



Allister rebukes President Pottering over Maze Shrine

In the first sitting of the European Parliament since its President visited Northern Ireland, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister rebuked President Pottering over his support in Belfast for the Maze Shrine project.

Speaking in a debate Mr Allister told the Parliament:-

"Last Monday on his visit to Belfast, the President enthused about the EU supporting what was covertly called a "Conflict Transformation Centre" at the site of the former Maze Prison, where some of the most vile and vicious terrorists were properly incarcerated. Also, where 10 IRA convicted terrorists infamously suicided through hunger strike.

"What the President maybe did not appreciate is that because of this history Irish republicans, who love to wallow in self-pity, are determined to perfect their own transformation on any such centre and turn it into a shrine for some of the most evil terrorists known to this generation. Hence, the folly of the EU falling into the trap of funding such an obscenity and the foolishness of the President lending his office to any such venture."



DUP Sell Out On Maze Shrine Confirmed

"The fact that the Joint First Ministers lobbied EP President, Hans Gert Pottering, on his visit to Belfast in support of a so called "conflict transformation centre" at the Maze, confirms that in the recent DUP/Sinn Fein deal the DUP has conceded the Maze Shrine.

I have long warned this would happen, not least since Ian Paisley, when First Minister, sanctioned inclusion of the Maze project in the EU Task Force Report - something which I invited Peter Robinson to reverse, when he came to office. Instead in a recent letter to me he has even endorsed the Provo lingo by calling it the Maze/Long Kesh site!

With or without the stadium, it is now clear that the DUP has caved in to Sinn Fein's key demand over the Maze Shrine. This is shameful, particularly since delisting by the DUP Minister of the remaining Maze buildings could have permitted their demolition and an end to the Provo dream.

This "conflict transformation centre" will indeed be a site for the glorification of terrorism, particularly of the suicide hunger strikers, and the rewriting of history at which republicanism excels. The recent BBC documentary was a clear indication of just how Sinn Fein will exploit and use the shrine centre which the First Minister is now ready to gift them.

As an MEP I will do my utmost to thwart the misuse of EU funds on this project, but it is clear the First Minister is prepared to endorse such wastage as part of his latest deal with the Shinners, which is made all the more appalling by the total failure to date of PEACE III funding to give one penny to victims' groups."

Destroying Northern Ireland from within

Statement by TUV Leader Jim Allister MEP: "Conor Murphy's boast that he anticipates a referendum proposing Irish unity by 2016, is further evidence of how IRA/Sinn Fein is abusing its presence in government to advance the destruction of Northern Ireland. As Peter Robinson rightly observed, when he was opposed to the Belfast Agreement, whose processes are designed to deliver Irish unity, there is indeed no

quicker way to destroy Northern Ireland than from within its own government.

"The all-island harmonisation process, which Sinn Fein is pushing at every turn and which the DUP is helping to finance by lavishing funds on the north/south bodies, is an object lesson in how this part of the UK is intended to be detached from its present constitutional alignment."

MEP urges "holiday" from EU Regulation to help business

Speaking in a debate in the European Parliament on the global economic downturn and particularly its impact on small and medium sized business, Traditional Unionist Jim Allister challenged the EU to do something radical to help by introducing a "holiday" from EU Regulation for small business. With EU regulation costing businesses across Europe a huge outlay, equating to 5% of the EU's total GDP, the MEP identified such as an immediate way to lift the burden of industry and allow it to breathe and grow. "The sky would not fall in", he chided the Commission, "if we lifted this burden off business."

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

Jim Allister (NI). - Mr President, the title of this question speaks about improving the environment for SMEs. Could I suggest that, if the EU really wants to help, rather than indulging in predictable rhetoric, there is something meaningful and immediate which could be done. Why could we not initiate a 'regulation holiday' for SMEs during the current global crisis? Compliance with tier upon tier of EU regulation is so demanding, so onerous and so expensive that it is stultifying EU output and prosperity. The cost is unbearable. It amounts to billions per annum. At a stroke, through a 'regulation holiday', we could save businesses billions per year and allow them to breathe and grow."

What about the AK 47?

The charging of Padraig Trainor with possession of an AK 47 rifle raises important questions for Sinn Fein and the political process in general.

