



Allister rebukes UUP in Europe

On the back of a debate in the European Parliament on racist violence, DUP MEP, Jim Allister, attacked the UUP's link-up with the PUP.

Mr Allister entered on the record of the Parliament the following statement:-

"In terms of the standards and ethics expected of democratic parties I very much regret that in Northern Ireland the Ulster Unionist Party has seen fit to invite into its Stormont Assembly Party the political representative of the UVF, an illegal organisation which has been mired in racist, sectarian and other violence. Such shameful association not only diminishes those who so taint themselves but undermines what should be a united stand by all democratic parties against criminality, whether of the racist or other variety."

Allister welcomes double pledge from Hain

Jim Allister, DUP MEP, recently met Secretary of State Peter Hain in Brussels to discuss the share out of future EU structural funding within the UK. 6.2 Billion Euros is coming to the UK 2007-13. Mr Allister has been campaigning for a greater than a population pro rata share for Northern Ireland on the basis that among the 12 regions of the UK Northern Ireland lags at the bottom of the economic performance list and the primary purpose of structural funding is to bring equality of competitiveness and economic performance to all regions. In this regard he submitted detailed dossiers to the UK Government. (available on www.jimallister.org)



Speaking after the meeting Mr Allister said:-

"This was a useful meeting. Two positive things of benefit to Northern Ireland emerged:

1. The Secretary responded to my concerns about additionality of EU funding being the key to its effectiveness, with an absolute assurance that under the new Financial Framework 2007-13 all EU funds drawn down for Northern Ireland will be additional to Government expenditure and not used in substitution for national funding. To date equivocation and "government grab" has blighted EU funding. Thus, I welcome this commitment to true additionality.

2. Following the debacle and dereliction of duty last December, I pressed the Secretary of State that this December the Agriculture & Fisheries Minister will attend the quota-setting Council in Brussels and fight Northern Ireland's corner. I am pleased that Mr Hain gave me an unequivocal undertaking that if a NIO Minister is still in charge he will be in Brussels to represent our fishermen. This is how it should be.

I pressed upon the Secretary of State the strength of case which can be made on Northern Ireland's behalf to secure a substantial share of the Structural Fund share-out. I await to see the outcome of his negotiations with Cabinet colleagues, trusting it will be positive, particularly now that additionality is assured."

MEP tells EU to stop chasing moonbeam of Constitution

DUP MEP Jim Allister congratulated the Austrian Foreign Minister, Mr Winkler, as representative of the outgoing Presidency of the Council of Ministers, on his failure to achieve progress on the EU Constitution. Mr Winkler was addressing the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament on the achievements of the Austrian Presidency. The Ulster MEP regretted that so much time, effort and energy had been wasted in chasing the moonbeam of the Constitution.

Mr Allister reminded the Minister that in the last 6 months the Euro-barometer poll showed the level of trust in the EU had never been lower, with citizens wanting less not more Europe. Even within the European Parliament there has been a dramatic haemorrhaging of support, with only 347 members voting (14/6/06) in favour of the "period of reflection" report, 212 against and 70 abstaining. Interestingly only one British MEP voted in favour.

Mr Allister told the Secretary of State that Europe should move on and deal with the real concerns of citizens, which could best be achieved by repatriating powers back to the nation states and thereby returning power closer to the people.

Allister speaks out on Immigration

During a debate in the European Parliament in Strasbourg on immigration, Ulster MEP, Jim Allister raised concerns about immigration policy passing to EU control and the actions of other Member States, for example, Spain, in "regularising" the status of illegal immigrants, thereby bestowing on them rights of free movement within the EU. This practice of "regularisation" by others has the capacity to impose immigration over a nation's head, warned the MEP.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

"Sustained immigration is a fact for many Member States and when managed has aided economic output, though it would be foolish to deny that problems can ensue. I take this opportunity to unreservedly condemn recent racist attacks in my constituency. Decent people want no part of such deplorable behaviour.

I have three points to make:

1) The control of immigration policy is properly a national issue and should not become an EU competence, otherwise national governments could not exercise necessary controls.

