



Too chicken for a referendum!

The European Parliament, in a keynote debate, has discussed the Lisbon Treaty and given the Parliament's verdict. Predictably, the Europhile majority prevailed by 525 votes to 115. Jim Allister MEP used the debate to again demand a Referendum in the UK. Mr Allister also took part in a demonstration at the Parliament by British Eurosceptic MEPS, who wore shirts emblazoned with "Too Chicken for a Referendum" - a message directed at the British Government.

In the course of his speech the Traditional Unionist MEP said:- "I reject this Report and the Treaty which it supports.

Before the French and Dutch referenda we heard much empty talk in this House about the will of the people. Why, because in their



arrogance the EU's political elite believed the people would be conned by their propaganda about the Constitution. Suddenly, when the people caught them on, they ran with their tail between their legs, and they've been running ever since, petrified that the voters would reject them again.

That is why the key focus of the last 3 years has been on hatching an inter-governmental conspiracy to foist this Constitution on the peoples of Europe, without daring to ask them their opinion. Such arrogance, such tyranny; fitting, of course, because this Constitution is all about providing more and more national power to Brussels despots. Those who are indeed "Too chicken for a Referendum!"

Statement on Paisley Junior's resignation

"Welcome and overdue as the resignation of Ian Paisley Junior is, an event, no doubt, accelerated by the Dromore result, it will not be enough to redeem the DUP with the Unionist electorate.

The fundamental problem is not just flawed personalities but flawed policies, particularly the policy of having IRA/SF at the heart of government. It is that policy which needs to be abandoned. "Thus even when Ian Paisley Senior follows Junior in exiting the scene, unless the

policy is reversed, the DUP's decline will continue."



Another sham fight at Stormont

"There isn't a lot of point, and certainly no substance, in DUP MLAs beating their chests about the Quinn murder, while all the time ignoring and running away from the fact that they are happily sustaining in government the very Party whose military wing committed this dastardly murder. It is this sort of double-speak which will continue to see their support haemorrhage at the polls."

STOP PRESS!

A book on Ian Paisley just published by Ed Maloney has claimed that at St Andrews, unknown to other members of the delegation, two DUP MPs met secretly with Martin McGuinness.

While small beer when compared with the antics of the present Chuckle Coalition, such a meeting would have utterly breached DUP undertakings and policy at the time.

Unhappy Valentine's Day for Chuckle Brothers

Responding to the Dromore by-election result, Traditional Unionist MEP, Jim Allister said:-

“I am delighted with the TUV performance, amounting to 27% of the Unionist vote. This is a phenomenal achievement from a standing start for a new Party, surpassed only by the magnitude of the DUP’s loss of support. To crash from 50% of the poll, at the last local government election, to 28% - a loss of 44% of the DUP vote - is unparalleled and betokens the gross loss of confidence by grassroots Unionists in Ian Paisley’s leadership. This is a thumping vote of no confidence in the Chuckle Coalition.

This result for TUV will bring hope to tens of thousands of concerned Unionists across the Province. My message to them is that the fight back for traditional unionist values and against unrepentant terrorists at the heart of our government has begun. We will build on this



tremendous showing to go onwards and upwards in the polls.

I note TUV transfers split almost equally between the other two unionist parties. This does not surprise me because, frankly, there is nothing now to choose between the other two parties; both are enthusiastically

implementing the pernicious Belfast Agreement.

My message to the very many DUP activists, councillors and others, and some Ulster Unionists, whom I know to be unhappy about what has been done in their name, is to urgently reassess their position and ponder whether by their presence and

acquiescence they are not propping up the very thing which concerns them. Its time to draw courage from this result and follow your conscience.

I note some DUP spokesman have promised to listen to the people - though the leader has thoughts only of defeating the messenger - however, its not only the personalities at the top which need changed, but the policies of unrepentant terrorists in government and partnering a Party with a military wing and an Army Council.

I wish to heartily congratulate Keith Harbinson on a wonderful performance and campaign. I look forward to even greater success for him in the future.”



