



## Allister welcomes Victims Commissioner to Brussels

DUP MEP Jim Allister held talks with Interim Victims Commissioner, Mrs Bertha McDougall, in Brussels recently during a visit by her to the EU Institutions.

Mr Allister said, "I was pleased to see the Commissioner in Brussels promoting the interests of victims. As the voice of the victims it is important that she be heard here, as elsewhere. Funding, of course, is a key issue. Such limited funding which there has been for victims from the PEACE Programme is fast reducing as the total PEACE fund shrinks to a mere 26M pa from 2007. Core funding from Government is the answer, with long term commitment to making a difference for those who suffered the most during the relentless terrorist campaign. I had a very useful discussion with the Commissioner on the various funding options.

Europe has a special, though limited fund, for victims. Naturally, we explored how this could be exploited and, also, how the lead taken in Northern Ireland in having a Victims Commissioner could be used as a template elsewhere in Europe. Clearly, there are parallels between the suffering in Northern Ireland and the ETA-inflicted terrorism in Spain.

It is also important that a legitimate distinction is maintained between innocent victims and those who would claim victimhood from their own involvement in violent insurrection. To me there is no commonality between the family of a policeman murdered in the line of duty and the terrorist lawfully killed by the security forces or imprisoned for his crimes. Some would wish to equate their status. This must not happen."



## Allister raises 'Panorama' allegations in Europe

Following the disturbing allegations on the BBC Panorama programme concerning Roman Catholic Church document, "CRIMEN SOLlicitationis" and its negative impact on police investigations of clerical sexual abuse, The DUP MEP has tabled a Priority Question to the Justice and Human Rights Commissioner of the EU in the following terms:

To Commission:

"Will the Commission comment on the impact of the Roman Catholic Church document "CRIMEN SOLlicitationis", on the fight across Europe against child sex abuse and in particular in regard to its negative effect on the securing and giving of evidence to the police and lawful authorities. What representations has the Commission made to the Vatican about this policy and if none, to date, will the Commission now urge upon the Vatican the necessity and duty of full disclosure to the police by Church authorities of all information on child abuse incidents?"

Commenting, Jim Allister said,

Child sexual abuse is an awful scourge. There should be no hiding place for its perpetrators, nor cover-up, by anyone of their abhorrent deeds. With the dominance of the Roman Catholic Church across much of Europe I believe it is appropriate for the Commission to take an active interest in this matter. I hope there will be no dodging of the issue."

## UK most savage in punishing fishermen

In the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament Jim Allister raised the gross discrepancy in penalties imposed on fishermen in the UK who breach Common Fisheries Policy regulations and those imposed elsewhere in the EU for breach of the same rules.

The EU Commission has just recently published the data for 2004. It shows that the average fine across the EU for breach of CFP Regulations was €2272, but in the UK the average fine was six times greater at €13,099.

Mr Allister told the committee it was intolerable and anti-competitive that fishermen in his constituency were liable to fines 6 or 7 times higher for breaching the same rules as fishermen anywhere else. He continued, "Take the Irish Sea where men from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland fish. These figures show that for failing to record data in logbooks or falsifying accounts, the average UK fine is €18,900 but the average Dublin fine is €2,330. Yet these are the same regulations which are being breached, but my fishermen are being punitively hammered, while others are slapped on the wrist."

He continued, "We are supposed to have a COMMON Fisheries Policy, but on penalty it is grossly distorted and unfair. Our UK courts should take cognisance of what is the going rate for these offences in Europe and stop penalising our fishermen so savagely."

## Allister rails against common fisheries policy

During a debate in Strasbourg on a report highlighting the crisis across much of Europe in the fishing industry, DUP MEP alleged that since through its Common Fisheries Policy the EU Commission had a design to reduce fishing effort, it saw opportunity in the severe economic pressures under which the industry was labouring. Hence, the weakness of its offers of help.

The Ulster Euro MP went on to highlight the fact that with only some governments availing of permitted aids and others, like the UK, opposing such, the outcome was a Fisheries Policy of Disparity not Commonality.

