



Allister challenges Sinn Fein in Brussels

During an adjournment debate in the European Parliament, Jim Allister MEP, addressed Sinn Fein's recent indications on policing. The DUP Euro MP clearly identified that mere words from Sinn Fein were not enough and stressed that its journey from "terrorist adjunct" to being fit for the purpose of office, must be "real rather than virtual".

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

"It is good to see seasoned supporters of terrorism profess commitment to the rule of law - against which they fought so long. But only a fool would accept verbal pledges from those who hitherto did not balk at murder, without putting those pledges to the rigorous test of time and proven delivery. And so it is in Northern Ireland today.

Sinn Fein has made a highly conditional commitment to support the police, but only when they are rewarded with government office. Such blackmail is unacceptable. Genuine commitment to law and order is unconditional.

Furthermore, you can't be untainted democrats and an aspirant Party for Government and still inextricably linked to an illegal organisation, boasting a continuing "Army Council". So Sinn Fein is only at the start of a long road of transition from terrorist adjunct to fit for the purpose of office. May its journey be real rather than virtual."

Commenting further on Mr Adams' comments about the McCartney murder, Mr Allister said, "The IRA offered to shoot the killers of Robert McCartney and Sinn Fein say they suspended several members because of their role. Clearly, therefore, they know the identity of those involved, so let them now hand them over and give to the police the information gleaned from their "inquiry". Otherwise they are withholding information."



Mad rush for PSNI Application forms

MEP defends RUC in Europe

Following Sinn Fein circulating MEPs with O'Loan's report and vicious attack on Special Branch and the RUC, Jim Allister has countered by emailing every MEP with details of what the policemen concerned and Sir Ronnie Flanagan have said in response.

In his email Jim Allister said:- "Though Mrs O'Loan concedes there is no evidence warranting prosecutions of police officers, she nonetheless, without evidence of that quality, rushes to damn Special Branch.

In the interests of a more balanced consideration of the issues than that which Sinn Fein would wish, some might be interested in reading what various of the accused police have said. Mr Allister then set out the key statement of ex-RUC Officers challenging the report.

Allister to join Agriculture Committee

DUP MEP Jim Allister is set to join the Agriculture Committee of the European Parliament as a substitute member. This will be in addition to his service on the Fisheries Committee and the Constitutional Affairs Committee. Explaining his move, Mr Allister said, "As we move towards the health check of the Common Agricultural Policy and discussions regarding how the CAP will be funded in the future, I wish to have a more hands-on involvement in trying to shape matters in Northern Ireland's interests. Though it increases my workload, I take the view that it is important to have an input into policy development in this vital sector."



Mr Allister continued to welcome the fact that the Committee will shortly have a new Chairman, British Tory Member, Neil Parish (left). "This is good news for British Agriculture. Neil is well versed in all things agricultural and has a healthy dislike for unnecessary bureaucracy. In congratulating him I have invited him to visit Northern Ireland at an early stage so that he might become personally acquainted with the issues of key importance to us. I look forward to working with him."

Equality Commission exudes Inequality - Allister

Statement by Jim Allister MEP:

"The Equality Commission is supposed to exist to promote and improve equality of opportunity, particularly in employment, throughout Northern Ireland. Yet figures just released to me demonstrate lamentable failure by it to secure equality and an end to under-representation of Protestants within its own staff. As the figures below demonstrate the situation is getting worse year on year.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Composition of Commission staff by Community background

Date	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Non-Determined
1 January 2006	49 (35.0%) [38.0%]	80 (57.1%) [62.0%]	11 (7.9%)
1 January 2005	50 (38.8%) [40.7%]	73 (56.6%) [59.3%]	6 (4.7%)
1 January 2004	53 (38.1%) [40.2%]	79 (56.8%) [59.8%]	7 (5%)
31 January 2003	59 (41.2%) [43.7%]	76 (53.1%) [56.3%]	8 (5.6%)
31 January 2002	60 (42.3%) [44.1%]	76 (53.5%) [55.9%]	6 (4.2%)
31 January 2001	56 (40.9%) [43.4%]	73 (53.3%) [56.6%]	8 (5.8%)

* Figures in square brackets are for Protestant and Roman Catholic only

This is an appalling indictment of those so quick to rebuke other employers for lack of effective affirmative action. Though the Chief Commissioner has written to me claiming he is focussed on this issue, the on-going decline in Protestant employees within the Commission raises a fundamental issue as to its fitness for purpose.