Allister answers deluded Poots

Describing comments by Edwin Poots, to the effect that the DUP was delivering and had got Sinn Fein to abandon its all-Ireland ambitions, as “delusional” Jim Allister MEP said:-

“Only a fool would believe Sinn Fein/IRA, which still has its military wing and Army Council, is doing other at Stormont than pursuing what Gerry Adams has described as *“the latest phase in our struggle”*.”

Courtesy of the DUP they have been delivered to the very heart of the government of a state they not only don’t believe in but are dedicated to destroy. Thereby they have opportunity, beyond

their wildest dreams, to wreck our prized education system, build all-island infrastructure, both physical and political, and exercise a veto on every unionist proposal, because of the inbuilt procedures of the Belfast Agreement, which the DUP was now ardently working.

Mr Poots speaks of Sinn Fein giving up the language of the past, but the most notable change in language in recent times is Ian Paisley’s enthusiastic adoption of the republican lexicon of *“the north”* and *“great days for Ireland”*.

Edwin Poots may be deluded, but the voters of Dromore certainly aren’t.”

Allister tells Europe, 'Learn from our mistakes'

During a debate on terrorism within the EU, Traditional Unionist Jim Allister told fellow MEPs in Strasbourg that sometimes society had to choose between defending itself and indulging the human rights of the terrorist. Dealing with a report which put heavy emphasis on preserving the human rights of all, Jim Allister described some of the content as “naïve”. Speaking of Northern Ireland’s experiences of terrorism the TUV MEP warned of the disasters of appeasing terrorism.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

“As a representative from Northern Ireland, which suffered decades of vicious terrorism, I give you two points from our experience.

1. Terrorism should never be appeased, rather it must be defeated. Start treating with terrorism, giving its prisoners ‘special status’, and ultimately early release, and soon you’ll end up, like Northern Ireland, with unrepentant terrorists at the heart of your government.

Appeasement only whets the insatiable appetite of terrorists.

2. Whereas State abuse is not right, a naïve belief- as evident in this report - that lavishing so called ‘human rights’ on terrorists will neutralise them, will, in fact only strengthen their cause, as they expertly exploit and misuse every such right to their own advantage, while they go on denying to their victims the most basic human right of them all, the right to life.

Because of the excesses of their murderous strategy, sometimes the defence of society requires a choice between uninhibited rights for the terrorist and the rights of the innocent. In such circumstances, I have no difficulty in choosing the right of society to defend itself over the supposed human rights of the terrorist. The battle against terrorism is a battle of good against evil and, if needs be, the rights of the terrorist is secondary to that of society.”

The scandal and risk of double standards on our roads

Jim Allister MEP has expressed deep concern about the disparity in treatment of local drivers and foreign drivers in Northern Ireland and the implications for road safety.

In a statement Mr Allister says, “It might come as a surprise to some but the DVA does not take any interest in vehicles which foreign nationals bring with them to Northern Ireland. Thus they are permitted to be driven unlicensed. A foreign licensed vehicle brought into the UK may be used for up to 6 months in 12 before it is required to be registered, but as there are no records of

when vehicles enter the UK it is never possible to show the 6 months has expired. Thus virtual amnesty exists on licensing for foreign nationals using such vehicles. Moreover, foreign registration marks are not detected by the DVA Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras.

But of greater concern from the road safety perspective is that foreign vehicles are immune from MOT requirements. Under Reg 6 para (1)(x) of the Motor Vehicle Testing Regulations (NI) 2003, foreign registered vehicles “temporarily” in Northern Ireland are exempt from the requirements of these regulations and such exemption lasts 12 months. Again, since there is no way of proving date of arrival, the effect is an open-ended exemption from MOT.

This is a scandalous situation which first and foremost can endanger other road users, but also, discriminates against locals who have the expense of both taxing and putting their vehicles through the MOT. With so many foreign nationals and their vehicles now on the roads of Northern Ireland, we cannot let this go on and, therefore, I am calling on the Environment Minister to urgently review the current regulations.”



