

Jim Allister MEP - Leading for Ulster

BRUSSELS BRIEFING

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Non-attached Member of the European Parliament

www.jimallister.org



EU intent on gagging its voters - Allister

In a hard-hitting speech in the European Parliament, when EU leaders reported back on their Summit after the Irish 'No' vote, TUV MEP, Jim Allister, chided "the political elite" for refusing to accept the Lisbon Treaty was dead.

Referring to the fear of referenda elsewhere in Europe, Mr Allister pointedly observed that in Zimbabwe democracy is bludgeoned to death, while in the EU it is suppressed by gagging the people.

In the course of his remarks the Ulster Euro MP said: "The real message of the Republic of Ireland voting 'No' is that vast swathes of the rest of



the EU would do the same, if only they were let. Ireland is not naturally Eurosceptic, far from it. It is the fact that voters there rejected Lisbon which terrifies the political elite that met in Brussels last week. They know, if they dared let their people speak, they too would look like the hapless Brian Cowan. Thus, to their shame, they conspire to rush through the ratification elsewhere and then try and arrogantly bounce the Irish in a second referendum.

Lisbon set its own test for survival - acceptance in all member states. It has spectacularly failed that test. If EU leaders were honest they'd accept the Treaty is dead. In

Zimbabwe democracy is bludgeoned to death, in the EU it is suppressed by gagging the people."

Get Marty's hand off the steering wheel - Allister

Statement by TUV Leader Jim Allister in response to the DUP announcement of two new units to "resist" the Sinn Fein agenda:

"Which DUP are we to believe? The one which says the Union has never been stronger, that they have derailed the Sinn Fein agenda and that Unionist confidence is at an all-time high, or the one which says we need, not one, but two new units to lead a fightback against the denuding of Ulster of its Britishness etc?"

It was the DUP which delivered IRA/Sinn Fein to the heart of government, where it has relentlessly destroyed our education system, promoted Irish language schools and culture, and now broadcasting, and made republicanism stronger than ever by the daily working of all-Ireland institutions. DUP can't credibly cosy up to Sinn Fein by day in Stormont and fight them by night in a "Cultural & Policy Unit".

Yes, our Britishness is being eroded. Yes, everything

possible should be done to reverse it, but the starting point is to rid ourselves of the rigged, undemocratic system of government which elevates the chief enemies of the Union to the very heart of power in our land. Only when the DUP decouples itself from the disastrous policy of putting and keeping unrepentant terrorists at the heart of government, can any substance attach to its latest gestures towards its diminishing electoral base. You can't let Martin McGuinness' hand on the steering wheel and then with honesty and credibility complain about where you are being steered!"



Allister slams Robinson's "audacious and deceptive" claim

"It used to be that the Ulster Unionist Party had cornered the market within Unionism for spin and deception. However, just as they've been dethroned in the electoral stakes, so too they've been outclassed in the spin department by the DUP. Seldom can there have been a more audacious and deceptive claim than the assertion by Peter Robinson that the Belfast Agreement is gone and is buried. If it were, then its statutory incarnation, the Northern Ireland Act 1998, would have been repealed. Instead it continues to decree how we are governed.

I wish Peter Robinson's claim was true, but sadly the fundamentals of the Belfast Agreement live on and continue to give us, as originally intended, unrepentant terrorists at the heart of our government. St Andrews did not alter its basic architecture. The essential structures of the Belfast Agreement were, and are, these:

- [government by mandatory coalition, so that a party can never be voted out of office and Opposition is denied. The purpose, of course, is to guarantee IRA/Sinn Fein a permanent place in the government of the state they are dedicated to destroy.](#)

- [The dysfunctional office of Joint First Ministers, OFMDFM, whereby equality is guaranteed for republicanism and the right of veto is enshrined by reason of the First Minister being unable to do anything – even sign a letter – without Sinn Fein's agreement.](#)
- [entrenched north/south executive bodies to advance harmonisation on an all-Ireland basis.](#)

Nor has the intended trajectory of the Belfast Agreement been altered. It was, and is, eventual Irish unification. Hence the continuing pledge of the British Government to legislate for Irish unity, as and when the people agree - with the only proposal on the constitution which can ever be put in referendum being one for unification. The essence of the referendum provision is to permit the people to be asked, after sufficient all-island harmonisation, "Are you yet ready to join the Republic of Ireland?" This is the indisputable scheme and objective of the Belfast Agreement.

