



## BLAIR TRIES IT ON

Tony Blair intends, before he leaves office, to try and agree a new deal on the EU Constitution, but, at the same time, hopes to go back on his promise to hold a referendum in the UK.

His gameplan is to agree a reduced Constitution at the June Heads of Government meeting, which he will present as a mere tidying up of governmental arrangements within the EU. Such a contention would be phoney, because it is likely to involve establishing an EU President and Foreign Minister and transferring more decision-making over to qualified majority voting. This further reduction in the national veto is a massive step towards the political integration of Europe, whereas, a President and Foreign Minister personify the apparatus of EU statehood.

It is imperative that the British people are not cheated out of the promised referendum. Thus, Jim Allister has joined with Euro-sceptic Tory MEPs and others, in signing a motion in Parliament demanding referenda across Europe on any revised Constitution.

**Euro-sceptic Tory MEP, Roger Helmer, poses with the EU Constitution at a famous Brussels monument.**

**No further comment needed!**



## 100 not out!

On 25th April 2007 Jim Allister MEP, elected in June 2004, made his 100th speech in the European Parliament. Speaking in a debate on human rights issues, Mr Allister focussed on persecution of Christians in Pakistan and China. Such persecution is something he has long pursued with the EU through dozens of parliamentary questions.

Since the current EP took office in July 2004 the number of speeches made in the Chamber by the 3 Northern Ireland MEPs is as follows:-

Allister: 100  
De Brun: 46  
Nicholson: 38

In the previous Parliament (1999-2004) the total speeches in the Chamber by Northern Ireland's MEPs over the full 5 years was as follows:-

Paisley: 24  
Hume: 12  
Nicholson: 51

## Response to Peace III Operational Programme

Jim Allister has launched his response to the latest consultation exercise on the future of the Peace Programme for Northern Ireland. The MEP welcomed the reduction in the number of bodies overseeing the programme and the reduction in the levels of costs devoted to administration, he also welcomed the special focus that will be given to developing public spaces - this is something which he had previously called for. The MEP also called for a stronger economic focus in the programme than has been the case up until now.

Jim Allister said:

“I broadly welcome the proposals contained in the consultation document published by the SEUPB on the Peace III stage of the European Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. This is likely to be the final stage of the Peace Programme and it is vital that we get things right at this stage. This money, if properly allocated can make a real and lasting impact for good on our community.

In my consultation response I have proposed the creation of a third measure in the Programme which would be designed to expand our economy here in Northern Ireland. It is sad that in the past so much money that could have been put to good use building our economic infrastructure and leaving a positive and lasting impact was wasted on unnecessary froth. I believe the creation of an economic measure would help to alleviate that problem.

The creation of a strong economy is I believe the bed-rock of a peaceful society, in formulating my proposals that is what I want to see achieved”, said the MEP.

To view Jim Allister's full response, go to: [http://www.jimallister.org/uploads/\\_217.pdf](http://www.jimallister.org/uploads/_217.pdf)



Jim Allister MEP meeting with students and staff from Causeway Institute of Further & Higher Education during a visit to the European Parliament in Brussels sponsored by the MEP.

## Lottery funding - Improving Community Buildings Programme

The National Lottery's latest programme will provide **£5 million** for projects wishing to refurbish or modernise community venues in order to **increase the level of community use and enhance the quality of services provided**. Applicants may be voluntary, community or charitable not-for-profit companies. It is envisaged that individual grants of between **£25,000 and £50,000** for projects not exceeding **£75,000** will be made available. The **deadline for applications will be Thursday 24th May 2007** and staff from Jim Allister's office are available to offer guidance on completion of the application forms.



## Allister speaks on Berlin Declaration

In a debate on the “Berlin Declaration”, issued to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome, Mr Allister returned to a familiar Euro-sceptic theme of resisting moves towards political union.

“When you peel away all the self-congratulatory verbage, this Berlin Declaration in reality amounts to very little of substance.

In pursuit of the central tenet of the Treaty of Rome of securing “ever closer union”, which this declaration celebrates, euro-fanatics had seen it as a key landmark in relaunching the rejected Constitution.

When it came the declaration wasn’t even able to mention the Constitution. Instead it peddled all the old nonsense about the EU being the peace machine of Europe. NATO, not the EU, can take most credit for the defence, return and promotion of freedom and democracy in Europe.