Allister blasts appointment of McBride as Victims Commissioner

“The spin over the appointment of 4 Commissioners, pretending it is a gain for victims, is designed to divert attention from the fact that OFMDFM was unable to agree. The danger is that the same dysfunctionality will afflict the working of the new Commission, with them able to act only on consensus.

The lowest common denominator will inform decisions, rather than the real needs of victims. Also, money that ought to have gone directly to victims will be wasted on a bloated administration, which will be four times more expensive than it need have been. And all this in a supposed era of efficiency and value for money! The truth is that unable again to make any hard decision OFMDFM, which has been all over the place on this key issue, has gone for the soft option of “one for you, one for me, one for you, one for me.”

One of the Commissioners, Ms McBride, is someone in whom innocent victims of the IRA can

have no confidence, given her antecedents and alignment with republicanism. Ms McBride has appeared in the Provo’s in-house magazine - An Phoblacht, alongside members of the Eolas group, an umbrella organization for self-styled “republican ex-prisoner and victims groups”.

This group peddles the obscenity that ex-prisoners and those who died while perpetrating terror, are to be treated equally with innocent victims of terrorism. Thus, Ms McBride is singularly unsuited to have anything to do with victims’ issues. I am disappointed but not surprised that the First Minister has agreed to her appointment.

The key upcoming issue in the new legislation will be the definition of “victim”. It is imperative that the unionist majority in the Assembly insists that the definition does not equate innocent victims with the perpetrators of terror. This will be a litmus test on whether the DUP is capable of getting it right and delivering for unionists.”

MEP speaks of mounting anger among victims

“The more that emerges about the Victims Commission, the more innocent victims feel let down and without adequate representation. I say this after being contacted by a number of victims groups.

As the DUP said in its Policy Document on Victims in 2003 the definition of victim must exclude terrorists and those who made innocent people victims. This was a statement of correct principle.

Sadly, the Victims Commission that DUP/Sinn Fein has now given us is built on an entirely different and flawed foundation, namely the definition of “victim” contained in the Victims and Survivors NI Order of 2006. This definition is a travesty: it defines a victim as anyone affected by “a conflict-related incident”. Thus in these terms the IRA terrorist who meets his just deserts, such as at Loughgall, or who blows himself up with his own bomb, is put on an equal footing with the innocent victim of Kingsmill, Teeban or any other terrorist atrocity. This is a shocking obscenity, yet it is what the First Minister and the DUP has

agreed to.

From this folly flows the republican propaganda that appeared on the OFMDFM website that Commissioner McBride’s brother died as an IRA volunteer on active service, rather than as the terrorist which he was. Also, aping the dysfunctionality of OFMDFM itself, the Commission must all agree in order to act, therefore, the lowest common denominator of agreement will prevail.

Innocent victims, after much promise, have been badly let down. They asked for help and esteem and what Ian Paisley gives them is parity with those who made them victims. Little wonder so many feel used and betrayed. Only if the DUP produces amendment of the definition of victim to exclude perpetrators of terror, can anything worthwhile be achieved. There is no point in DUP MLAs putting out statements condemning parity between victim and perpetrator if they do not produce the goods in amending the legislation.

That is the litmus test.”

Allister faces Chief Human Rights Commissioner with criticisms

Jim Allister QC MEP has met with Chief NI Human Rights Commissioner, Monica McWilliams, to express his opposition to the general direction the Commission is headed, particularly on a Bill of Rights. The meeting followed similar criticism from the Church of Ireland Gazette.

The Traditional Unionist MEP commented:- “In what could only be described as a straight-talking meeting, I left Ms McWilliams in no doubt as to my opposition to a separate Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. Such would distinguish our citizenship from that of the rest of the UK and with the intended all-island Charter of Rights would further align us with the Republic of Ireland.

There is a direct nexus of constitutional importance between citizenship and rights. In

consequence all the citizens of a nation should enjoy the same basic rights, with due respect to the nuances of regional ethos and values. Thus, any Bill of Rights should be UK-wide and not unique to Northern Ireland. Not only does the NI Human Rights Commission seek to distinguish Northern Ireland from GB with its own unnecessary Bill of Rights, but, very significantly, it wants “equivalence of rights” with the Republic of Ireland. Hence the proposal for an all-island Charter of Rights.

