



UK can't bankroll more EU enlargement

With Bulgaria and Romania having swelled the ranks of the EU to 27 countries, from 1/1/07, Jim Allister has warned that the UK can't afford to bankroll anymore enlargement.

Speaking in a debate on future enlargement of the EU Ulster MEP Jim Allister attacked the linkage now being made between Enlargement and the Constitution. Enlargement, said Mr Allister, is the latest bandwagon Europhile fanatics have clambered on board in order to try and revive the rejected Constitution.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

"Proponents of the rejected Constitution see further enlargement as a bandwagon to secure implementation of key parts of that Constitution. Hence, the ill-argued but vehemently demanded further assault on national vetoes, a Minister of Foreign Affairs, more powers for the unelected Commission and the expansionist Court of Justice and more competences for the EU.

Enlargement of itself requires none of this but Europhile fanatics like our rapporteurs, devoid of sustainable arguments to overcome popular opposition to the Constitution, have come up with this spurious spin that enlargement demands a Constitution. Neither this EU, nor one bloated by foolishly encompassing Turkey, needs a Constitution.

And all this, with no thought of who would pay. As in the past the expectation is that countries like the UK will happily continue to bankroll this runaway madness. With the EU already costing us 4 billion pounds net per annum, we simply can't afford any more charity."



Jim Allister with Assemblyman Jim Wells in the Strasbourg Chamber of the European Parliament on a recent visit by the South Down MLA and Assembly Deputy Speaker.

Leading for Ulster

Figures published by "Open Europe Blog" show an analysis of the UK's 78 MEPs in terms of their press coverage over the last 6 months. Jim Allister emerges as the clear winner from Northern Ireland and out of all 78 MEPs from across the UK he is ranked 3rd in terms of press contributions and gains the 10th overall ranking when internet publications are counted.

You can view the full results at: http://openeuropeblog.blogspot.com/2006/12/your-mep-hot-or-not_05.html

Fish quota outcome better than last year

The outcome of the Fisheries Council just before Christmas was mixed for Northern Ireland. However, in his response, Jim Allister acknowledged and commended the effort made this year by the Minister David Cairns MP, who, unlike his predecessor, went to Brussels to fight Northern Ireland's corner. **“In consequence we have a better deal than last year,”** said Mr Allister.

“The 17% increase in the prawn quota is essential for what is now the mainstay of our industry. The 15% increase in plaice quota is also welcome. However, set against these are cuts in sole, cod, whiting and haddock. Once again the cod quota is diminished by 20%, so that year on year it is a mere shadow of its former self. On top of this we face the 8th year of spring closure under the misnamed and patently failing “Cod Recovery Scheme.”

A key concern continues to be the future of our whitefish fleet. It has been devastated over recent years and these further cuts add to the misery.

The reduction in “days at sea”, though substantially less than the Commission was seeking, is still a blow, ameliorated somewhat by the extra days of fishing obtainable by participating in the voluntary Irish Sea Discard Project. I commend the local Anglo-North Irish FPO and the IFO in promoting this initiative, which disproves the slur of some that fishermen are disinterested in conservation and better fishing practices.

In light of the severe pressure on the whitefish fleet, Mr Allister has called on the Minister to sanction compensation payments through operating ‘Tie-Up Aid’ for the 10 weeks of the spring closure in the Irish Sea.

Last year there was a row when Lord Rooker claimed aid, having been paid in 2004 and 2005, was not permitted for a third year under EU legislation. Mr Allister disagreed and proved, through confirmation from Fisheries Commissioner, Dr Borg, that DARD was misinterpreting the Regulation and that no such bar on further aid existed. Nonetheless, in a move described by the MEP as “vindicative and churlish”, Lord Rooker still refused aid in 2006, causing great anger among the affected fishermen.



Commenting on the situation this year, Mr Allister said:-

“The whitefish sector is in dire straits, made worse by further savage quota cuts. Already the fleet is a mere fraction of its former size, the sector urgently needs a signal of tangible support. Many believe there is an agenda in Government to totally liquidate the whitefish fleet. Granting Tie-up aid would send a powerful signal of government support. The scheme is far from perfect, but at least it pumps some much-needed cash into the industry to tide it over a very difficult spell.”

