

# November Report from Claude Moraes MEP



Dear Friend,

Welcome to my November 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.

Please feel free to get in touch,

Claude Moraes MEP

Labour MEP for London

Deputy Leader, European Parliamentary Labour Party.

## **Eurozone Crisis**

I've written for [Next Europe](#) about the [Eurozone crisis](#) and subsequent changes of government in Greece and Italy that followed. I'm clear that both events [are not symptoms of any irredeemable flaw in either the European project or Eurozone currency.](#)

Instead, [Europe is still coping with a long, global recession, a situation following on from the impact of the financial crisis of 2008 onwards.](#) This month, I've also made this point on London's [LBC Radio](#), explaining unfolding events and key relationships in the crisis.

Europe has tough days ahead. But allowing Eurosceptic analysis to take hold would mean mistaking finite challenges for insurmountable problems. This would be a mistake. It would also be to ignore how much of the perceived crisis is [the product of domestic debates in individual European countries, as well as all the work underway on solving Europe's immediate issues.](#)

## **Labour MEPs Approve Ban on Sovereign Debt Speculation**

Labour in Europe has approved a new law which will [ban speculators gambling with debt issued by the British government, Eurozone countries, or by other EU Member States](#).

[At a time when Eurozone countries have been pushed to the brink of bankruptcy, this law will ensure governments can't be held hostage by speculators](#).

Some countries in the Eurozone got themselves into financial difficulty but others are facing problems simply as a result of the pressure from these speculators. Arlene McCarthy, Labour's spokesperson on this issue, said ["CDS \[credit default swap\] contracts can be used to create a self-fulfilling prophecy, driving otherwise solvent countries into bankruptcy"](#).

## **Financial Transaction Tax**

The European Commission is proposing a draft law for a financial transaction tax. This is the first step in the journey towards a Robin Hood Tax, which I and other Labour MEPs support.

A financial transaction tax (FTT) is a very small tax levied on each transaction undertaken by a financial institution. The tax could apply each time a City trader buys shares, sells currencies or agrees a futures contract, and a rate averaging just 0.05% on each transaction could generate tens of billions of pounds additional revenue in the UK alone.

## **Free movement in Europe**

In recent weeks, and all throughout 2011, the free movement of people has come under attack from some countries in Europe wishing to reinstate national borders, especially following high refugee flows following the Arab Spring. [The European Commission is working to prevent the erosion of the Schengen agreement](#).

In November, I've continued to make the argument for protecting free movement of people in Europe from the European Parliament. [Freedom of movement in Europe is a fundamental right. It's also one of the main benefits of EU membership enjoyed by Londoners and the by people in the UK more widely](#).

## **Ageing in Europe**

[Ageing is one of the most important issues facing London and the United Kingdom more widely](#).

Given this, the [European Commission is looking at how to make pension systems more transparent and accessible for European citizens](#), something of great importance during difficult financial and economic times.

I've supported this work during November, as well as lobbying the Commission [on cross-border pension rights and free movement in Europe](#). In addition, following a visit by

Enfield Over 50s Forum to the European Parliament, I've authored two Written Declarations, one calling for a European age-friendly network and another supporting [2012's European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations](#).

### **Clean air in London**

The Campaign for Clean Air in London has reported this month [on the UK Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee \(EAC\) view that Mayor Boris Johnson as having failed to 'achieve acceptable levels of air quality' in the capital](#).

The EAC also found how 4,000 deaths in London in 2008 were attributable to poor air qualities; a level the Campaign for Clean Air in London points out is comparable to the 1950s. [Clean air in London should be a right, and should be a major health priority for the Mayor's office](#).

### **Royal Mail and European State Aid Rules**

My office is supporting representatives of the CWU, the Communications Union, by enabling meetings with European Commission officials dealing with state aid issues.

In the UK, Royal Mail is being primed for privatisation under the Postal Services Bill. As a part of the preparations for a sale of the company, the UK Government also intends to take on the Royal Mail's historic pension deficit, with effect from March 2012, and restructure the company's debts. [After submitting a formal state aid notification in July 2011, the Commission has now begun an in-depth as to whether or not the UK government's action breaks European state aid rules](#).

There are fears that in order to grant the takeover the Commission may ask the Royal Mail to sell off GLS (its profitable parcel operation) as part of a deal to compensate the Royal Mail's competitors in the UK. [This eventuality would make it difficult for the Royal Mail to continue as a commercially viable business](#). I will continue to support the CWU's efforts to represent the Royal Mail workers and the UK's need for its postal service.

### **Labour party News – Ken's 2012 Campaign for Londoners**

[Ken Livingstone's 2012 Mayoral campaign is going from strength to strength](#).

This month, Ken focused on promoting his "fare deal" for Londoners.

If elected Mayor next year, [Ken will put an end to unfair rises in the cost of using Transport for London, cutting fares by 5% and saving the average London transport user over £800 over 4 years](#).

### **MEP of the Year**

On 28 November, [I was voted MEP of the Year for my work on Justice and Civil Liberties in the Dods/Parliament Magazine MEP Awards for 2011](#).

The nominations are made by recognised Europe wide NGOs, trade unions, charities

and business organisations and then voted on by the Parliament's 732 MEPs. I thanked in particular my staff Anny Bhan, Ciara Burbridge, Ed Price and Sarah McLeish.

### **CLP visits**

I will be reporting back to, or have reported back to, the following CLPs personally soon

22 November – Cities of London and Westminster CLP

23 November – Hornsey and Woodgreen CLP

24 November – Enfield North CLP

6 December – Hackney North and Stoke Newington CLP – visit to the European Parliament

3 February – Lewisham East CLP

15 March – Richmond Park CLP