuss the various European issues that are important to Wales. During my meeting with Alun we discussed the negotiations on the next round of Structural Funding and the Common Agricultural Policy, in which I am playing an active role to ensure the best results for Wales. It is always good to see Welsh Government Ministers visiting the Parliament to highlight the issues that matter to Wales and to reinforce Wales' voice in Europe.

Budget 2013

Since being back after the summer recess my work as draftsman for the European Parliament and other EU institutions' budget for 2013 has started in earnest. I have been meeting with a wide range of representatives from the different EU institutions as well as looking at potential savings in the Parliament's budget, such as MEPs' travel. With negotiations ongoing these next few weeks and months involve a lot of hard work to ensure that we can agree on a budget that



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demonstrates the restraint necessary at this challenging economic time.

New Rights for Crime Victims

During this September Strasbourg session I voted for a resolution that will help minimise the difficulties faced by EU citizens when they become victims of crime in an EU country other than their own. At present, the difficulties inherent in navigating the legal system of a foreign country mean that victims' fights for justice can go on for years. Thanks to this new legislation, however, EU Member States will now have to provide specialist support services for foreign crime victims, including free translation and interpretation services and access to information on any medical help that may be required in the aftermath of the incident. It is estimated that each year up to 15% of EU citizens fall victim to criminal behaviour while travelling or working within the EU so under these new rules, they will receive the support they are rightly entitled to.

Calls for More Investment in Education

Recently I supported a report by one of my Labour colleague calling for EU Member States to invest in education at all levels. The Education, Training and Europe 2020 report, which was adopted by the European Parliament, has emphasised the need to improve key skills, reduce the number of early school leavers, modernise higher education and develop strategies for lifelong learning. At a time when many countries' response to the economic crisis is to cut their education budgets, I believe it is vital for Member States to protect or even increase their investment in education and training. Issues of social mobility are particularly relevant during these tough economic times and it's encouraging to see that this report supports the introduction of small grants systems for pre-university students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Honest Fish Labelling and Sustainable Fishing



A number of debates regarding the fishing industry took place in Strasbourg last week. The Parliament passed a resolution allowing the EU to ban imports of fish from non-Member States who fish in an unsustainable manner. I fully support this resolution; at a time when many species are under threat, it is imperative that we take this opportunity to work towards the common goal of preserving fish stocks for the future. I also voted in favour of measures that will promote sustainable fishing and provide consumers with more information about the fish they buy. Under current legislation only the date the fish was landed must be displayed. However, when this new ruling comes into effect, the date the fish was caught must also be shown. This will give shoppers an indication of exactly how fresh their fish is so that they can make more informed choices.

A week in the life

I am quite often asked about what I do on a daily basis as a Member of the European Parliament. If you would like to find out more then [click here](#) and you will find a diary article that I have written for the Public Service Europe website which will give you a flavour of life as an MEP.

In the Constituency

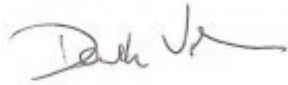
Since the Summer break, I have held meetings with many groups around Wales including visits to Deeside, Haverfordwest, Llanelli, Swansea and Wrexham and I am pleased to have been able to support local campaigns on issues ranging from affordable housing to moves to reduce violent crime against shopworkers. My engagement

diary over the next few weeks will also take in events in Caerphilly, Cardiff, Carmarthen, Colwyn Bay, Cwmbran, Port Talbot and St Asaph amongst others.

I am always keen to address and meet with as many organisations around the country as possible so if you know of a local community event in your area that you like me to attend then please let my Cardiff office know as soon as possible and I will do my best to be there.

If you require any further information on anything mentioned in the newsletter then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Best Wishes



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