



EU Commission spells out Corporation Tax position

Following all the hype and misinformed comment about Stormont securing a reduction in Corporation Tax rates, Jim Allister tabled a Priority Written Question to the EU Commission as to what was permissible within EU regulations. Both the question and the detailed answer from Commissioner Kroes can be viewed at <http://www.jimallister.org/default.asp?blogID=644>

Certain pertinent realities are very clear from the Commission's reply, which is based on what the European Court of Justice determined in the test case when Portugal tried, and failed, to reduce corporation tax in the Azores - which, unlike Northern Ireland, has fiscal powers.

It is clear that without fiercely independent fiscal powers - such as to exclusively control and shape the economic environment in which business operates, there is no question of a separate corporate tax regime in any part of the UK being compatible with EU law. Even in the Azores, where there are devolved fiscal powers, that was not enough as it was deemed to constitute state aid. The 3 tests set out in the 2nd paragraph of Commissioner Kroes' answer are stiff and are additional to having autonomous fiscal powers.

1. The devolved government must be of such a nature, from a constitutional point of view, as to have a political and administrative status separate from that of the central government.
2. The subject fiscal law must have been adopted without the central government being able to intervene directly as regards its content.
3. The financial consequences of reducing corporation tax must not be offset by aid or subsidies from the central government - in other words there must be no subvention to make up for the loss in revenue.

Thus, it is clear that since Stormont does not possess any fiscal powers, never mind the autonomous kind necessary, there is no likelihood of a cut in corporation tax being possible within EU jurisprudence. Nice as a cut in corporation tax would be, it seems that a more prudent expenditure of energy might be in seeking to boost the inward investment incentive package for Northern Ireland."

Jim Allister MEP with Belguim Blue Exhibitor, Mel Lucas, with his prize-winning bull at Balmoral Show.



100 not out!

Jim Allister MEP, elected in June 2004, recently made his 100th speech in the European Parliament. Speaking in a debate on human rights issues, Mr Allister focused on persecution of Christians in Pakistan and China. Such persecution is something he has long pursued with the EU through dozens of parliamentary questions.

In the course of his remarks Jim Allister said:-

"In this my 100th speech in this House, I am glad to talk about human rights, something which we all take for granted, but to which millions can only aspire.

As a major player, particularly in trade, the EU has a role to play. We're good on all the platitudes about human rights, but do we see them through? Take China, for example, with whom we facilitate trade, but, frankly, we do little to insist on parallel human rights compliance. We could do more.

Vested interest is no excuse. Nor, is it when it comes to western-friendly Pakistan. There, increasingly savage persecution of Christians is rampant, under the aegis of Islamic extremism, wicked Blasphemy Laws and forced conversions. Here the EU's role is not just ambivalent, in one area it is complicit through the millions of euros which we pour into the madrasses. Many of these schools, like Lalmasjid, are training grounds for Islamic extremism. So why do we keep funding them.

Both in trade agreements and in development aid we need to robustly proof against human rights standards."

Allister launches Interreg consultation response

Member of the European Parliament, Jim Allister QC has launched his response to the new Cross-Border Programme for Territorial Co-operation, which will be the latest stage of the European Union's Interreg Programme. In his consultation response the MEP welcomed the fact that Scotland will now be an eligible area for funding and support under the programme, Mr. Allister also welcomed the fact that the Technical Assistance budget, which pays for things such as light, heat, staff and administration costs is to be lower in this programme.

Jim Allister said:

"On reading the consultation document, I was pleasantly surprised to see the content of this latest stage of the EU Interreg programme. This time around the programme will have a stronger focus on developing our tourism sector than has been the case in previous programmes. In the context of the inclusion of Scotland in the programme, this presents us with a great opportunity to develop further the Ulster-Scots axis and maximise its potential for attracting foreign and domestic tourists.