This all-island Charter of Rights is an ill-concealed attempt to promote all-island citizenship and is the outworking of an overtly and unacceptable political agenda, spawned in the Belfast Agreement. I very plainly told Ms McWilliams such was repulsive to traditional unionists.”

MEP welcomes Banbridge protest

Jim Allister welcomed a recent protest in Banbridge against Sinn Fein’s campaign to further extinguish our Britishness, and congratulated the Orange Order on organising the protest. Speaking from Banbridge, Mr Allister said,

“The vicious attack on our culture which we have seen recently both in Limavady and Banbridge gives the lie to those who have foolishly suggested Sinn Fein has “bought into the British state”. What nonsense! True to form, Sinn Fein is in the business of trying to extinguish every last vestige of Britishness from our Province. The same hatred that motivated Sinn Fein/IRA in shooting soldiers and policemen in the back inspires this cultural war on Unionism, which has also of course encompassed attacks on Orange Halls.

Tragically, they are being aided by an Equality Commission which pedals guidelines that also wish to sanitise Northern Ireland of all its British symbols and attachments. OFMDFM could, and should, require revision of these guidelines but, given Marty’s veto, they won’t.”



Mystery still surrounds Special Advisers

Nine months since their appointment, the publicly funded salaries of the 18 Special Advisers to the Executive Ministers remain a closely guarded secret. Despite persistent correspondence with the Head of the Civil Service and the First Minister, the only relevant facts to emerge are that:

- no enquiries were made, before appointment, or since, as to whether any have criminal convictions;
- none were security-vetted before appointment, or since;

- though they enjoy the status of civil servants they are outside the control of the Head of the Civil Service;
 - though a DFP Code of Practice exists, giving guidance on appointment procedures applicable to Special Advisers, it was not followed in many instances;
 - no disclosure has taken place as to whether any family relationships exist with any Ministers.”
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St Andrews Bombshell- The Beginning of the End for Ian Junior

"I am appalled by what I discovered on 15th January 2008 by a Freedom of Information request as to how the DUP conducted itself at St Andrews last October, particularly Ian Paisley Junior.

With Unionists back home hoping and believing that the DUP leadership was there negotiating hard for the best deal possible in defence of the Union, I believe most will be outraged to discover that Ian Paisley Junior was wasting valuable leverage on securing concessions from the PM no less, not on matters of importance to Unionists, but on issues of mere commercial or constituency import.

On the critical last day of the negotiations David Hanson, NIO Minister of State, wrote to Ian Paisley Junior in the following terms:-

Requests to the Government from Ian Paisley Jr

"The Prime Minister has considered your requests and has agreed that we should try to respond positively. I will ask my officials to scope the issues set out below and will report back to you once I have considered their findings.

1. £1m over seven years for the North West 200
2. Resort Spa Planning approval inc. 200 homes
3. St Pats Barracks -future use to be discussed with MP
4. Giants Causeway -Private Sector land to be included in development
5. A26 upgrade -Ballymena to Ballycastle
6. Ballee (?) lands -judicial review to be dropped

This letter should be regarded as a statement of

intent. I should be grateful if you would provide some further detail on each item. My office will discuss with you at the earliest opportunity."

When Unionism needed concessions on a vast range of issues, including an end to mandatory coalition, the decoupling of OFMDFM, a resolute insistence on an end to the Army Council, an enhanced financial package for NI and much more, why did Ian Paisley Junior think it appropriate to move the focus onto these irrelevant issues? Patently by this tactic the DUP took its eye off the ball.

Little wonder the outcome was so disappointing for unionists. While I was part of the wider DUP delegation at St Andrews I was carefully excluded from all negotiating meetings. Now, I better understand why!