2) It is imperative that immigrants integrate and do not become a debilitating "state within a state". Hence, in the UK I support Chancellor Gordon Brown's calls for a willingness and procedures to embrace "Britishness".

3) With 3 Million illegal immigrants in the EU this issue must be robustly tackled, not least because of the links to the odious practice of human trafficking. It is not acceptable for some countries to engage in so called "regularisation" of their illegal immigrants and thereby qualify them for free movement into other Member States."



Jim with local and European leaders of the Federation of Small Businesses, on the occasion of the opening of their office in Brussels.



Jim with East Antrim MLA George Dawson on a recent trip to Harland and Wolff.

Allister meets DSD/DFP Minister

DUP Member of the European Parliament, Jim Allister QC has had a meeting with DSD Minister David Hanson. Issues discussed at the meeting included: social deprivation in working-class Protestant areas, development of community capacity in rural areas, the future of EU structural funds and the future of PEACE funding. The MEP was accompanied by party colleague George Dawson MLA.

Jim Allister said, “Today we had a useful meeting with David Hanson in which a wide range of issues were discussed. In relation to the plight of working-class Protestant communities throughout the Province, we discussed the recent publication “Renewing Communities” which earmarked £33million to tackle the problems in these areas and which was the product of intensive DUP lobbying. We emphasised to the Minister the importance of seeing such an approach as outlined in the document widened out beyond the greater Belfast area in order to bring maximum benefits to deprived working-class communities throughout Ulster. This will require additional investment on the part of government.

We also stated in the clearest possible fashion that we did not wish to see any of this additional funding, or any other government monies for that matter, going into the hands of paramilitaries who have brought nothing but misery to the communities in which they operate. In many rural areas, community capacity is drastically underdeveloped. We want to see that tackled as a matter of urgency. Recent schemes which are being formulated in relation to support for groups meeting in community halls are most welcome, and we want to see a far-ranging programme in these areas, where local halls such as Orange Halls effectively function as the local community centre and provide the focal point for community-based activity.

We continued to lobby the Minister on the importance of ensuring that Northern Ireland receives its fair share of monies coming from Europe under the auspices of EU structural funds. The Minister assured us that he will fight Northern Ireland’s corner hard, but warned that there are other regions such as the North East of England and Wales, that have big-hitters within the government battling for them. Time will tell how successful the Minister has been in fighting for Ulster. We also outlined our vision of the role that Scotland can play in future programmes”.

MEP visits Rathlin

DUP MEP Jim Allister, accompanied by local MLA Mervyn Storey, has visited Rathlin Island to meet with community leaders and discuss funding possibilities.

Mr Allister said, “As our only inhabited off-shore island, Rathlin is a special place, which must not be forgotten in the on-going push for increased prosperity. Its natural beauty is a tremendous asset for tourist development. Already it is attracting increasing numbers of visitors. When I was there I encountered several foreign visitors who were captivated by its unspoilt appeal. A large visiting French yacht in the harbour illustrated the potential which is there, but infrastructural deficits must be tackled. An improved electricity connection is vital so that wind generated electricity can be profitably sold back into the grid.



There is an obvious need to secure a development officer exclusively for Rathlin and I have undertaken to assist in exploring funding possibilities. Also, under the new tranche of EU inter-regional and transnational funding, which will be available from 2007, it is vital that Rathlin does not miss out.

Clearly, its ferry is its lifeline. There too there is scope for improvement, particularly in regard to securing a vessel with adequate covered areas. To ensure Rathlin is not neglected there should be a co-ordinating Civil Servant, with cross-departmental authority, appointed to oversee the development of the island and promote its interests. I have put this proposal to the Secretary of State.”

If you have received this Newsletter by post and would like to get it by e-mail, then please contact my Brussels assistant, Lynne, at the following address: jallister-assistant@europarl.eu.int

Allister rejects CFP for inshore fishing

In a debate in the European Parliament on the future of inshore fishing, presently excluded from the competences of the EU, Jim Allister, while underscoring the needs of the sector, strongly opposed a proposal that it should be brought within the ambit of the Common Fisheries Policy.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

"I commend the rapporteur for his hard work in drawing attention to the needs of an often neglected sector in fishing. In my constituency of Northern Ireland, our sector is equally feeling the pressures identified in this report and indeed a recent political decision to deprive the white fish fleet of Tie-Up Aid as compensation for losses inflicted by the Cod Recovery Scheme closure, has put added pressure on the inshore sector and on inshore fish and shellfish stock as those denied Tie-Up Aid are forced into the domain of that sector.