I am calling on the Secretary of State to intervene forthwith and insist that the Equality Commission begins to practice what it preaches. I also intend to draw this disgraceful situation to the attention of the Commission in Brussels which claims an interest in promoting equality of opportunity throughout Europe."



New Energy Policy for Europe Inadequate

Commenting on a new Energy Policy from the European Commission, Jim Allister MEP said:

“Once again the EU commission, creating energy policy, ignores the reality of the increase of CO2 emissions from the developing world.

The new proposed policy again focuses on the emissions from within the community. While it is true that emissions can be reduced by efficiency, technology and development of renewable energy, the history of the EU is draconian targets which, rather than creating incentives for managed reduction, simply makes business uncompetitive on the world stage and exports jobs.

The simple fact is that by 2030 coal fired power in India and China will add 3000 million extra tonnes of CO2 to the atmosphere every year - 13 times the UK’s current total of CO2 from power generation! Over the same period emissions from China alone are forecast to grow by as much as those of the entire industrialised world.

The recently published House of Commons Science and Technology Committee report clearly states, ‘Fossil fuel consumption in countries such as China and India will have a profound and potentially catastrophic impact on global atmospheric CO2 levels eclipsing any reductions made by the UK and others.’

This being the case the EU while right to focus on stability of supply, must ensure that there is appropriate attention to maintaining business competitiveness. It must also seriously begin to deal with emissions in the developing world by adequate trade arrangements which will limit emissions in those areas.”

Call in European Parliament to support North-West rail link

During a debate in Strasbourg DUP Euro MP Jim Allister raised the state and future of the rail link between Belfast and Londonderry. Calling for it to be included in the EU’s Trans National Network, as a means of opening up fresh funding opportunities, Mr Allister said current expenditure plans at best would prevent further deterioration in the infrastructure, but do nothing to provide the radical improvement necessary to allow the use of fast trains, which was the key to increased usage.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:

“Opening up the rail market to competition is all well and good, but where you don’t have a sufficient rail infrastructure it is a secondary consideration. In my constituency of Northern Ireland we’ve benefited from essential improvements in the north-south rail connection from Larne through to the border with the Republic of Ireland and beyond to Dublin as part of the Trans European Network. But the other key limb of our infrastructure is languishing in neglect and resulting decline, namely the link from Belfast to our second city, Londonderry.



This north west route, particularly north of Ballymena has had minimum investment and a mooted 10.5 M GBP expenditure will not address the essential need of infrastructure improvements, but merely arrest further deterioration but still leave us with a network incapable of carrying necessary fast trains. What is urgently needed is inclusion of this north-west line into the TENS programme, followed by the investment and upgrade which could result. It is for this that I appeal to the Commission. A rail bridge across the River Foyle would then open up the opportunity of a rail link into Donegal and thereby provide a truly trans-national link. This north-west line must be not just saved but radically improved, and through TENS the EU can make a worthwhile contribution.

Finally, on the Savary report I must say it seeks to place far too much regulatory burden on the rail industry. It will provide a tier of EU regulation on top of already adequate national regulation, while providing no benefit to the sector or its users.”

Allister clashes with German Foreign Minister on Constitution

During a discussion between German Foreign Minister, Frank W Steinmeier, in his capacity as current President of the Council of Ministers, and the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament in Brussels on the future of Europe, DUP MEP Jim Allister challenged his insistence on a Constitution for the EU. The Foreign Minister's visit was an extension of the campaign to revive the Constitution, launched the previous week in the Parliament by Chancellor Merkel.

The Ulster Euro MP, in an exchange with Minister Steinmeier, asked If the Council of Ministers had no shame? "The Council approved and promoted a Constitution which set its own test for survival, namely approval by every Member State. It had spectacularly failed that test. Thus whether 18 states had ratified a defunct document was of no weight. Yet, here you are still trying to contrive ways and means to subvert that rejection. Dress it up as you will, that is what this is all about. The EU has spent the last 2 years trying to subvert the declared will of the French and the Dutch and will waste the next 2 years on the same totalitarian mission."