Ian Paisley Junior and the DUP leadership now owe a full, unvarnished explanation to the people, not only as to why these matters were prioritised but precisely what is involved in each. For example, what is meant by the reference to a resort spa with housing, who were the beneficiaries, why were the Sweeney lands at the Causeway made part of the negotiations and likewise why were the Ballee lands in the mix? Each and every one of the four senior negotiators who attended the meetings with Hanson and the Prime Minister must explain, but above all Ian Paisley Junior must come clean.



The Causeway U-turn

"The abandonment by Minister Foster of her foolish support for the Sweeney project at the Causeway is welcome. Her volte face demonstrates that public opposition and distaste for what was going on has won through. The timing in the run up to the Dromore by-election suggests that politics was still at play, as the DUP sought to undo some of the damage caused by the antics of Ian junior.

What the Minister has not adequately explained is how she got herself into this mess, given what

she ought to have known the integration requirements of planning policy and about the parameters and requirements set by UNESCO."



Allister reveals more on Ian Junior's shopping list

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has released further documentation, obtained on FOI, suggesting HMG was persuaded that satisfying Ian Junior's shopping list at St Andrews was crucial to bringing the DUP on board for devolution. After he obtained disclosure of the St Andrews' shopping list, last month, Mr Allister launched a fresh round of FOI applications designed to unearth the follow-up by both Ian Junior and the Government. These are now coming to fruition and Mr Allister has now released information obtained through a FOI application to DRD.

In a statement Mr Allister says:- "While the general public of Northern Ireland were kept in the dark about Ian Paisley Jnr's lobbying at St Andrews it is clear from further information I have obtained through a Freedom of Information request to DRD, that government departments were very aware of his activities. It is also evident that the government believed the resolution of the issues on Ian Paisley Jnr's shopping list would play an important part in shaping the DUP attitude towards the restoration of devolution.

On 9th November a memo was sent from OFMDFM to the Permanent Secretaries of DSD, DETI, DOE, DRD and DCAL saying that they would be "aware of the representations made by Ian Paisley Jnr" and informing them that David Hanson wished to provide the DUP MLA with a response which should be "as positive as possible".

Interestingly it stated that "In the case of the Giant's Causeway issue, it would be appreciated if DETI and DOE could agree a single composite response".

A copy of Ian Jnr's infamous St Andrews shopping list was included with this email.

But most significantly, departments were informed that Mr Hanson "wishes to write well in advance of 24 November and to meet this deadline, I would be grateful if your response could be forwarded to me ... by close of play on 15th November".

Do not forget that November 24th was the original deadline by which devolution was to have been restored, with the DUP required to give a response before then.

It would appear to me, therefore, that instead of the DUP being focused on securing the best possible deal for the people of Northern Ireland and addressing the many shortcomings of the St Andrews Agreement surrounding the removal of terrorist structures, the absurdity of mandatory coalition, the joint office of First and deputy First Minister, the IRA's ill-gotten gains, etc. the government believed they were more interested in securing progress on Ian Jnr's wish list. Why else would Mr Hanson have been so keen to write "well in advance of 24 November"?

This confirms to me that the DUP took its eye off the ball and wasted valuable negotiating leverage on Junior's pet projects. As Leader of the Party, Ian Paisley Senior has to carry responsibility for this squandering of the opportunities at St Andrews. He has never acknowledged what he knew of Junior's activities at St Andrews, but I'd find it very hard to believe that he did not know. Certainly, from today's disclosure, it is clear HMG took satisfying Junior as satisfying the DUP!"

IRA/Sinn Fein at it again!

Statement by TUV MEP Jim Allister:

"The announcement that a Sinn Fein republican has been taken into "protective custody" raises the fundamental and important question of from whom he is being protected.

If, as the DUP and others constantly tell us, Sinn Fein/IRA has given up violence for good and use only peaceful means, then who is he being protected from?

The answer, of course, is Sinn Fein/IRA, because despite all the whitewash they still have a military wing - which killed Paul Quinn and would kill this man too! So much for all the political sanitisation of Sinn Fein/IRA: they are still the same violent, threatening organisation.

Clearly, the police know this, hence the protective custody for this man."

