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EUROPE MATTERS: FEBRUARY 2009

NEWSLETTER

Hello and welcome to the February edition of my newsletter! Please feel free to pass this to friends, family and colleagues. If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, please email me with "unsubscribe" as the subject header.

Thank you for your support,

Catherine

Joint Action to Restore Stability

We are faced with an economic and financial crisis of historic proportions. Unfortunately the 'credit crunch' and its consequences are making an impact on our everyday lives.

The turmoil in the global market has revealed the real importance of European co-operation and joint action. By working across Europe we can find solutions to re-create the conditions for a re-launch of growth and job creation. Europe has the ability to be a leader in innovation and new technologies. Efforts to reduce climate change are already generating new jobs all over the world. By fighting climate change, we can help to re-launch the economy by creating smart green growth and new jobs.

EU governments have played a crucial role in dealing with the crisis. Billions of pounds from EU national governments have been pumped into the rescue effort.

Economic crises are avoidable but new rules are needed to put a stop to excessive risk-taking, unmanageable debt and the financial institutions should come under more democratic scrutiny.

Striking the Right Balance

The drive for Social Europe was aimed at ensuring that we obtained the benefits of a Single European Market without the undercutting of workers' wages and conditions.

European Court of Justice judgements in the Viking, Lavall and Ruffert cases undermined Social Europe by giving higher priority to the freedom of movement over the rights of both UK and other EU workers. We are now witnessing the damage done by these judgements.

These recent interpretations of European employment law must be reversed and that is why the Socialist Group manifesto – approved in November 2008 – calls for the revision of Viking, Lavall and Ruffert judgements.

A well functioning European Single Market is good for jobs and prosperity but it cannot be an excuse for driving down labour conditions.

Stornoway Black Pudding Visits Brussels

Locally produced food is unique. It has its own heritage, character and reputation. Under EU law, foods such as Gorgonzola, Melton Mowbray pork pies, Camembert de Normandie and Champagne can only be labelled as such if they are produced in the designated region.

In January 2009, I met with European Commission official, Kiejo Hyvonen, together with Rhoda Grant Highlands and Islands Labour MSP, and the Stornoway butcher representative, Iain MacLeod. The purpose of the visit was to kickstart the process and to see the Stornoway Black Pudding protected in the market place. The Western Isles has already benefited from the genuine protection of Harris Tweed.

It is vital that we gain European protected status for one of the finest examples of Scottish fayre. It is important that consumers know that they are getting the real deal and not a 'Stornoway-style' imitation. European protected status will protect the credentials of the delicacy, support local business and market Stornoway as the home of the famous black pudding. If the application is successful, this will make the product even more marketable and will help to secure jobs in Stornoway.

The Importance of the EU

The European Elections will be held on the 4th June 2009. The European Union is unique and has rightly been described as 'the most successful peace process in history', emerging from two World Wars and the Holocaust. Now 27 countries, covering 500 million people, choose to work together. Your vote matters. Each and every one of us has been given the opportunity to decide how we want to shape Scotland in Europe and the dividing lines are clear. The European Socialist group puts people first and for many years Labour in Europe has championed the cause of workers' rights, the local environment ,and keeping our children safe. We will stand on a platform across the 27 countries which will fight for social justice and a better future for all.

Party of European Socialist Manifesto – ‘People First, A New Direction for Europe’

In December 2008 leaders of Europe's social democratic and socialist parties adopted the PES Manifesto for the 2009 elections.

The Manifesto features over 60 proposals including:

- A European strategy for smart green growth to create 10 million new jobs by 2020;
- A new financial market regulation covering all players including hedge funds;
- Climate changing emission reductions;
- A European Pact on Wages for decent minimum wages in all EU members states;
- Stepping up the fight against the trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation.

If you would like to access the full manifesto, you can do so by logging onto my website www.cstihlermep.com – it is in the 'news' section and is available for download.

New Websites

The new European Parliamentary Labour Party website is now up and running! It is a valuable resource on the work of Labour MEPs. Please feel free to browse the site and you have the option of signing up for regular e-bulletins. <http://www.eurolabour.org.uk/>

In addition, the European Parliament has launched a new 'elections' link on its website. It has all the information that you need to know about the election in the UK and across the EU. The website also gives you the opportunity to take part in online debates and explore the range of multimedia options.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2009/default.htm?language=en>

Get in Touch!

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