



STRASBOURG ROUND-UP, May 2006

Dear Friends,

Here is a report of my work as your London Labour MEP in the month of May. In May, we voted on a varied agenda, from the campaign against increasing homophobia in the EU to development issues, pollution of London's waterways, obtaining EU funding for London educational charities operating websites to Corporate Social Responsibility and disability issues. We received a larger than usual feedback to our newsletter last month, particularly on our work with Remploi, the Daphne programme on violence against women and racism in football. I'm really grateful to those of you who take the time to email. You will see this feedback emerging regularly in our parliamentary questions. Please also note that I can raise urgent matters in the Strasbourg Plenary session each month, if you feel there is an issue that would benefit from this exposure, or through petitions or other Parliamentary activities set out in an easy to understand format on our website.

In the **May** issue:

News from Strasbourg & Brussels

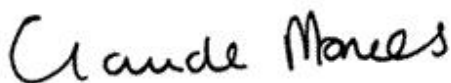
European Court of Justice ruling on transfer of personal passenger data to the USA - International Day against Homophobia in the European Parliament - Western Sahara & EU- Morocco fishing deal - Letter to Kofi Annan on Burma - Solution To "Strasbourg Circus" - CSR - Darfur - Future for development funding - Speech to FIFA & UK and German Government representatives on social responsibility in football - Annual report on human rights - UK Government review of citizenship education - Disability issues

Parliamentary Questions asked by Claude Moraes MEP

Europe's Waterways - Website Funding - ECJ Ruling on Air Passenger Data Transfer

Constituency-Related Meetings & Visits

Bexley Fabians Meeting - Berlin Football Conference - TUC European Network Meeting - Education Action International - TUC European Network Meeting - EU Journalist Diversity Award - Conference on caste and religious freedom in South Asia - Spoke at Bexley Fabians Meeting - EU-Russia initiative launch - South Africa EU Delegation.



Claude Moraes MEP

Labour Member of the European Parliament for London

NEWS FROM STRASBOURG & BRUSSELS

ORGANISATION OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION VISIT TO EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Our office organised the visit of Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) Chair, Jenny Watson and her staff to the Parliament on the 31st of May. We were able to help plan key EU gender issues with a view to UK EOC input into the 2007 Year of Equal Opportunities. Jenny and her staff were introduced to key MEPs from different member states that are prioritising gender issues such as equal pay, the campaign on violence against women, the situation of minority ethnic women and women and pensions. For further information please get in touch.

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

My colleague Labour MEP Michael Cashman was at the forefront of coordinating the European Parliament's official recognition of the International Day Against Homophobia in May. I spoke at this meeting on the need for the Council Framework Decision on Racist Crimes to be both implemented and extended to take account of the sharp increase in homophobic attacks particularly in Eastern European countries. There is a worrying trend in some of the new member states of the EU where a small minority of politicians has encouraged discrimination against LGBT men and women. The meeting was addressed by the President of the Parliament and the Austrian Presidency to underline the importance with which EU is taking this issue.

MAHMOUD ABBAS AND EVO MORALES ADDRESS THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Mahmoud Abbas, the President of the Palestinian Authority and Evo Morales, the new President of Bolivia addressed the Parliament in the May session. The centre-right EPP staged a walk-out during the speech of Evo Morales which I felt was immature and an unpleasant experience for Morales who is the first indigenous President of his country. If you interested in their speeches please get in touch.

WESTERN SAHARA AND THE EU- MOROCCO FISHING DEAL

Thank you for all the feedback we received over the EU-Morocco fisheries deal. Last month I voted against this deal because the people of Western Sahara are still under Moroccan occupation and have had no say over the agreement which allows fishing in their territorial waters. This was the prime concern of those who contacted me. The Western Sahara is currently occupied territory under Moroccan control. In April, I met with War on Want, a development NGO who feel strongly on this issue and have campaigned to this effect.

SIGNED LETTER TO KOFI ANNAN ON SITUATION IN BURMA

Last month I signed a letter to Kofi Annan and the UN Security Council regarding the humanitarian crisis currently underway in Eastern Burma, in Karen State. In past weeks, more than 15,500 civilians have been forcibly displaced by the Burma Army and it appears that tens of thousands more displacements are imminent.

SOLUTION TO "STRASBOURG CIRCUS" CRISIS OFFERED

I am regularly contacted by constituents questioning the need for the European Parliament to use two different buildings - in Brussels and Strasbourg. Last month, a credible alternative was presented by Richard Corbett, deputy leader of Labour MEPs suggesting the European Council name Brussels as the European Parliament's only seat.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

There will be another attempt by the Parliament to regulate in this area. I attended a meeting of stakeholders, business, trade unions and NGOs on 30 May, and my colleague Richard Howitt MEP will be leading for us on this issue.