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

"I share the disappointment of this report at the inadequacy of the Commission response to the crisis in the fishing industry, but I will not pretend to be surprised. Socio-economic pressures are, for them, something to be exploited rather than alleviated, because fundamentally the Commission, in pursuit of the Common Fisheries Policy, desires savage reduction in fishing effort. There can be no doubting the depth of the crisis - with, across the EU, 35% fall in jobs in 10 years, falling prices, falling catches, a 40% dependence on imports and a 100% hike in fuel prices in the last 2 years - but there is much room to doubt the worth of the Commission's response.

Such permitted assistance as there is in the Commission's response is, for many regions, particularly those in the UK, likely to be more theoretical than real, because of national government's resistance to matched funding or any form of state aid. Here we come to a glaring flaw in the CFP. How can you deliver a COMMON Fisheries Policy if some governments avail of assistance options and some do not. Oh yes, we all get the downside of binding CFP regulations and restrictions, but not all get any up side which flows from permitted aids. The result is a Fisheries Policy of Disparity, not commonality! Until the Commission finds a way to address this issue, then even its modest proposals here will accentuate the differences between the haves and the have nots under the CFP."



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## SEUPB discussion paper reflective of reality, says DUP MEP

DUP Member of the European Parliament, Jim Allister QC has welcomed the main findings of the Special EU Programmes Body's discussion paper on the future delivery structures for the PEACE programme. The DUP MEP claimed that the paper's findings if acted upon will ensure more resources are targeted to needy communities and not wasted on unnecessary administration costs.

Jim Allister said:

"It is a matter of public record and considerable public concern that vast swathes of the European Programme for Peace and Reconciliation's budget (roughly 10%) is being consumed in unnecessary Technical Assistance costs - costs devoted to paying administrative staff, light, heating and rent of office accommodation. These valuable funds should not be consumed in such a way and should be allocated to needy communities. The findings of the SEUPB's discussion paper, which envisages the elimination of IFB's from the programme in the prior-RPA environment and the responsibilities for programme delivery during this period becoming the responsibility of SEUPB, will save significant resources, which should be allocated to worthwhile projects.

Similarly, the post-RPA recommendations, which envisage a strong partnership between local authorities and the SEUPB acting in a scrutinising role, are also to be welcomed. Local representatives, know better than most the needs of their local communities. I welcome the elimination of IFB's from the programme, many of whom command little support within the Unionist community, and one of which - CFNI is viewed as directly hostile to the pro-Union community in Northern Ireland.

There are some elements that have yet to be teased out - we are insistent that the delivery structures of PEACE III should be reflective of the broad range of opinion and diversity that exists within our community. At present this is not the case.

Now that significant progress has been made on the delivery structures, we turn our focus to the priorities for the future. Our top priority is to ensure that the long-standing under-funding of the Protestant community which has gone on up until now is reversed, it is also vitally important that these valuable resources are not wasted on unnecessary froth, but are devoted to projects aimed at increasing economic activity and improving infrastructure in the Province."

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## Allister challenges EU policy on CO2 emissions

Euro MP Jim Allister, during Question Time in the European Parliament, challenged the Energy Commissioner on the validity and effect of the EU's CO2 Emission policy. Under the policy CO2 emissions are restricted by a strict national quota system, which is fair enough, says Mr Allister, if by our trade arrangements with high polluters like China we were not facilitating unrestricted emissions elsewhere.

Mr Allister put it to the Commissioner in this way:-

"Can the Commissioner comment on the validity and logic of a policy that compels Member States to radically reduce emissions with resulting increases in EU energy prices and lower manufacturing output while, at the same time, we promote trade with and production in China, the world's greatest polluter, with no enforceable requirements for the suppression of emissions from them. I do not object to trade with China, but I do object to the lack of compulsion upon them to reduce their emissions.



In effect, are we not really trading jobs and low emissions in Europe, for higher emissions and output in Asia?"