So despite all the red-faced re-branding and repackaging, the iniquitous Belfast Agreement is still with us. It was all but gone, but tragically those who were instrumental in seeing it almost done to death have themselves breathed new life into it.

Make no mistake, without the DUP volte face the Belfast Agreement was dead, but thanks to the resuscitation skills of Peter Robinson it's very much back in all its glory."

Allister slams Executive over water rates for Orange Halls and Churches

Jim Allister has slammed the Stormont Executive for failing to grant churches and Orange Halls exemption from water rates. The MEP said: "It has been officially confirmed to me by the Permanent Secretary of DRD that "the Executive ... accepted the Independent Water Review Panel's recommendation (Strand 1 report) that proposed payment arrangements for the non-domestic sector **should proceed as planned**".

"One would hardly expect a Sinn Fein/IRA Minister to be concerned about the important role that churches and Orange Halls play in our society but I am appalled that the entire Executive backed a plan which will see such premises paying tap tax."

Now the Department of Regional Development has refused to re-consider this decision.

"Sinn Fein's Assembly election manifesto promised



that there would be "no water charges" while other parties used the threat of the tap tax as part of their campaign to blackmail the unionist electorate into supporting devolution. We now know that no one around the cabinet table – Unionist or Nationalist – objected to Orange Halls and churches having this additional burden."

SPEAKING FOR YOU - LEADING FOR ULSTER

The facts speak for themselves. Here are the statistics (to 30/6/08) on speeches and pursuit of Oral Questions in the European Parliament by Northern Ireland's 3 MEPs since their election in 2004.

	SPEECHES	ORAL QUESTION	TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS
Jim Allister	163	36	199
Jim Nicholson	72	3	75
Barbara de Brun	65	0	65

DETI's all-Island agenda attacked

The recently published Regional Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland, endorsed by Minister Dodds, shows an alarming tendency to think excessively in all-island terms.

In pursuit of the imperative of establishing Northern Ireland as an outward-focused and competitive region in the global knowledge economy, the first strategic objective is to "ensure NI is playing its full role in the UK, all-island, European and global innovation arenas". In Annex A the actions intended to deliver the same are articulated.

My fundamental concern is the disproportionate emphasis within these "actions" on all-island proposals, in sharp contrast to the dearth of all-UK or other proposals. The only vision caught in this Action Plan seems to be the all-Ireland vision.

Why is this?

In 9 of the 12 actions outlined there is an all-island dimension. As part of the UK and of its larger economy, why are we not focused on collaboration with GB, where the global knowledge economy flourishes? Why this pre-occupation with the much smaller and less stable economy of the Republic of Ireland?

I suspect that the document "Comprehensive Study of the All-Island Economy", embraced by DETI in 2006, is still very much at work under devolution. I have, therefore, called on the Minister to indicate if he has reviewed, altered, withdrawn or otherwise taken any action since coming to office to re-craft economic development policy away from the all-island bias ensconced in that document. What exactly is the status of that document today and is he happy with it?

I raise these concerns from the conviction that economic fusion is the handmaiden of political fusion and that the more our economic prospects and actions are aligned with the Republic of Ireland, the more our UK nexus is diminished."

MEP says repatriate fishing powers

During a debate in the European Parliament in Brussels on fishing issues, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister called for the repatriation to Member States of fishing powers ceded to the EU.

