



Dear Friend,

Welcome to my January Newsletter, a chance for me to keep you up to date on what your London Labour MEP is doing on your behalf, as well as to give you a regular analysis of developments in the EU.

At the midway point of this Parliamentary term, I was re-elected Deputy Leader of the European Parliamentary Labour Party, and as Socialist and Democratic spokesperson on Justice and Home Affairs. This month, I've also written for Next Europe about the issues and likely challenges facing us in 2012.

Please feel free to get in touch and I always welcome any feedback,
Claude Moraes MEP

Labour MEP for London Deputy Leader, European Parliamentary Labour Party.

Europe in 2012

Many of the challenges facing Europe this year will be [direct outcomes of the last 12 months, with issues lingering from 2011's explosion of events and crises](#). Still to resolve among these are two huge issues: immigration policy in Europe, and the Eurozone crisis. These huge issues will directly affect at least one major election this year, the presidential election in France. There, we can see a vibrant far-right under Marine Le Pen, and President Sarkozy pandering to anti-immigration themes.

I've written, for [Next Europe](#), about the broad issues we can expect to see in European politics during 2012, focusing on these two issues above and how, despite my optimism for a solution in the Eurozone, I'm still very wary of a mainstream trend towards the politics of the far-right.

Keeping an eye on Migration Watch UK

In January, the right-wing think tank Migration Watch UK [released a report on a supposed link between youth unemployment in the United Kingdom and immigration to Britain from poorer European countries](#).

The report was instantly [ripped to shreds by commentators for its misleading conclusions, poor data set and lack of anything approaching rigorousness in its methodology](#). I spoke out widely against the Migration Watch report on Radio 5, BBC London Radio and other media during January.

I also [wrote for Labour List about why such poor research can be reported on in the British mainstream press as news](#), pointing to how the anti-migrant climate in the UK has even reached the point of warping facts - or in this case ignoring a lack of facts - in anti-immigration reporting.

Hungary and the European Union

In Hungary, the government is changing the country's constitution and making other sweeping reforms.

The course of these reforms has caused [great concern in the European Parliament, as Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban seems set on blurring the lines between the judiciary and executive in Hungary](#), as well as curtailing essential media freedoms.

I led on this issue in the European Parliament and speaking to the Financial Times and other news outlets, I've been clear that any use of Article 7 - a power the European Parliament has to demand the EU Council hold hearings to see whether a country is in breach of European laws - is last resort. However, I also cannot see much other choice, given how [far, fast and deeply these reforms could change the fundamental social contract in Hungary](#) away from the country's natural place in our European community of values. I and my Labour colleagues will continue to work with each other, the Commission and Hungary on this critical issue.

Your data protection rights in Europe

The European commission has [proposed new rules on data protection for the EU. I'm both welcoming and scrutinising these proposals](#).

Among them is the proposed "right to be forgotten", or in other words the right to conduct your social life, shopping and other activities online and still maintain the privacy of your personal data by demanding that it be removed from a company or organisation's databanks.

Millions of EU citizens exchange data or hand over personal details every second they are online, all of which is recorded. For that reason, [I'm welcoming new rules that will offer consumers the right to erase their online footprint](#).

Labour calls for EU budget freeze

Labour Members of the European Parliament have [called on all EU institutions to freeze their budgets](#).

My Labour colleague Derek Vaughan MEP, who is leading for Labour on the 2013 EU budget, said "In difficult economic circumstances all EU institutions should show budgetary discipline and be able to limit their expenditure."

Labour is clear on EU budgets. [We need to ensure that our democratic institutions recognise the position of so many ordinary people during a long and hard recession.](#) That's why I and my Labour colleagues will continue to call on EU institutions to freeze the 2013 budget.

Bankers possibly before the European Court of Justice

The European Parliament and European Commission have joined forces to call on banks to ensure that this year's bonuses comply with new EU rules that have been introduced to curb excessive payouts.

Financial Services Commissioner Michel Barnier and Labour's Arlene McCarthy MEP, Vice Chair of the European Parliament's Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee have [joined forces to put pressure on the banks. It's crucial that banks protect both their stability and the savers and taxpayers who deposit their hard earned money with banks.](#) Arlene has said that "Banks have had over a year to implement these rules and we expect them to apply the legislation thoroughly and in full to this year's bonus round. [The European Parliament is working closely with the European Commission to monitor this year's plans and we will hold an investigation at the start of 2012 to review implementation.](#) It is in the economy's and taxpayers' interests that these rules are enforced by national Governments, but if they don't take action they could find themselves before the European Court of Justice in the New Year."

Labour supports EU-wide rights for whistleblowers

The Tories have refused to support whistleblowers in a recent vote in the European Parliament.

Despite Tory resistance, however, MEPs [overwhelmingly passed legislation on workplace health and safety that included support for whistleblowers, specifically calling for an end to the practice of "black-listing" of those workers who speak out when their or their colleagues health or safety are endangered.](#)

Labour's Glenis Willmott MEP said "When people see their companies are being unethical or illegal, they should have a right to make it known without fear of prosecution.

["Employers across the EU should not have black-lists of employees brave enough to speak out against their employers."](#)

New Presidents for the European Parliament and the S&D Group

In a vote in the European Parliament last week, former President of the Socialists and

Democrats Group, German MEP Martin Schulz was elected President of the European Parliament. Austrian MEP Hannes Swoboda was elected the new President of the Socialists and Democrats Group.

Justice and Home Affairs in Europe during 2012

During the new Danish presidency of the European Union, I'll be leading on Justice and Home Affairs in the European Parliament.

In the European Parliament, [I've spoken directly to the current president of the European Union Danish Prime Minister Minister Thorning-Schmidt](#). I raised the important issues of free movement in Europe, the long-delayed common asylum system and the victims' rights package, all of which are fundamental to Europe's core values and must be promoted.

Labour Party News - Ken for London 2012

Ken's 2012 Mayoral campaign is [really heating up](#). Two recent opinions polls, ComRes and YouGov, show how Ken's Fare Deal campaign is really resonating with Londoners. Both polls show how Ken is leading the Tory Mayor 51% to 49%. Throughout January, I've been speaking widely on London radio, and pushing Ken's message on fairness and lower fares for the capital.

That's still a hard fight and we know the Tories will fight back. Let's make sure that election day, on May 3rd, we [send Ken back to City Hall with a resounding Labour win](#).
Opposition Watch - Cameron has cost Britain dear

Cameron's EU policies will result in [British influence being lost](#). The fallout from December's disastrous EU Summit, which saw the UK Prime Minister walk out on our European partners, will be felt for years.

Glenis Willmott, Leader of Labour's MEPs, has summed the mood up very well, saying "It was tragic to see the evidence of lost British influence at the summit.

["We are an international trading economy and Cameron's anti-Europeanism and kow-towing to his back-benchers has excluded Britain from the top table"](#).

Britain is now in danger of being left at the side lines of Europe while important decisions that impact all our futures are made, a situation that is especially dangerous for the City of London. Labour in Europe has always tried to avoid this outcome and I and other Labour MEPs will continue to push hard for London and Britain's interests from the European Parliament.

CLP visits

In the coming weeks, I will be reporting back to the following CLPs personally

3 February - Lewisham East CLP

15 March - Richmond Park CLP

I'll be campaigning in the GLA and Mayoral elections this year and I'm asking Labour Party members to get in touch if they have campaigning activities they think I can help with.