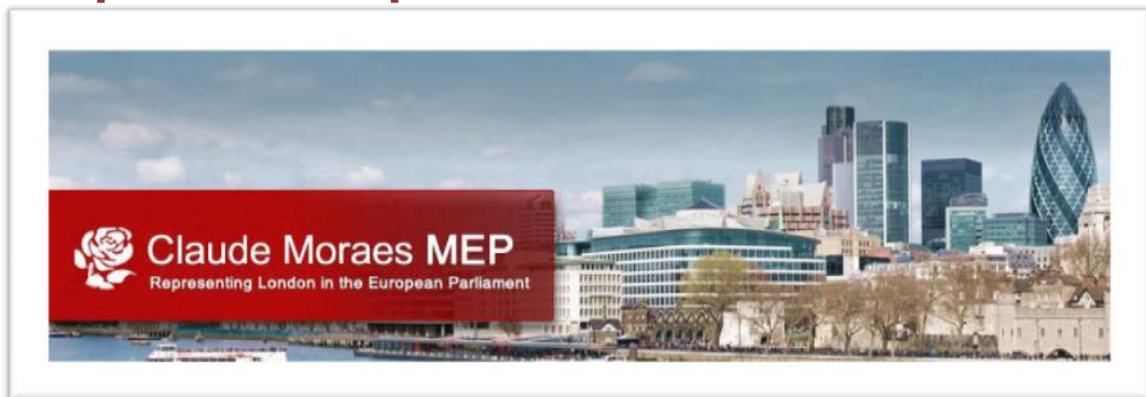


# September Report from Claude Moraes MEP



Dear Friends

Welcome to my September 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.

Over the summer, the dominant issue was again the economic crisis. We also had major issues over the Schengen area.

Please feel free to get in touch,

Claude Moraes MEP

Labour MEP for London

Deputy Leader, European Parliamentary Labour Party.

## The Economic Crisis – Labour MEPs support the new financial transaction tax

Currently, the news is dominated by the Eurozone crisis. Whilst Eurozone governments convene to continue working on a lasting solution, Labour MEPs continue to push hard for the inclusion of fair measures to lessen the current financial crisis, and counter future ones.

The European Commission is in fact 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. As Arlene McCarthy has said, Labour's European spokesperson on the economy, "[A recent study showed how a 0.005% tax to the foreign exchange market could raise around £17.6 billion worldwide in new taxes - £7.7 billion in the UK alone](#)".

Labour MEPs are now calling on the missing piece of the jigsaw to be put in place, which is [agreement from the UK government](#), as given London's position in the global financial sector, these proposals cannot pass without British approval.

I've also appeared on the BBC's News Channel to give my views on the importance of this measure as well as to respond to President Barroso's State of the Union address.

### **Free movement in Europe under threat**

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.

That's why [I've defended the agreement that makes free movement in Europe possible](#), the Schengen accord. Schengen has come under attack from some countries in Europe who wish to reinstate national borders, especially in the context of refugee flows following the Arab Spring. [The European Commission is also working to prevent the erosion of the Schengen agreement](#).

Europe is being tested enough, and is under strain enough, without one of its key characteristics being challenged by Member States. Now, more than ever, [we need the most effective economic and social components of Europe to be protected and made stronger](#), and at the head of these must be freedom of movement and all the benefits that it brings.

### **Enfield Visitors to the European Parliament on Ageing**

I organised a visitors group to Strasbourg in September as part of a wider event on Ageing, where the group [Enfield Over 50s](#), discussed key issues such as pensions, age discrimination, dementia and Alzheimer's, transport and insurance for older people.

### **Re-assessing the Eurosceptic argument**

[Next Europe is a EU-focused think tank](#) edited by [Lazzaro Pietragnoli](#). I was recently asked to write for Next Europe on how and why Britain's Eurosceptics will have an ever smaller case to make during hard economic times for the UK.

Some of Britain's most important trading partners are at the heart of Europe. Rather than sit back and gloat at the current turbulence in the Eurozone, our [British Eurosceptics should really consider the outcome for the UK of any serious downturn in Germany, France and Italy](#).

### **High Speed Rail in Britain**

I've written for the London Chamber of Commerce's magazine, [London Business Matters](#), about High Speed Rail 2 - the proposed extension of the UK's high speed rail system.

As Lord Adonis has argued so well, [London would undoubtedly benefit from high speed rail 2 \(HS2\), connecting our flagship airport Heathrow with the rest of the country, and bringing international business and travellers to the capital more easily.](#)

As an MEP, I've seen how parts of Europe are roaring ahead on this count - developing their high speed rail systems even during difficult economic times. I think the biggest danger for the UK now is to have our future infrastructure damaged by the cuts. That would be a mistake, and [London - from business to consumers - is united on wanting the best possible transport system.](#)

### **Labour MEPs fight dishonest airline charges**

Labour MEPs are concerned about the way some budget airlines don't give you an up front price when you book your tickets. Labour's spokesperson on this issue, Brian Simpson MEP, has said "[In the last few years there's been a growing trend for airline companies to advertise one low attractive price and then show passengers a long list of extra charges they must pay for basic services.](#)"

This is clearly a dishonest business practice - and unfair advertising.

We've therefore welcomed moves by the European Commission to investigate this practice, where additional charges that the consumer cannot avoid are added during the booking, and not at the stage where a price or flight is chosen.

### **Clean air in London**

Pollution - and dangerous air - is an issue of real concern to many Londoners.

I continue to support the [Campaign for Clean Air in London](#), and as a recent developments on air quality include the news that Defra needs to lodge any time extension request to delay until 2015 compliance with nitrogen dioxide legal standards by the end of September (and may fail to do so for London). The Environmental Audit Committee is also due to publish its report soon.

Clean air in London is something we should take for granted, not something we should have to pester the current government to secure.

### **CWU visit to Brussels**

I've hosted a visit of delegates from the CWU to Brussels. [We discussed the UK Government's intentions to take on the Royal Mail's pension deficit as part of preparations for a sale of the company](#) (outlined in the [Postal Services Bill](#)). It also intends to restructure the company's balance sheet in due course as part of this process.

The UK government is in fact arguing that the Royal Mail should be considered as a "firm in difficulty" in accordance with the Community Guidelines on rescue and restructuring aid. This could be disastrous for the Royal Mail - and for our postal service.

## **Tougher tobacco rules urged by Euro-MPs**

Labour MEPs have criticised delays to the planned revision of the EU's Tobacco Directive.

The Directive was due to be re-opened in the next few months in order to strengthen health warnings and limit tobacco branding. However, under pressure from the tobacco industry the European Commission is now dragging its heels in setting a time scale for revision of the Directive.

In a debate on Killer Diseases in Strasbourg last week, [Glenis Willmott MEP urged the Commission to put public health first and re-open the Directive as soon as possible.](#)

## **Labour party News**

In the coming weeks, I will be reporting to the following Labour CLPs in person

October 27 - Romford CLP

November 23 - Hornsey and Woodgreen CLP

November 24 - Enfield North CLP

And I have invited a visitors group from Hackney North CLP to Brussels on December 6.

## **Ken for London**

In recent weeks, Ken Livingstone's 2012 Mayoral Campaign has really gone from strength to strength, including a fantastic speech to the Labour Party conference in Liverpool.

I'm supporting Ken's campaign, and in particular [his election pledge to cut London fares by 5% and then freeze fares until 2014.](#)

It's just this sort of policy that Londoners need from their Mayor at times like these, and Labour MEPs will be working hard to support Ken's campaign for 2012.