



Allister pummels de Brun in Strasbourg

In a debate in the European Parliament in Strasbourg on EU PEACE funding, Traditional Unionist MEP, Jim Allister, did not spare the report's author, Barbara de Brun. Describing the report as one "of verbiage, not substance", he drew attention to the irony of an IRA/Sinn Fein MEP being a rapporteur on peace, considering the victims needlessly made such by the IRA. He continued to note her failure to even refer to the unacceptable disadvantage suffered by the Unionist community in the distribution of PEACE funding and paid tribute to the security forces, not the EU, as the deliverers of peace.



In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

"This is a report of verbiage, not substance, just as much PEACE Funding was wasted on froth.

The irony of an IRA/Sinn Fein MEP being rapporteur on a report on PEACE funding will not be lost on thousands in Northern Ireland whom her wicked organisation made victims, through its pernicious terrorist campaign. Its no surprise she can produce a report talking about a peace process without a single blushing reference, or scintilla of regret, as to how we came to need peace - because of her IRA's decades of terror!



Nor, am I surprised she makes no mention of one of the gross failures of the PEACE Programme, namely the inequality in distribution between the two communities in Northern Ireland, with the Protestant/Unionist community not having had its fair share - not something, of course, likely to concern Ms de Brun.

Finally, let me place on record that the relative peace which we enjoy in Northern Ireland today, is primarily due, not to any EU PEACE Programme, but to the remarkable tenacity, courage and sacrifice of our marvellous security forces, who faced down the IRA terror which robbed us of peace for so long."

Notable quotes

Outgoing First Minister, Ian Paisley, has excelled himself in his last days in office.

During the Investment Conference he referred to Marty the Terrorist as "my friend"!

Then he was quoted in an Irish Times interview as saying, *"We're not going to have a united Ireland within 50 years or maybe 100 years but then I'll not be here anyway, so it doesn't matter."*

McGuinness recently gave his assessment by declaring Ian Paisley had done more to advance

"national reconciliation" (SF code for Irish unification) than dissident republicans!

Need we say anymore?



MEP pays tribute to Robert Dunlop

"Robert Dunlop, like his brother Joey before him, was an iconic giant in his sport. His achievements brought great credit to him and his native land of Northern Ireland. His personal modesty contrasted with his status as an international motorcycle racing star. The Province-wide outpouring of sympathy confirms the deep affection in which he was held."



Even within Europe I have been struck by the number of foreign MEPs who have mentioned his passing to me and knew of his remarkable road racing achievements. Naturally, our heart goes out to his family, particularly his widow, three sons and grieving mother."

Allister warns against creeping Irish Unity process

Statement by Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister:

"Now that nationalism has the process to deliver an all Ireland in place - namely, the harmonisation which flows from the Belfast Agreement - we are beginning to see greater boldness and articulation by pan nationalism of its unification agenda. The last few days have provided interesting insights.

We've had both Durkan and McGuinness rattling the unification sabre. Durkan, with closer alignment with Fianna Fail underway, has been talking about coming political change - indicating even he doesn't accept the Belfast Agreement as a settlement, but as a staging post. McGuinness - who some foolishly told us had "bought into British rule" - has been making his agenda as deputy First Minister very clear. Recently he told an audience in the Guildhall, ***"The march towards Irish reunification is unstoppable. I have no***

doubt about that...There are unionists who believed that if you give power to nationalists it means the end of the union as they know it and they are absolutely right," he said.

Sinn Féin president, Gerry Adams also told those at the meeting of the significant progress made for republicanism since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement: ***"We always said the Good Friday Agreement was...transitional. It has allowed us to develop our all-Ireland approach"***, he said.

It is clear, therefore, that pan nationalism is exploiting the positions of governmental control given to them to assiduously and insidiously advance Irish unity. As more and more the all-island agenda unfolds under Belfast Agreement devolution, I believe increasingly unionists will come to recognize the creeping Irish unity process which I have constantly warned is underway."