Welcome extension to Farm Nutrient Management Scheme

Jim Allister commented, **“Over the last number of months I have lobbied various Commissioners in Brussels to ensure that there was an extension to the Farm Nutrient Management Scheme. I am glad that the European Commission has finally approved to extend the FNMS deadline for the completion of works to 31 December 2008. It is vital that farmers within Northern Ireland are given sufficient time to construct additional slurry storage prior to the enforcement of more stringent environmental legislation.**

“It is important that DARD make changes to the Farm Nutrient Management Scheme to ensure that there are no further delays to farmers being able to commence work under the scheme. There have been commitments already given that additional funding will be allocated to the scheme once an extension has been approved. It is time that DARD allocates additional finance to the scheme and ensures that all farmers who applied to the scheme up to the end of March 2006 can get approval to commence work.

“If DARD does not resolve the current funding and administration difficulties associated with the scheme I fear that 2 years will not be long enough to carry out necessary work on farms.”



Allister's broadside attack on Irish Language Bill

MEP Jim Allister has sent a probing letter to Maria Eagle MP, Culture Minister, on the content of the consultation document on the proposed Irish Language Bill. In his letter, which is only a preliminary response, Mr Allister raises issues, including:

- how HMG was able to make a policy commitment to support a Bill without any equality proofing or financial proofing of the proposition, suggesting the subsequent alleged equality proofing is fraudulent and describing its conclusion that the Bill will *"improve good relations"* and *"have only positive impacts"*, as **"laughable"**. The MEP has made a FOI request for all documentation giving rise to the commitment made in the St Andrews Agreement.
- Why within the consultation document there is misinformation and deliberate inflating of the number of Irish speakers in NI.
- Whether policing would be included in what the document identifies as *"the need for public bodies to ensure that they would have a sufficient number of Irish speaking staff to enable the provision of services in Irish"* and *"the need for fluency for frontline services"*. Why if policing is included, was this "hot potato" avoided in the document and what are the implications, including on employment qualifications, asks the MEP.

The full text of Mr Allister's letter is available on www.jimallister.org

Allister attacks ESB Monopoly

Speaking during a debate in Strasbourg on EU energy policy, DUP MEP Jim Allister attacked the continuing monopoly of state-owned ESB in the Republic of Ireland, citing it as an obstacle to a competitive trade in energy throughout the British Isles.



In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

"You can't have an open market in energy and a workable policy of energy-sharing without transparent competition. The Commission's Green Paper recognises this. Yet on the island of Ireland, as part of a wider British Isles and European project, the opportunities for a free and fair market are being stifled by the state domination of the Republic of Ireland's market by the ESB. Its near monopoly on both generation and distribution must be broken, as it is keeping others out of the market and smothering competition. The Dublin Government has been tardy in moving to break this monopoly. I call today on the Commission to be more robust in demanding delivery of this necessary change.

With monopoly goes subsidised inefficiency and high prices and so it would be for the consumers in my constituency, Northern Ireland, if we became a minority part of an energy market dominated by an unreformed ESB. That we cannot have."

Commenting further Mr Allister said, "For a truly competitive market in electricity on the island of Ireland two things are required: Viridian and other UK businesses must have fair access to the ROI market with ESB not simply allowed to expand its dominant position, both in generating and supply, into Northern Ireland and thus structural changes will be necessary to dismantle ESB's dominance and, secondly, further interconnection with GB must be promoted so that a truly British Isles-wide and Europe linked energy approach is secured?"

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

“Sinn Fein coat-trailing again”

Recently Sinn Fein held an ‘anti-collusion’ event in Brussels, which Jim Allister described as a, ‘coat-trailing exercise’, based on outlandish claims about collusion in the Loughanisland Murders. Mr Allister said the event showed how insincere Sinn Fein is about moving forward.

“Its preference for wallowing in the mire of finger-pointing at the security forces shows nothing is really changing in Sinn Fein/IRA. They expect everyone else to overlook and forget their gruesome past, but insist on spurious muck-raking against the security forces.

The Loughanisland murders, like all terrorist crimes, were indeed a terrible outrage, whose perpetrators deserve to be convicted and severely punished - through the judicial process which Sinn Fein refuses to support. But, of course, if convicted, thanks to the Belfast Agreement of Sinn Fein and others, they would walk free, like so many other terrorists before them.

Loughanisland, of course, also features infamously in our troubled past for another reason. It was there, less than 2 years ago, that the IRA's Northern Bank robbery squad held hostage one of the staff and kidnapped his wife. Base hypocrites that they are, Sinn Fein came to Brussels demanding transparency on the Loughanisland killings, but to this day deny ownership of their IRA's own handiwork at Loughanisland in the Northern Bank robbery.”