1. Is Trainor a Sinn Fein member, or a member of any other part of "the republican movement"?
2. How, in light of decommissioning supposedly being "complete", was there an AK 47 available for anyone to be in possession of in November 2007?
3. When did Conor Murphy part with Trainor's services as a driver? Was it only after his premises were searched and this weapon found in November 2007?
4. Till then was he in receipt of any public funds as part of the bizarre

arrangement whereby Sinn Fein Ministers are permitted to "employ" their own drivers? Perhaps, the DFP Minister would like to explain. Just as the Quinn murder was whitewashed, so I suspect the mutual interest of the DUP and Sinn Fein in concealing the full truth of this matter will equally come into play.



Allister urges extension of Government protection to mutual savers

Government has a 'moral duty' to extend the financial protection scheme to include savers of mutual savings schemes, including the Presbyterian Mutual, says TUV MEP Jim Allister.

The MEP said, "To a large extent, the Government's understandable action in protecting banks has induced the run on mutual societies, because they are outside the scope of the financial protection scheme. From this, I believe, there flows at least a moral obligation on Government to respond to a crisis within mutual societies induced by its selective protection scheme."

"Thousands of small investors are suffering greatly as a result of the inability of the Presbyterian Mutual Society to meet the cash demands upon it, which has resulted in that particular mutual society going into administration, with savers being denied access to their savings. I have therefore written to the Chancellor, making the case to extend financial guarantee to include mutual societies, including the Presbyterian Mutual. If investors in banks are worthy of protection, then, surely and equally, investors in the mutuals deserve the same comfort."

Allister backs free fruit in schools

The European Parliament has backed a Commission proposal for a scheme to give every primary school pupil free fruit. "With 5 million children in the EU overweight, the inculcating of healthier eating habits at an early age is important", says Ulster MEP, Jim Allister.

Mr Allister explained, "The Commission scheme is limited in its resources and would require co-financing by member states. At its present level of proposed funding it might only permit

one piece of fruit per child per week. Such is patently inadequate. If the scheme is worth doing, then it must be on a scale of daily provision. This would be a better spend of EU funds than many of the schemes money is wasted on. A further concern which I have is the option for some member states to ask for contributions from parents. This must not happen, or the scheme would lose its universal availability. Otherwise, there is obvious merit in this scheme and, therefore, I was happy to vote for it."

25th Commemoration of Edgar Graham's murder

Reflecting on the 25th commemoration of the IRA murder of Edgar Graham, Traditional Unionist Voice Leader Jim Allister MEP said:-

"Having known Edgar well from his student days in the Law Faculty at Queen's University, where our under-graduate years overlapped, and later when we both served in the 1982 Assembly, I still vividly recall the shock, sorrow and anger which I felt over his brutal murder. To think that the ultimate reward for the Party of those who murdered him, and hundreds more of our best citizens, is to rule over us, adds to my revulsion. To this day his murderers have not been caught. If Sinn Fein was truly committed to justice and democracy they would be helping, even now, to bring his murderers, and those of all other

innocent victims, to justice. But, as ever, they are still most interested in protecting their own and glorifying their evil exploits.

Edgar was a sound Unionist and exceptional talent. His murder was intended by IRA/Sinn Fein to rob Ulster, and particularly Unionism's future, of an articulate and outstanding ambassador, and so sadly it did.

At this poignant time our thoughts and prayers are with his family."



Allister defends Israel

Speaking in a debate in the European Parliament, shortly after a narrow vote to postpone a decision on an upgraded EU-Israel Agreement, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister attacked that decision as the product of an orchestrated campaign by anti-Israeli forces, and once more defended Israel on the floor of the parliament.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

Jim Allister (NI). - Mr President, some would have us believe that this House today acted out of a crisis of conscience. I must say that I find that strange, considering how many times this House has endorsed agreements without a whimper in respect of countries which indeed have appalling human rights records and which indeed have governmental structures which are far from democratic.

It seems to me that this House was blown off course today by an orchestrated campaign, from without and within, of very considerable venom against the State of Israel, and that we allowed ourselves to be unduly influenced by that. The blind bigotry that some have shown against Israel is quite appalling. Israel is a democracy in a region where democracies are few and far between. It accepts a two-state solution. It has been subjected to the most horrendous external and internal terrorism and, in consequence, it undoubtedly has the right to defend itself.

Some in this House seem so concerned with their angst and hatred of Israel that they are eager to excuse terrorist attacks and, indeed, eager to excuse the excesses of Hamas in Gaza, seeing fault only within the state that is under attack. I think that is wrong.

Allister raises "trojan candidate" issue in Brussels

Statement by TUV MEP Jim Allister

"With the DUP due to select its vote-splitting candidate on 22 January and as they are key proponents of the intended change in the law to outlaw by-elections in Northern Ireland to the European Parliament, and instead allow a resigning member to be replaced by a party placeman, I took the opportunity of a debate in the Constitutional Affairs Committee on the mechanics of future EP elections, to raise the Trojan candidate issue.