I also welcome the fact that this time around the programme's Technical Assistance budget is to be cut. The reduction in the amount of resources devoted to administration and clerical costs, is something that I have consistently called for. For too long precious resources have been wasted in paying pen-pushers, when they should be going to develop and expand our local economy and communities. I give this revised Interreg programme a welcome, but it must be ensured that this money from Europe is not subject to government grab, whereby EU funds are raided by central government to pay for projects which should be paid for out of the Exchequer. I have highlighted this issue in my consultation response and trust it will be addressed when the final operational programme is published", said the MEP.

The full response can be viewed at www.jimallister.org





Jim Allister MEP welcoming to Brussels a delegation from women community activists in Londonderry. Mr Allister had sponsored the visit of the Foyle Womens Group.

Allister lashes EU meddling in criminal law

Ulster QC and MEP, Jim Allister has spoken out strongly in Strasbourg against *“expansionism by the unelected EU Commission into dictating what will be criminal offences in the UK and what penalties will be imposed”*.

Using a debate in the European Parliament on a Brussels Directive on patent law, Mr Allister highlighted its proposals to make breaches of patents (hitherto in the UK a civil matter only) into criminal offences, as an example of law-making *“not because the elected House of Commons thinks it necessary or wise, but because the unelected EU Commission dictates it.”* Such he described as *“intolerable meddling”*.

In the course of his remarks Jim Allister said:-

“I speak in this debate to record my total opposition to the EU meddling in the criminal law of member states, to the monstrous extent of demanding new offences and dictating the level of penalties to be enforced in the UK and other states.

It is the nefarious ECJ decision of September 2005 which, of course, gives rise to this intolerable infringement of national sovereignty. Now, we are seeing a programme of rampant expansionism of power by the Commission.

What makes this Directive even more objectionable from the UK perspective is that, for the first time, it will make breach of patent a criminal offence, punishable by up to 4 years imprisonment, or more, not because the elected House of Commons thinks it necessary or wise, but because the unelected EU Commission dictates it.

I reject such intolerable EU interference and, therefore, I reject this Directive.”

Good news for mobile charges

In makes a pleasant change to welcome a piece of EU legislation. The enforced reduction in mobile roaming charges is good for consumers across Europe. Though still high at 35p per minute to make a call and 17p per minute to receive a call, they are set to fall further over the next 3 years. Now reductions must be obtained on texting and email connections.

Allister delivers Euro-sceptic critique on 50th anniversary of Rome Treaty

Member of the European Parliament, Jim Allister QC has delivered a strong Euro-sceptic message on the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome. Speaking at a public meeting organised by NICVA on the theme of “the EU at 50”

Mr. Allister highlighted issues such as the massive annual cost of the EU to the UK, over-regulation and red tape emanating from Brussels, the major democratic deficit at the heart of the Union and the wasteful use of resources here in Northern Ireland as proof positive that we would be better off out of the EU.

In a no-holds barred address Jim Allister said:

“I come today not to praise the EU, but to bury it. This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome - a treaty which bound its signatories to the creation of “an ever closer” Union. We in the United Kingdom have been a part of that Economic Union for more than a third of a century. We are therefore able to look back over our membership and are entitled to ask, have we received value for our money? The obvious answer to that question is a resounding no.

The United Kingdom has since 1973 been a net contributor to the European Union - year on year we have poured millions into the black hole that is the EU - last year the net cost to us was £4billion, even after the British rebate, - and what do we get in return? £6 billion a year in regulation - that’s £120million a week in the cost of red-tape emanating from Brussels. These are not my figures but come from official government statistics.

Ours is a trading nation and over 50% of our trade is outside the EU. Yet, we, through our EU membership, are prohibited from entering any trade agreement with any country, even our biggest trading partner - the United States of America. Only the EU can conclude trade agreements on behalf of all members, such is the loss of sovereignty and independence which flows from EU membership.

Countless billions have been lost to the UK economy, and are still being lost, both in direct contributions and in curbs to our trading

interests. By any reasonable assessment membership of the European Union has hampered our economy and prevented growth.

The democratic deficit of the European Union is astounding. Only the Commission, not Parliament, can initiate legislation. Some legislation Parliament cannot even amend and at best gets to share legislative powers with the Council in some areas. The European Parliament is the only parliament in the world prohibited from itself deciding where it will sit.