Turning to the Minister's dislike of referenda, Mr Allister said, "Is it not the ultimate irony that advocates of the Constitution proclaim it is for the benefit of the citizens of Europe, as essential to their well-being, but run scared of letting those same citizens decide if it is what they want. Maybe, Minister, if you had let the people of Germany vote in a referendum they too would have rejected their government's support for the Constitution, just as the people of France and Holland did, and the people of the UK would, if given the chance."

DUP opposes tax powers for Brussels

In Brussels at the Constitutional Affairs Committee Jim Allister MEP voted against a proposal to promote direct tax-raising powers for the EU. The rejected EU Constitution contained such a proposal and as part of the on-going surreptitious efforts to implement it by the back door, there is a move afoot, under the guise of a review of the EU's financing system, to push such a development.

Commenting Jim Allister said, "I think it is preposterous to suggest that the EU, with its lamentable record of squander and mismanagement, should be permitted to exercise fiscal powers. Fiscal powers are strictly a national issue and must remain so. I am appalled that today in the Constitutional Affairs Committee, EPP members - the Group to which the UUP and Conservatives belong - voted in favour and helped approve this call for radical extension of EU powers. I will continue to oppose this proposition, believing firmly that taxation powers must lie exclusively in national parliaments. Though Euro-taxation would enhance Euro-scepticism in the UK, it is wrong in principle and unwarranted."



Log onto 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

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



Free up livestock trade to Scotland urges MEP

Jim Allister MEP has urged DARD to do more to ensure that breeding and store livestock can be exported to Scotland. Jim Allister believes that there is no justification for the current 30 day pre movement rule prior to export and that this should be reduced to 6.

Jim Allister commented, "It is vital that there is an urgent change to the current rules for the exporting of live cattle to Scotland. Currently animals have to stay on a holding for 30 days prior to being exported to Scotland. There is no basis for this rule in EU legislation and I believe that it is in placed solely to restrict animals moving from Northern Ireland to Scotland. I have urged DARD to do more to ensure that this rule is relaxed.

What angers many farmers is the fact that Northern Ireland meat plants are importing thousands of beef cattle and lambs from Scotland and this is undermining the price paid for livestock finished in Northern Ireland. Farmers need to be able to export good quality store cattle out of Northern Ireland to higher value markets in Scotland. It is vital that there is an immediate change to the export rules for animals going to Scotland.



Jim Allister has also called on DARD to up livestock exports to other Member States. "European officials were in the UK inspecting the controls for the export of cattle to other Member States last November. All indications suggest that this was a positive inspection and no major concerns were raised regarding the controls governing the export of cattle. It is vital that DARD now live up to commitments made by the previous Agricultural Minister Lord Rooker and amend the rules for the export of cattle. Northern Ireland farmers are currently being penalised due to DARD interpreting EU rules for the export of cattle differently than other Member States.

Allister welcomes launch of review into beef sector

Jim Allister MEP has welcomed the launch of the red meat task force and hopes that it can identify ways that will ensure that all sectors of the beef chain make a profit. Jim Allister has however warned that this does not need to be a further report that merely goes through the motions without producing any tangible benefits. Jim Allister has stated that Northern Ireland beef farmers are not fools and they will not continue to produce beef at a loss for much longer.

Jim Allister commented, "Figures clearly show that very few beef farmers within Northern Ireland can produce beef without using their single farm payment. It is vital that efficiencies can be found within the beef chain. I therefore welcome the setting up of the red meat task force and hope that this group can identify ways that will ensure that all sectors of the Northern Ireland beef industry can make a profit. It is good to see that this task force includes all parts of the beef sector including the Government, farmer representatives and meat plant representatives.

"In order to survive I believe that difficult decisions are going to have to be made and these should be identified by this task force. I hope that once the task force has come up with findings, these will be implemented by the industry. There have been too many previous reports that have produced fine words but have not had any benefit for the industry. With the introduction of decoupled subsidies, it can and should not be assumed that farmers continue to produce beef at a loss."

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Allister slams Cairns on refusal of Fishing Aid

Statement by Jim Allister MEP:

"I am appalled by Minister Cairns churlish refusal of Tie-Up Aid for Northern Ireland's whitefish fleet. It is sadly clear that the Minister is on the side of those who want to see our whitefish fleet disappear.