DARFUR

Following the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement in Abuja on the 5th of July, the European Parliament passed an urgent resolution this week urging all the parties involved to do their utmost to ensure that a comprehensive and workable peace agreement is reached and implemented. We condemned the Sudanese Government's continued support on the Janjaweed militia and called for the Government to finally accept a UN force in the region.

FUTURE FOR DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

A key debate and first vote took place last month in Strasbourg on the European Commission's proposals to simplify the financial instruments it uses for all of the EU's external actions. These instruments will determine exactly how money from the next Financial Perspective will be spent for the EU's foreign and development policy. I voted for an instrument with a strong focus on poverty eradication and for the European Parliament to maintain its powers of democratic oversight on the policy area.

SPEECH TO FIFA & UK AND GERMAN GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES ON SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN FOOTBALL

On 5 May I addressed a special conference at the British Embassy in Berlin. The other keynote speaker was German Interior Minister Hans Bernhard Beus and senior FIFA and UEFA officials. I was critical of FIFA's decision to postpone sanctions and penalties including the deduction of points for clubs who fail to take action on persistent racism and related hooliganism. On the media section of my website, you can see what I've been saying on this issue and the recent review of football initiated by the UK Presidency of the EU and delivered to the Prime Minister on 23 May. This included issues of the capping of salaries and transfer fees and the whole issue of bringing the game closer to people.

ANNUAL REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Last month, the European Parliament produced its Human Rights Report to the Parliament this week. The report praises Britain's Presidency of the European Union for stepping up representations against the death penalty worldwide, and successfully leading international negotiations to create the new UN Human Rights Council. It also proposed that the European Union publishes a more hard hitting, unified Human Rights Report, which would for the first time name an annual EU league table of pariah states responsible for the worst human rights abuses, and for whom an enhanced priority for trade and other sanctions could be applied.

UK GOVERNMENT REVIEW OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

You may have heard what I've been saying about this latest review from the Department of Education on the Today programme on 15 May and other national media. Please see our website if you're interested in this issue. My website is regularly updated with media output and articles which may be of interest.

DISABILITY ISSUES

Thank you for all the positive feedback and enquiries about our work with Remploy, the disability charity. I will be addressing the Association of London Government on the issue of implementing EU disability legislation in the UK, and we are currently undertaking casework which addresses the different national rules on the admission of guide dogs to public buildings. This is in response to my London constituent, Verity Smith and her mother Frances, who are currently campaigning with us to extend the UK practice to countries such as Sweden where health and safety laws are in direct conflict and with the freedom for visually impaired people to access public areas with guide dogs.

EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE RULING ON TRANSFER OF EUROPEAN PASSENGER DATA

The ECJ ruled along the same lines as the European Parliament, in rejecting the deal on the transfer of personal passenger information of Europeans taking flights to the United States. Along with my colleague Michael Cashman, I made some comments in the press on this issue; if you would like further information please get in touch.

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS ASKED BY CLAUDE MORAES MEP

In May, I asked Parliamentary Questions on the subjects below to the European Commission and the Council of the European Union. 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.

LONDON AND EUROPE'S WATERWAYS

I asked the Council whether it has any plans to encourage the use of Europe's waterways and canals, a currently vastly underused resource, in terms of leisure, transport and other activities. I also asked what Commission action there was on dealing with pollution issues. It could help ease the burden on other modes of transport as well as contribute to the wellbeing of the environment. For example, in London there are some underused, and often polluted, waterways which could be a very small but growing part of an integrated transport strategy.

WEBSITE FUNDING

In London there are many excellent interactive websites created by NGOs, voluntary groups and educational organisations has been an expansion of excellent interactive websites which tackle a whole range of issues. I am active on trying to obtain funding for these initiatives because they often have a disproportionately positive effect. It is extremely difficult to obtain such funding and I will continue to campaign on this. A recent bid I was involved in was an initiative from City University students. Last month I asked the Commission whether it thought that they should receive some kind of EU funding.

CONSTITUENCY-RELATED VISITS & MEETINGS

in **May** included:

- * **4 May** - I hosted a visit of students involved in the London-based charity Education Action International (formerly known as the World University Service).
- * **5 May** - TUC European Network Meeting
- * **8 May** - I judged the EU Journalist Diversity Award
- * **9 May** - Conference on caste and religious freedom in South Asia.
- * **10 May** - Spoke at Bexley Fabians Meeting
- * **17 May** - I co-hosted the EU-Russia Initiative which will look at issues of human rights to energy supply.
- * **17 May** - Spoke at the South Africa EU Delegation on the work against AIDS and obstacles to this.

DIARY DATES

- * **12 - 15 June**, European Parliamentary Plenary session, Strasbourg

GET IN TOUCH - TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK

Please email me with your comments on any of the issues raised above. If you want any detailed information, or to invite me to a meeting or event please let me know by email at mep@claudemoraes.net or visit my website at www.claudemoraes.net.