Generally, MEPs were astounded that in any part of the EU it would be possible



to replace an elected member by a party hack, who the electorate had never known could become their MEP. Yet, this is precisely what is proposed for Northern Ireland. If the legislative amendment goes through, then, one person can be elected as the MEP and replaced immediately, or at any time, by the nominee of his/her Party Leader, without that person's name even having gone before the electorate, even on a 'B' list.

Even historically in Eastern Europe at its worst, there was seldom such scant regard for the democratic process."

"Where now pledge on Army Council ?"

Extract from a speech by Traditional Unionist Voice Leader Jim Allister MEP in Kilkeel on 21 November 2008

"Now that the DUP and Sinn Fein have kissed and made up, its business as usual at Stormont, until Sinn Fein next needs its concession card topped up by the DUP. Make no mistake it was the DUP which gave way on policing and justice. All the machinery is being put in place to deliver it as soon as they can get away with it. Nigel Dodds says no date exists but he is the Minister in charge of "Personnel" while a recruitment circular is circulating within the Civil Service asking who would like to join the new Department. So, who does he think he's kidding in pretending nothing has changed?

On 26 August 2008 Peter Robinson said no Sinn Fein Minister could ever exercise any policing and justice powers, yet on Tuesday last he stood, side by side, with McGuinness and announced their joint nomination for Attorney General - the most senior law officer and an integral part of the devolution of policing and justice. Moreover, McGuinness will proceed to jointly nominate the Judicial Appointments Commission, which will appoint every Judge. So much for no role for any Sinn Fein minister in policing and justice.

And, of course, the moment policing and justice is devolved every cross-cutting issue from that department must go to the Executive and every policing and justice issue going to the North South Ministerial Council - to which, shamefully,

policing and justice will be subject - must pass through the Executive. So the pretence that no Sinn Fein minister will have any say on policing and justice is a colossal fiction and deceit.

It is, of course, because of this direct Executive role for Sinn Fein that the DUP used to make dissolution of the Army Council a pre-requisite before policing and justice devolution could even be considered.

On 11th February 2008 Peter Robinson told the Belfast Telegraph that policing and justice devolution was not possible "while the IRA Army Council still exists." And Jeffrey Donaldson MP told the NI Committee,

"There is no way that we will agree to the devolution of policing and justice powers when the IRA army council remains in place—no way. That is an issue that Sinn Fein will have to address and deal with." <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmgeneral/nigc/070724/70724s01.htm> (at the end of Column 35)

Where now that pledge? Gone, alas, with all the rest as the DUP does whatever it takes to keep Sinn Fein on board and the executive afloat.

Now we face the obscene prospect of policing and justice issues being discussed in the Executive by and with Army Council members, because of the probability of continuing duality of membership. Yet in the DUP's parallel world this is another "victory" for Unionism!"



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.

Republic's voters face coercion - Allister

Statement by Jim Allister MEP:

“As I have long forecast, the voters of the Republic of Ireland are to be bullied by a consortium of their own government and the EU to reverse their democratic rejection of the Lisbon Treaty. It is entirely a matter for the voters of the Republic as to how they respond to such coercion, but it is clear that not one word of substance of the Treaty will be altered.

What might appear in “declarations” to accompany the Treaty will be of no binding legal force and will be easily swept aside by the Euro-fanatical Court of Justice in Luxembourg. The fig leaf of a Commissioner for every country, possibly in the Accession Treaty for Croatia, will not dilute the important issues of super statehood structures for the EU and ever-diminishing national control, through increased majority voting in decision making.”

Allister flays Murphy over Frazer attack

Statement by TUV MEP Jim Allister:

“Republican thugs attempt to abduct Willy Frazer, beat him up, steal his phone and camera and Government minister Murphy dismisses it as a “fantasy”. This, of course, is the same IRA apologist who tells us the IRA had nothing to do with the murder of Paul Quinn, or even the Northern Bank! Yet, this is the same Murphy who thinks he and his ilk in government are fit to sit in an Executive discussing policing and justice issues. I don't think so!

I trust rigorous police investigation, unhindered by political restraints, will follow this outrageous attack on Mr Frazer.”



The Crossmaglen attack, along with its military style execution, with men and cars coming from every angle, portrays that in South Armagh IRA bandits still roam at will. IRA control in South Armagh, alas, is the price that has been paid for what passes as “the peace process”.