Absentee MPs

Recently in the House of Commons we had another example of how dual mandates are short-changing the Unionist electorate. Quite appallingly both Peter Robinson MP and Jeffrey Donaldson MP were absent for the key votes in the embryology debate, and Sammy Wilson only made it for two of the votes.



These were vital issues of prime moral and public importance. If some DUP MPs were too busy to attend, then they are too busy.

Coming as this does on the heels of missing several key votes on the Lisbon Treaty Ratification Bill, it is clear that clinging to dual, even triple, mandates is robbing Ulster of full and effective representation.

No justice in Sinn Fein/DUP run Ulster

Speaking at the formation of a new branch of Traditional Unionist Voice in Enniskillen MEP Jim Allister hit out at the perversion of justice in Northern Ireland.

"The recent documentary on the Enniskillen bomb reminded us just how unfit Martin McGuinness is to hold the position of joint First Minister. If, as some Unionists foolishly claim, Republicans now support the police why is McGuinness not cooperating with the PSNI to obtain justice for those who were killed and injured in the bombing?

By allowing unrepentant terrorists into government and claiming that they support the rule of law, while giving a by ball on information on past crimes in this county and throughout our Province, they have granted terrorists a de facto amnesty, both judicial and political.

The utter madness of current DUP policy was recently illustrated when local DUP councillor Bert Johnston welcomed the appointment of convicted terrorist Sean Lynch to Fermanagh DPP as someone who could bring "individual experience" to the role of overseeing the work of the police!

"Do not forget that Lynch did not even pay the price for his crimes. Because of the prisoner releases under the terms of the iniquitous Belfast Agreement - an Agreement now enthusiastically embraced by the DUP - Lynch did not serve his

full sentence for attempting to launch a landmine attack on an Army patrol in 1986.

But one does not have to go back to the 1980s to find evidence of Republican blood lust. Next week the Independent Monitoring Commission will publish a report which will cover the brutal IRA murder of Paul Quinn. The IMC are already on record as saying that there was IRA involvement in the killing. Should they repeat this next week the moment of truth will have arrived for the DUP. Will the DUP Chairman, Lord Morrow, follow through on his Assembly speech agreeing the IRA murdered Quinn? Or, will he join Jeffrey Donaldson in running round looking for the Army Council minute book to find a let-out clause for the Provos?

Sadly, the DUP has already presided over the corruption of government and justice by elevating terrorists to the highest positions in the land and welcoming them onto DPPs.

Will they also turn a blind eye to this vicious murder by the military wing of their partner in government? I confidently predict, self interest, will ensure they will twist, turn and prevaricate enough to literally let the Provos off with murder."



DUP Minister's attitude to IRA Monument Appalling

Traditional Unionist Jim Allister has attacked the failure of a DUP Minister to take action against an illegal IRA monument in Castlewellan. Commenting the MEP said:

"In mid-March I wrote to the Minister of the Environment, Arlene Foster, drawing her attention to an illegal IRA monument which was being re-built on ground owned by Down District Council. No Planning Permission had been sought nor exists for the venture. I therefore urged her to ensure that a stop notice was served immediately."

"The Minister has replied saying that a stop notice can only be served where there is "a definite imperative and clearly established planning merit

in doing so. I am appalled. I doubt if the small Protestant community of Castlewellan would share the Minister's analysis that there is no "imperative" to act on this matter. Nor do I accept that there is an absence of clearly established planning merits to act. This is an illegal monument constructed without planning permission. That alone means the Minister can, and should act immediately. I have therefore written to the Minister again demanding that she reconsider her decision to sit on her hands."

"The Minister's apparent disinterest is all the more offensive when one considers the three young UDR men - one of them a Roman Catholic - murdered by the IRA just outside the village in 1980".

Article by Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister for EP Magazine

The fact that Northern Ireland is the only region in the whole of the EU - indeed in the whole of western democratic civilisation - where the electorate is, by law, denied the democratic right to ever vote a party out of office, is testimony in itself to the undemocratic ethos and practice of the Belfast Agreement.

