

Catherine Stihler MEP

www.cstihlermep.com

Member of the European Parliament for Scotland

EUROPE MATTERS: FEBRUARY 2010 E-NEWSLETTER

Hello! Welcome to the February 2010 edition of my e-newsletter.

Please feel free to pass this onto friends, family and work colleagues.

Thank you for your continued support,

Catherine

EU Action to Tackle Fatal ‘Needle Sticks’

More than one million healthcare workers across Europe suffer injuries by used needles at work. Studies have shown that most cases are completely avoidable.

Labour MEPs have called on the EU to back a new European directive which seeks to protect workers from catching serious blood-borne diseases, including HIV and hepatitis. Although there are existing EU guidelines on how to prevent these injuries, Labour support giving legal status to these rules to ensure that the risk of ‘needle stick’ injuries are minimised. Most of these could be prevented through proper training and legally enforced working practises.

Our healthcare workers do a fantastic job across Scotland. It is high time that this directive was in place, in order to give them the protection that they deserve.

The New European Commission Meeting with US Congress

On 9 February the new European Commission was finally approved, following the tough ‘interviews’ each Commissioner-delegate got from the European Parliamentary committees. As previously reported, only one candidate stepped down - Bulgarian candidate Rumiana Jeleva resigned following scrutiny from MEPs about her questionable financial interests

Labour MEPs will continue to closely watch the new Commission and ensure that they are fulfilling their duties in delivering for all European citizens. By 10 February the power of MEPs was tested when the Parliament voted to reject an agreement the Commission had made on sharing financial data between the EU and the USA. The badly drafted agreement would have seen swathes of constituents’ data being transferred to the USA with scant protection.

The next five years will be a critical period for both the European Commission and the European Parliament. President Barroso must live up to his promises and show the true leadership needed to stimulate economic growth and new jobs.

Meeting with US Congress

I had a series of meetings in the US Congress this month and lifting the ban on the sale of haggis was one of the issues on the agenda. Haggis has been banned in the USA since 1989 following the BSE scare. My visit to Washington DC gave me the perfect opportunity to highlight the issue. After all, the US market could be huge for Scottish companies. Given the strong historical and cultural links between the USA and Scotland, it would be wonderful if one of our finest examples of Scottish fayre was back on American menus. You can watch the footage of my interview for ITV here.

<http://www.itveuropeandyou.co.uk/EN/video426region7category16.aspx>

Whilst in Washington I also had the opportunity to attend the National Prayer Breakfast with President Obama and Hilary Clinton. It was truly an honour to have been invited and to hear the words of inspiration from both the President of the US and the Secretary of State.

EU Year on Poverty 2010

2010 has been designated as the European Year for Ending Poverty and Social Exclusion. The European Economic and Social Committee are active in drawing up a range of activities to initiate and participate in.

It is shocking that 16% of all Europeans are living below the poverty line. More must be done to combat social exclusion and unemployment. The full impact of the global recession has not only widened the gap between the rich and the poor, but it has highlighted how important it is for individuals to possess a range of skills and knowledge so that they can work across sectors. The global downturn and the effect that it has had on numerous industries has strengthened the argument for people to receive training and education to help them find alternative jobs.

For more information on the 'Ending Poverty and Social Exclusion' campaign please visit www.endpoverty.eu. You can also view the 'Shared Message from Social NGOs' on my website

ASH Scotland

I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate ASH Scotland for the excellent and hard work that they do to raise awareness of the dangers of smoking. A couple of years ago I spearheaded the campaign for bolder anti-smoking messages on cigarette packages, alongside promoting Scotland's anti-smoking legislation as a role-model for the rest of the EU.

ASH Scotland play a vital role in maintaining the high profile that tobacco has on the public health agenda. For more information about their work, please visit www.ashscotland.org.uk.

Get in Touch!

For more information about my work in the Parliament, please do not hesitate to contact my office. Remember I am here to represent you, so if there is any issue that you would like me help with, just get in touch.

25 Church Street

Inverkeithing

Fife

KY11 1LG

t: 01383 417 799

f: 01383 413 335

cstihlermep@btconnect.com

www.cstihlermep.com

If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, please email me with “unsubscribe” as the subject header.