

April Report from Claude Moraes MEP



Dear Friends

Welcome to my April 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.

Many countries in Europe are addressing national pressures associated with the wider recession and Eurozone crisis. As this happens, and as painful cuts are made to national budgets, centre right governments are turning to the politics of anti-immigration, or scapegoating. April, for example, saw Sarkozy and Berlusconi try to suspend the Schengen Treaty on free movement to manage an argument on how many refugees from North Africa they should accept. Similarly, Hungary's right wing Fidesz government has enacted a populist and anti-minority Constitution this month.

I 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.

Reforming the European Arrest Warrant

I welcomed [moves by the European Commission to reform the European Arrest Warrant](#) (EAW) this month. The UK uses Eurojust more than any other Member State.

The Commission is quite right [to point out and seek to address how the EAW is being increasingly misused for trivial arrests in Europe](#). As Socialists and Democrats Group Spokesperson for Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, I am keen to see the EAW applied in an effective way. The EAW should be used to counter serious cross border crime in Europe, rather than for a series of smaller offences referred by national judges, something that has given the

Eurosceptic lobby in Britain ammunition to attack a cross border initiative which has apprehended many serious organised criminals.

[I explained in the Guardian in April how Eurojust was being accessed more frequently and successfully by the UK.](#)

Age Platform UK Meeting

I met with [London and UK representatives of 'Age Platform UK' on April 15](#) to brief them on the latest developments in the EU on aging and older people. This is a vast area of work in the EU and the key areas of activity are both legislative and political. We have seen a number of political advances in the area of non-discrimination, an area where 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.](#)

Aviation Security and Body Scanners

I called for [serious safe guards to be built into the way we use body scanner technology as a part of the security regime in European airports](#) during the legislative passage of the Aviation security report in the European Parliament.

The Socialists and Democrats Group position is clear. We need to ensure that, whilst any new technology is contributing to our safety, it is also not detracting from either our civil liberties or our privacy including the use of the naked outlines of screened passengers. [I've spoken about this important issue, and made these points on how the new technology should be used and monitored in European airports.](#)

Middle East and North African Protests and EU Asylum and Immigration Policy

As reported to you in my last newsletter, [I am working hard on the EU's immigration and asylum policy.](#) Current events in North Africa and the Middle East point to how [Europe needs to plan not only ways to help people fleeing violence,](#) over the short term, but also for the longer term health of a viable and fair [European asylum and immigration policy.](#)

As the situation in Libya continues to escalate, and as we have no real idea as to what the end game will be, I will continue to monitor the role of the European Commission and Council. I will continue to argue from the European Parliament for a measured and effective humanitarian response to

the refugees fleeing the country, understanding that [hundreds of people fleeing Libya have already tragically died](#).

Socialists and Democrats win financial reform

The Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament have achieved two milestones in financial reform, backing a report for [an EU-wide Financial Transaction Tax \(FTT\)](#) and a vote in the Parliament's economic committee to [ban naked short selling, a speculative practice](#).

The UK government is now set to oppose such moves from London, but is expected to fail given the strong support for such measures in France, Germany and other EU Member States.

UK government U-turn on human trafficking

During its final plenary sitting before Christmas, the European Parliament endorsed a deal with EU governments to tackle illegal human trafficking. However, in August the UK government decided to opt out.

[I argued against the UK government's position on human trafficking](#) then. Now, I and Labour MEPs have welcomed [news that the UK government will finally opt in to EU proposals to combat human trafficking](#), despite the fact the UK lost any chance it might have had to make the Directive even stronger or more effective at the beginning of the process.

Opposition Watch

Some [senior and mainstream European politicians including David Cameron have openly opposed the role of immigration in European life](#).

[David Cameron's recent and opportunistic speech on immigration made clear his anti-immigrant views, something even members of his own cabinet openly opposed](#).

Conservative and UKIP MEPs have voted against establishing [an EU directive on gender-based violence](#). They were joined by the majority of the Liberal Democrats, UKIP and the BNP in voting against calling on EU member states to "facilitate access to free legal aid enabling victims to assert their rights throughout the Union". Edward McMillan-Scott voted in favour, and Catherine Bearder abstained, alongside the Earl of Dartmouth, Marta Andreasen and Nigel Farage.

Conservative, UKIP and BNP MEPs also voted against calling on the EU and its Member States to establish a legal framework that would give immigrant women the right to hold their own passport and residence permit and make it possible to hold a person criminally responsible for taking these documents away.

Labour Party News

In April, I sent an email on behalf of the [Ken Livingstone for mayor campaign](#). I would like to pass my thanks on to the many of you who responded to this email by attending a successful phone banking session [in support of Ken's 2012 mayoral campaign](#).

In the coming weeks, I'll have also reported to or be reporting back to the following Labour CLPs personally:

Islington North CLP – April 20th 2011

Hornsey and Wood Green CLP - April 27th 2011

Romford CLP – May 26th 2011

Hackney South CLP – June 23rd 2011

Ealing Central and Acton CLP – July 28th 2011