Hence the lunacy of meeting in both Brussels and Strasbourg. We have a fully equipped parliament building and 2650 offices in Strasbourg standing idle for 307 days a year and why? Because an EU Treaty, on French insistence, requires that the Parliament must meet 12 times a year in Strasbourg, costing EU taxpayers 300 million per annum and 20,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions!

Of course, the EU never lets the facts stand in the way of it proclaiming success for itself. Peace in Europe is the prime example of this. I would contend that the forces of NATO and the Thatcher - Reagan axis might have had a little more to do with the preservation of peace on the European continent than the bumbling, fumbling EU did. By any measure, the EU has failed this country and it is indeed apparent that we would be better off out!

If the EU is the answer, then it must have been a very stupid question.”



Employment guidance: Another Sinn Fein sop

Statement by Jim Allister MEP:

“The Employers’ Guidance on recruiting terrorist convicts is another sop to Sinn Fein. It is the product of a Working Group which included representatives of ex-prisoners and it proposes a “Tripartite Review Panel” within the Civil Service upon which ex-prisoners will be represented. Nowhere does the document permit consideration of the impact of employing a convicted terrorist on working relationships within a place of employment? Why is that not a relevant consideration?”

The extent to which it is a charter for terrorist convicts is illustrated by the fact that the onus is in favour of their employment and the employer has to produce reasons to justify rejecting them.

There is no justification for these special provisions for terrorist convicts. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Order makes provision for all prisoners and it is wrong and offensive that special treatment is to be afforded to terrorist convicts.

I have written to the First Minister with some pertinent questions and inviting him to say if he supports the document, in particular its excusing of terrorist deeds in paragraph 4.2. I have also asked:-

- just how voluntary the guidance is, since in the public sector, at least, it seems to be compulsory;
- for disclosure of all minutes of the Working Group and for the identification of the prisoner’s representation thereon;
- whether the guidance has been “equality proofed”, as required by Section 75 of the NI Act, 1998, in that it seems to prejudice the interests of the law-abiding community by treating the law-breaker as if he had the same standing.

In office the First Minister will carry responsibility for these grotesque provisions. Thus if he is not happy with them, it is up to him to get them withdrawn. There is no point in him saying his hands are tied as he needs Martin McGuinness’ permission to act, because that is exactly the arrangement he has voluntarily embraced. Sadly, never once in negotiations did the DUP seek to challenge or disentangle the joint nature of the office of OFMDFM.”

Sinn Fein’s double celebration on 8th May

Sinn Fein, we are told, has changed, so much so that it is a fit partner in government. Yet, unsurprisingly to those of us not persuaded by Sinn Fein’s credentials, we find that the Sinn Fein online store is still selling, and making money from, offensive terrorist memorabilia.

To mark the 20th anniversary, on 8th May, of the killing of 8 IRA terrorists, as they bombed Loughgall RUC Station, Sinn Fein is selling “Loughgall Martyrs T-shirts”. Moreover, the website drools over the “fearlessness, bravery and heroism” of these hardened terrorists.

It is further clear from the website that multiple events are planned to mark this anniversary. Given that it falls on the same date as IRA/Sinn Fein is to be elevated to rule over us, the date takes on a special significance.

The point of direct relevance to the political process, particularly as the DUP goes out of its way to play the game of statesmanship, is that for Sinn Fein in reality nothing has changed. They remain - true to their roots - unabashed apologists for terrorism, glorifying in the mayhem they brought to the Province over which they will now jointly preside.

The fundamental point remains, how can on-going glorification of terror be compatible with full support for the rule of law?

An alternative view of the last few weeks

Platform piece by Jim Allister MEP written in anticipation of Devolution on 8 May:

Though in due course the shine will come off the new wonderland into which we have been so euphorically introduced, what a few weeks it has been! Unity in photography around the IRA's Easter lily, handshakes to surpass all greetings, joint letters all round, grand words to go with grand gestures, priority invites to view the Stormont silverware, even for the travelling community, and an ill-concealed smugness from Sinn Fein, who can't believe how easy it was.