This assault on fundamental democratic principles is the centre piece of the iniquitous Belfast Agreement. It's called "mandatory coalition" and requires every party, of any significant size, to be guaranteed, as of right, and for ever, a place in government. It is in place for one reason only, namely, as a quid pro quo for stopping daily killing, to guarantee IRA/Sinn Fein - those who subjected Northern Ireland to 30 years of indescribable terrorism - a place right at the heart of government of a state they do not accept and are dedicated to destroy. Needless to say, the Belfast Agreement makes no provision for an Opposition within the structures of government in Northern Ireland. Thus, today, Northern Ireland has the most undemocratic structures of anywhere in the EU. Hence, my unbending opposition to the new regime at Stormont.

To some it might seem cuddly and enlightened to have unrepentant terrorists at the heart of your government. To me it is an obscenity!

Recently, we had the EU Task Force for Northern Ireland, set up by President Barroso, report its findings. Like many EU presentations, when you strip away the fine verbiage, it signified little new. Certainly, no new money is headed our way, at best it unwraps some of the mystery surrounding already available EU programmes. I've no doubt the Chuckle Brothers - as Joint First Ministers, Paisley and McGuinness, are scornfully referred to - missed a trick when they had President Barroso in Belfast, at the height of the new government's honeymoon. Just as President Delors effectively made policy on the hoof for Northern Ireland when he agreed the PEACE Programme - which did not fit within prevailing budget and policy provisions - so Barroso should have been strong-armed or charmed - whichever it took - into an Infrastructure Package for Northern Ireland.



The case was overwhelming. Northern Ireland never qualified for the serious infrastructural aid under the Cohesion Fund, because of the national qualifying criteria. In consequence of first call in national expenditure being necessarily on security funding, as we fought off the IRA's terror campaign, infrastructure expenditure suffered, leaving a legacy of under-spend on roads and water & sewage. If the EU really wanted to help Northern Ireland then a special time-limited package of infrastructural aid could have done more than anything else to bolster our economy and competitiveness. A Task Force focused on this would have been a real boost.

To the outsider things may look good in Northern Ireland. Yes, and apart from the perversion of democracy, things are better. It's good my constituents are not dying on a daily basis because of terrorism, though if such is only so long as we tolerate IRA/Sinn Fein in our government, then we are being blackmailed as well as conned. If IRA/Sinn Fein is irreversibly committed to peaceful means, then why do they still cling to their wicked Army Council? If they are genuinely supporting the rule of law then why have they done nothing to secure justice for McCartney sisters, who so impressed us all in the European Parliament. And, why did Sinn Fein's military wing murder Paul Quinn just a few months ago? This is not how truly democratic organisations behave. Nor is mandatory coalition how any democracy should be governed.

IMC whitewash won't do

The Independent Monitoring Commission's report amounts to a total whitewash designed to let the IRA's political wing and their partners in the DUP off the hook. It is preposterous to argue that because the murder wasn't supposedly "sanctioned" then it wasn't an IRA killing. No one will find an IRA Army Council Minute sanctioning specific murders.

The report is a complete insult to victims and offers no protection to future victims because it gives terrorists the green light to operate as they like as long as the leadership is supposedly kept in the dark.

The IMC have conceded that IRA men killed Paul Quinn and that makes it an IRA murder. No ifs, buts or maybes.

For months we were told by senior Sinn Fein/IRA figures that their movement had nothing to do with it. On 22 October Gerry Adams said; "I do not believe that there was any republican involvement in this murder." Similarly, Cormor Murphy described rumors of "any republican involvement" as "wild and baseless allegations" on 25th October.

It is now clear that this was patently untrue.

Although the IMC attempt to sanitize the leadership even they concede that: "Amongst those involved were people who had in various ways been associated with the PIRA at a local level, including as members of the organisation."

Doubtless those who partner the IRA's political wing in government will seize upon the attempt to let the Provos away with murder.

However, back in October of last year Jeffrey Donaldson and I appeared on Radio Ulster. Responding to probing from myself he said the following:

"I speak on behalf of my party. If the IRA is involved - whether it's individuals or - and there was a gang involved here - if there were a number of IRA members involved in this murder then that's the actions of the IRA. We are not here to dance around this issue".

