

June Report from Claude Moraes MEP



Dear Friends

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

June was dominated by the financial crisis in Greece, on which I've spoken extensively in the past few days. My work in June has also focused on reforming the European Arrest Warrant, an essential tool for London's policing that is being misused for too many minor offences by other EU countries. I also worked to bring a delegation of MEPs to Barking and Luton, studying how to fight extremism and defend the sort of diversity found in our capital. I also worked hard on the age related issues that Londoners face.

I also regularly update my website and Facebook page on this type of news and hope that this Report will be informative and establish an accountability link with you.

Please feel free to get in touch,

Claude Moraes MEP

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

Countering Extremism in Europe

During June, I brought the issue of how to tackle the political extremism [that is infecting mainstream European politics](#) to the European Parliament. I also spoke at a Socialists and Democrats conference on Extremism in June, discussing the state of modern fascist groups, the rise of the far right, and how we can continue to fight extremism in Europe. This was attended by expert campaigns from across the EU including Nick Lowles from Searchlight.

On this issue, I also led a delegation of senior [S&D Group MEPs](#) to Barking this month, where we met with inspiring local Labour party activists. My colleagues from several other European countries also learned first hand from [Margaret Hodge MP](#) how Labour fought the BNP in Barking and Dagenham in 2010 and won back every single of the 12 council seats the BNP then held. This was a particularly impressive achievement, particularly in a year that Labour lost

elsewhere in the country more widely. I remember how hard campaigning was there – 150,000 leaflets were distributed and 22,000 doors knocked up – and all at a time many commentators feared that [Nick Griffin](#) was on track to become the UK's first British National Party MP. Margaret and her labour team's achievement made a lasting impression on the Parliament's delegation.

Reforming the EAW

[I want to ensure that we get the best possible deal from Europe and Labour MEPs are pragmatically considering our practical interests abroad.](#)

[The European Arrest Warrant \(EAW\) is one such consideration.](#) It allows us to remove dangerous criminals from Britain, and bring wanted terrorists to justice in the UK. Both of those are advantages and both are clearly in our national interests.

[But I've also been very clear in June about how we need to reform the EAW.](#) I joined with other MEPs in the European Parliament to ask the European Commission directly about how it is going to guarantee that disproportionate use of the EAW is put to an end, both in law and in practice. [I also appeared on BBC Democracy Live](#) to talk about reforming the EAW and [have had my concerns reported in the Guardian.](#)

Rather than see the EAW misused for minor offences, Labour MEPs want to see safe guards on civil liberties raised across EU justice standards. In this way, the EAW can continue to provide Britain with an essential tool to tackle international terrorism and European organised crime.

Eurozone developments

Many of you will be following the ongoing debates surrounding the Euro, and, in particular, that over Greek finances and the possible ramifications for Europe. [The S&D Group in the European Parliament](#), of which Labour is a part, is following the issue closely.

[European nations are in fact rallying around Greece, putting into practice the spirit of European solidarity and countering those who falsely speculate that Greek's few tough years ahead will mean the end of the Eurozone.](#) In short, whilst Greece is facing problems, the European Union, along with the European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund, has stepped in to lend Greece necessary funds.

Greece will have a tough few years ahead, but the EU is working hard to ensure two things happen. First, regulation of the financial sector in order to ensure such a devastating crisis does not happen again. Second, strengthening the economic framework of Member States so that – for example with Greece, Portugal and Ireland –European nations are better placed to cope with economic downturns, by being better able to profit from and create growth. Greece faces continual downgrading by US Credit reference agencies who themselves were heavily implicated in the 2008 sub-prime crash.

Resolving the Eurozone crisis is critical for British interests, not because our financial system has untoward exposure to Greece, but because we trade so much with those countries like Germany and France who could suffer a downturn as a result of any worsening in Eurozone developments.

I and other Labour MEPs are watching these developments closely, and [will always ensure that London's economic health is not endangered by too much austerity in the economic governance package.](#)

I have spoken extensively at public and party meetings about the financial crisis, and given the perspective from the centre-left. If you have a particular question in relation to this please get in touch.

Ageing

As Co-President of the [European Parliament's Intergroup on Ageing](#), I hosted an European Parliamentary event for Age UK [Age Platform Europe](#) in June. This followed an earlier presentation at Age UK's office in London.

Ageing in the EU is a critical issue. I'm working with other MEPs to ensure that we have a 'Horizontal Directive' which will encompass [age discrimination](#) along with the other categories of disability and sexual orientation in the provision of services.

A Race Equality Directive and Employment Directive are already transposed in Member States including the UK, but more needs to be done on crucial areas of discrimination in financial services and access to other services that Member States are unwilling to make progress on. Currently, Member States are seeking only to deal with disability discrimination, but [aging is also a critical issue being addressed by the European Parliament.](#)

Migration to Europe

[In June. I kept the pressure up on the issue of reforming Europe's immigration system.](#)

I was clear from the European Parliament that it is [high time the EU ratifies the International Convention on the Protection of the Migrant Workers \(ICRMW\).](#)

[I also wrote about the recent history of EU border control in the Guardian newspaper.](#)

The influx of migration from North Africa has placed great strain on Europe, not just its immigration system, but also its internal politics. France and Italy fell out over who would take refugees from Africa, and Denmark has moved to reintroduce its internal European borders.

[I've also expressed my concerns to Tribune magazine](#), noting that the European Council is digging in on this critical issue, and refusing to introduce the changes Europe so badly needs in immigration reform, something that is [urgent now more than ever.](#)

Labour Party News

In mid-June, [I chaired a meeting of Progress which Liam Byrne set out many of Labour's Policy Review conclusions on the future of welfare and employment in Britain.](#)

In the coming weeks, I will have reported back to or be reporting back to the following London CLPs personally

Hackney South CLP - June 23rd 2011

Ealing Central and Acton CLP - July 28th 2011

Croydon North CLP – September 9th 2011

Cities of London and Westminster CLP - November 22nd 2011

Woodgreen and Hornsey CLP November 23rd 2011

Enfield North CLP - November 24th 2011

In Parliament

I regularly speak and ask Parliamentary Questions in plenary sessions of the European Parliament and [all of this work can be found here.](#)