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Welcome to my monthly e-newsletter bringing you up to speed with developments from the European Parliament that will benefit Wales.

Another busy week for MEPs in Strasbourg where we discussed a wide range of issues including the EU using their collective clout to stop Canada's barbaric trade in seal products, outlined plans to improve the safety of nuclear power plants across the EU, and I even mentioned the promotion of Swansea City to the Premiership (sorry Bluebirds fans) - you can see the speech here <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getVod.do?mode=chapter&language=EN&vodDateId=20110606-21:02:31-911> . Other issues we discussed are outlined below.

### **Epilepsy**

Last week I signed a written declaration calling on the Commission to introduce legislation to protect the rights of those living with epilepsy. Around 6 million people across Europe live with epilepsy and each year 300,000 new cases of the disorder are diagnosed. Epilepsy is the most common serious disorder of the brain and I have called on the Council and Commission to encourage research into prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy. At the moment 40% of people with epilepsy do not receive sufficient treatment, and sufferers are more likely to face unemployment and social exclusion. More needs to be done to make sure that those suffering with the disorder have a good quality of life and receive the treatment they need.

### **Fish Fight**



I joined celebrity chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall on his recent visit to Brussels (above) to promote his "Fish Fight" campaign. Fish stocks across the EU are dangerously low and many fishing communities are under real threat of losing their livelihoods. The well known food



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writer and journalist was raising awareness of about the waste of fish that occurs through "discards". Millions of tonnes of fish are thrown back in to the sea each year as fishermen have already reached their quotas - this practice is not only costly for fishermen, but is also harmful to the environment. There must be reform of the Common Fisheries Policy to ensure that coastal communities across Wales are able to thrive and secure jobs for fishermen. I have signed a declaration calling on the Commission to make fishing more sustainable by coming forward with a long term plan for future fisheries policy in Europe.

### **Credit rating agencies**

Having seen the distress caused to many pensioners in the UK who have got savings, I voted in favour of stricter rules for Credit Rating Agencies in the UK, and for those Agencies to be legally liable for the ratings they give to products. This legislation will allow the new European Supervisory Authority on Securities and Markets (ESMA) to closely scrutinise the activities of agencies and will curb the gung-ho attitude of lenders which led to the financial crisis. Credit rating agencies earn fees from financial institutions for awarding ratings on their products and from the resulting business of selling those products. This conflict meant agencies were keen to give high ratings to risky financial instruments which led to a false sense of security for investors. Agencies were also advising companies on ways to mislead customers by presenting higher risk products as low risk, meaning high sales of toxic and subprime products which were not viable, and ultimately led to huge losses for investors, including pension holders across Wales.

### **Business Directory Scams**

Small businesses from around Europe have fallen foul of the misleading practices of unethical "business directory companies". These companies have lured thousands of small companies, libraries and even charities with promises of free listings in their business directory; only to present them with often extortionate bills weeks after the contract has been signed. These fly-by-night operations simply shut down as soon as there is a whiff of trouble and Labour MEPs have called on the Commission to introduce legislation to crack down on these tricksters that operate across borders. They currently operate in a legal grey area and scare people to pay the bills with threats of legal action. The best advice is to always read all the small print and if you think you have been affected you should seek legal advice before parting with any money.

### **Funding Directory**

I recently launched my European Funding Directory at Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff.

European funding makes a huge contribution to the Welsh economy by improving the performance of Welsh organisations, providing funding for the regeneration of town centres and creating valuable links with

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Europe. In Wales, Structural Funding has invested over €3bn in projects since 2000 while our universities and businesses have successfully applied for millions of euros from the European Commission to fund a variety of projects.

At a time when government cuts are directly affecting organisations throughout Wales, it is becoming increasingly important for Welsh public, private and third sector organisations to access other sources of funding

The Directory has been created to provide Welsh organisations with an overview of the European funding possibilities available to them. It covers a wide range of subject areas and has useful tips on applying for funding and details of essential contact points for further information.

The launch at Chapter Arts Centre on Friday 10th June was attended by a cross-section of Welsh businesses, voluntary organisations, community groups and charities representing a wide range of sectors including education, the arts, culture and sport. The Directory will be launched in North Wales at Optic Technium in StAsaph on 22 July. It will be available in hard copy at the launch and also available to download, in Welsh and English, at a later date.

For more information about the North Wales launch or to request a copy of the Directory, contact [derek.vaughan@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:derek.vaughan@europarl.europa.eu)

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

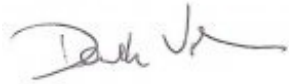


Over the past month, I have continued to attend as many events and meetings as possible around the constituency including a visit to Ysgol Cae Drewyn, Corwen, Denbighshire (pictured above) as part of celebrations for Europe Week.

I have also held two of my regular regional EU policy meetings designed to keep people in Wales up to date with my work as an MEP and to stimulate discussion and debate on topical European issues.

The first, in Port Talbot, where I was joined on the panel by Huw Irranca-Davies MP and Julie James AM attracted over 100 participants. The second, in Carmarthen, featured contributions from Joyce Watson AM and Rebecca Evans AM. Similar evenings are planned for Cardiff on Friday, 09 September, Caernarfon on Friday, 30 September and Abertillery on Friday, 14 October.

if you have any questions about anything in this newsletter or any other European issue please feel free to contact me.



**Derek Vaughan MEP**

**Member of the European Parliament**

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