It has now been officially confirmed that Paul Quinn's murder was, by Mr Donaldson's standards, the actions of the IRA. This demands immediate action. However, it seems that justice for Paul Quinn, just like justice for Robert McCartney, will come a poor second to maintaining terrorist inclusive government.

DUP comments pitiful

Gregory Campbell's reaction to the IMC report is a pitiful commentary on just how far the DUP have departed from traditional unionist principles. There is little point in the DUP calling for the disbandment of the Army Council while excusing the IRA murder of Paul Quinn. Hiding behind the fig leaf that their partners in government were

not "*organisationally involved*" just isn't good enough.

Who would have thought the day would have come when DUP MPs would be queuing up to wheel out excuses for the IRA!

Allister reflects on One Year of Devolution

Courtesy of Belfast Agreement devolution we have seen a serious degradation in democratic values and principles in Northern Ireland.

A young man can be murdered by South Armagh IRA and his killers' political wing continues unscathed in government, while those who once made careers out of their toughness on IRA/Sinn Fein are tellingly mute. Alas, it is now more important to cling to office than oppose the obscenity of a party in government with both a military wing and an Army Council. What's the death of Paul Quinn compared to the riches of joint government with IRA/Sinn Fein?

Of course, it should be no surprise that Belfast Agreement devolution doesn't even blush at murder, because it is built on the corruption of decency and democracy. The monstrosity of "mandatory coalition" emasculates basic democratic practices, like the right to vote a party out of office or even to have an Opposition. So don't be surprised when murder, like the Northern Bank robbery, becomes a mere local difficulty.

Much was promised, but a year into devolution what benefits have we seen? After 30 years of neglect under Direct Rule, it may come as a surprise to some that we haven't seen a single piece of novel or substantive legislation pass through Stormont. Indeed, we've seen some spectacular examples of dysfunctionality. Consider the debacle over the long promised Victims' Commissioner. Unable to agree, we are to get, at enhanced expense, a dolly mixture Commission, but, most critical of all, they are to persist with the offensive Direct Rule definition of victim, which equates the terrorist bomber with his victim. The DUP tell us they control Stormont, so why is this not being changed? Because of the Sinn Fein veto, of course. So, just like under Direct Rule, Michelle Williamson has identical status to Kelly, the Shankill bomber who made her a victim! Is this what delivering for victims looks like?

But it's comforting to see devolution has brought such certainty and stability to education and isn't it wonderful not to have to pay water charges. Sorry, I'm reading what it says on the tin, not what we've actually got. Our education system is in chaos! And, we're going to pay for our water



after all. Whatever happened to the huge financial package the DUP promised, as the prerequisite to devolution that would save us from such charges? Like Sinn Fein's support for policing and the rule of law it was more hype than reality.

ut, haven't we been saved from the dreaded Irish Language Act? Those who fondly think so should take a look at Section 28D of the NI Act - an amendment inserted by the St Andrews Bill, if you please - which places a statutory duty on the Executive to "adopt a strategy setting out how it proposes to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language". Also, don't forget the upcoming Bill of Rights which may well enunciate linguistic rights and which will be immune from any Assembly veto.

On daily issues of importance to ordinary citizens I can't say the Assembly has brought great benefit. Take our hard-pressed fishing sector, ravaged by quota cuts and soaring fuel costs. They pleaded for help and with a response that would have done Lord Rooker proud, all Minister Gildernew would come up with was £276 per boat, even though EU rules allow her to pay 7500 euros. Likewise in farming, where the all-island agenda seems more important than anything else.

And then, what of the quality of government? With our bloated coterie of 16 ministers, it's hard to imagine something worthwhile hasn't been achieved - like a cap on manufacturing rates - but, frankly, as a senior foreign journalist, who recently visited Stormont, observed, the performance there is often amateurish. I won't pretend to be impressed by many of our ministers and committee chairmen, right from the top down. Poor as many Direct Rule ministers were, at least most could read out the right answer to the question asked and few floundered in the farce of "minded decisions"!