MEP comments on Rathlin Ferry report



Jim Allister heading to Rathlin on recent visit

Commenting on the internal DRD report on the awarding of the Rathlin Island Ferry contract, TUV MEP Jim Allister, who had referred the whole

issue to the Audit Office, said:-

“Though written as sympathetically as possible to the Department, even this internal report has to acknowledge “basic errors” in relation to the procurement process and the administration of the tender exercise. Concluding that such, nonetheless, did not “affect the overall outcome of the competition” seems to me a giant leap of convenience for the Department.

The finding that key staff exercised “poor judgement” is worrying in circumstances where public funds are being distributed through public contracts.

I will be monitoring carefully how DRD implements the 12 recommendations in this report.”

DUP wriggling, says Allister

Statement by TUV Leader Jim Allister MEP

"I don't suppose I should be surprised by the disingenuous claim by DUP spokesman that what they have delivered on policing and justice is in fact what they always intended. If it turns out that OFMDFM is to be stripped of some of its policing and justice powers - and we'll only know that for sure when we see the amending legislation - then that is the result of TUV pressure, not DUP conviction. The facts and chronology are very simple:



Policing and Justice

- the present legislative framework (contained mostly in the 2004 Justice Act) provides upon devolution of p & j that OFMDFM would be gifted
 - a) the recommendation powers on who should be senior judges;
 - b) the right to appoint the Judicial Appointments Commission, which would appoint all other judges;
 - c) the right to appoint the Attorney General, who in turn appoints the head of the Prosecution Service;
 - d) the right to appoint the 9 "independent" members of the Policing Board.
- thus if any of the above is to change amendment to the primary legislation is necessary.
- When the Executive Review Committee met for months under the chairmanship of Jeffrey Donaldson MP, not once was even one of these issues raised or any attempt made by the DUP to strip out OFMDFM's powers over policing and justice.

- TUV then produced a document highlighting and exposing these OFMDFM powers.
- Nigel Dodds MP responded by saying it was DUP policy to have no policing and justice powers in OFMDFM.
- The DUP/Sinn Fein deal has some hint that things may now change (only the amending legislation will confirm the reality), particularly in regard to ceding the recommendation powers on senior judges to the Judicial Appointments Commission, which OFMDFM, it seems, will still appoint and Jeffrey Donaldson has said - though there is no such mention in any of the published documents - the powers of appointment to the Policing Board will pass to the Justice Minister. If so, this still leaves OFMDFM to appoint the Attorney General, a power they have conditionally already exercised (a sure sign that an agreed timeframe exists for transferring policing and justice, confirmed further by internal trawling in the Civil Service for staff for the department) and appointment powers to the Judicial Appointments Commission.

Thus, it seems some policing and justice powers may be removed from OFMDFM, while others will stay and others will become arms-length. The TUV can rightly claim credit for forcing the DUP into waking up to these issues, but we regret that they have not gone the whole way and removed every policing and justice power from McGuinness' reach. McGuinness shouldn't be permitted to appoint a court doorkeeper, never mind the Attorney General, nor those who appoint the judges.

I look forward to publication of the amending legislation to see exactly what is fact and what is fiction in the spinning of the latest attempted reconciliation of the DUP/Sinn Fein partnership. Having proven that their bully boy tactics work, one wonders how long it will be before Sinn Fein is back with a new shopping list and ever bigger trolley for the next tranche of DUP concessions.

I also must comment on the cave-in over the period that Sinn Fein can be held out of holding the Policing and Justice Ministry. A few weeks ago we were told Sinn Fein in a letter to the Review Committee had agreed to the appointment mechanism of a cross-community vote "at all times", now we find the "sunset clause" opens up the possibility of Sinn Fein control as early as 2012!"

“DUP has botched education negotiations” - Allister

Extract from a speech by TUV Leader Jim Allister MEP at a public meeting in Bangor on 28th November 2008

“...As the dust settles on the latest DUP/Sinn Fein deal it is becoming increasingly clear that it was Sinn Fein which got its boxes ticked: they are to get policing and justice devolved in 2009, they are to get their Maze shrine under the guise of a “transformation centre”, an Irish Language Strategy is on its way and on education the DUP has given up resistance to the ESA and signalled surrender on transfer at 11.