The Parliament was debating a report on a Commission proposal for a possible EU effort management system, which could see quota traded on an EU basis, thus opening up the prospect of loss of local control to foreign operators. Whereas there is a need for changes to the present discredited TAC & Quota system, the Ulster Euro MP is opposed to fresh opportunities for Brussels control and is particularly anxious that any new plans should not be managed and controlled by the EU.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

"Representing a region whose overall experience of the CFP has not been positive, my natural inclination is strongly against the imposition of an EU based management system.

Rather, member states should be able to decide which management system works best for them. Moreover, maintaining stability could be severely jeopardised if unregulated transferable quota was embraced, with particular threat to single or small-scale operators.

Better by far, in my book, to repatriate real powers over fishing to the member states and concentrate on getting in place viable local management systems, capable of enjoying the confidence of those affected.

I also fear that this new Commission study will prove another protracted excuse for putting off real and helpful change."



Allister challenges Robinson over McGuinness' past



On the afternoon Peter Robinson MP took office with Martin McGuinness as Joint First Minister, Jim Allister MEP, pointedly reminded him of what he had previously alleged against McGuinness in the NI Assembly on 8 May 2001, when opposing him as Education Minister. Then Mr Robinson catalogued crimes of which he accused McGuinness as an IRA Commander and referred to his involvement in government as "immoral".

Among the first letters on Mr Robinson's desk as First Minister was this salvo from the TUV Leader:

"Dear First Minister,
As you take up office as Joint First Minister, it seems appropriate to remind you of what you famously said in the Assembly on 8 May 2001 about your infamous partner. Were you wrong in what you said about McGuinness? Has he been made amenable for any of the multiple offences you alleged against him? Has he - whom it is now claimed supports the police and rule of law - cooperated in solving the horrendous crimes which you mentioned? Or is he still the same unrepentant terrorist you then painted him to be? If so, what are you doing being politically joined at the hip with him? As you so cogently put it yourself on 8 May 2001, when objecting to such a person being Minister of Education, "Are we going to continue with this unseemly and immoral sham?" Are you?

Yours sincerely,
JAMES H ALLISTER QC MEP"

Allister raises discrimination in Strasbourg

During Question time in the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Jim Allister raised the continuing discrimination against Protestants in recruitment to the PSNI. Highlighting that such was only possible because the Commission permitted derogation from EU legislation banning such discrimination, the Ulster Euro MP pressed Commissioner Spidla on when the Commission would put an end to "this preposterous situation" and restore the rights which all other Europeans enjoy to his constituents.

In the course of his questioning of Commissioner Spidla, Mr Allister said:

"Mr President, I would like to direct the Commissioner to religious discrimination and to

the amazing fact that, despite the EU's protection against religious discrimination, there is one place in the EU where religious discrimination is permitted. Sadly it is my constituency of Northern Ireland where by reason of derogation from EU legislation - permitted by the EU - it is expressly declared that it is lawful to discriminate against Protestants when it comes to recruiting to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Can the Commissioner tell us when this preposterous situation will end and the rights which others enjoy restored to my constituents?"



The sanitisation of the IRA

The next stage in the sanitisation of IRA/Sinn Fein is to be the removal of the IRA from the Government's list of banned organisations. Hence, the announcement of a "review" - inevitable code for intent to do so.

No matter how politically convenient to HMG and the DUP, it would be preposterous to so legitimise the IRA, which still boasts a wicked, operating Army Council and whose members just a few months ago

murdered Paul Quinn. Nor, have we ever seen an inventory of what was supposedly decommissioned so that an objective assessment can be made of its completeness.

It would be no surprise if this was a further concession recently negotiated with IRA/Sinn Fein. Such a move would then open up the way to the regularisation of assets and facilitate "resolution" of "on the runs".

More triple-jobbing = Less work at Westminster

Commenting on the DUP reshuffle of Executive Ministers, Traditional Unionist Leader, Jim Allister MEP said:-

"While the DUP needs a reshuffle of policy more than a change of personnel, there are aspects of this reshuffle which require comment.