MEP questions delivery on Human Rights

Speaking the European Parliament's annual debate on Human Rights abuses throughout the world, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister questioned just how serious the EU is in delivering change, suggesting trade considerations were often more important.

Pointing to China and India, as countries the EU is wooing for trade, but each with appalling human rights records, Mr Allister asked if their trade mattered more to us than their repression.

The Ulster Euro MP also attacked the use of EU development aid to promote abortion, particularly in Africa.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-
"Is this debate just an annual ritual to preen our human rights conscience, or are we serious in the EU about forcing real change by countries who are serial abusers? Yes, the EU protests, but is our action measured in inverse proportion to the trading importance of those we target? Take India and China, both countries we are wooing for trade, just how serious are

we in pushing the human rights agenda. Why do our trade agreements not have real human rights teeth? Is the truth that trade matters more to us than repression?

I look at India with its caste-based discrimination, its appalling record on bonded labour and sex trafficking and widespread religious freedom abuses, and then I discover that all we have is an ad hoc dialogue with India and the absence of meaningful engagement on human rights issues. Little wonder things are not improving.

I must also say, sometimes our focus is skewed. The EU presses hard on a rights agenda, including promotion of abortion, even where it offends the local culture, as in Kenya where EU funded NGOs used the money for funding abortions in breach of local custom and law. Shouldn't our focus be on fundamental rights and our development money better employed helping in food and water provision than in pedaling our own agenda, even under the guise of a health policy."

Single Electricity Market not working for Northern Ireland

Jim Allister, following a recent visit to Lafarge Cement Ltd (Blue Circle) in Cookstown - one of Northern Ireland's biggest consumers of electricity - has said the Single Electricity Market (SEM) is not working for NI business, with prices continuing to spiral, producing an ever-widening gap with GB. "The all-island energy policy may be reducing prices in the Republic, but here in Northern Ireland our manufacturers are paying more than ever", declared the MEP.

In a statement following his discussions in Cookstown, Mr Allister said:-

"With great trumpeting we were told the SEM and all-island energy policy would produce great benefits. The facts tell a very different story. In 2005 a large consumer, like Lafarge, was paying on average 4.07p per unit, while its counterpart in GB was paying 3.92p, today in GB a company will pay on average 4.87p, but Lafarge, for example, are paying 8.57p, a 76% premium over the GB rate. In GB the Cookstown plant's consumption would cost £2M less per annum! This is outrageous and is crippling our competitiveness.

We were told the all-island energy market was in

our interests and would reduce prices. It has done no such thing. In large measure this is because the ESB's monopoly situation was not adequately addressed. We do not have a truly competitive market in operation. The SEM has de facto de-coupled us further from lower GB prices, without providing real competition. The lack of competition is such that recently when Lafarge was embarking on negotiations for supply, NIE didn't even bother to bid - suggesting much too cosy an arrangement exists with ESB.

At present in the Industry Committee of the European Parliament there is a proposal demanding that generation and transmission of electricity should be totally unbundled. This has my support. I trust it will force the Commission to be more robust in its approach. Locally, the DETI Minister needs to revisit the workings of the all-island energy policy which he embraced a few months ago.

Securing inward investment is all very good and necessary, but if local manufacturers are being crippled by run-away electricity costs, then what future have they got? This issue requires hands-on attention."

MEP calls for more Protestant Students at Magee

Having raised concerns about the low intake of Protestant students at Ulster University's Magee Campus, Jim Allister recently accepted an invitation to visit the campus in Londonderry and discuss the situation with the Vice-Chancellor Prof Richard Barnett and the Provost, Prof Jim Allen.

Speaking after what he described as a profitable meeting, Jim Allister said:-

"I am grateful for the opportunity to explore with the key personnel in Magee the problem of Protestant under-representation. Some years ago only 10% of the student body was Protestant. Whereas this has now reached 17%, it is still far below par for a campus drawing students from across the Province. The reasons for this deficit lay at the heart of my discussions. I was keen to understand what pro-active steps Magee is taking to dissipate its "cold house" perception.