Following the December Council of Ministers meeting in Brussels and its further harsh cuts in whitefish quotas, I warned that our whitefish fleet was in danger of collapse, having radically diminished over recent years from 40 boats to less than 10. I called on Government to show support for the industry and demonstrate its belief in its future by, as a minimum, paying out the modest Tie-Up Aid possible under EU Regulations during the Spring Closure in the Irish Sea. The Minister's refusal to do so, coming on top of Lord Rooker's vindictive decision last year, signals a desire by DARD to see an end to our whitefish industry. They see this as an easy-fix to the issue of reducing cod stocks. Rather than backing the industry and helping it through tough times they help it go under, "Et Tu Dard".



As for Minister Cairns (left) saying he listened carefully to representations, that is so much cant and hypocrisy. On 29th January, the Assembly was due to debate a motion supporting Tie-Up Aid, but before that debate even started DARD had notified its decision to refuse financial support. So much for being prepared to listen, not least to elected representatives."

MEP pursues key fishing issues with President of Fisheries Council

At a meeting of the European Parliament's Fisheries Committee, DUP MEP Jim Allister has pressed German Fisheries Minister, Horst Seehofer, in his capacity as current President of the Council of Fisheries Ministers, on two issues of importance to the Northern Ireland sector.

First, Mr Allister raised his belief that reduced cod stocks has more to do with climate change than over-fishing, as cod move north to colder waters. The Minister announced that in May 2007 he is hosting a Conference in Hamburg to look at the impact of climate change on fishing. Mr Allister welcomed an assurance from the Minister that he would approach the matter with an open mind and stressed to Herr Seehofer the folly of EU ever reducing quota allowances and permitted days at sea if the cause of stock reduction, as many in the sector contend, is climatic rather than fishing-related. Mr Allister said, "I trust that at last the EU will take a serious look at this issue and challenge dubious science which has dominated their thinking for years."



Secondly, the Ulster MEP raised the negative impact on European eel stocks of the harvesting and export of elvers to the Far East. Eels spawn in the Sargasso Sea and the elvers then return to Western Europe, including Lough Neagh, to mature. However, a lucrative trade in elvers is causing disruption of the natural cycle of replenishment, as greedy commercial interest harvest the returning elvers and sell them to China and Japan. In consequence eel stocks in Lough Neagh have radically fallen. The Minister promised to examine the issue and see what steps could be taken. "Clearly", said Mr Allister, "a co-ordinated effort with the Trade Commissioner will be necessary to address this problem, but if it is not faced up to then the European eel industry will continue to be the loser."

250 MILLION EURO

THE EXTRA YEARLY COST OF SPLITTING ONE PARLIAMENT ACROSS 3 CITIES

250 MILLION EURO

22 DAYS TIME WASTED PER PERSON EACH YEAR

250 MILLION EURO

Meeting with the staff of Training for Women Network (TWN) from Northern Ireland, during their recent visit to the European Parliament in Brussels.



Allister defends right of recourse to Capital Punishment

In a debate in the European Parliament, on a motion demanding a global ban on the death penalty, DUP MEP Jim Allister QC defended the right of sovereign democratic states to determine their own criminal sanctions and attacked the arrogance of the EU in seeking to dictate how such states must behave.

In the course of his remarks Jim Allister said:-

"The arrogance of this EU knows no bounds. Not satisfied with dictating to member states that they must not avail of the ultimate deterrent, the death penalty, it now wishes to dictate to the rest of the world. Awful as the fate of the Bulgarian nurses in Libya is, and while this House should be vigorous in protesting their situation, it does not justify us demanding a global ban on the death penalty. Wrongful imprisonment is intolerable, but it doesn't lead rational people to oppose all imprisonment.

No, I say, where there is a transparently fair, human rights compliant judicial process, with a reliable appeal system, then a sovereign nation state is perfectly entitled to deploy the death penalty for capital crimes, if that is the democratically determined will of its people. They, not we, have the right to choose what is right for them."

MPs and MEP sign up to BETTER OFF OUT of the European Union

BETTER OFF OUT, the cross-party campaign for the UK to leave the European Union has gained the support of several DUP MPs and the Party's MEP. They have recently joined what is a campaign attracting support from anti-EU Conservatives, Labour, UKIP and now the DUP.