The idea of European cooperation is not in question, it is the means and ultimate purpose which divides. Eurosceptics believe in the benefits of voluntary mutual cooperation between sovereign nation states. What we reject is the orchestration of such by a grasping, centralising EU for the purpose of forcing an unwanted political integration upon the citizens of those nation states. This declaration clings to that goal and, therefore, it is flawed.”

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## The runaway cost of expansion

With further expansion of the EU on the agenda, it is worth reflecting on just what it could cost, particularly, since the UK is one of the biggest net contributors to the EU.

In the queue for membership are Turkey, Croatia, Macedonia, and the Western Balkan state of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, including Kosovo.

These countries would expand the area of the EU by 35%, its population by 27% but its GDP by only 4%, and would actually reduce per capita GDP by 18%. To fund this expansionism would cost extra structural funding of 150bn Euro for pre-accession aid in 2007-13 (on top of the 308bn already committed).

Who would pay? You, of course, as a UK taxpayer, as the UK is set to continue to be one of the main paymasters of Europe.



Log onto [www.jimallister.org](http://www.jimallister.org) to read Jim’s latest press releases and statements.

Learn more about the workings of Europe, listen to Jim’s speeches in Parliament and much more online.



If you would like a free copy of Jim’s book, ‘Leading for Ulster: Speaking for you in Europe’, then please phone (028) 90 655 011



All editions of the monthly newsletter ‘Brussels Briefing’ are available to download at my website, [www.jimallister.org](http://www.jimallister.org)

There, you can also sign up to receive each new edition, either by post or by e-mail.



## MEP resigns

Statement by Jim Allister MEP on 27/03/07:

“It is with immense sadness that I must resign from the DUP.

To continue as the DUP’s MEP it would be my obligation to accept the Party Executive policy decision to usher Sinn Fein into government in a few short weeks. This, in conscience, I cannot do. Thus, I must resign from the DUP.

Sinn Fein, in my view, is not fit for government, nor can it be in a few weeks.

I have fought a protracted battle within the party over recent months against a premature DUP/Sinn Fein Government. I now have to accept that this battle is lost.

The import of the Executive resolution and yesterday’s spectacle is clear. Sadly, no more delivery is required from Sinn Fein; it is enough if they do not resile from the commitments already made. Since the present commitments are, at best, equivocal and permit outrageous utterances such as those of Ms Gildernew after the lawful arrest and charging of persons with attempted murder, and since Sinn Fein is now to be admitted to government while its IRA Army Council still exists, I believe the much vaunted “delivery to our satisfaction” has been so diluted as to have become meaningless. Just as the ill-gotten gains, so robustly mentioned in that New Year’s message, have become the forgotten gains.

For me the abolition of the Army Council was always a litmus test of the sincerity of Sinn Fein/IRA’s professed transition to involvement exclusively in peaceful and democratic processes. The Army Council is the apex of the military structures of the republican movement. The DUP has long pledged that the military structures must go (it has been one of its “Seven Principles” for years and was reiterated in the manifesto for the March 2007 election.)

Now, it seems, the Army Council can stay.

Then, I can’t.

If Sinn Fein/IRA is indeed truly and irreversibly committed to exclusively peaceful means, then it does not need, nor should it want or have, an Army Council. I just cannot comprehend how the DUP can contemplate government, particularly where it will be “joined at the hip” in the office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister, with an organisation which clings to an illegal Army Council of an illegal army. It seems to me that, sadly, the lure of office has clouded the Party’s judgement.

Personal interest and advancement might dictate that I too should ignore these issues. In conscience I cannot do so.

I did not return to politics to help ease Sinn Fein into government and, thus, I cannot be a party to the present manoeuvrings and their inevitable outcome.

I thank all those within the party who supported me, particularly in recent months, and very much regret that things have turned out as they have.”



## Allister attacks Sinn Fein in Government

Speech by Jim Allister MEP in the European Parliament on the current political situation in Northern Ireland:

"Mr President, following on from the President's comments earlier about developments in Belfast, I would like to say that, from this distance, euphoria about political developments in Belfast is understandable.

However, I must tell the House that I, and many in Northern Ireland, see nothing to celebrate in the premature admission to government of those who personally sanctioned, practiced and unreservedly supported a campaign of vicious terrorism that left thousands of my fellow citizens as innocent dead. I say 'premature' because even now Sinn Féin is still cherry-picking in its support for the police, with prominent members condemning legitimate police arrests for serious crimes and refusing full cooperation with the police in bringing to justice those responsible for such outrages as the Omagh bombing, which killed 29 innocent shoppers.