What did the DUP get in return? Nothing, well maybe a little job security, till IRA/Sinn Fein next needs concessions, and, of course, Peter got “personal assurances” that the wicked Army Council has gone away. How have the mighty fallen? Peter Robinson, who would have torn David Trimble apart for daring to rely on anything the IRA said, is reduced to peddling republican spin. If Peter believes the IRA about the Army Council, does he now also believe they didn't rob the Northern Bank, because the same people have given that assurance too? How pathetic!

But tonight, I want to focus on the education debacle. The concession to accept the ESA is of tremendous strategic importance and detriment for the future of education. The ESA is about centralist, near totalitarian control of education, curriculum-wise, management-wise and assessment-wise. And who is to control it? None other than Gavin Boyd, an avowed opponent of the grammar schools and every principle that made our education system the envy of many.



Mr Boyd's time at the helm in CCEA was characterised by radical curriculum reform: he introduced a “progressivist” curriculum which moves us away from the tried and trusted priority of grounding children in the basics of English, mathematics, reading and science and instead emphasises, often in the critical early years

through mere play, self-development of “the whole child”, leading inexorably to a woolly, frothy product, incapable of objective testing. Hence the link between this approach to education and outlawing selection. In an address to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, Mr Boyd's manager for Curriculum Development, Carmel Gallagher, described the curriculum as a “Trojan Horse that would be the vehicle for effecting significant change.” The chaos which is playing out before our eyes is the result.

In management terms too, ESA will upturn well functioning arrangements, with particular detriment to our many voluntary grammar schools. Central control, by those who take an anathematic view of the grammars, will be asserted, as Sinn Fein spokesman, O'Dowd, boasted earlier this week.

The DUP used to see and stand against these dangers. Sammy Wilson, in particular, railed against the centralising control of an ESA. Now, in another roll-over it is to be meekly accepted.

But an even greater breach of promise is in the offing. Mired in the welter of contradictory statements and documents from the DUP is the reality that just a few days ago they delivered to Sinn Fein a paper offering to surrender selection at 11 to transfer at 14. While Mervyn Storey says one thing, and avows that their commitment is still to selection at 11, the cold print of their secret document to Sinn Fein tells a very different story: “However none of these matters are sufficiently concerning to force us to feel instinctively that agreement around transfer at 14 could not be found...Fourteen could become the key decision point for the future...We would be flexible about the instrument for matching pupils at 14. Fourteen however would be promoted and supported as the key decision point....”

Could it be any clearer? The DUP has signalled its willingness to accept transfer at 14, so the pretence that the line is being held on academic selection at 11 is palably deceptive. If this is how the DUP negotiates - by signalling concession in private and then trying to pull it back in public - little wonder, they have so little to show for the past 18 months. Let no one be fooled, transfer at 14 will destroy our grammar schools.

I fear, therefore, that courtesy of wholly bungled negotiations we are heading for even worse news and chaos on the education front.”

DUP lavishing taxpayers' money on North/South bodies

Statement by TUV Leader Jim Allister MEP:-

“One of the loud pre-devolution boasts of the DUP was that once in power they would rein in the north/south bodies of the Belfast Agreement and cut out their waste of taxpayers’ hard earned cash.

So, a year after devolution, in May 2008, I sought information on exactly how this calling to account of the north/south bodies was going and by how much the DUP Finance Minister had trimmed their budgets. Now, 6 months after asking, and complaining to the Ombudsman about the delay, I’ve received the information. The embarrassing reality that far from trimming their costs the DUP has been rubber-stamping their every lavish demand, no doubt explains the reluctance to answer my questions.

I am dismayed that with no questions asked every north/south body got every penny of public funding they demanded. There is not a single local department which was so treated, every one of them saw their funding bids cut, but not the north/south bodies.

Not one penny was held back from a single north/south body by DFP. So much for reining them in and calling them to account. Moreover, on average, their 2008 Budgets were sanctioned to rise by 10% - well above inflation. So, while local departments are subject to efficiency

SUMMARY OF 2008-10 CORPORATE PLANS AND 2008 BUSINESS PLANS APPROVED FOR NORTH/SOUTH BODIES

NORTH/SOUTH BODY	DATE TO MINISTER	DATE APPROVED	£'000s		
			2007 BUDGET	2008 BUDGET	% INCREASE FROM 2007
Special EU Programmes Body	10-Oct-07	11-Nov-07	2,307	2,723	16%
Tourism Ireland Ltd	01-Feb-08	26-Feb-08	47,300	52,640	11.3%
Food Safety Promotion Board	01-Feb-08	26-Feb-08	6,560	6,921	5.5%
Waterways Ireland	12-Mar-08	13-Mar-08	33,300	34,110	2.4%
InterTrade Ireland	23-Apr-08	13-May-08	10,300	11,470	11.4%
The Loughs Agency	19-May-08	27-May-08	3,640	5,700	56.6%
The Language Body:					
Foras na Gaeilge	25-June-08	1-July-08	13,596	13,674	2%
Ulster Scots Agency	25-June-08	1-July-08	2,557	3,315	29.6%

savings, the north/south bodies get to squander as much of our money as they seek, going up from a spend of £119m in 2007 to £130m in 2008.

