



STRASBOURG ROUND-UP, February 2006

Dear Friends,

Please find below the work I've been doing as your London Labour MEP in the month of February.

In the **February** issue:

News from Strasbourg & Brussels

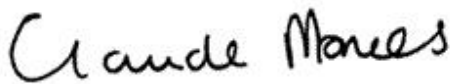
Services Directive - Millennium Development Goals- CIA Inquiry - Cartoons controversy - Racism in football - Protection of workers from optical radiation - Committee of the Regions, social services & CRE events - Bird flu

Parliamentary Questions asked by Claude Moraes MEP

EU small business audit appeals - Lisbon jobs agenda

Constituency-related Visits

Wanted Labour Party Branch fundraiser - Labour Party Spring Conference - Hosting UK-EU meetings with social services experts, the CRE and Committee of the Regions



Claude Moraes MEP

Labour Member of the European Parliament for London

NEWS FROM STRASBOURG AND BRUSSELS

SERVICES DIRECTIVE

Last month in Strasbourg, Labour MEPs voted in favour of the amended Services Directive to end protectionism but to ensure protection of workers and jobs. The final deal on the table was exhaustively discussed to create an ideal outcome for workers and business in the EU. The UK's markets are already liberalised for other EU countries. We must ensure that businesses, including businesses in London, are in the position to compete with the booming market in services in other EU countries where they or restrictions exist for a range of service providers - from IT consultants to architects. Labour MEPs have worked hard to ensure that trade union concerns over terms and conditions have been seriously and faithfully taken up. All companies operating in the UK will be bound by UK law, health and safety laws and our minimum wage.

There was an unprecedented level of contact between senior UK and European unions, the TUC, ETUC and Labour MEPs on this directive, including meetings with London UNISON and leading London-based trade unionists Paul Kenny (GMB General Secretary), Barry Camfield, Derek Simpson and David Prentis, and TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber who all came to Brussels and Strasbourg to put their case. They had real

concerns over the "Country of Origin" Principle, which in its original form may have led to service providers from other EU countries bending rules on the conditions of employees. In its amended form the directive very strongly addresses these concerns. I also met with DTI Minister Barry Gardiner and worked particularly on the employment aspects of the proposal. The directive will now be discussed by EU governments in March. Our spokesperson on the directive is Arlene McCarthy MEP who was recently elected as the new Chair of the Internal Market Committee.

Links:

* [Read press release from Labour MEPs >>](#)

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

At the last Strasbourg session, I helped draft a motion calling for the EU to consider new methods to raise additional funds for reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

The MDGs are a set of goals agreed at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000 and nearly 190 countries have subsequently signed up to them. They range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015. They have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest.

One option for financing the goals includes the International Financing Facility (IFF) proposed by the Chancellor Gordon Brown. The IFF leverages money from international capital markets by issuing bonds which can potentially raise 50 billion US dollars each year from 2005 to 2015. The motion sets out a workable EU mechanism to achieve international development goals within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals. Achieving those goals has been important to many of my London constituents.

Links:

[Read the Declaration >>](#)

[More on the EU and the Millennium Development Goals >>](#)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT INQUIRY INTO ALLEGED CIA ACTIVITY IN EU

In February, I attended the first full meetings of the Temporary Committee of Inquiry into allegations of CIA activity. The Committee is mandated to examine whether the CIA has been involved in extraordinary rendition' and transport of 'ghost detainees', within the EU; whether such practices are legal in EU law, including the ECHR and EU-US agreements on extradition; whether EU citizens were among the detainees; and whether Member States were involved in the illegal detention or torture of terrorist suspects. I put questions to Statewatch, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International witnesses. Dick Marty from the Council of Europe was also questioned.

Some constituents have asked me what the point of a European Parliament Inquiry is given that the Council of Europe has also looked into the matter. The Parliament pays close attention to the smallest detail of the ingredients in our food and cosmetics, so it ought to examine whether our own Member States have acted contrary to principles of human rights on which the EU was built. MEPs are directly elected and can recommend sanctions against EU members if a fundamental breach of the EU treaties is proved. When constituents write to me in London I want to tell them that we have done everything within our power to investigate these allegations.

