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Welcome to the latest edition of my regular enewsletter.

MEPs were in Strasbourg again last week discussing a wide range of issues including measures to combat organised crime, how to improve the mobility and inclusion of people with disabilities, and how much passenger information we share with Australia.

Global Economic Governance

One of the first votes held was on how MEPs see the future of the global economic system. In the run up to the G20 Summit held in Cannes this week, MEPs made it clear that we wanted stronger global financial regulation and supervision to close loopholes in the current system. We also called on the leaders of the G20 countries to put in place measures to overcome imbalances between global economies. Key to this overhaul would be a new direction for the IMF allowing it to become a more legitimate, accountable and transparent body at this time of economic uncertainty.

Eurozone Crisis



In a key debate in Strasbourg MEPs gave a cautious welcome to the deal on saving the euro agreed by EU leaders in the early hours of Thursday morning, but warned that this is only the first step and that much still needs to be done to exit the crisis. The deal included calls on banks that hold Greek government debt to write off around half of their investment (about €100m) the so-called haircut, raising the bail out fund raised to €1trn, and asking banks to raise their capital requirements by 2012. Although these measures should be welcomed, we should learn the lessons from the last months of instability, and ensure that in future decisive action is taken at the



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first opportunity. We must now encourage Europe's right-wing governments to look again at their austerity only policies and replace them with a coherent jobs and growth strategy to boost European economies. The situation continues to develop on a daily basis with the recent political instability in Greece adding to the international uncertainty.

Mobility and Inclusion of People with Disabilities

This week, in a positive step towards a more inclusive society, the European Parliament voted in favour of a report in response to the European Commission's European Disability Strategy 2010-2020. Providing social protection, health care and education to persons with disabilities is vital in order to boost the social integration of 80 million people living with a disability in the EU. There is no doubt that access to the labour market for persons with disabilities is limited; only 30-40% are in employment. The integration into working life and the economic independence of persons with disabilities is extremely important for their general social integration, and is becoming even more important in this time of financial austerity. MEPs called on the European Council to adopt the Directive on equal treatment for citizens irrespective of religion, disability, age or sexual orientation quickly.

Financial Regulation

An often overlooked part of the European Parliament's work is our role in ensuring that all EU monies are spent in efficient and effective ways. Last week we voted on the very technical, but vital piece of work that reviewed the rules and regulations for spending EU funds, and contained measures to cut down on bureaucracy and simplify the rules laid out for all financial transactions taken by the European institutions. We need rules in this area that allow for vital flexibility, greater transparency, accountability whilst ensuring that EU money is spent correctly.

EU Budget

Last week, I voted to increase funding for jobs and growth across Wales. With cuts in national budgets, EU money for research and development, education and training and structural funds is more important than ever. However, there are areas within the EU budget that need reform - particularly administration and agricultural spending - and it is for this reason that I opposed the 5.2% increase proposed by the European Parliament. We need an ambitious budget to kick start Europe's economy, but must also recognise the need for budgetary restraint during this challenging economic time.

Agenda for New Skills and Jobs

One of the targets of Europe's key EU2020 strategy for boosting growth is to achieve a 75% employment rate target. With this in mind I voted in favour of a resolution that calls for an increased focus on matching skills to labour market needs and bridging the gap

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between education and employment. Ensuring that job-seekers have the necessary skills to enter the jobs market is essential to creating a working society and achieving this target. With an ever changing labour market, it is essential that those already in employment have skills that match the needs of the job. The resolution also calls for minimum standards for pay and social rights to set decent working conditions and protect trainees in all Member States. This initiative places emphasis on human capital and employability through an updating of skills. In voting for the resolution, the European Parliament has shown its commitment to the important issue of tackling unemployment in today's society.

Structural Funding

At the beginning of October the new regulations about Structural Funding were released, and much of my time from now on will be spent analysing what this means for Wales, and discussing how we can most effectively spend the money that we receive. The week beginning 10th October also saw Brussels hosting the 9th annual Open Days; a series of events for representatives of regions across the EU to come together and showcase their capacity for creating growth and jobs, implementing European Union cohesion policy, and prove the importance of the local level for good European governance. During the week I hosted a meeting with local government representatives from across Wales, where we had a very useful discussion on how the money we receive in the future will be spent.

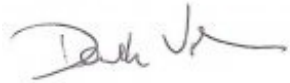
In the constituency



I have continued to meet with local organisations and businesses across Wales with visits to Colwyn Bay (pictured above at the EU part funded Parc Eirias Events Centre with Cllr Chris Hughes), Aberystwyth, Blaenau Gwent, Ammanford and Cardiff amongst others. I have been working on a number of issues raised by constituents on subjects including animal welfare, proposals for a "Robin Hood Tax", motorcyclist safety, green job creation and skills training.

Following the success of my recent European policy evenings held in Abertillery, Cardiff, Carmarthen, Caernarfon and Port Talbot, I will be hosting similar meetings in the New Year in Brecon, Bridgend, Aberdare, Llandudno and Cwmbran. I hope to be able to publish full details in the next few weeks so keep an eye out in future newsletters for further updates.

As always please feel free to contact me about these or any other European issues you have, and please share this newsletter with anyone that you think would be interested.



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