The increase in triple mandates is bad news for the quality and constancy of the representation of Unionism at Westminster. In a year we have moved from 3 double-jobbing MPs serving also as Ministers, to 5. We've recently seen DUP MPs absent from key votes in the House of Commons on the Lisbon Treaty and the Embryology Bill. No one can adequately do 2, never mind 3 jobs - MP, MLA and Minister.

I fear in consequence of the appointment of even more MPs as ministers - itself a reflection on the value placed on "mere" MLAs - Northern Ireland will be even more short-changed in the coming months in parliamentary representation.

As for the sacking of Mr Poots, my only surprise is how he came to be appointed in the first place!"



Funding inequality against Protestants exposed

Monitoring data published at a recent Peace II Monitoring Committee revealed that Protestants were significantly under-represented as beneficiaries of EU funding. Of a total funding package worth 854.8 million Euros, Protestants represented just 36% of total beneficiaries, while Catholic beneficiaries accounted for 57% of the total. These figures were released as part of the winding up exercise of the 2000- 2006 Peace II Programme, in preparation for Peace III.

Jim Allister MEP said,

"I am appalled at the gross under-allocation of EU funds to Protestant beneficiaries. These figures confirm what many in the Protestant community suspected all along, that Peace II failed, by design and execution, to appeal to both sections of the community equally."



"Furthermore, figures reveal that 26% of allocated Peace II funds identified 'ex-prisoners and their families' as key target groups for funding. Here we have a situation where those who perpetrated their terror on society for more than 30 years are being rewarded, ironically by 'Peace' funds. Law abiding citizens will feel sick to the stomach when they discover the disgraceful manner in which large chunks of Peace funds have been allocated."

"We need answers regarding the persistent inequality in the distribution of European funding under so called 'Peace' Programmes."

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Article by Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister from EP Magazine

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

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

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

Recently, we had the EU Task Force for Northern Ireland, set up by President Barroso, report its findings. Like many EU presentations, when you strip away the fine verbiage, it signified little new. Certainly, no new money is headed our way, at best it unwraps some of the mystery surrounding already available EU programmes.

I've no doubt the Chuckle Brothers – as Joint First Ministers Paisley and McGuinness are scornfully referred to - missed a trick when they had President Barroso in Belfast, at the height of the new government's honeymoon. Just as President Delors effectively made policy on the hoof for Northern Ireland when he agreed the PEACE Programme –



which did not fit within prevailing budget and policy provisions – so Barroso should have been strong-armed or charmed - whichever it took - into an Infrastructure Package for Northern Ireland.

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

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

Jim Allister MEP - *Leading for Ulster*

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Allister reflects on One Year of Devolution

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

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

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

Much was promised, but a year into devolution what benefits have we seen? After 30 years of neglect under Direct Rule, it may come as a surprise to some that we haven't seen a single piece of novel or substantive legislation pass through Stormont. Indeed, we've seen some spectacular examples of dysfunctionality. Consider the debacle over the long promised Victims' Commissioner. Unable to agree, we are to get, at enhanced expense, a dolly mixture Commission, but, most critical of all, they are to persist with the offensive Direct Rule definition of victim, which equates the terrorist bomber with his victim. The DUP tell us they control Stormont, so why is this not being changed?

Because of the Sinn Fein veto, of course. So, just like under Direct Rule, Michelle Williamson has

identical status to Kelly, the Shankill bomber who made her a victim! Is this what delivering for victims looks like?

But it's comforting to see devolution has brought such certainty and stability to education and isn't it wonderful not to have to pay water charges. Sorry, I'm reading what it says on the tin, not what we've actually got. Our education system is in chaos! And, we're going to pay for our water after all. Whatever happened to the huge financial package the DUP promised, as the prerequisite to devolution that would save us from such charges? Like Sinn Fein's support for policing and the rule of law it was more hype than reality.