In his response the Commissioner conceded less was expected from China and India because historically they had not high industrial or emissions output. Commenting on this excuse for soft-peddalling the EU's demands on emissions from China, Mr Allister said, "This is a nonsensical stance. We should be addressing damaging emissions in the here and now and not permitting them because of an historical deficit in damage caused by the polluter. High CO2 emissions now from China are doing damage and so should be addressed now."

## DUP meet AFBI

The DUP have met with George McIlroy, Chief Executive of the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute and other senior representatives of the organisation. The DUP delegation included Jim Allister MEP, William McCrea MP and Edwin Poots MLA.

Speaking after the meeting Jim Allister said, "It is good to hear first hand the role of AFBI and how their work has benefited the agricultural community in Northern Ireland. It is vital that we have world leading scientific research taking place here within Northern Ireland to help the agri-food sector. It is also vital that Northern Ireland has the capacity to deal with an emergency response for incidents like foot and mouth disease or a bird flu outbreak.

"Research carried out over the years at Hillsborough, one of the 7 specialised sites belonging to AFBI, was the basis of the scientific case put to the European Commission when designing the action programme for implementing the Nitrates Directive in Northern Ireland. I have little doubt that the action programme would have been much worse if there had not been scientific research carried out here in Northern Ireland. It is vital that core Government funding is provided to AFBI over the longer term to ensure that this vital work can continue."



## Beef price increase needed to secure future of NI beef industry

Jim Allister MEP has called on the UK multiples to increase the price which they are paying for beef cattle and lamb to ensure that a red meat industry remains within Northern Ireland. Jim Allister made the comments following the publication of the LMC Annual Report for 2005/2006 which shows that the Northern Ireland beef industry lost £125 million in 2005/06.

Jim Allister commented, "Figures released by the LMC this week clearly show the combined loss of the beef and lamb sector for the 2005/06 financial year within Northern Ireland was over £150 million. This loss is not sustainable over the longer term and unless the UK multiple retailers increase the price they pay processors for red meat the beef and sheep sector will rapidly decline over the next couple of years. This decline has already started and is evident in census figures published by DARD.



"If the large supermarkets want to secure a supply base of local product over the longer term it is vital that they increase their prices. Northern Ireland farmers cannot be expected to support the profit margins of the large multiple retailers throughout the UK by producing product at prices which are below the cost of production. The deficit of red meat throughout the EU and the decrease in imports of non-EU product has helped drive up the price of red meat throughout the EU. This price increase however needs to continue to ensure that farmers can start to make a profit for the animals which they keep.

Jim Allister also claims that the Northern Ireland industry is losing out in live animal trade to Europe due to different interpretation of EU legislation compared to other countries. "Within the Republic of Ireland a large number of suckler calves are currently being exported out of the country and farmers are receiving premium prices for these animals. Unfortunately the Northern Ireland suckler farmer is unlikely to be able to benefit from this trade due to more stringent export rules being applied by DARD and DEFRA. I am continuing to lobby DARD to ensure that EU legislation is not gold plated when interpreted into Northern Ireland law and that farmers can export animals under similar conditions that exist in other Member States.



## Governmental Departments 'can't do' attitude putting pressure on the agricultural industry

The DUP has called on all Government Departments to adopt a different approach when working with the farming community. The DUP supports the campaign launched this week to cut out the red tape and bureaucracy that exists within farming.

Jim Allister MEP commented, "It is only weeks since I highlighted the difference in penalties being removed from Northern Ireland farmers compared to farmers within the Republic of Ireland. This difference is not a result of farmers being less law abiding in Northern Ireland but can be directly attributed to more red tape and a less sympathetic Government Department. I am again highlighting this difference as an example of how EU legislation is differently interpreted here in Northern Ireland. If DARD is serious in reducing bureaucracy they would have already changed their penalty system for minor breaches of cross compliance guidelines for Single Farm Payments and would not have rushed out to inform the industry of duplicate field errors for 2006.