Where else in the world would you expect to find in government ministers inextricably linked to, and maybe even still members of, an illegal army council of their own illegal private army? Yet that is what many in this House will applaud in Northern Ireland.

Of evil no good can come."

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## Allister comments on Sinn Fein Ministries

"Unionists and all citizens caring about the future of our children have good reason to fear the return of Sinn Fein to continue its past pillage of our education system. Now, agriculture too is to be subjected to the Sinn Fein treatment. Our primary industry, the agri-food industry, has enough problems without suffering under Sinn Fein's anti-business and Marxist agenda, most likely to be targeted against medium and large farmers. Moreover, I fear a destabilising all-Ireland agenda will now drive the decision-making process rather than the needs and interests of local agriculture."

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## Sinn Fein shows true colours

"As Sinn Fein prepares for government, we are seeing that abrasive, aggressive republicanism dictates their every move. Hence, their choice of Policing Board members to include a terrorist convict, as a means of rubbing it into unionists, particularly the DUP, that this is what you get when you roll into government with the republican movement.

Likewise, their intransigent insistence that the Maze stadium is conditional on delivery to their satisfaction of what will amount to a shrine to terrorism, in the so-called "Long Kesh Visitor Centre". Before it even begins we are getting a taster of Sinn Fein rule. While Ian Paisley dons the mantle and language of statesmanship, his Sinn Fein partner shows reciprocation is not in its nature."

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Feel free to contact my offices regarding any European issue:

139 Hollywood Road,  
Belfast,  
BT4 3BE

Tel: (028) 90 655011  
Fax: (028) 90 654314

European Parliament  
Rue Wiertz  
ASP 08F154  
B-1047 Brussels

Tel: +0032 2284 5275  
Fax: +0032 2284 9275

## Allister meets APPG on dairy farming in Brussels

Jim Allister MEP recently hosted the Westminster All Party Parliamentary Group on Dairy Farming. The group is chaired by Tory MP Daniel Kawczynski and were in Brussels lobbying the Agricultural Commissioner Fischer Boel and head of the European Parliament Agricultural Committee Neil Parish. The group includes the Member of Parliament for South Antrim William McCrea.

Jim Allister commented, "The group were in Brussels lobbying key officials on a number of issues including the issue of voluntary modulation, the future of milk quotas and the power of the multiple retailers.

"The APPG on dairy farming have recently published a report which called for fairer milk prices



to be paid by retailers and processors and for the formation of a powerful industry regulator. The report highlighted the fact that over the last 15 years the price of milk in the shops had increased by 11%. During the same period the price paid to farmers had fallen by 10%.

"Despite a smaller percentage of Northern Ireland milk being sold direct as liquid milk this group is still of importance to Northern Ireland farmers. It is vital that the price paid for dairy products throughout the UK increases to ensure that a viable dairy industry survives within the UK."

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## Tesco milk deal

Jim Allister believes that Tesco could do more to help Northern Ireland dairy farmers. Commenting on the latest announcement from the retailer, the Euro MP believes that it will have a modest impact on Northern Ireland farmers. Jim Allister has however called for Tesco to extend the offer to all dairy products and for all other major retailers to follow the lead taken by Tesco.

Jim Allister commented, "I welcome the announcement made today that Tesco will pay 22ppl for milk. Although it is not practical for Tesco to translate this through to individual farmers in Northern Ireland, as a direct result of the successful auction system operated by United Dairy Farmers', it should help improve the returns paid for milk by the retailer. I believe that Tesco should extend this offer to all dairy products produced in Northern Ireland in order to prove that this is not merely a marketing gimmick."

Jim Allister has called on other retailers to follow the lead of Tesco. "I believe that other retailers need to follow this trend that has been started by Tesco. With higher feed and fuel costs, hundreds of dairy farmers are leaving the industry throughout the UK. Thankfully the global markets for dairy products are continuing to rise and this should lift the price paid to farmers for milk over the coming months."

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## Arrests for fraud in Brussels

Three Italians, one a businessman said to benefit handsomely from Commission foreign contracts, another an EU official and the third an Italian MEP's assistant, have been arrested in Brussels on corruption charges. Despite a lengthy fraud investigation which led to the charges, throughout that investigation it seems the Commission continued to grant fresh contracts to the businessman.