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

On daily issues of importance to ordinary citizens I can't say the Assembly has brought great benefit. Take our hard-pressed fishing sector, ravaged by quota cuts and soaring fuel costs. They pleaded for help and with a response that would have done Lord Rooker proud, all Minister Gildernew would come up with was £276 per boat, even though EU rules allow her to pay 30,000 Euros. Likewise in farming, where the all-island agenda seems more important than anything else.

And then, what of the quality of government? With our bloated coterie of 14 ministers, it's hard to imagine something worthwhile hasn't been achieved – like a cap on manufacturing rates – but, frankly, as a senior foreign journalist who recently visited Stormont observed, the performance there is often amateurish. I won't pretend to be impressed by many of our ministers and committee chairmen, right from the top down. Poor as many Direct Rule ministers were, at least most could read out the right answer to the question asked and few floundered in the farce of "minded decisions"!

MEP raises suicide and abuse of Internet

Jim Allister MEP, in the wake of rising levels of suicide among young people, has raised in the European Parliament the need for EU-wide action to curb internet sites which promote and facilitate suicide. Speaking during Question Time to the President of the Council, Mr Allister said:

“President-in-Office, could I direct you to another matter in terms of the protection of children in the context of the media, in particular against the background of rising and alarming suicide rates in Europe, not least in my own constituency? What can the Council do in respect of the gross misuse, in particular via internet services, of readily available advice on how to commit suicide? I today downloaded information from one such site, which gave advice on multiple ways to commit suicide.

It is quite appalling. Even if one goes onto Wikipedia one can find information on how to commit suicide. Will the Council address that in the context of child protection, in particular in the context of media?”



In response the Minister promised to examine if the Audio-Visual Media Services Directive could be deployed to try and clamp down on the offending websites.

Speaking afterwards, Mr Allister said, "It is not only the task of Governments to do everything possible to deal with these websites - a far from easy task given the worldwide nature of the net - but internet providers and search engines like Google need to play their part. More responsibility is required from them. It is quite appalling that a culture of suicide can be glamorised and promoted on these wicked sites. They need to be blocked and subjected to severe restraint."

EU COSTS UK £4,110,000,000.00!

The net annual cost to the UK of EU membership rocketed by almost 20% in 2007/08 to a staggering £4,110 million, according to government published figures. In 2007/08 the UK contributed £13,763 million to the EU, received back £5,693 million in grants and £3,960 in the British rebate, leaving a huge net loss of £4,110 million – a net loss of over £80 million per week to the British taxpayer! All of which makes the UK second only to Germany as the top paymaster of Europe. When the £6,000 million per annum cost to British business is added to this, which HMG has confirmed arises from complying with EU regulations, then the

price of belonging to the EU is crippling.

Commenting Jim Allister said, “As the EU has expanded, the burden of paymaster of Europe on the UK is becoming unbearable. The drain on our national resources is phenomenal, particularly when you realise we’ve been a huge net contributor every year since we joined 35 years ago. How much longer are we going to go on pouring billions into the black hole that is Brussels, before it is realised we’d be better off out? The question should not be whether we afford to leave, but can we afford to stay.”

	£million					
Source: Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2008 HC 489	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
UK gross contribution to EU Budget	9,738	11,370	12,183	11,780	12,245	13,763
UK rebate	3,233	3,874	3,722	3,641	3,560	3,960
UK receipts from EU	3,424	4,235	4,555	3,750	5,164	5,693
Net cost to UK	3,081	3,261	3,906	4,389	3,521	4,110

DUP trapped in negotiations– Allister

"The reality of the outcome of republican threats to veto Peter Robinson as First Minister is that Sinn Fein has manoeuvred the DUP into fresh negotiations over issues the unionist people were assured were under unionist veto. The inevitable outcome of more negotiations will be concessions by the DUP, just as it was with Trimble before them, especially, since Sinn Fein has the option of forcing an election at any point by resigning McGuinness as joint First Minister.