I welcome moves to promote the campus more widely among State schools and the agreement of a "political protocol" with the Student's Union to ban the use of Irish tricolours at stalls etc on Fresher's Day. Such had been a problem with Sinn Fein activists and had created a distinct chill factor for non-republican students. I trust the university will be vigorous in implementing this protocol.

Recognising my own responsibility as an elected representative and spokesman for unionism, I would take this opportunity to encourage Protestant school leavers to actively consider Magee. It is a campus with a rich academic history, which offers a wide range of courses, none of which should be thought off-limits for Unionist students. The opportunities which it offers should be grasped and, therefore, I would encourage more Protestant students to apply. I want to see the present 17% uptake radically increased till a truly cross-community mix is attained, both in students and staff.

In terms of securing its future and academic achievement, I did express to the Vice-Chancellor my reservations about the suggested link-up with Letterkenny Institute of Technology. Not only must the impact on Magee's attempt to attract more unionist students be considered, but any perceived down-grading of academic pursuit could be detrimental."

MEP says slow-burn Destruction of Academic Selection must be Rejected

"Ruane's latest wheeze requires to be rejected. It amounts to nothing more than slow-burn destruction of academic selection. It is designed to get her to the same ideological destination - the destruction of our grammar schools and reduction of education standards to the lowest common denominator.

The shamble brought to our



education system by Sinn Fein worsens by the day. Parents are entitled to certainty. All they are getting is increasing misery and destabilisation. If this was a democratic government, then the Executive majority would prevail and order would replace disorder, but, alas, this is what you get when you pervert democracy and embrace a Marxist inclined party at the heart of government."



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.

Allister welcomes EU Commission's commitment to examine definition of 'victim'

MEP Jim Allister, who has long campaigned against the definition of “victim” in Northern Ireland as anyone affected by “a conflict-related incident”, because it equates the innocent victim with the perpetrator of terrorism, has welcomed a response from the EU Commission on the subject.

Mr Allister had been pressing the Commission to take a view on the compatibility of the definition in the Victims & Survivors Order (NI) 2006 with the principles enunciated in EU Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA. In a written answer Commissioner Barrot has revealed that Brussels is commissioning a study on “Member States’ legislation, national policies, practices and approaches concerning the victims of crime”, which should be published in January 2009 and that thereafter the Commission plans a full

review of victim’s rights. Commissioner Barrot has pledged, in Written Answer E-1897/08EN, that the specific issue, raised by the MEP, of equivalence between victim and perpetrator will be considered in the context of that review.

Commenting Mr Allister said, “I had hoped that the Stormont Assembly would have put right the great wrong of equating victim with perpetrator, but the veto held by Sinn Fein over legislative change soon put paid to that. Thus this obscenity continues, with no attempt to change it in the recent Victims Commission legislation. I’m not one to place great faith in the European Commission, but at least it has committed to examine the issue. I trust it will respond positively and in this regard I would urge innocent victims’ groups to lobby Commissioner Barrot accordingly.”

Allister slams Executive for snubbing fishermen

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has slammed DARD Minister Michelle Gildernew for her failure to provide any meaningful assistance to local fishermen to ease the crisis caused by rocketing fuel costs.

The MEP said,
“I condemn the Minister and her Department for snubbing our fishermen during this time of financial crisis within the industry, by failing to offer up to 7500 Euros of de Minimis aid per business, which is permissible under EU State Aid rules. Furthermore, I condemn the Executive for being disingenuous, by attempting to dress up its pathetic response to fishermen by announcing a

£25 million fund for the next 5 years. These funds were already earmarked under the European Fisheries Fund, and equate to a re-advertisement in order to save face for Executive inaction.”

“Let us be clear, the only new money the Executive is offering is in the form of Vessel Monitoring System maintenance for those vessels that have such devices fitted -which equates to £276 per year, a far cry short of what fishermen had expected. Our fishermen just like our pig and beef farmers are bearing the brunt of an incompetent and apathetic Minister, unable and unwilling to represent their interests at the negotiating table.”