However, the experience of UK fishermen of the CFP - whatever the Conservative Party might now say - has been so negative that, in conscience, I could not advocate effective extension of CFP controls to the inshore sector. Thus, this is where I part company with the rapporteur. He thinks the answer for the inshore sector is more Europe. I disagree for two reasons:

1) Yes, we need marketing assistance, fleet modernisation, fuel assistance and proper recognition of the potential and needs of inshore fishing, but the imposition of European harmonisation, fishing gear control, data collection and a new Community initiative, are the path to restriction not growth.

2) Since only some countries would take up any matched funding opportunities, which might arise in return for EU regulation and competence, countries like mine, the UK, would not and therefore disparity in the sector within Europe would intensify, not diminish, and my inshore fishermen would have all the pain of EU regulation but none of the gain of available assistance.

For these reasons I must reject this report, though I readily acknowledge the genuine motivation which lies behind it."

EU a massive drain on UK's resources

Commenting on official figures, recently published by the UK Treasury in Cm 6770, on how much the UK contributes to the coffers of the EU, DUP MEP Jim Allister has described the annual net cost of 4 Billion GBP as a massive drain on the nation's financial resources.

Publishing the figures on his website at <http://www.jimallister.org/article.asp> in an article on "*How the EU is Funded*", Mr Allister shows that even after the British rebate is taken into account the EU is scheduled to cost the UK £4,298,000,000.00 in 2006. "Considering that the net cost has been of this order every year, it is staggering just how much of our national resources we have poured into the black hole of Europe. And for what?, asked Mr Allister. "Think of the real infrastructural change this vast volume of money could have made if spent internally on the real needs of the UK since 1973."

"Some people foolishly say, "But don't we get it back through generous EU funding?", well, here's the answer in black and white. In 2005 we paid in £12,567 Million, but got back only £5,188 Million in public sector receipts. Year on year it has been the same, and even the Rebate leaves us in reeling in deficit."

"Though there are now 25 Member States, the UK this year will contribute one eighth (12.4%) of the total budget revenue of £83 Billion required to fund the EU in 2006, while the Republic of Ireland will contribute a derisory 1.4%. Little wonder the tide of Euro-scepticism continues to rise. At a time of acute pressure on our health service and vital education sector, it is appalling that we are wasting so much taxpayers' money on a failing political union. With Blair having agreed to surrender the British Rebate by stages and as the real cost of Enlargement builds, the situation will only get worse", declared the DUP MEP.

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



Visit to Londonderry



Top left: Jim meets Londonderry Councillors and Mayor on the steps of the Guildhall

Top right: A DUP delegation meet Community leaders in the Waterside to discuss funding possibilities

Bottom left: William Hay MLA and Councillors meets Jim outside his constituency office

Bottom right: Jim and William Hay MLA meet with local farmers in the Foyle Constituency

Allister comments on draft Rural Development Programme

Jim Allister MEP has commented on the consultation on the Draft Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (2007-2013). Jim Allister believes that the two important issues to come out in the consultation are how money will be raised to pay for rural development and how the programme will be delivered on the ground.

Jim Allister commented, “While there are still a number of decisions to be made regarding how the next Rural Development Programme will be funded, it is clear that there will be a large shortfall in the budget for the 2007-2013 period. Already DARD has a number of commitments, under axis 2 of the programme, for agri-environmental schemes. This will leave little additional money in the budget for measures falling under axis 1 of the programme. If DARD is looking to be rural champions and cater for the needs of the wider rural community, it is vital that the Department gets additional funding under the next Comprehensive Spending Review. It will not be acceptable for DARD to simply modulate Single Farm Payments in order to raise funds for spending in the wider rural community.”

