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Welcome to the July 2011 edition of my regular newsletter bringing you the latest developments in the European Parliament that will benefit Wales.

The past month has once again proved a busy time with debates and votes on new controls over financial institutions, EU energy infrastructure plans and stronger consumer laws amongst others.....

30% Emissions Targets

On Tuesday, Tory MEPs voted to derail a key climate change vote on whether to increase the EU greenhouse gas emission reduction target to 30% by 2020. Labour MEPs supported this important initiative but climate change-deniers in the Tory Party meant that the vote was lost. Tory MEPs were determined to defy David Cameron's pledge to lead the "greenest government ever". This vote shows the hollowness of their commitment to environmental policy and is another example of the Tories failing to live up to their pre-election promises.

A boost for Welsh farmers and shoppers

I am delighted that on Wednesday the Parliament voted in favour of a new law that will help shoppers choose meat from Welsh farms. The law extends requirements to almost all pre-packed lamb, pork and poultry sold in British shops to carry information about where the animal came from allowing shoppers to see where their Sunday roast began its journey to their fork. Labour MEPs have been leading the fight to introduce the new legislation and have vowed to keep up the pressure for these rules to be extended to cover processed foods, such as sausages and ready meals.

112 or 999?

On Tuesday the European Parliament decided that more needs to be done to publicise the single emergency services number that works throughout the EU in addition to national numbers like 999. The 112 emergency number was created over 20 years ago, yet a recent survey shows that only one in four people know that they can call this number in any EU country for free, even without a SIM card



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in your phone. As many of us will take holidays in other European countries this summer, it's a great idea to have one number that we all know to call in case of emergency.

Regional Funding

This week MEPs voted on how we would like to see the future of regional spending across the EU. Wales is a net beneficiary of EU funding, and I have been closely involved in this report making sure that it represents a fair deal for Wales, and that we continue to benefit from EU funding, whilst balancing the need for proper controls on the use of public funding. Measures in the report included more transparency, cutting red tape, and the creation of an intermediate category for regions that have a GDP between 75% and 90%, creating a buffer for those areas that fall out of convergence.

GMOs

The right of member states to ban genetically-modified crops was upheld in a vote this week in Strasbourg. This vote was an important opportunity to support the strengthening of regulations on genetically modified crops by giving Member States, and regions like Wales, the opportunity to determine whether or not to grow GM crops.

Rugby World Cup



Last week I was delighted to host an exhibition showcasing the Rugby World Cup that starts in New Zealand in September. Whilst rugby is our national sport in most EU countries football rules, and this exhibition was a great way to spread the word about our great game. Even though Wales has never won the World Cup the Webb Ellis trophy made an appearance on Monday, and on Tuesday we were lucky enough to welcome an All Black legend, Andrew Mehrtens to the Parliament. The event was a great success with over 300 people attending including the President of the European Parliament, Jerzey Buzek, head of the IRB, Bernard Lapasset, and the WRU's David Pickering.

Out and About in Wales

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I have had the pleasure over the last few weeks to meet with a number of groups, organisations and businesses across Wales to discuss EU related issues in places including Abermule (above), Garthmyl, Llandrindod Wells, Neath & Welshpool. I will be continuing my efforts in the weeks ahead to get around all parts of Wales, as far as possible, with visits to Builth Wells, Pontypridd, St Asaph & Swansea already pencilled in my diary.

If you know of any events or meetings that you would like me to attend then please let me know in plenty of time and I will do my best, diary commitments permitting, to be there.

The next of my regular EU policy discussion evenings takes place on Friday, 09 September 2011 in Transport House, Cardiff at 7pm. Guest speakers already confirmed include Kevin Brennan MP (Cardiff West) and Julie Morgan AM (Cardiff North). Tickets are free. Please email me to reserve your place if you would like to come along.

If you have any questions about anything in this newsletter or on any other European issues then do not hesitate to get in touch.

Best Wishes

Derek Vaughan MEP

Member of the European Parliament

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