Sadly, once more it is clear that despite all the pre-devolution rhetoric the DUP has settled in to enthusiastically working every facet of the Belfast Agreement, and they are prepared to lavish whatever money the cross-border bodies demand. Shame on them!

These tens of millions, in the present straightened circumstances, could be spent so much more prudently and beneficially for the hard-pressed people of Northern Ireland, but instead, by DUP sanction, it is wasted on the all-Ireland apparatus of the Belfast Agreement.”

"The politics of the Bully Boy"!

Speaking in the lead debate in the European Parliament on the December Heads of Government Summit, Traditional Unionist MEP, Jim Allister chided EU leaders for their obsession with forcing a re-think out of Irish voters on the Lisbon Treaty. A staunch opponent of the Treaty, Mr Allister expressed opposition to the bullying tactics of European leaders and observed that if there had been a 'Yes' vote, there would be no question of a re-run. It had something of the politics of the bully boy about it.

In the course of his remarks the Ulster Euro MP said:-

"Whereas the total focus of this Summit should be on the economic crisis afflicting us all, sadly,

much time will be devoted to how to subjugate the democratically expressed will of the Irish electorate. The disrespect for the lawfully expressed opinion of a small country on the Lisbon Treaty is palpable. Such a juggernaut, Mugabe approach would not dare be tried with a large country, but the voters of the Republic of Ireland are fair game to be pushed around by the European elite, to whom their precious Lisbon project is more important than the democracy of a nation state.

It is such arrogance, such intent on browbeating those who thwart their design which has brought the EU to such disconnection from its people. This whole unseemly saga has more of the politics of the bully boy about it, than democracy!"

Allister responds to NIHRC Bill of Rights report

"I reject the principle of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. While the DUP and UUP may agree that Northern Ireland requires such a piece of legislation I do not. HMG is currently pursuing a Bill of Rights for the UK as a whole. Northern Ireland should not be excluded from this process and treated as a place apart.

Unionists will doubtless note that the NIHRC met with the Irish Human Rights Commission "on a regular basis". This would appear to be part of more unwarranted Southern interference in our affairs.

It is also interesting that the report makes numerous references to so called "cultural rights" and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Language. As I have warned in the past, this will be used as cover for additional Irish language provision which will help to dilute the Britishness of Northern Ireland.

I also note that the report claims that the Programme for Government and the draft Victims and Survivors Strategy "recognises" the special needs of victims. There is no hint that any new Bill will seek to change the outrageous definition currently on the statute books which equates innocent victims with those who were killed or

injured while engaged in terrorism.

I regret that the report offers no protection for the unborn child and states that it would be "inappropriate" for the Bill to make any reference to abortion. How can any Bill claim to enshrine rights when the most vulnerable in our society - the unborn - are left unprotected by its provisions?



As for the attempt to promote social agenda issues as something suitable for a Bill of Rights, this is preposterous politicking. These are matters for elected governments to promote and change according to their mandate, they should not be in a Bill of Rights. However, as with the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights these are all set forth as "rights", when they are patently wholly political issues."

MEP lashes fishing outcome



"The manner in which the EU Fisheries Ministers rolled over on the Commission's unreasonable demands for savage cuts in the days

when fishing is permitted, is a disgrace and gross betrayal of the fishing industry.

The 25% reduction in fishing effort, supposedly to protect cod stocks, is more than the industry can bear. The knock-on effect on prawn boats is particularly alarming.

There is not much point in stand-in Minister, Conor Murphy, trying to blame everyone else. He was charged with defending Northern Ireland's interests and he failed, lamentably failed. Even absentee Lord Rooker in his time didn't do worse."

Ulster MEP rejects UK joining the Euro

Following the claim by President Barroso that UK Government figures have confided a desire to join the Euro, Traditional Unionist MEP, Jim Allister, has slammed any such notion as a recipe for disaster.

Commenting Mr Allister said, "If the present economic crisis teaches us anything it is the imperative of keeping maximum economic control within our own hands. Being able to set our own interest rates, financial targets and trimming policy to suit our own needs would all

be lost if we joined the Euro. We need less Europe, not more.

