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Welcome to my first newsletter of 2012.

I would like to wish you all the very best for the new year.

I am now half way through my first Parliamentary term as an MEP, and I am proud of the achievements of the last two and a half years. This has been an extremely busy time for the European Parliament, dominated by the ongoing financial crisis, the Arab Spring and the fight against climate change. My Socialist colleagues and I have been instrumental in ensuring proper regulation of the banking industry, making food labels clear and informative, provisions to make access to cross-border healthcare a reality and improving access to services for people with disabilities.

Since being elected in 2009 I have campaigned hard to ensure that Wales continues to benefit from European funding and that the EU's cohesion policy is high on the agenda in the fight to reduce the disparities that exist in Europe. In the last two and a half years I have met with a variety of public, private and third sector representatives in Wales to discuss their concerns about the future of Structural Funding. European funding is vital to the continued development of Wales' economy and I will continue to work hard to ensure that Wales' voice is heard at the highest level and that we get the best possible deal in the future.

Most of this week's plenary session in Strasbourg was devoted to the mid-term election of a new president of the European Parliament, vice presidents, and the presidents of the political groups.

### **New European Parliament President**



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This week MEPs voted to elect German social democrat Martin Schulz (above) as the President of the European Parliament, replacing Jerzy Buzek. Schulz, who was formerly President of the Parliament's Socialist and Democrat group secured 387 votes, compared to his competitors, British Tory Nirj Deva (142 votes) and British Liberal Democrat Diana Wallis (141). Schulz's role as President over the next two and a half years is to oversee plenary sessions of the European Parliament and also to represent the EP to heads of state and government. With right-wing governments in power in many European countries in recent years, it's great to have a Socialist voice as leader of the European Parliament.

### **Socialists & Democrats President**

The Socialists and Democrats group in the Parliament also selected its president, Austrian MEP Hannes Swoboda, who will lead the group until the next elections in 2014. Swoboda begins his leadership of the group during a particularly testing time for Europe and his first priority is to tackle the economic crisis head-on. Until now, Hannes had been in charge of the S&D group's parliamentary activities and has led on foreign affairs issues, including accession.

### **Final vote on WEEE Directive**

MEPs also endorsed an important piece of legislation to increase the recovery of electronic waste, which causes severe pollution when dumped in landfill sites. The agreement on electronic waste is a revision of the 2003 Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) directive and requires that large retailers, such as Currys and Dixons, will have to accept small electrical items (mobile phones, shavers etc) from customers for recycling, while manufacturers are responsible for recycling larger items. The UK is now required to draw up legislation in line with these proposals in the next two years.

### **Budget 2013**

The EU's budget for 2012 has only recently been agreed and put into action. Nevertheless, discussions on next year's budget are already underway and are expected to be even more challenging than last year. I will lead on the institutions' administrative budgets, including the European Parliament's budget; I will be taking an active role to make sure the right decisions on spending are taken during these tough economic times.

### **Out & About in Wales**



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Since the Christmas break, I have continued to meet and speak with a number of constituents, community organisations and businesses around Wales taking in Ammanford, Cardiff, Connahs Quay, Deeside College (above), Neath, Porth, Shotton & Wrexham along the way. I have also been working on many issues of concern drawn to my attention by constituents via my inbox and postbag including CAP reform, fisheries policy, Swansea-Cork Ferry services and the EU Transparency Directive amongst others.

Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of hosting the first of my regional EU policy events for 2012 in the Brewery Field, Bridgend joined by Alun Davies AM and Geraint Davies MP as fellow guest speakers. My next events are taking place as follows:

Friday, 10 February 2012 at 7pm  
Michael Sobell Sports Centre, ABERDARE  
With Mick Antoniw AM

Friday, 2 March 2012 at 7pm  
Brecon Castle Hotel, BRECON  
With Alun Davies AM

Friday, 9 March 2012 at 7pm  
Venue Cymru, LLANDUDNO

Friday, 30 March 2012 at 7pm  
Cwmbran Stadium, CWMBRAN  
With Chris Evans MP & Richard Howitt MEP

Further guest speakers will be confirmed soon and the aim of the events is to encourage debate and discussion on important EU issues and how they affect people in Wales. Tickets are free and light refreshments will be provided. Please contact my office to reserve you place.

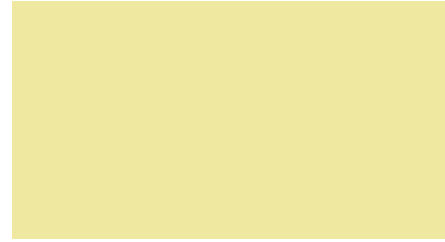
If you require more information on any of the issues raised in this bulletin then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Best Wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Alun Davies', written over a faint, illegible printed name.

*Derek Vaughan*

**Derek Vaughan MEP**  
**Member of the European Parliament**  
**Labour, Wales**



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