More Sinn Fein hypocrisy

At home Sinn Fein demands access for itself, as of right, into the heart of government, without the necessity to respect the democratic state and the rule of law.

Yet, in the European Parliament, in a debate on the accession of Bulgaria, de Brun voted for an amendment from her hard left GUE/NGL Group which expressed concern that parties that “do not respect the democratic state” and “the rule of law” were to be permitted to contest Bulgarian elections. The amendment was in the following terms:-

*“Notes with concern the political presence and electoral participation of political forces **that do not respect the democratic state, the rule of law and equality of ethnical minorities and which will take part in the upcoming election for the Bulgarian members of the European Parliament in May 2007.**”*

How can Sinn Fein in Brussels support the denial of even participating in elections to parties which do not support the democratic state and the rule of law, and, yet, in Belfast demand for themselves full participation in Government, even though **they** do not respect the democratic state or support the rule of law of the state which they demand a right to govern? Not for the first time, Sinn Fein stands exposed as base hypocrites.



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 my 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.

Allister chides Ahern

Recently Bertie Ahern, spoke to the European Parliament on the future of Europe. Speaking during the ensuing debate, Jim Allister chided him that last time he spoke to the Parliament in 2004, he boasted that by November 2006 the EU Constitution would be fully operational. How wrong he had been! In the course of his remarks, Mr Allister said:-



"Mr President, to what do we owe this visit of the Irish Prime Minister? Could it be connected to the upcoming Irish election to allow Mr Ahern to parade as a Statesman on the European scene? One wonders!

Last time Mr Ahern was here, at the end of his country's Presidency of the Council, he was celebrating having overseen agreement between the Heads of Government on the EU Constitution. He readily basked in the adulation of the Europhile fanatics in this House. By now, November 2006, he and they assured us the Constitution would be in full operation. But, as often, they reckoned without the most important component of democratic politics, the views of the people.

As the Constitution floundered on the rocks of rejection in France and Holland, Mr Ahern - though an avowed Euro-enthusiast - and my Government in the UK lost their nerve, hurriedly abandoned the prospect of the people of the British Isles giving their verdict by postponing the promised referenda. Now, he returns to again tell us of the marvels of European integration and that the rejected Constitution must be revived. It is a stale message about a moribund Constitution from one who may well soon be judged by the Irish electorate as a stale politician."

Allister speaks on Groundwater Directive

In the European Parliament during the debate on the new Groundwater Directive, Jim Allister MEP attacked the failure of the Commission to deliver its promise of better regulation, by pointing out that there were now four separate Directives, instead of one consolidated measure, dealing with water quality.

In the course of his remarks, Mr Allister said:-

"The Commission, Council and Parliament have all talked much of better regulation and removing duplication. Yet, here, we have a new Groundwater Directive - not to replace but to supplement, and yes, in places, duplicate, provisions in the existing Groundwater Directive, the Water Framework Directive and the Nitrates Directive.

The over-regulated farmer, for example, instead of having one clear cut directive to comply with has aspects of four to contend with. So far from the promised rationalisation of legislation we have proliferation.

As for the assurance that loss of income suffered by farmers as a result of a restriction on farming practices can be offset under the Rural Development Regulation, that is no comfort in a country where a large part of the funding for rural development is coming from farmers themselves, through top-slicing their Single Farm Payments."

New Lottery Funding launched

The Big Lottery Fund has launched its new "Improving Community Buildings programme. As the name suggests the programme has a highly capital works slant and is designed to make grants to "voluntary or community organisations, charitable not-for-profit companies and social enterprises wishing to refurbish or modernise their community venue in order to increase the level of community use and enhance the quality of the services provided". There is £5million available in the programme which is now on-line.

For further information contact the Big Lottery Fund Information Team: Telephone (028) 9055 1455. Our office will also be willing to provide any help and assistance we can.

MEP responds to possible Barroso invitation

"I note indications that the EU Commission President may invite the Northern Ireland Party Leaders to Brussels to discuss financial matters in the context of devolution.