Even the experience of those countries which joined the Euro, in terms of inflation and unemployment, tells us we are right to stay out. And a glance across the border to the Republic of Ireland shows prices and bust which we can well do without. So, I unashamedly believe we must keep the pound and keep our destiny out of the hands of the European Central Bank."

Farming News

Dioxin case confirms crisis of confidence in Agriculture Minister

Jim Allister MEP has said the response by DARD and the FSA to the dioxin situation has highlighted the crisis of confidence that exists within the farming community towards Farm Minister Michelle Gildernew.



The MEP said, “Those whose livelihoods depended on the reaction by the Northern Ireland authorities to the dioxin situation as it developed must still be reeling with horror. Questions as to why Northern Ireland pork was taken off the shelves before traceability checks were carried out, which would have confirmed that no local pig herds had used contaminated feed, are indeed prevalent in farming circles.”

“While public safety has to be the primary consideration in this type of case, farmers are undoubtedly questioning who in Government was representing their interests in terms of minimising the impact this scare has had on trade of Northern Ireland pork, at what is a key time of the year. The failure by DARD to communicate and liaise with pig processors did little to contain trading difficulties experienced by a number of local companies.”

“Poor communications seem to feature as a key indictment against DARD in the round, including the failure of the Department to alert fellow Departments to the situation. Furthermore, the DARD Minister’s inability to distinguish between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as separate entities has needlessly tainted Ulster Pork and Bacon, something which has been

deeply damaging in marketing terms, and could have been avoided.”

“A Minister who was hitherto deemed incompetent before this crisis, has served to create a crisis of confidence in her ability or willingness to defend Northern Ireland’s agricultural interests.”

Questions For Republic Too

The Republic of Ireland must explain how they allowed this to happen. Following the extensive dioxin crisis in Belgium in 1999 the EU put in place testing and inspection requirements on every member state. So, here there is not just failure at the feed mill involved but a Dublin government failure in terms of the adequacy of their inspection and control regime. This is something which I have already raised with the EU Commission. If the resulting economic loss to our economy flowed directly from Dublin government neglect, then recompense must become an issue.

In its own way this episode is a warning against slack cross-border importations and checks. For her own political purposes Minister Gildernew loves to talk of “Fortress Ireland”, well, sometimes protecting our own agri-food sector may require a “Fortress Northern Ireland” strategy.

This experience gives fresh urgency to the need for effective food labelling. It is the absence of proper labelling as to origin which left room for confusion as to whether withdrawn products might have included affected ROI produce. If clear labelling was required as to the country of origin of the main meat content, then we would have known precisely which produce to withdraw, instead of the scatter gun approach resulting from the absence of such labelling. Rather than waiting for the EU to get its act together on this matter, DARD should be acting now to introduce definitive and unambiguous labelling. There is no sensible argument against such.”

Feel free to contact my offices regarding any European issue:

139 Holywood Road,
Belfast,
BT4 3BE

Tel: (028) 90 655011
Fax: (028) 90 654314

European Parliament
Rue Wiertz
BD4 5M 073
B-1047 Brussels

Tel: +0032 2284 5275
Fax: +0032 2284 9275

Allister raises export refunds and pesticides with UK Permanent Representation

Jim Allister MEP has met with the UK Permanent Representation to the EU, to press for support at EU Council level on export refunds and on far reaching pesticides proposals.

The MEP commented, "It is imperative that the UK Government represents the interests of the Northern Ireland dairy industry in pushing for the early re-introduction of export refunds, in its representations to the Commission, and with the other Member States at Council level. Indeed, I also took the opportunity to highlight the absence of sufficient funding at a regional level to assist with the restructuring of our dairy industry, particularly if unspent CAP funds are not reallocated. We have seen where the French

have awarded an extra 25 million to aid its sheep sector, while the German Government has announced a 350 million Dairy fund - clearly, our Rural Development Programme in its current form is a bit of a lame duck."

"I also took the opportunity to present the concerns of our agricultural industry in relation to EU legislative proposals on Pesticides. Current proposals would cause enormous problems for the industry, in moving from a risk to a hazard based approach. The UK Government is not in favour of the proposals on pesticides in their current form, particularly in the absence of a full economic and environmental impact assessment having been carried out."