The republican movement gets Martin McGuinness as co-equal in government with Ian Paisley, yet gets to keep its pernicious Army Council, never mind the luxury of cherry-picking which aspects of policing to support and individual members are still able to engage in criminality. Wow! Whatever happened to upfront and proven delivery, tested over a credible period? Whatever happened to the DUP?

The DUP once demanded a photograph of decommissioning. Sinn Fein said no, but we do get a photo with Easter lily-clad Gerry. What a triumph!

And, the best bit, unless you are one of those carping purists, is that it could go on and on! The prospect is marred only by the consternation - still reverberating round some upper echelons of the DUP - caused by Ian Paisley's ill-judged boast of 4 more years, compounded by the slight that only he could do the job.

The travelling community invitation is significant for what it suggests to us as to how things now operate. For every unionist move there is an equal republican sop. That's how joint government works. What will happen when Ian Paisley thinks its time to invite the disabled policemen or innocent victims to Stormont, who will Marty want to invite then to balance the ticket? You ain't seen nothing yet!

But how did we get here? Certainly, arriving at 8th May without a jot of further delivery by IRA/Sinn Fein must be a shock to many on the DUP Executive who on 24th March voted on the promise that more delivery would occur. When I pointed out that the motion - which strangely we were not allowed to amend - bound the DUP into government in May provided only there was no backsliding from Sinn Fein, the meeting was robustly told by senior colleagues, this was not so and there would indeed be more delivery, and there had to be. Well, where is it?

Others, of course, didn't even pretend an interest in more delivery and couldn't wait to try out the trappings of office. Indeed, some have been swanking about in the ministerial limo even before they are formally appointed.

Where too is the effective default mechanism, promised by the DUP leadership in its province-wide consultation, to exclude Sinn Fein from government in the event of them reverting to form? Instead of delivering the promised legislative change, the DUP settled - Trimble-like - for a useless unpublished "comfort letter" from Tony Blair! Remember the worth of his Coleraine graffiti.

Now, as we sceptics brace ourselves for the hype and hyperbole of Tuesday 8th May, many might rightly ask what was the last 40 years of opposition all about, if embracing IRA/Sinn Fein into the bosom of government was so easy and congenial. Why was it wrong for Terence O'Neill, Brian Faulkner, David Trimble to do what they did, but suddenly right for Ian Paisley to give us the terrible twin package of Martin McGuinness and Bomber Kelly as Ministers in the equal Office of First and Deputy First Minister?

Don't ask me. I voted "NO"!

Feel free to contact my offices regarding any European issue:

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Allister presses Paisley on Sexual Orientation

In view of Ian Paisley's expressed opposition to the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI), upon him taking office on 8th May Jim Allister wrote to him in the terms below, since OFMDFM has responsibility for this legislation.

There is not much point in being in executive office if you can't deliver on principles important to you and your electorate. These 'over the top' regulations, subverting the conscience and convictions of service providers, so that, for example, the printer can't refuse to print gay rights material or the landlord must take in those whose lifestyle he abhors, offend not just the human rights of service providers but exalt the rights of those they serve above their conscience and religious belief."

Dear First Minister,

Re: The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006

I write to urge you forthwith to take steps to initiate the repeal of the above regulations. These regulations, in my view, go beyond what is required by the Equality Act and relevant EU Directives. Moreover, there are EU countries where such legislation has not been implemented.

As you know this legislation has caused great offence among Christian people. The prioritising of the rights bestowed by these regulations above the conscience and religious belief of service providers is an outrage and a stain on any Department which oversees the implementation of such a perverse law.

I would be obliged, therefore, if you could keep me informed of progress in repealing these obnoxious regulations.