"I welcome the campaign launched this week by the UFU. There are many examples of areas where DARD are more stringently implementing EU legislation. Currently farmers are missing out on valuable live export markets for quality weanlings coming from the suckler herd. Despite Lord Rooker promising last May that no additional red tape would be put into the guidelines for live animal exports we are seeing very different rules for Northern Ireland compared to other regions of Europe. The Republic of Ireland has recently had an EU inspection on their procedures for live animal exports and DARD has both seen a draft EU report on the visit and met with Department officials in the Republic of Ireland to discuss its findings. The question has to be asked why DARD is not willing to relax the rules here and allow for the live export of animals.

"William McCrea MP recently led a delegation from the DUP to meet with the EHS on the way they are implementing Farm Waste Regulation rules. During the meeting we suggested a number of ways in which the Farm Waste Regulations could be implemented within Northern Ireland in a less bureaucratic manner. We believe that Northern Ireland legislation could be amended to exempt all farmers from the Farm Waste rules without any form filling required. Alternatively a simple tick box could be included in next years IACS/SFP form to allow exemption. I believe it is a matter of if there was a will within Government Departments to reduce red tape on the industry a way could be quickly found" concluded Jim Allister.

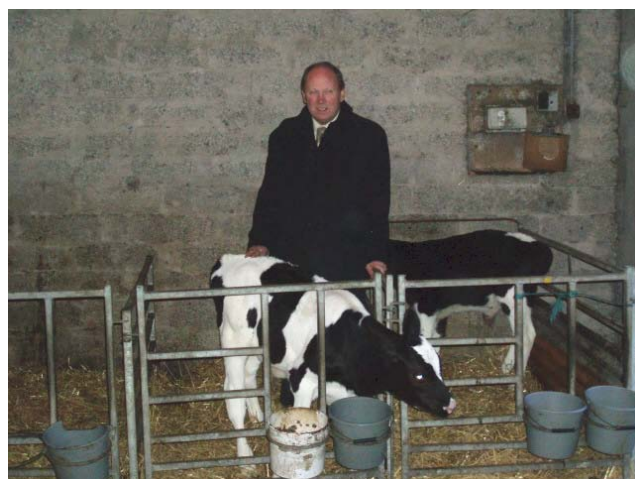
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## Rules must change to prevent slaughter of calves

Jim Allister MEP believes that the rules governing the live export of cattle must change to prevent farmers slaughtering calves at birth this winter. Jim Allister made the comments at the same time as Italian buyers were in Northern Ireland looking at the potential of purchasing animals for export to Italy.

Jim Allister commented, "Over the summer months calves were being exported out of Northern Ireland into other EU Member States. The major importers buying calves are now turning their backs on Northern Ireland as a result of the rules and paperwork associated with exports. I believe that unless DARD amend some of the current rules that exist for live exports farmers will have no option but to resume slaughtering young calves at birth. At a time when there is a shortage of beef in Europe and the beef ban has been lifted, farmers should not be forced into a position where they have to slaughter calves at birth.

"I welcome the news that Italian buyers were here in Northern Ireland this week and hope that they can do business with the Northern Ireland industry in the very near future. I do however fear that the rules currently being imposed by DARD governing the export of animals will prevent any trade being established with more lucrative markets. It is vital that DARD change the current rules to ensure that there is less red tape associated with live animal exports but ensuring that EU guidelines can be met. I believe that this is already happening in most other Member States throughout Europe."



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## Sinn Fein/IRA supporting terrorists the world over

DUP Member of the European Parliament, Jim Allister QC has accused Sinn Fein/IRA of being in hoc with terrorists throughout the world and being totally unsuitable for a position in the government of Northern Ireland. The DUP MEP was speaking in response to Sinn Fein/IRA MEP Barbara de Brun's call for the release of a Basque terrorist involved in the deaths of 25 people. Inaki de Juana has been on hunger strike since August in an attempt to force the Spanish government to grant his release.