So I warn the Unionist people that, despite loud

assurances that the Irish Language Act was dead, that policing & justice was subject to unionist timing and indications that the Maze would not proceed, we should prepare for further concessions to republicanism. Such is the nature of a process which can only survive if mutual vetoes are not exercised. There will be much bluster from Mr Robinson, but he too will end up feeding the insatiable Sinn Fein tiger if he wants to keep his job as joint First Minister.

It's time the DUP recognised the unworkability and folly of Belfast Agreement devolution and delivered themselves and the Province from its clutches."

SUPREME IRONY!

Comment by Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister:

"What a farcical irony in the DUP MPs voting for 42 day detention of suspected terrorists, when every day the DUP sustains in government convicted terrorists, some of whom deserve 42 years!"

Where is the DUP veto now?

"A few weeks ago I warned the Unionist people that one of the ideas being floated was to "allow Westminster to take some language decisions, which the DUP would publicly protest but tolerate. Such would be a travesty and a mockery of supposedly having devolved powers". Time has proven this to be correct.

"In January the then DUP Culture Minister Edwin Poots ruled out further funding for the Irish Language Broadcast Fund. Now we learn that the Irish Language Broadcast Fund is to receive over £6million following negotiations with the Government surrounding Sinn Fein's threat to veto the DUP's leadership change.



extravagant hand-out to the Irish language, with

"Where is the Unionist veto if – behind DCAL's back (or was it) – the government can squander millions of pounds on the Irish language? And why did the DUP not block it, if as they claim they control Stormont? Instead, we have the DUP Minister, Gregory Campbell actually welcoming this further



its overtly republican agenda. Is this what delivering for unionism now looks like?

"It is time for the DUP to come clean on what else they conceded to Republicans in order to avoid facing the electorate.

"The crisis at Stormont over Peter Robinson's nomination illustrates very graphically the nature of the relationship between the DUP and Sinn Fein/IRA. The DUP cannot even change their leader without the agreement of the IRA's political front men. As Mr Robinson assumes office alongside a convicted terrorist, who gloats in his evil deeds, the imagery will be different from that of the Chuckle Brothers era. However, Peter will still be sharing a joint office with the man he once stated was **"the IRA commander in Londonderry when hundreds of killings were ordered"**.

Follow the work of your MEP at www.jimallister.org

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 MEPs.

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 being not 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."

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



Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister used a debate in the European Parliament on the structures of the WTO to attack the fact that, despite their burgeoning economies, China,

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

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said: "The WTO has many flaws, but surely its most ludicrous defect is the unfair advantage which it gives China, India and Brazil by affording them the favourable status of "developing countries". They once might have been emerging economies, but today they have very definitely emerged and can compete with the best. Indeed so successful are they that they are world leaders in several fields,

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

For a full report on Jim Allister MEP's visit to Brazil see: <http://www.jimallister.org/default.asp?blogID=1026>



Decision time on TB and badgers – Allister

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has called on DARD to reveal if badgers will feature in a future TB action plan.

The MEP said,

“For years, DARD has employed a TB control strategy which has ignored an important source of the infection which exists in the badger population. Indeed, last October, the UK Government’s Chief Scientific adviser warned that cattle movements alone cannot explain the persistence of TB in certain areas or its spread over the last decade, and recommended badger culling to be used in appropriate circumstances.

“In recent correspondence I have had with DARD on this issue, it would appear the Department is still undecided on whether a control strategy will include active management of the disease within the wildlife population, in particular badgers. While DARD makes much acclaim of the fact that TB incidence has been

falling since 2002, Northern Ireland remains a poor performer in comparison with other EU Member States, particularly in those countries where eradication has been achieved.

“I note the Welsh Minister has recently announced a pilot badger cull, as part of a plan to eradicate tuberculosis in cattle in that part of the UK. Local farmers, particularly those whose livelihoods have been affected by TB outbreaks, will be anxious to see some urgent action on this issue.”