*Yours sincerely,
James H Allister QC MEP*

Comment by Jim Allister on IMC report

The latest IMC Report is conveniently silent on several IRA/SF-related issues:

1. Again, there is not a single mention of the Army Council, which patently continues to exist. Its very existence is incompatible with exclusively democratic commitment. The IMC's blind eye approach has not caused it to go away, you know.
2. There is not a single mention of the interesting South Armagh incident linked to a close relative of Minister designate, Connor Murphy. Why?
3. The murder of Denis Donaldson has been comprehensively swept under the carpet. Again, not even meriting a single mention or update.
4. On the hitherto much-talked of "ill-gotten gains", the report is pitiful, "we remain unable to determine how the organisation is dealing with the question of previously illegally gained funds". Why not, if the IMC is all knowing and brimming with top intelligence? Or is it just too uncomfortable for Gerry and Ian - Gerry because he can't even admit the Northern Bank robbery, and Ian, because one of his broken promises was that the ill-gotten gains had to be dealt with?

It seems to me that anything capable of embarrassing Sinn Fein, or their intended partners in government, has been studiously avoided. Such does no credit to the IMC nor service to Northern Ireland."

Allister calls on Poots to abandon Irish Language Act consultation

MEP Jim Allister called upon Culture Minister, Edwin Poots, in his first day in office to immediately withdraw the current DCAL consultation document on the type of Irish Language Act to be introduced. In his letter Mr Allister said:-

Dear Minister,

Re: IRISH LANGUAGE ACT

I write to urge you to withdraw the current consultation on the form which legislation advancing the Irish language might take.

I believe the process by which things reached this far has been corrupted by political decisions which rode roughshod over fundamental equality law requirements. I invite you to agree. In consequence, I contend the present consultation process is irretrievably tainted and flawed, being the product of a corrupted process, and thus should be withdrawn. I refer you to my response to the first consultation document for details as to how equality and other procedures were fundamentally breached. The second consultation, being the product of the first, cannot escape the same corrupting consequences.

Moreover, the second consultation lacks credibility in its own right because of its production within 7 working days of the close of the first, thus, making it impossible for it to be the result of serious and genuine consideration.

Furthermore, the fact that it presents indicative clauses for an Irish Language Bill, in circumstances where the fundamental question of whether we even need an Irish Language Act has never been asked, confirms that, within itself, it is deficient and a trap to lead to an Irish Language Act of some form.

I, therefore, implore you to roll back the process and return to a beginning which acknowledges, respects and operates within equality provisions and the processes of good government. You should do that, I suggest, confident in the knowledge that Northern Ireland has been fundamentally compliant with the expectations of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, as confirmed by the recent report by the Committee of Ministers. Certainly, on that basis there is no tenable justification or requirement for an Irish Language Act.

You can, I suggest, easily meet the requirements of Section 28D of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998 without recourse to the divisive folly of an Irish Language Act.

I trust, therefore, you will make it a priority to withdraw the current consultation and announce an end to plans to implement an Irish Language Act.

*Yours sincerely,
James H Allister QC MEP*

MEP speaks of Unionist discards

Speaking to the AGM of the Ulster Special Constabulary Association in Kilkeel on Saturday, 28 April, Jim Allister MEP said under the new dispensation theirs was a tradition which could expect increasing marginalisation.

Mr Allister continued, “It was not they but the travelling people who would be invited to the First and Deputy First Minister’s first official reception at Stormont on 9th May. Such was the new chic of joint government.

“Just as the ill-gotten gains of the IRA were already forgotten, so too the hard-gotten struggles of USC, RUC, UDR and RIR would equally be forgotten in this new Sinn Fein-friendly era. An era of much give and take: giving by unionism and taking by republicanism. Even in the month since 26th March it has all been one-way traffic. Grand gestures and speeches of conciliation by Ian Paisley, soaked up, sponge-like, by Sinn Fein, but not reciprocated. So it would continue.

Sinn Fein can’t believe its luck. It gets into government as an equal, while being able to keep its precious Army Council, the luxury of cherry-picking which aspects of policing to support and individual members are still able to engage in criminality.”



Climate Change - some facts!

Jim Allister recently attended a major conference in Brussels addressed by leading scientists and academics who challenge the popular hype about climate change. There is no argument but that the climate is changing, the dispute centres on the reason.