I have two comments:

1. Such a joint visit would be premature in advance of arriving at satisfactory arrangements and circumstances making devolution possible.
2. If EU funding is to have a role to play, then it is imperative that it is directed towards solid infrastructure projects and not wasted on soft PEACE-type ventures. Northern Ireland's infrastructure, in terms of roads and water and sewerage, disastrously lost out on direct EU aid under the former Cohesion Policy (because the qualifying criteria was national, not regional), while the Republic of Ireland secured 2B for just such projects. Throughout this period our priority was security spending, because of the IRA terror campaign, and so our infrastructure was grossly neglected.

Thus, our pressing need today is for a massive injection into infrastructure spending, which will itself generate economic activity and make Northern Ireland altogether more attractive for foreign investment. It is to this that any EU aid should be directed. Such would require fundamental amendment of the current Cohesion Fund Regulation. Simply throwing more soft money at the PEACE Programme will bring no appreciable and lasting benefit to Northern Ireland and its people."



More costs for farmers

The DUP has expressed concern regarding aspects of the DARD consultation on cost sharing within the agricultural industry. Jim Allister MEP believes that DARD needs to demonstrate to the farming community that it is at least trying to eradicate diseases within the agriculture sector before it can expect farmers to take on additional costs.

Jim Allister commented, "Farmers within Northern Ireland have always taken disease control seriously. The farming industry is more than happy to work closely with the Government in both preventing diseases from entering the country and eradicating diseases. It is vitally important that DARD takes steps to control disease. In the consultation it is clear that the proposed policy is an outcome from the 2001 Foot and Mouth outbreak in the UK. The controls in place at our ports and airports are still inadequate to prevent Foot and Mouth being reintroduced into the country.

"I believe that the current consultation is designed as a cost cutting exercise rather than a genuine desire to work closer with the industry. Farmers have already taken on additional costs in controlling disease through pre movement brucellosis testing. The farming industry cannot afford to take on additional costs."

France fined for Beef Ban



The European Court has upheld a decision to fine France for its illegal ban on British beef following the BSE scare in 2001, though the original fine was reduced.

Commenting Jim Allister said, "I welcome this news, but regret that the fine will disappear into Brussels' coffers, whereas it should be made available specifically to promote British beef in Europe, as this was the sector that suffered loss from the unwarranted French ban."

Allister backs FSB campaign against European red tape

Jim Allister, DUP Member of the European Parliament has thrown his full support behind the five point campaign of the Federation for Small Businesses recently launched by the organisation. The campaign is aimed at ensuring the German Presidency of the EU is characterised by a reduction in regulation and bureaucracy which is having an adverse impact on businesses here.

Jim Allister said:

“The Federation of Small Business is the largest organisation representing business in Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom: when they speak they are speaking for thousands of people who provide millions of jobs in our country. Their five point list of aims for the German presidency of Europe are therefore of the utmost relevance and importance. The FSB’s five points if taken up during the German presidency would indeed serve to eliminate some unnecessary red-tape and ensure that businesses throughout the Union begin to operate on an equal and level playing field.

The five points are:

1. To set a target to cut the burden of red tape for businesses at EU and national level by 25%.
2. All legal proposals should be annulled if not passed by the end of a European Parliamentary Term.
3. Deadlines should be set in the European Parliament and Council for the simplification of existing regulations.
4. An independent review panel should be created to ensure the quality of all regulatory impact assessments.
5. Member states should be compelled to provide ‘correlation tables’ to make the implementation of EU rules transparent across all 27 nations.



Jim Allister with a group of pupils at Slemish College, Ballymena during a recent visit to the school when he addressed 6th Form pupils.



Jim Allister with Orange Order leaders, Robert Saulters and Drew Nelson, discussing the outcome of the RDC Rural Halls Scheme in which many Orange Halls have been successful in obtaining funding.

Mr Allister had spearheaded the campaign for this fund and supported several applications.

Boat owners hit by EU tax hike

Recreational boat owners face a hike in fuel costs after the Commission refused to renew the UK's exemption from paying a higher rate of tax on the red diesel used in such boats. Jim Allister, who had lobbied for retention of the derogation expressed great disappointment that the EU was not prepared to listen and persisted with this higher rate of tax, inflicting great damage on the pleasure craft industry.

Bulgarian and Romanian migrant workers

Following the accession of Bulgaria and Romania The Capital Economic survey forecast that up to 60,000 from the EU's newest countries will come to the UK in 2007, despite strict rules on work permits. After the 2004 Enlargement an "open house" policy was operated by the UK and 600,000 migrant workers have flowed in. City forecaster Capital Economics has predicted unemployment will rise over the next two years as foreign workers continue to flock to the UK.

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