Allister speaks in CAP Health Check debate

Speaking during a recent debate in Strasbourg on a European Committee Report on the CAP Health Check, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister made four key points, majoring on the potential to use unspent budget money on essential aid under Article 69 to strengthen EU agriculture. Millions of euros each year go unspent on intervention, export refunds and private storage. Rather than going back into general EU coffers, Mr Allister called for it to be used, particularly in regions where there are few alternatives to traditional types of agricultural production, to sustain agriculture there and tackle such socio-economic problems as an aging farming community with no alternative prospects. In the course of his



remarks Mr Allister said:

"There is much in this report with which I agree and would like to comment. Time restricts me to 4 points.

1. As the report highlights, the theory of decoupling is good, but its practice has been disappointing in failing to command higher market returns for producers.
2. We must retain sufficient instruments to safeguard against market and supply crises. Imbalances in the supply chain endanger the CAP's aim of secure food supply. Food security is impossible without guaranteed economic sustainability for producers.
3. We can do more on CAP simplification to reduce the bureaucratic burden and, yes, to decriminalise farmers who make honest mistakes through minor breaches.
4. Unused Agri Budget allocations on market management measures should be available for Art 69 aid to strengthen EU agriculture, particularly where production is marginal and to deal with situations, as in my constituency, where there are high number of farmers over 55 with little prospect of alternative employment."

SF sustained in government by “sceptics”



Speaking at the annual 11th Night bonfire at Ladyhill in South Antrim, Jim Allister MEP, reflecting on a year of DUP/Sinn Fein government, said Martin McGuinness was being sustained as joint First Minister in Ulster not just by unionist supporters of

joint rule with IRA/Sinn Fein, but, tragically, by some MLAs who privately claimed to be unhappy and opposed to Sinn Fein rule.

Mr Allister said, “As we reflect on three convicted terrorists still in our government and Sinn Fein able to deliver its anti-British agenda by direct deals with Westminster, one of the saddest realities

is that without some MLAs propping up a regime they privately claim to oppose, it would neither have come into existence, nor survived.

The murder of Paul Quinn by South Armagh IRA was the perfect opportunity upon which to take a stand and deliver promises made, but even those, like Lord Morrow, who told the Assembly everyone knew the IRA murdered Quinn, turned a blind eye, accepting SF can still be in government while IRA members still murder. Shame on them!

Some say government with Sinn Fein turns their stomach, but ask them to pull out the props that keep Sinn Fein in government, and they go weak at the knees.

Those who in their heart know it is wrong to have McGuinness as joint First Minister and unrepentant terrorists in other key posts, have the most to answer in explaining why, nonetheless, day and daily they prop up this regime. I too could have taken the easy option of claiming I was opposed, while all the time propping it up, but where is the integrity and principle in that?”

Politicisation of The Queen's visit regrettable - Allister

“The politicisation of Her Majesty’s visit by stage managing a simultaneous visit by Mary McAleese is regrettable. It is clear that the NIO and Dublin have collaborated to push forward the imagery of joint London/Dublin synergy.

“I would like to know if the Northern Ireland Executive, and particularly the First Minister assented to this joint visit, not least since the DUP has boasted that through devolution, they have thwarted the drift towards joint authority manifestations.

“As part of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland should be able to enjoy a Royal visit without any element of hijack from Dublin or peddling of joint symmetry.

“McAleese's audacious declaration that there will be no royal visit to Dublin till policing and justice is devolved is remarkable. The political meaning is clear and explains why republicans are so adamant on securing such devolution. Devolution of policing

and justice for republicans means the end of British justice and British policing anywhere in Ireland. That is why McAleese said what she said and that is why no unionist should rush into such devolution. When their goal of “Brits Out” of policing and justice has been achieved, then, they will they deign to permit Queen Elizabeth II to visit. What a cheek!”



“The opinions stated herein are those of the author. These opinions do not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Parliament - in fact they almost certainly do not!