Current orthodoxy, fuelled by Al Gore's hysterical film "An Inconvenient Truth", blames rising CO2 emissions, leading to a global campaign and opportunity by world governments to slap new taxes on industries and citizens. The alternative view cites cyclical solar activity as the primary cause of climate change and reflects that over the centuries such is not unusual. In the time of the Romans, vines grew in Scotland and Greenland was so called by the Vikings because then it was in fact green. There was the Medieval Warm Period and, in contrast, the Thames famously froze during winter in times past and even in the last century we have seen notable changes.

As conference chairman, MEP Roger Helmer, said:-

"While the earth has warmed somewhat in the last three decades, it cooled in the previous thirty years, and in the 70s some scientists, and the media, warned not of the global warming but of global cooling, and the coming Ice Age. It is not clear that the current warming will be sustained, nor that it will become catastrophic. There are legitimate doubts about whether climate change is driven by CO2, or if it is, whether anthropogenic CO2 is a major factor."

Christopher C Horner, author of *"The Political Incorrect Guide to Global Warming and Environmentalism"* reminded the conference of some basic scientific facts:-

- CO2 is a natural gas produced by all living things.
- CO2 is a life force - stimulating plant growth.
- Despite all the anti-flying propaganda aviation is responsible for only 2% of CO2 emissions.
- Volcanoes - which man will never control - produce more CO2 than all the factories in the world.
- CO2 exchanges between atmosphere and oceans exercise more impact on atmospheric CO2 than human activity.
- CO2 makes up just 0.054% of the atmosphere.
- In the Southern hemisphere temperatures are cooling, not warming.

Lord Lawson, a Member of the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee which produced a valuable report on the economics of climate change and was involved in the remarkable Channel 4 programme *"The Great Climate Change Swindle"* gave a keynote address attacking the misuse of climate issues by governments as an excuse for extra taxation. Such, he said, threatened to cripple economic prosperity and slow growth, particularly in the developing world by suppressing the use of fossil fuels, so essential to their economic development. Attacking the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme, whereby companies can purchase emission credits from others with spare emissions capacity, he dubbed this as an extra cost on industry which produced no gains but merely balanced the books on emissions while proving a disincentive to invest in technologies to curb emissions.

Several speakers agreed that it was good, from a resource management point of view, to use less fossil fuels but chided green campaigners to follow through the logic of their position by accepting that the cleanest, lowest carbon alternative was in fact nuclear technology!



Lord Lawson addressing the conference.

Farming News

Allister welcomes Fischer-Boel to Northern Ireland

European MP Jim Allister welcomed the visit of the EU Agriculture Commissioner to Northern Ireland.

Jim Allister commented. "The EU Farm Commissioner heard directly from Northern Ireland farmers the problems facing the agricultural industry. This visit allowed farmers the opportunity to explain how EU rules and regulations were impacting on the agri-food industry within Northern Ireland. It also gave the agricultural sector the opportunity to hear from the Commissioner her thoughts about how EU policies will change in the future.

"Currently the European Union has a cheap food policy rather than a policy for supporting a profitable EU agricultural sector. This policy is reliant on other regions of the World being able to supply the European Union with products such as grain and beef. I believe that the EU must however change this policy and become more self sufficient in producing its own food.

"The EU Commissioner did signal that there may be some changes to EU policy in the CAP health check next year. It is vital that the Commission make changes to the rules that will reduce bureaucracy associated with the Single Payment Scheme and secure payments beyond 2013."

Allister continues dialogue with Fischer-Boel

During a meeting of the Agriculture Committee in Brussels on Monday 7th May, Jim Allister MEP thanked Commissioner Fischer-Boel for visiting Northern Ireland the previous week, before pressing her further on some of the issues raised on her visit.

Mr Allister focussed on two key issues, the ending of voluntary modulation and maximum flexibility in cross-compliance.

On voluntary modulation, which the MEP described as loathed by farmers and destabilising of the very notion of a "common market", the Commissioner expounded her vision of increasing compulsory modulation while simultaneously reducing the "voluntary" element, till it eventually disappeared. The Commissioner resisted Mr Allister's invitation to put a date on completion of this exercise.