Farming News

No more free ride for China, India & Brazil, demands Allister

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister used a debate in the European Parliament on the structures of the WTO to attack the fact that, despite their burgeoning economies, China, India and Brazil are, within the WTO framework treated as "developing countries" and in consequence get favoured treatment. "Developing countries" should mean exactly that, said Mr Allister, but not those rich in resources, flourishing in output and leading the world in manufacturing production. With developing country status comes exemptions, favourable treatment and lower levels of commitment. "All this", says Mr Allister, "gives China, India and Brazil unwarranted advantage and allows them to take the rest of the world for a ride in the WTO negotiations."

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

"The WTO has many flaws, but surely its most ludicrous defect is the unfair advantage which it gives China, India and Brazil by affording

them the favourable status of "developing countries". They once might have been emerging economies, but today they have very definitely emerged and can compete with the best. Indeed so successful are they that they are world leaders in several fields, yet, inexplicably we give them a free ride as "developing countries" and in consequence accept lower standards and commitments from them.

Little wonder, my constituents often see the WTO as not meeting or serving their interests - a feeling which is accentuated when they watch unmatched concession after concession on agricultural issues by Commissioner Mandelson. Commissioner, getting the right deal is more important than getting a deal. And it won't be the right deal if it washes away our agri-food industry under an incoming tide of cheap imports from countries we treat more favourably than their robust economic capacity requires."

Allister reports on investigative visit to Brazil

Commenting at the end of the EP's Agriculture Committee's investigative visit to Brazil, Jim Allister said:-

"This visit to Brazil was well worthwhile in giving a first hand insight into their agricultural system and the reasons why exports of their beef to the EU have had to be curbed.

The overwhelming impression of Brazil is the sheer scale of its agricultural sector. When you see 24,000 cattle in fattening pens on a single farm and realise such is replicated across this vast country many times over, you appreciate the economies of scale which makes their production so competitive.

From what we saw, I have no doubt that the restrictions on beef imports from Brazil are essential. I have no regrets about being one of those on the Agriculture Committee who campaigned long and hard for these restrictions, and eventually changing the Commission's mind.

Whereas, there are some exceptionally well run farms and while we saw one meat plant which would be the envy of anywhere, we also saw

thousands of cattle without tags and no prospect of traceability. We also visited a meat plant where the hygiene standards and practices were appalling and would have caused it to be closed down instantly in the EU.

We cannot subject EU producers to the stringent standards which our consumers and public health interests require and at the same time allow imports where anything goes in terms of processing standards and traceability.

For a full report on Brazil see:

<http://www.jimallister.org/default.asp?blogID=1026>



Allister hits out at DARD bureaucracy

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has written to DARD's Permanent Secretary, to raise concerns about what he describes as 'a continuing culture of bureaucracy' within DARD.

The MEP said, "Recently, I had occasion to want to speak to the Chief Veterinary Officer, Bert Houston, on an animal welfare issue. I rang that section and asked to speak to him or one of his deputies. After much prevarication I was told I could not do so and that I must channel my request for information through the Private Office. Why? Why should I as an elected representative not be able to speak directly to a public official about a matter within his realm of expertise? The Private Office may consist of very able civil servants but they are not masters of the discipline of veterinary medicine."

"In Brussels - which is often thought to epitomise bureaucracy at its worst - I can lift the phone at any time and speak to any Commission official I want. I often find them to be far more forthcoming and open than local civil servants. Having spoken to key figures in the agri-food industry in Northern Ireland, I know my frustration and experience is not unique."

"It is high time the processes within DARD are fundamentally overhauled, and unnecessary obstacles eliminated to create open and transparent access to what is, after all a public body. Thus, in addition, to a full explanation as to why my specific request was so treated, I have asked the Permanent Secretary for his views and plans to liberalise and modernise the procedures within his department."