Jim Allister said:

"Following on the back of Gerry Adams recent pilgrimage to meet the crazed, murderous and anti-Semitic Hamas organisation in Palestine, we now have Barbara de Brun calling for the release from prison of a man who has the blood of 25 innocent people on his hands show just how unsuitable for government Sinn Fein/IRA really is. Reading the statement issued in Ms. de Brun's name there was noticeably no mention at all of what Mr. de Juana was imprisoned for in the first place. I wonder why? Could it be that decent people at home in Northern Ireland, regardless of their political beliefs, would be utterly disgusted that one of their MEPs would be campaigning on behalf of such an individual in Brussels? Such behaviour is a gross embarrassment for Northern Ireland in Europe, not least in a week when there was an exhibition in the European Parliament illustrating the depravity of the ETA campaign.

Innocent victims of terrorist violence in Northern Ireland are well used to the weasel words of Sinn Fein/IRA and their disgusting attempts to rationalise the evil campaign of the IRA. At a time when the Secretary of State is trying to persuade the Unionist community to jump into government with Sinn Fein/IRA at the earliest opportunity, comments such as those from de Brun demonstrate just how unready for government Sinn Fein/IRA is."

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### "British rights for British citizens"

Speaking in the European Parliament against a Commission proposal for recognition in one EU country of criminal convictions in another, DUP MEP Jim Allister claimed it would expose British subjects to the findings and vagaries of ropey foreign criminal justice systems. A conviction abroad, no matter how dubious, like that of the British plane-spotters in Greece, would now count against a British citizen, subsequently appearing in a local court, as if it arose under our own tried and trusted system, with all its robust safeguards, protested the Ulster QC.

In the course of his remarks Jim Allister said:-

"Like many EU harmonising proposals there is a certain simplistic and plausible appeal to mutual recognition of criminal convictions throughout the Community. But, make no mistake, it is part of the grand design for an integrated and EU controlled criminal justice system, requiring subservience of our national systems.

Criminal justice matters are intrinsically national issues and must remain so, hence I welcome the resistance at last Friday's Council of Ministers to further surrender of the national veto. I hope it will be sustained.



Not only because of my opposition to the grand design of which it is a part, but because it diminishes the protection of my constituents against unfairness, I will oppose this proposal. The savage experience of British citizens abroad confirms me in the view that we have much to lose from criminal justice integration. Remember the spectacle made of the British plane-spotters in Greece and the appalling conviction of Kevin Sweeney in Holland. Why should ropey convictions, secured by lesser standards than those applicable in the UK, be capable of being held against UK citizens in their own country? I say they should not and, therefore, I oppose this proposal. British standards for British citizens is my watchword."



## Allister welcomes public support for ending Strasbourg circus

"The EU likes to pretend it is interested in listening to its citizens. Though to date it hasn't listened to MEPs on the issue, the fact that a million citizens have signed a petition demanding an end to the nonsense of the Parliament meeting in Strasbourg, while it has full and adequate facilities in Brussels, will put EU leaders' responsiveness to public demand to the test.

I welcome the fact that the millionth signature has now been gathered and hope the public might succeed where MEPs have failed in stopping the wanton waste of Billions per annum on the 12 sessions in Strasbourg.

While EU leaders proclaim their desire to listen to citizens, they also love wasting money, so, frankly, not much is likely to change, particularly as it would require the other 24 Leaders to stand up to France.

Of course, the fact that the European Parliament is the only parliament in the world incapable of deciding where it will sit, is a telling commentary in itself on EU institutions and their democratic deficit."

## When wrong is right, and right is wrong

Who would have thought that an innocuous advert like, "*Retired couple wanted to look after vacant property. Married quarters available*" could be illegal. But in EU world, this is so. As of 1st October 2006 the potential employer has committed an offence. Under EU-driven discrimination rules it is now unlawful to restrict a job to older people, or to younger for that matter.

However, the final sentence of the advert will also soon be illegal because it implies that the applicants should be married and it could, therefore, be considered discriminatory against homosexuals.

