



Welcome to the July 2012 edition of my regular enewsletter designed to bring you the latest news from the European Parliament.

Access to banking

Last week I supported calls to make sure that everybody, no matter what their financial circumstances are, has access to a basic bank account. At the moment, as many as 30 million people across the EU do not have access to a bank account. Many banks are turning people away because of a low level of income, the type of job they do, their credit history, or their level of debt. This creates a social divide between those who hold a bank account and those who don't. Preventing people from holding a bank account means that they are excluded from benefiting from financial products and services. It is vital to make sure that everybody is entitled to a basic account - this would allow consumers to carry out essential payment transactions such as receiving income or benefits and paying bills or taxes. I fully supported [this report](#) and expect the Commission to come forward with proposals for legally binding rules by January 2013.

Project bonds for infrastructure projects

Last week in Strasbourg MEPs gave their approval on the decision to launch a pilot project phase for transport, energy and information technology infrastructure projects. Over 230 million Euros will be set aside in guarantees by the EU to back the issuance of "project bonds" which are expected to attract private investment in infrastructure projects across the EU. The fact that the bonds are guaranteed by the EU budget and the EIB will mean that they are safer and more attractive to capital market investors, for example, pension funds and insurance companies. At present, many investors are reluctant to fund large infrastructure projects due to risks that are perceived to be too high. We need to make sure that infrastructure in Europe is as modern and efficient as possible. I strongly believe that at a time when member states are seeing severe restrictions on their budgets, this could be an innovative way of boosting investment for growth and reducing excessive risks to European taxpayers.

ACTA

MEPs have overwhelmingly rejected the [proposed ACTA treaty](#) in a vote that saw the European Parliament use its powers under the Lisbon Treaty to reject an international trade agreement for the first time. My Labour colleague, David Martin, was responsible for the report that recommended rejecting ACTA and I am delighted that his proposal was backed by the majority of MEPs. Negotiations on this treaty since the beginning have been conducted in secret with little opportunity for public examination and the proposed treaty as it stands is potentially a threat to online freedom. Countries outside the EU may still choose to implement the Treaty, however, I am very pleased that the European Parliament has listened to EU citizens and civil society and voted to reject the Treaty's vague and contradictory proposals. I firmly believe that intellectual property infringements must be tackled at an international level, however, on this occasion, ACTA was not the answer.

Attractiveness of investing in Europe

During this time of uncertainty in Europe's economy it is vitally important that we do all we can to attract investment in European regions in order to help growth and boost economic recovery. The ['Attractiveness of investing in Europe'](#) report, which was adopted this week by the European Parliament highlights the need to encourage the competitiveness of the EU on a global scale and explores the measures that need to be taken at regional, national and EU level to encourage entrepreneurial initiatives and investments, which are the main triggers for growth. I was pleased to see this report approved because it calls for, among other things, increasing investment in research, innovation and education and removing bureaucratic barriers that might deter foreign investors. It is important that we



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continue to do all we can to encourage investment in our SMEs, companies and research and education institutions to help boost growth in the Welsh economy.

Roundtable on INI report

Earlier this month I held a roundtable event to discuss the future of EU funding to provide ideas for my Own Initiative Report on creating synergies between different European funding streams. Over 40 participants representing a wide range of EU regions attended the event and shared their experiences on how Cohesion Policy funds could be used to greater effect to fund projects in their regions. The Commission's proposals for the future of EU funding include a Common Strategic Framework that looks at combining different funds but the proposals don't include examples of how to achieve this. Some regions are in the process of exploring different mechanisms that could help to integrate funding programmes and as I draft my report over the summer I will take these ideas into consideration with the aim of providing concrete examples of mechanisms that could support the Commission's proposals.

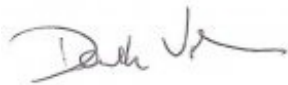
In the constituency

Over the past month I have held meetings and attended events with a wide range of groups and organisations including The British Council, British Deaf Association, CBI Wales, Federation of Small Businesses Wales, NFU, UNISON and the Welsh Local Government Association. I also hosted an advice surgery in my Wrexham office.

In the Autumn, I will be looking to resume my European Policy meetings across Wales, starting with Torfaen. Further details will be released soon so please keep an eye on future editions of this bulletin if you would like to come along and join in the debate.

I hope that this enewsletter has been interesting and helpful. If you require any information on the issues raised in it, or any other EU-related matter, then do not hesitate to contact my Cardiff or Wrexham offices.

Best Wishes



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