Farming families disadvantaged by an aspect of PPS 21

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has expressed grave disappointment over an aspect of draft PPS 21. He says retiring farmers stand to be grossly disadvantaged over the removal of the free-standing right in planning policy to a retirement dwelling, something which was in the now discarded PPS 14. Now retiring farmers will have to let 10 years pass, if they sell a site even to a family member, before they can secure a retirement dwelling for themselves.

In a statement the MEP said, "Draft PPS 21 abrogates a retirement dwelling (CTY 3 in PPS 14) as a free-standing basis upon which a planning permission could be obtained on a farm and subsumes it, without distinction, into CTY 10 (farm dwellings).

In consequence a grave disservice and inequity is being done to the farming community. Under CTY 10 if a site is sold or a planning permission is obtained for a son or daughter, and the site is transferred for value, then the farmer must wait 10 years before he could hope to attain a retirement dwelling. This is unfair. Frequently

when sons or daughters are looking for dwellings the father might be 60 years of age. Yet, under this proposal when he comes to 65 years he can't attain a retirement dwelling, but must wait a full 10 years after transfer of the earlier site to his son/daughter. Meanwhile the transfer of the business, for example to another son, who would expect to live in the farmhouse, is disrupted.

I, therefore, believe it is wrong and misguided to remove retirement dwellings as a free-standing basis upon which a planning permission can be obtained. In many cases PPS 21 will diminish planning opportunities for farming families because of this abrogation of the retirement dwelling category. Surely, a retiring farmer is in a particular position and this requires to be reflected in planning policy. He should not have to choose between transferring a site to a family member or having a retirement dwelling for himself and his wife.

I trust that this flawed aspect of draft PPS 21 will be re-examined and I have written to the DOE Minister accordingly."

Allister responds to DARD wind turbine report

Jim Allister MEP has added his comments to the long awaited DARD report on the Wind Energy for Rural Businesses project:

"At long last, DARD has been forced into admitting it has a responsibility towards the farmers and rural business owners who have been at the centre of this shambolic scheme. While the report does recommend that the Department should consider making a payment to project promoters, I note this is on the basis that applicants abandon any claim against the Department arising out of the project. DARD is seeking to give recompense for only 'some' of the costs of this flawed scheme, while ensuring that

affected farmers do not seek to pursue the Department for the balance through the courts. In short, it seems that DARD is seeking to 'short-change' those who have suffered financially under the scheme."

"Regrettably, it has taken an enormous amount of negative publicity for the Department to be forced into accepting it has any responsibility to the farmers concerned, which is all too often the case. I suspect my referring this matter to the attention of the Northern Ireland Audit Office has also had a part to play in forcing DARD to this point."

1st Anniversary of formation of TUV

Speaking at a dinner in Templepatrick, coinciding the first anniversary of Traditional Unionist Voice, Jim Allister MEP said in just one short year TUV had sent shockwaves through the political establishment and given hope to tens of thousands of Unionists who felt betrayed by the spectacle and failure of DUP/Sinn Fein government.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

“As a new political party we have punched well above our weight in the last year. At Dromore we may not have won the seat, but in reality we won the election, toppling one Paisley within days and another in months. We have put the frighteners on “the biggest party in the country”, most recently by forcing a hasty retreat from transfer at 14. Increasingly obfuscation has become their refuge. They blinked on Sinn Fein’s demand for policing and justice, but ever since have been kicking up dust to try and cover their tracks, pretending no date is decided, when even the Prime Minister is speaking of months.

All the while the Sinn Fein agenda is moving forward, with the Maze shrine being peddled by OFMDFM for European funding and a Language Strategy evolving to give increased support to Irish - let me say the cover of a few more pound for Ulster Scots will fool no one. Yes, Ulster Scots culture, more than language, needs more support, but not as the cover for largesse towards the Irish Language.

A present log-jam in OFMDFM, which I am watching with interest, is the preposterous proposal to give £10m of PEACE III funding to ex-prisoners’ groups, £7m of it to Provo prisoners. Will the First Minister blink on that one too? I hope not!



Jim Allister MEP and South Antrim party officers at their dinner in Templepatrick

In 6 months the votes will be counted in the European Election. Then, I believe, we will see that far from receding opposition to the DUP/Sinn Fein regime is growing. No thinking person will be fooled by the DUP’s pretence of concern over their partner, Sinn Fein, topping the poll. You can’t hoist IRA/Sinn Fein to the top of the government poll and then pretend concern about them topping the Euro poll. Unionist voters will see such hypocrisy for what it is and know that for a principled stand at home and abroad you vote TUV and that the man who thrashed Sinn Fein in 2004 is the one to do it again.”

