

# Catherine Stihler MEP

Member of the European Parliament for Scotland

## June 2008 e-newsletter

Contents:

- Introduction
- My View – The Lisbon Treaty
- Campaign – Women in Europe

### Introduction

*Welcome to the latest edition of my e-newsletter. Please feel free to forward this to friends, family and colleagues. Should you wish to stop receiving email updates please reply directly to this email with "unsubscribe" in the subject header.*

*This month's newsletter is shorter than usual due to the recent publication of my quarterly newsletter. If you have not had a chance to see a copy of my quarterly newsletter and would like to do so please contact Kirsty at my office who will be able to send you a copy.*

*Thank you,*

*Catherine*

### My View – The Lisbon Treaty

Is the Lisbon Treaty dead or alive? The Irish Republic rejected the treaty by 53.6 per cent to 46.6 per cent in a referendum held on 12 June. The debate and discussion following the result is beginning to fall around three positions: Ireland votes again; abandon Lisbon; and move ahead without Ireland.

The result is all the more interesting given that Ireland is a broadly pro-European country. Nearly all the political parties, except for Sinn Fein, including the vast majority of Irish MPs and MEPs supported the Lisbon Treaty. However, a well-financed "no" campaign brought together a bewildering array of objections to the treaty. These included abortion, neutrality, tax sovereignty, military conscription, the loss of an Irish commissioner, the deregulation of the taxi trade, and the desire to kick the government of the day.

Scrutiny of the results shows that young people and women voted no. Two of the main "no" campaigners were female whilst the "yes" campaign had few female faces fronting the campaign. The no campaign proved the more successful whilst the turnout last week was 53 per cent, higher than that of the second Nice referendum.

Many now argue that we should set aside the Irish result and respect the ratification process of the other countries, some arguing that such a small country should not be allowed to impede the ratification process. Yet I believe that it is clear that all 27 member states must ratify the Lisbon treaty for it to be valid. When the French and the Dutch said "no" in 2006 then the Constitution was dead. Ignoring the Irish "no" vote will do great damage to the European Union. As Professor Simon Hix argued in a letter to the Financial Times, "Abandoning the treaty but making a few changes that can be done without treaty reform is the only viable option ... In the meantime EU leaders need to think long and hard about why an ever larger number of people across Europe perceive the EU as unaccountable."

We have from now until the European Elections in June 2009 to get out and show to our citizens that Europe is not removed from their concerns and that in fact we are part of the solution to their concerns. But if we do not go out as individuals, national governments, politicians, trade unions, business people and the like who believe in a progressive EU and talk about why Europe matters we will allow a Euro-sceptic victory.

## **Campaign – Women in Europe**

The Lisbon Treaty is hanging by a thread and we don't know its final fate yet. The Treaty resolves how the European Union could operate in an enlarged EU whilst it also promotes equality between men and women. We may not know what is going to happen to the Treaty but I am still backing the campaign to make sure that our future European leaders include women. Within the next 12 months we must approve new Presidents of the Parliament, Commission and Council together with the High Representative on Foreign Affairs and at least one of the top posts must go to a woman.

For fifty years now, the picture of European political leadership has remained the same. It is time for a change.

International top posts should always go to the most competent candidate. There are 250 million women in Europe; it should not be too hard to find qualified candidates among all these.

I am supporting the campaign to see at least one female leader of the European Union & hope we can rely on your support.

[www.femalesinfront.eu](http://www.femalesinfront.eu)

## **European Forum – Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June**

Please do remember that there will be a European Forum on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June, at John Smith House in Glasgow from 10am – 12noon, entitled Europe, Unions and Equality.

Mary Senior from the STUC will be joining David Martin MEP and myself, and there will be lots of opportunity for debate.

**For more information please do not hesitate to contact me at:**

25 Church Street, Inverkeithing, Fife, KY11 1LG

t: 01383 417 799

f: 01383 413 335

[cstihlermep@btconnect.com](mailto:cstihlermep@btconnect.com)

[www.cstihlermep.com](http://www.cstihlermep.com)