Links:

[Read article by Claude Moraes MEP in European Parliament magazine, February 2005 >>](#)

CARTOONS CONTROVERSY

In February, the European Parliament issued a joint resolution in response to the furore surrounding the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in several European newspapers. Several constituents have contacted me about the cartoon controversy to express their concern. The key point to highlight is the need for balance, and understanding that whilst the right to freedom of expression is a fundamental right, it must be exercised with responsibility and in accordance with the fundamental values of democracy, pluralism and tolerance on which the EU is built. In media interviews, I have stated repeatedly that violent reactions to the cartoons were completely unacceptable and disproportionate.

RACISM IN FOOTBALL

During February, my fellow co-authors and I managed to gain enough signatories to our written declaration on racism in football to gain an official resolution of the European Parliament. To achieve this status, a written declaration must be signed by at least half the number of current MEPs within a limited period of time otherwise it will lapse. A massive 420 MEPs signed the declaration. Formal arrangements must take place before the resolution is formally announced at the next plenary session in Strasbourg in March after which, a practical response is expected from UEFA on what further measures they will be taking to stamp out racism in football. Recent incidents of abuse in Europe illustrate that national football associations still have much work to do in sending a clear message that racist abuse will not be tolerated in football grounds.

DEAL APPROVED ON PROTECTION OF WORKERS FROM OPTICAL RADIATION

In Strasbourg, MEPs approved an agreement on an EU directive designed to protect workers from exposure to optical radiation. You may remember from my September Round-Up after the second-reading vote in the Parliament that the directive lays down minimum standards for the prevention and early diagnosis of damage to the eyes and skin from optical radiation, and the prevention of long-term health problems. The directive also includes provisions on workers' rights to information, training, consultation and health checks.

HOSTING MEETINGS OF UK AND EU SOCIAL SERVICES (EUROPEAN SOCIAL NETWORK) & CRE SEMINAR

In February, I hosted "best practice" seminars with the European Social Network on how unaccompanied asylum children are dealt with by local authorities, and with the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) on social cohesion and integration. Specialists from London joined EU experts and those actually affected by the policies.

BIRD FLU

As most of you will be aware, the H5N1 "bird flu" virus has now been identified in several EU countries. In December, the European Parliament adopted a report on EU-wide measures to tackle bird flu which called for cooperation to be strengthened in particular areas. These covered developing oral vaccines for poultry, strengthening national emergency plans and coordination facilities, providing workers in the industry with more information and offering them greater protection as well as more proactive moves to coordinate the development of vaccines for human use and in building up antiviral stocks.

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS ASKED BY CLAUDE MORAES MEP

In February, I asked Parliamentary Questions on the subjects below to the European Commission and the Council. The answers to these questions should shortly appear on www.EUROPARL.eu.int, the website of the European Parliament. If you have problems accessing the full questions and answers, please contact my office by email at mep@claudemoraes.net.

EU AUDIT APPEAL PROCEDURES

In February, I asked the Commission whether it could outline the process of appealing against an EU audit. I also asked the Commission, to outline what protection is offered to small businesses when trying to appeal against the results of an audit, and what guarantees are offered. I asked this question in response to SMEs in London who had asked for our help.

LISBON AGENDA

I asked the Austrian Presidency what attitude it was taking to the jobs agenda of the EU.

CONSTITUENCY-RELATED VISITS & MEETINGS in February included:

- * **23 Feb** - Spoke at Wansted labour party branch meeting and fundraiser.
- * **21 Feb** - Spoke to Committee of the Regions conference on best practice in local authority public health issues including fuel poverty, older people's issues and how EU law affects local government.
- * **21 Feb** - Hosted social services and local authority seminar on the treatment of unaccompanied child asylum

seekers.

- * **20 Feb** - Co-hosted with Jean Lambert MEP, CRE best practice seminar in Brussels with Trevor Phillips and specialists from other EU countries.
- * **15 Feb** - Met with European Jewish Congress in Strasbourg on anti-Semitism and current EU action.
- * **11 Feb** - Addressed delegates at Labour Party Spring Conference Seminar on "Community Cohesion and Local Leadership" with Hazel Blears MP.
- * **11 Feb** - Spoke at launch of European Parliamentary Labour Party campaign on "Defending Democracy and Protecting Civil Liberties" with Michael Cashman MEP, Linda McAvan MEP and Charles Clarke MP.

DIARY DATES

- * **13 - 16 March**, European Parliamentary Plenary session, Strasbourg
- * **22 - 23 March**, European Parliamentary Plenary mini-session, Brussels

GET IN TOUCH

For further information about my work please get in touch by email at mep@claudemoraes.net or visit my website at www.claudemoraes.net.