Jim Allister supports a change in the mechanism for delivering rural development funds. “DARD has a poor track record of delivering money in the current round of European funding. It is vital that changes are made to the delivery process that ensures more effective delivery of European funds at ground level. I do have concern about the timetable regarding the setting up of new structures prior to the commencement of the new Programme in 2007 and how these new structures will complement the changes with local Government due to be introduced in 2010.”

Allister calls for commitment from Fisheries Minister to avail of EFF

With the Council of Ministers now having approved new funding arrangements for the fishing industry, which will come into effect in 2007 under the European Fisheries Fund (EFF), DUP MEP, Jim Allister, has said the challenge is now to ensure the DARD draws down the available funding.

“One of the tragedies of fisheries funding to date is that the British Government has refused to draw down available funding because they were not prepared to produce matched funding and so, instead, they let our industry continue in decline with an ever ageing fleet. The new EFF will only be of benefit if this culture of grant avoidance is overcome.” said the MEP.

Mr Allister continued:-

“One of the available funding facilities under EFF is to aid fishermen equip their boats with new and more efficient engines. This is critical in a time of run-away fuel prices. DARD’s attitude to this opportunity will be a litmus test of what weight can be given to the Minister’s fine words of today.

In anticipation of this issue I wrote to the Minister last week. I included the following pointed observations in my letter:-

“I write at this stage to establish if in principle your Department will commit to drawing down, and where necessary co-financing, such available funding. I would stress that both from the perspective of modernisation needs within the industry and the environmental gains which would result from more efficient and eco-friendly engines, such funding has the capacity to make a positive contribution to the continuance of our hard-pressed fishing sector. I believe that the Department’s response on these issues will be seen as a legitimate test of its commitment to the industry. Cash always speaks louder than words.

I am aware that some of your officials seem to be set upon securing further rationalisation and reduction within the sector and may urge upon you the view that better engines will only increase fishing effort. Such dogma, I believe, is destructive of the future of our industry and must not be allowed to perpetuate the haemorrhaging of viability which has afflicted the sector now for many years.

I trust therefore that you will ensure that the new opportunities afforded under the EFF from 2007 will be fully exploited and not wasted.”

Commenting further on the issue, Jim Allister said:-

“With the fishing industry almost destroyed by the CFP it is important that our own Government step up to the challenge of protecting their own citizens where they can and exerting what power they still have left. We cannot let our fishing industry be controlled by those who have little experience beyond our harbour walls. I call on our Minister to listen to our fishermen, grasp the opportunities available and make a commitment to securing a future for our fishing fleet by drawing on some much needed funding for an industry in deep waters.”

Allister answers Nicholson

Responding to comments by UUP MEP Jim Nicholson, DUP Member of the European Parliament Jim Allister QC said, “It takes a special quality of muddled thinking and a certain detachment from political reality to conclude that sitting on the same public policing body as a PUP member, over whose appointment you had no control, is the same as voluntarily inviting into your Assembly Party a PUP/UVF MLA. The former is beyond your control, the latter is of your own choice and making. Yet, to Jim Nicholson, both are the same!

I’m sure his constituents see the distinction and will note the lamentable lack of judgement and insight which Mr Nicholson’s endorsement of the UUP/PUP pact reveals.

The conscious and deliberate act of inviting the UVF’s primary political spokesman to become your political colleague and ally is incomparable with ending up on a Board upon which political opponents also serve. Though Mr Nicholson can’t grasp that elementary concept, it is clear his voters can as the UUP/PUP pact meets rising disdain”.



Allister blasts EU Energy Policy

Jim Allister MEP has accused the EU of trying to undermine British Sovereignty under the guise of energy policy.

“Worried about the increasing cost of energy and the security of supply the EU has proposed the creation of a single energy market which will control both energy reserves and distribution.

While it makes sense for stable states to interconnect to protect overall supply of electricity, and for power stations to be able to provide supply at competitive rates to other states (and profit by doing so). It does not make sense for states to pool their individual energy resources and reserves.