"Strain at a gnat, but swallow a camel" - MEP's verdict on EU's GMO policy

During a debate in Strasbourg on the EU's attitude to GMOs, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister angrily condemned the folly of the present policy, particularly the zero tolerance to any trace of an unauthorised GMO, which can cause a whole shipment of grain to be rejected. Yet, at the same time, shiploads of imported meat are accepted from outside Europe where the animals have been fed a full GM diet. Pointing up the disadvantage which results to local producers, Mr Allister in the course of his remarks said:

"What a laughing stock the EU must be to its competitors. With sanctimonious fervour we ban GMOs in animal feedstuff, even to the

ridiculous point of zero tolerance of any unauthorised GM trace, but simultaneously meat derived from animals reared outside the EU and fed with the very GMOs, which we refuse to authorise, can be imported freely. Sounds like zero sense to me! We strain at a gnat, but swallow a camel and who suffers? Our own producers who have to pay sky-high prices for GM-free feedstuff. It seems if the political correctness boxes are ticked then the EU is happy, never mind the lunacy which we create.

I confess, Mr President, such stupidity makes me angry, but not half as angry as those who suffer its consequences."

Allister condemns Brucellosis testing delays

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has hit out at increasing delays in farmers receiving results of Brucellosis tests.

In a letter to DARD, the MEP said, "Farmers have raised with me concerns at delays in receiving the results of Brucellosis blood tests. My understanding is that it is now commonplace for herd test results to take 3 to 4 weeks to come back, which commonsense itself would indicate is a risky strategy to take regarding disease management."

"Delays in test results being processed has direct implications for farm businesses curtailed from buying or selling animals as a result. This is a

clear example of DARD bureaucracy causing financial loss to farmers, which has got to stop."

"Furthermore, my concerns lie in DARD's inability to act quickly to remove positive animals from farms, where a positive reading is found. This is also increasing the likelihood of the disease spreading to other animals on a herd where Brucellosis may be in existence, which is hardly the recipe for competent disease management."

"I understand DARD has been holding Brucellosis roadshows in recent months. Perhaps time would be better spent putting its own house in order, rather than deflecting the blame at farmers."

Allister pays visit to Balmoral

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister commenting on his visit to Balmoral:

“One of the key messages coming from the farmers I spoke to at Balmoral is the need to recoup the recent hikes in feed, fertiliser and fuel costs through higher farm gate prices. Issues such as food security and food price inflation are very much coming back on the agenda.”

“The show is a reminder of the daily efforts



required to produce quality Northern Ireland food on behalf of local consumers. Regrettably, the ever increasing standards of animal welfare, environmental compliance and other consumer-orientated legislation delivered by local farmers often fail to apply to imports. This was certainly the conclusion I made during a recent visit to Brazil.”

“Certainly, much more could be done to create an even playing field for local farmers, at EU and at a local level. There is an increasing risk that local food, which is produced to the highest EU standards at additional cost, is displaced with imports which do not adhere to those same standards. Fundamentally, this is unfair to local farmers, and is something I continually fight against in Brussels. Closer to home, much more could be done to ensure all meat sold at retail and in restaurants is clearly labeled with country of origin information. I have raised this particular issue recently with the Food Standards Agency.”

Allister raises insecticide concerns with Fischer-Boel

During an appearance by Commissioner Fischer-Boel before the Agriculture Committee of the European Parliament in Brussels, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister took the opportunity to raise concerns about the Commission's review of the regulation on insecticides, 91/414. It is proposed to shift from a risk to hazard based approach, which will outlaw many insecticides and fungicides currently in use in agriculture. Among the sectors fearing a resulting reduction in production are potato growers, where estimates suggest yield could fall by 33%.

Mr Allister warned that we were in danger of falling into the same trap as has arisen with GMOs, whereby we ban the use of certain insecticides in Europe, increase dependence on imports, only to discover that they have been produced with the very insecticides we have banned! Such folly, the MEP warned the Commissioner, only hurts our own producers, with



no benefit to our consumers. Mr Allister, therefore, argued that the present risk based approach should be retained and asked what impact assessment on food production had been carried out in connection with this proposed change?

The Commissioner undertook to write to the MEP to update him on the present position and prospects.”

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