Hands off our airports!

In the debate in the European Parliament on a Commission proposal on airport charges, Traditional Unionist MEP spoke out strongly in favour of exemption for regional airports. Making it clear that in Northern Ireland's case its airports were vital to its economic development and identifying deregulation, rather than regulation, as the way ahead, Mr Allister bluntly told the EU to stop meddling with more needless control.



In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

“The Commission talks much about promoting competitiveness in industry and cutting red tape, but its walk is often one that takes Europe in the opposite direction. So it is with its stance on air travel.

Having championed increased costs for air travellers through green taxes, we now have a proposed Directive on airport charges which inevitably will drive up costs for the flying public.

Regional airports have been the catalyst for progress in many regional economies. They have opened up markets, made the inaccessible accessible and been indispensable in economic transformation. Now, true to form, the Commission wishes to stifle them

with the heavy hand of bureaucracy, burying innovation under a mountain of reporting requirements, for which the traveller will ultimately pay. If the genuine reason for this Directive is to tackle the abuse of a dominant position in the market, then why does it include regional airports at all? They aren't the problem!

Northern Ireland's airports are key to its development, yet at a time when President Barroso is providing soundbites of support and on the day a new route opens to Heathrow, we are debating a Commission proposal which will hike costs and discourage expansion.

Thus, without apology I will vote against this proposal.”

Do we really want to be ‘part of the European experience’, Dr Paisley?

During the visit to Brussels of the Joint First Ministers, Ian Paisley declared on behalf of Northern Ireland “we want to be part of the European experience”.

The EU has a remarkable capacity to make itself look good by regularly re-announcing funding commitments already made. So it was during the visit to Brussels of the Joint First Ministers. With much ado 1.1B Euro (£0.8B) of funding was trumpeted. But two realities should be grasped. First, there is not a penny of new money involved and, second, it merely amounts to the UK getting back some of its own money.

The £0.8B is Northern Ireland's anticipated share of available EU funds for the 7 year period 2007-13. It has been known of and previously announced several times. It is our own money anyhow, because the EU of itself has virtually no resources, but recycles money paid in by member states.

The UK is the second largest net contributor to Brussels. Currently, in round figures, we pay in £12B per annum, get back £5B in grants and a further £3B in the diminishing “British Rebate”, meaning that the net cost to the UK of the EU per annum is of the order of £4 billion - and this is without taking account of the massive cost to British business of complying with EU regulations. Thus over the 7 years 2007-13 the UK can expect to contribute up to £100B, of which we in Northern Ireland will get back less than 1%, or £0.8B. Northern Ireland's pro-rata contribution to EU coffers over the same period will be approximately £2.5B. So, all is not as it is spun when it comes to EU funding!

This funding deficit situation has existed, year on year, for the 35 years which we have belonged to the EU. This, for the UK, has been what it has meant to be “*part of the European Experience*”.

Ruane caught out!

"The Education Minister before Christmas asserted that her intent to develop an "open house" policy on school enrolment towards Republic of Ireland pupils was necessary to avoid conflict with EU legislation. She repeated this in an Assembly answer.

Knowing this to be nonsense I tabled a Question to the EU Commission and now have written confirmation that neither EU legislation nor jurisprudence impacts on this matter at all.

I asked the Commission:-

Can the Commission confirm that there are no EU policies or equality rules which prevent a school in its admission policy from giving priority to admitting children from the Member State in which the school is located, over children from a neighbouring Member State?

The answer clearly states that policy pertaining to general school education is a member state competence and only in circumstances where a national of one country moves to another can they demand the same treatment as indigenous nationals. In "grannyng" the parents and child remain living outside the jurisdiction, so none of the rights arising under Article 18 of the EC Treaty are relevant.

So why is Minister Ruane trying to hide behind non-existent EU requirements in a bogus attempt to provide a figleaf to cover her brazenly republican agenda of liquidating the border and giving equality of treatment to foreigners to the detriment of locals? Since there is no EU justification for what she is doing it is no surprise that I have been waiting 8 weeks for her Department to answer my challenge as to what EU legislation she is talking about. There is none and they must know that!