Affected by the increasing gravity of the situation, Jeffrey Donaldson MP stated, *"I support the Better Off Out Campaign because I believe that the European Union is fast moving towards Federalism and the creation of a European Superstate. This will result in a further loss of British sovereignty, which will herald the end of our parliamentary democracy and curtail many of our hard won freedoms."*



Jim Allister MEP declared, "Only those who relish needless bureaucracy, support the waste of a £5 billion annual subsidy to Brussels, delight in surrendering key national powers to the unelected, and think we should be unable to control our own vital trade policy could possibly think EU membership is good for the UK. Of course we'd be better off out."

As its name suggests, BETTER OFF OUT communicates the positive reasons for being outside the European Union, which Switzerland and Norway have already discovered.

Keep up-to-date with the latest news from Europe at www.jimallister.org

Allister tells Brussels, 'Hands off criminal law!'

MEP Jim Allister has declared his forthright opposition to a proposal from Brussels today that the EU, instead of the member states, should determine what is a criminal offence in the environmental field and what should be the penalty for such offences. Believing strongly in the protection of national sovereignty the Ulster Euro MP and QC described the proposal as “the latest wheeze by Brussels to ever extend its powers at the expense of national control. Of course, environmental crime must be tackled but it is for member states not the unelected Commission to determine offences and penalties.”

In the course of his statement Mr Allister said:-

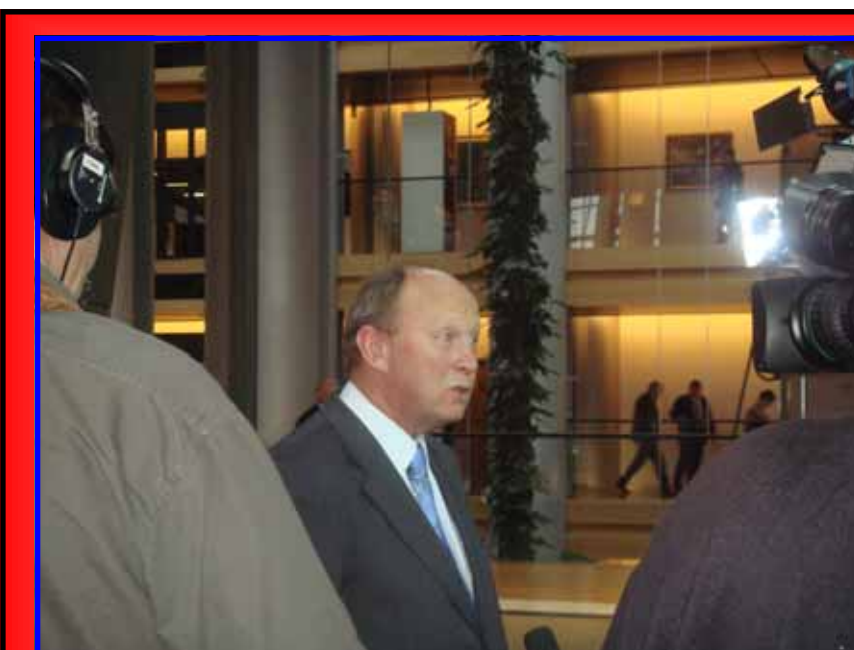
“The European Commission is ready to move into national governments' criminal law, proposing to harmonise what constitutes serious environmental crimes and what the minimum level of penalties should be across the EU.

The proposal emerges in a draft paper introduced today by the Commission. Brussels lists nine sets of offences, such as unlawful treatment of waste or unlawful possession of protected wild plants and animals, that should be considered criminal throughout Europe, with possible punishment ranging from one to ten years' imprisonment.

It is the second time in the EU's legal history that Brussels proposes that national governments will no longer have the full sovereign right to decide what constitutes a crime and what the punishment should be. The first precedent dates back to May 2006 when common rules on counterfeiting were tabled by Brussels' executive body.

Brussels' move into criminal matters was triggered by a landmark ruling on environmental crimes by the European Court of Justice in September 2005, which gave Brussels power to introduce harmonized criminal laws across the EU. The court stated that it is up to the Commission to decide on penal measures in order to make community legislation effective.

Believing that it is the exclusive preserve of national governments and parliaments to direct and determine their own criminal law and penalties, I would vigorously oppose any intrusion into criminal law by the Commission. Criminal sanctions should be a national matter only.”



Jim Allister giving TV interviews in Strasbourg concerning the waste of millions of Euros in making 'Irish' an official language of the EU.

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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!"