The resources of fuel reserves, both indigenous and imported, which an individual state can control is and must remain the responsibility of that state. The desire of the EU to control both fuel reserves and the energy produced will have a particular detrimental impact on the United Kingdom, which benefits from significant on going indigenous supplies of fuel.

The proposed Common Energy Policy will remove from the British Government the right to control these reserves. This must not be allowed to happen. It is one of the worst recent examples of European political expansionism.

Practically, the EU states have a poor record in delivery of internal competition. Without internal competition in member states it is inconceivable that the EU could contemplate extending its remit. Let the EU deliver a level playing field within member states, facilitating real competition, rather than seeking to extend its power over energy reserves.

A good place to start would be the Republic of Ireland, which is dominated by the ESB, and where the government is suppressing the findings of a report by Deloitte that outlines the anti competitive nature of that market.”

Allister visits SAVER/NAVER

DUP MEP Jim Allister, along with newly elected Armagh Mayor, William Irwin, were the special guests of Markethill based victims’ group SAVER/NAVER on a tour of their headquarters, Bingham House, and the new victims Remembrance Garden which is nearing completion.

Mr Allister had assisted the group to access a considerable fund of money from Europe, which is being deployed in engaging staff on specific projects to help County Armagh victims. As the work on the Remembrance Garden nears completion the MEP was invited to come and see the progress being made.



Speaking on the occasion, Jim Allister said, “It is wonderful to see these fantastic premises and to see at first hand the excellent work being done on behalf of often forgotten victims of terrorism. I was particularly impressed by the Garden which will give the Wall, where victims’ names will be inscribed, a tranquil and magnificent setting.”

The MEP continued, “Saver/Naver, like other groups acting for victims, is doing marvellous work. During my time as an MEP I’ve been pleased to make their needs a priority and delighted to have been able to help. My vision is that such groups in the longer term will become self-sustaining and certainly the plans of this group for some commercial development is prudent planning for the future. Too often the victims of terrorism, and their pain, go unnoticed, but we must never forget either the savagery of those that made them victims or the stoic resilience with which they have borne this burden. I was, therefore, delighted to meet a large cross-section of Armagh victims today.”

Allister attacks “Gold plating”

Jim Allister MEP has hit out at “Gold Plating” of EU directives by Westminster and Northern Ireland legislators.

“In a submission to the independent review into the implementation of EU legislation into UK law, by Neil Davidson QC I have drawn attention to 12 key areas affecting business in Northern Ireland where our legislation has been more stringent than that required by the EU and more stringent than that being implemented by other EU states.

This attitude by legislators must change. The only outcome of transposing EU law in this way is the strangling of local business and the handing away of our markets to our competitors, including the Republic of Ireland.

The “gold-plating” examples I have drawn attention to are:

- 1) Part Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- 2) Information and Consultation Directive 2002
- 3) Insurance Mediation Directive
- 4) Investment Services Directive
- 5) The Consumer Credit Directive
- 6) The Waste Incineration Directive
- 7) The Packaging Directive
- 8) IPPC Directive
- 9) Emissions Trading
- 10) Equality
- 11) Common Agricultural Policy - application form
- 12) Cross compliance

I have also taken the opportunity to recommend to the review some suggestions as to how “gold plating” might be brought to an end. These include, early and effective consultation, keeping pace with other countries, concentration on the legislation rather than gathering tax and creating real partnerships with those who will be most affected.

This is a constructive approach which recognises the reality of the directives, whilst requiring greater engagement between member states, planning consistent transposition and cooperating throughout the process to identify all the benefits and opportunities.

If this approach is adopted, for all directives, it will go a long way to removing the effects of the real and perceived “gold plating” and negative impacts of EU legislation on business in NI.”

Jim made a number of submissions recently to the European Union. These include:

- A review of the UK’s implementation of EU legislation
- Shaping Peace III - ”Making it Better”: The future of the European Programme for Peace and Reconciliation
- Working together for a common good: The prospects for East-West co-operation
- A response to the Consultation on Draft National Strategic Reference Framework for Future Structural Funds Programmes (2007 - 2013)

These, along with all press statements and documents, can be accessed online on www.jimallister.org



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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