Sadly, this Minister is so dedicated to mangling our education system that she will seemingly go to any lengths to add destruction to the mix."



Justice for Robert McCartney secondary to maintaining the Chuckle Coalition

Three years on from the brutal murder of Robert McCartney, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister succeeded in raising the case again in the European Parliament. Reminding the Parliament that the McCartney sisters had bravely brought their search for justice to Strasbourg, Mr Allister said they were no further on and were now the victim of the political expediency required to prop up the Stormont Executive. Likewise, he warned, the Paul Quinn murder would be similarly whitewashed and side-stepped.

In the course of his remarks Jim Allister said:-

"Three years ago this month Robert McCartney was brutally murdered by IRA members in Belfast. Abhorrence at the murder reached this House when the McCartney sisters bravely put their case for justice before us.

Three years on, justice still evades them. Why? Primarily because the one Party which could help them the most, Sinn Fein, is still more interested in protecting their own than seeing the killers brought to justice. Indeed, the situation has worsened, because the pressure on Sinn Fein has been eased by their foolish admission to government, with the result that, for the sake of maintaining that government, the DUP and others are prepared to let Sinn Fein off the hook. Tragically, justice for Robert McCartney is secondary to maintaining the Chuckle Coalition at Stormont.

Likewise, with the more recent IRA murder of Paul Quinn. Though killed by the military wing of Sinn Fein, his murder will be shamefully whitewashed and swept under the carpet. That is what happens when you treat with the forces of terrorism."

Farming News

Put value back into food

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has predicted an end to the 'cheap food' policy, as food price inflation is predicted to rise by a further 20% in 2008, on the back of a 12% increase in 2007.

The MEP said, "Historic production surpluses have been replaced by a seismic shift towards all-time low stocks of cereals, and recently dairy commodities. Competition for land from biofuels, production constraints due to environmental legislation, and increased demand from a booming Asian population are combining to alter the delicate supply-demand balance."

"Food price inflation does not necessarily follow with higher margins for primary producers. Livestock production costs are also increasing substantially as a result of reduced global supply of feed, as well as the increased costs associated with environmental compliance and energy."

"In the months that lie ahead, a mindset of 'cheap food' must be replaced by a re-discovered appreciation of the value of locally produced, quality food. I hope this will be accompanied by a

greater appreciation of the role farmers play as food producers, and indeed custodians of the countryside."

"If food costs are on the rise, then more importantly than ever we need a much greater degree of scrutiny of the supply chain. I reiterate my calls for an EU-wide investigation of the power of supermarkets, as a first step to introducing transparency and fairness for producers"



Allister calls for EU Wide Investigation into Supermarket Abuse

Traditional Unionist MEP, Jim Allister has supported calls for an EU-wide investigation of supermarkets. A European Parliament petition on investigating and remedying the abuse of power by large supermarkets operating in the European Union, has received signatures from over half of all MEP's.

Mr Allister said, "In 2007, the OFT found that a number of UK supermarkets were colluding to operate a dairy cartel, which was obviously detrimental to both producers and consumers. The increasingly dominant position of a small number of large supermarket chains throughout Europe, has shifted the balance firmly against producers. I believe there is a real need for a comprehensive investigation into foul play, and that is why I added my signature to the Written Declaration."

"I have written to DG Competition, requesting that any investigation must take account of how profits are distributed through the supply chain, as the ultimate litmus test of whether supermarkets are in fact abusing their position. Producer returns for many commodities have been unsustainable for years, a fact clearly illustrated in the Red Meat Taskforce findings. The continued erosion of a local production base should be a matter of concern for DG Competition, as not being in the interests of consumers.

Finally, I have asked that any investigation must be matched with equally far-reaching recommendations for remedial action where appropriate."



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 tells DARD 'Get a Move on' with Rural Development Funding

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has challenged DARD to get a move on with rolling out new Rural Development funding.