On the cross-compliance review, Mr Allister urged the need to introduce aspects of the package, as they were agreed, rather than waiting for completion of all anticipated changes. The introduction of notice for many inspections was one example the Ulster MEP suggested could and should be introduced this year. The Commissioner responded sympathetically but strongly made the point that member states could themselves do much to help by consolidating inspections, rather than diversifying them, as at present, among different inspectors. She said she had made this point to the Agriculture Committee Chairman and his Deputy last week at Stormont. Commenting Mr Allister said, "I agree with the Commissioner that not all the fault for multiple inspections lies with Brussels, DARD could and should do more to rationalise the process. I hope they will."



Jim Allister welcoming Ballylaw Farmers Group to The European Parliament in Brussels.

Gildernew manipulating agriculture portfolio

Jim Allister MEP has strongly criticised Michelle Gildernew for blindly pursuing an all-Ireland agenda on agriculture regardless of the impact this will have on the Northern Ireland Agri-food industry.

Mr Allister commented,

‘In the Sinn Fein Manifesto, which the Minister will seek to implement, among the preposterous measures to which she is committed are the removal of UK status from Northern Ireland food labelling and the setting up of an All-Ireland Food Promotion Agency. The Manifesto also commits to the ringfencing of milk quota for redistribution on an Island-wide basis’.

‘These priorities are not something which farmers and food processors in Northern Ireland want, but simply reflect Gildernew’s narrow political agenda. This is despite the fact that the key players in the agri-food industry are preparing to launch a major new campaign aimed at promoting local Northern Ireland food.’

He continued, ‘The new Minister has also expressed her bias towards small farmers. The fact is that the agricultural industry is made up of a range of different sized farm holdings, which all require the full backing of Government for the industry to move forward. The Sinn Fein notion is a far cry from the reality of an industry that has struggled and continues to press hard to improve its competitiveness on the World market’.

‘One would have thought the Minister has enough issues to be resolved by her Department North of the Border, without the need to focus South.’

Plea for cross-compliance fairness

During the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee's hearing in Brussels on cross-compliance, Jim Allister MEP again attacked the Commission's intention to retain no notice inspections in respect of controls pertaining to feed & food law, animal health and animal welfare & identification.

Drawing a parallel with tax or vat inspections Mr Allister said even in those draconian fields the citizen was entitled to notice, but farmers were being assumed to be up to no good and denied rights available in every other walk of life.

Since farmers already have to record everything in respect of animals so as to provide total traceability, there was no justification on animal health or other grounds for denying notice of upcoming inspections, argued the Ulster MEP. Farmers' representatives at the hearing, including Peter Kendall President of the NFU, agreed.

The European Commission made a commitment to fair, flexible and proportionate cross-compliance measures, but by clinging to no notice inspections in several key areas it was not delivering on its promise, asserted Mr Allister. "Cross-compliance is understandable but it must be proportionate, equal and implemented in the same way across Europe", argued Mr Allister.



Jim Allister talking to cattle exhibitors at Balmoral Show.

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE DAWSON MLA 1961-2007



The death of George Dawson has come as a great shock to us all. Understanding why such a good man, loving husband and devoted father is taken away at such a young age is beyond human comprehension.

To his wife Vi, and young daughters, Emma and Sara, we express deepest condolences.

Anyone who knew George, as I have for many years, cannot but have been struck by his sharp intellect, cheerful personality and appetite for hard work, which made him a diligent and very talented Assembly Member. Even when he disagreed with you, he remained at all times courteous and the perfect gentleman.

A man of deep personal faith he lived his life and faced illness and death as an example to others and did much in his various organisational involvements to advance and defend traditional Christian values. The Ulster Protestant heritage is much the richer for his contribution but much the poorer for his passing.

In my role as an MEP I had the great benefit of George, despite his busy schedule, working in my office half a day a week on business and economic issues in which he had specific and notable expertise. His counsel was always sound and his grasp of issues insightful. We will all miss him greatly.

Jim Allister MEP



Log onto www.jimallister.org to read Jim's latest press releases and statements.

Learn more about the workings of Europe, listen to Jim's speeches in Parliament and much more online.



If you would like a free copy of Jim's book, 'Leading for Ulster: Speaking for you in Europe', then please phone (028) 90 655 011



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