## Allister presses cross-compliance issues

At the Agriculture Committee of the European Parliament in Brussels, Jim Allister MEP raised with the Commission representative issues arising from its recent cross-compliance paper.

In particular, Mr Allister pressed for delivery on the suggested relaxations, both in terms of inspections and penalties. **"Proportionality is what is required"**, said the MEP, **"both in the notification and manner of inspections and in dealing with any perceived infringements."** Citing a case where a Northern Ireland farmer had his SFP jeopardised over a 41p discrepancy, the Ulster MEP said a bit of old fashioned common sense would go a long way. Some inspectors, he said, themselves needed a course in compliance with basic man management, because their attitude provoked conflict and resentment where none need exist.

Mr Allister also raised the need to definitively resolve the duplicate field issue, urging maximum flexibility in the conditions governing this issue.

Speaking of the Commission official's response to his probings, Mr Allister said he was disappointed to note that already limitations and caveats were creeping into the suggestion that 14 days notice could be given for inspections. **"I intend to return to this issue when the Committee holds a full hearing on the cross-compliance paper on 8 May"**, said Mr Allister.

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## Allister speaks up for equine industry

Commenting on the recently published "Strategy for the Equine Industry in Northern Ireland", Jim Allister MEP said:-

**"As a document drawing together in a coordinated way the issues which need to be addressed, and giving an historic context, this is a valuable production. However, the real challenge is in taking forward the issues identified. We can't afford to have another report merely gathering dust on a DARD shelf, as has happened with previous equine reports in the past.**

The equine industry is growing and making an increasing contribution, with an annual spend of over £110M and over 5000 jobs. It holds key export potential in regard to top class horses. To fully exploit this potential fundamental issues like classification of horses as agricultural animals, zero-rating for VAT and developing quality breeding programmes, must be addressed. Moreover, Northern Ireland has the quality of animal and expertise to stand on its own feet and should not just think in terms of merely operating in the shadow of the Republic. Rather, the disadvantages



such as arise in the rating and vat regime to which we are subjected, must be addressed. This could particularly expand and promote the thoroughbred sector.

To enhance the opportunity to host world-class events and to retain local talent, both in the riding and handling of horses, investment in world-class facilities is essential.

I, therefore, welcome this report and trust its many valuable suggestions will be robustly taken forward."

## Fruit and veg reforms and the Single Farm Payment

Following debate in the Agriculture Committee of the European Parliament in Brussels, Jim Allister MEP spoke of his concern about the impact the pending reform of the Fruit & Vegetable sector could have on the Single Farm Payment scheme in Northern Ireland.

"While I generally welcome liberalisation and simplification of the arrangements, arising from the integration of the Fruit & Vegetable sector into the Single Farm Payment system, I must raise a specific concern relevant to my constituency.

Though now it will be possible to use Fruit & Vegetable land and orchards to activate SFP payments, in regions, such as mine, where there were no processing aids - essentially because the



eligible crops are not grown there - there will be no extra cash added to the SFP budget. In consequence, it seems the only way additional SFP could be allocated to fruit and vegetable producers in Northern Ireland would be to scaleback all existing SFP entitlements as a means of generating the funds required. This would be punitive on existing SFP recipients and not acceptable, particularly on the back of unfair voluntary modulation.

Thus, it seems to me the Commission should be looking at specific relief for regions which did not qualify for processing aids, but which on the back of this reform now will face additional SFP demands."

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## Paying the price of an end to whitefish fleet

Jim Allister MEP has released updated information from DARD on the money being paid to induce an end to Northern Ireland's whitefish fleet.

"Following the unwarranted refusal of Tie-Up Aid, it is clear my fear that DARD's intention was to liquidate our whitefish fleet is being realised.

Information recently received by me from Minister Cairns confirms that already 3 "dedicated" whitefish vessels have been financially assisted to diversify into alternative fishing. Now another £200,000 from the Investment Development Fund is being sought for a similar scheme for the 5 remaining whitefish vessels.

In the end almost as much money will have been spent as would have paid Tie-Up Aid and kept our whitefish fleet alive. Instead, all are being driven into prawn fishing, which may be fine so long as prawn prices hold, but unhealthy and economically dubious in terms of sustaining for Northern Ireland a diverse fishery."

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## Climate change - an alternative view

See next month's bulletin for an interesting report on a recent conference in Brussels presenting an alternative view on the causes of global warming.

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"The opinions stated herein are those of the author. These opinions do not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Parliament—in fact they almost certainly do not!"