Mr Allister said, "I am aware that the Northern Ireland Programme was one of the first to receive EU approval in July last year. However, six months later we see little evidence of new funding schemes opening for the benefit of farmers and the wider rural population".

"There has been much talk of a £500 million package for the rural community. I want to know when this money will start to be rolled out through farm modernisation grants, diversification opportunities or the re-opening of the countryside management scheme. I also believe potential applicants are still very much

in the dark about who will be responsible for delivery of funding, and how they should go about accessing funds. DARD must provide greater transparency and awareness of delivery this time round."

"Developments within agriculture are in danger of superseding the Rural Development Programme. For example, the Red Meat Task Force Report was launched in October, while as yet it would seem no funds have been diverted into implementing the recommendations of this important Report."

"I have written to DARD on this issue, my message being 'Get a move on'! Farmers and the wider rural community deserve to have funds rolled out without any further delay."

MEP presses Commission on Detail of Brazilian Beef Ban

During an exchange with the Commission in the Agriculture Committee of the European Parliament on the steps being taken towards restricting Brazilian beef imports, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister pressed the Commission on just how serious it was about holding Brazil to the qualifying criteria set.

"Given 12 FVO negative inspections, followed by Commission inaction and fresh breathing spaces each time for Brazil, why", asked Mr Allister, "should we be convinced that an effective ban will indeed result?"

It emerged that the Commission intends to identify with Brazil more than 300 holdings from

which exports will be permitted if they meet the stipulated criteria. However, the testing of whether they comply will be based on EU sample inspections on as few as 20-30 holdings. Given that some of these holdings might have as many as 100,000 head of cattle, Mr Allister expressed concern at the adequacy of this level of inspection.

On past performance we've let Brazil make a nonsense of EU requirements, so I for one remain to be convinced that we will see rigorous holding to EU standards under the implementation of the precautionary ban being introduced", said the MEP.

Allister presses Commission on Mandatory Beef Labelling

Jim Allister QC MEP tabled a written question to the European Commission, seeking clarification on what current rules apply to an EU Region/Member State wishing to apply country-of-origin labelling of meat in the food service and catering sectors.

Mr Allister said, "The Northern Ireland beef industry would benefit, I believe, from mandatory country-of-origin labelling on foodstuffs sold in the food service and catering sectors. It would also benefit consumers to have a greater awareness of where their food comes from, when using restaurants, canteens and other catering establishments."

"In her response, Mariann Fischer-Boel indicates that Member States shall introduce mandatory

country-of-origin labelling for the catering sector, 'only where failure to give such particulars might mislead the consumer to a material degree as to the true origin of provenance of the foodstuff'. Interestingly, the Commissioner avoided answering my question whether applications have been made to date by either DARD or DEFRA in respect of introducing mandatory labelling in Northern Ireland. Indeed, she failed to comment on how the Republic of Ireland Government has already introduced identical requirements."

"If the Republic of Ireland can make the case for mandatory labelling for beef sold in the food service and catering sector, I see no reason why Northern Ireland should be denied similar provision."



Jim Allister welcoming Cllr Stephen Herron as a TUV councillor on Banbridge Council.

Allister comments on Ahern / Paisley confab

Statement by Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister:

“The spectacle at Galgorm is yet another manifestation of the dramatic intensification in north/southern which is occurring under devolution. The architects of the Belfast Agreement should be well pleased that its trajectory towards all-island harmonisation is



progressing so swiftly, and all that under the aegis of those who once saw this Belfast Agreement process for what it was.

It seems to me that Ian Paisley, now head over heels in implementing the Belfast Agreement, has lost his political way as he stumbles towards ever-closer

involvement with Dublin. Northern Ireland is part of the UK economy, our future lies there, not within the flawed eurozone to which the Republic belongs, so when Ian Paisley talks nonsensically about, “*I think we are into the march and we have not even seen the march overseers*”, frankly, I haven’t a clue what he’s talking about. Does anyone?

One thing that is becoming increasingly clear to me, however, is that the cause and centrality of the Union is being undermined by the runaway enthusiasm of the DUP for the all-island agenda.”



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