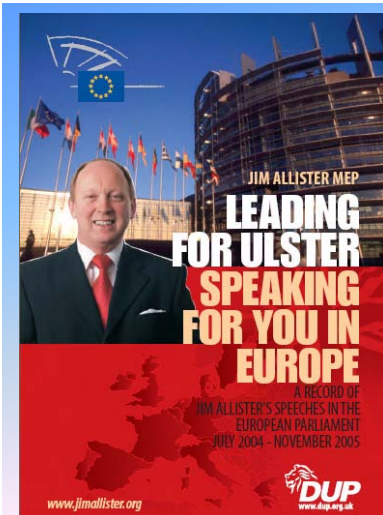
Under the Equality Act, The Sexual Orientation Regulations are to be introduced, at the EU's insistence, making it an offence for anyone providing goods, services, facilities, education or public functions to discriminate on the grounds that someone is heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual. These EU age discrimination rules are fanatically ill-advised. Moreover, they are themselves destructive of rights of freedom of expression and religion.

If introduced, as originally intended, these Regulations could see Faith Groups face prosecution if they attack or even fail to promote homosexual practices. A Christian printer could be charged for refusing to publish material for a gay pride march. Likewise, an IT consultant whose Christian conviction causes him to refuse to build a website for same-sex dating, or a Christian hostel for refusing beds to same-sex couples.

Little wonder, former Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay has said, "For people of religious faith who believe that the practice of homosexuality is wrong, these proposals carry a serious threat to their freedom in their voluntary and charitable work and in relation to earning their livelihood in a number of occupations".

Even the all important field of education is likely to feel the dark reach of these regulations. Teachers may be in breach if they do not give homosexuality equal prominence in sex education lessons to heterosexuality. This is preposterous.

With the Government due to respond to the consultation launched earlier this year, it is essential that they reconsider the regulations so that it does not become an offence for anyone to honour the convictions of their faith.



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



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## Government by spite - Allister

Extract from a speech from Euro MP Jim Allister to South Belfast DUP:

"Government by spite. That has been our lot in recent times. Instead of Good Government, we've had Vindictive Government - all designed to coerce us into premature devolution. Hence super rates - hurting particularly in parts of this constituency - grammar school destruction and constant threats of "joint stewardship", which, if it happened, would negate the consent ethos supposedly ensconced in the Belfast Agreement.

This, of course, is the same Government which three times persuaded Trimble that the conditions were right for devolution, that Sinn Fein was ready and deserving of government, and three times got it utterly wrong. It is our bounden duty and election pledge not to repeat these mistakes.

**Sinn Fein was not ready for government then, and is not ready now. Sinn Fein is inextricably linked to the IRA. The IRA is an illegal organisation, whose structures and command remain in tact. That nexus is enough, in my book, to make them unfit for government. That nexus must be broken - which can be most persuasively done by disbandment of the IRA, which is not too much to ask if its war is truly over. Why would any Party in government need an illegal "Army" at its beck and call. It cannot and must not be allowed. Sinn Fein knows what needs to be done. No one else can do it for them. Its not enough to dump arms, they must dump "the army"!**

Yes, devolution would be nice, but to be worth having it must be both durable and democratic. Failure to adequately address structural deficiencies, criminality and the IRA elephant in the room would just as assuredly cause it to collapse again, as it did in the past. Nor is the artificial contrivance of de hont't a means to durable and democratic devolution.

November 24th will come and November 24th will go, but until the IRA and its criminality are gone, I see no basis for optimism.

Nor, should we feel under any real pressure. This is a dying Government, fading into oblivion. Blair is not the future, soon he will be the past. So too Ahern may be on his way out. As for Hain, his greater ambition is playing croquet at Dorney Wood.



Jim Allister pictured with some members of South Belfast DUP

## One small step

DUP MEP Jim Allister has welcomed a positive response by the Special EU Programmes Body to representations which he had made that in the interests of cultural balance they should add Ulster Scots to their logo.

At present the SEUPB logo appears in English and Irish and since it has to be reproduced on publications by bodies funded by SEUPB, there was resentment that only Irish was included. Now, following representations by Mr Allister, SEUPB has instructed that their logo be redesigned to include Ulster Scots.

Commenting Jim Allister said, "This is a small step in the interest of cultural equality and one which, therefore, should be welcomed. It was unacceptable that only Irish was hitherto included."

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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!"