

# May Report from Claude Moraes MEP



Dear Friends

Welcome to my May 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.

May was a busy month, during which I was lead negotiator for 185 MEPs of the Socialists and Democrats group on new Commission proposals on repairing the Schengen agreement on free movement, currently being torn apart by populist decisions in France and Italy. I highlighted this dangerous development, arguing the need to protect the Schengen agreement on free movement in both the Guardian and Independent newspapers, in the Financial Times and on the Radio 4 Today programme.

In addition, you can read here about other issues related to the events in North Africa, Europe's response, my work on civil liberties and other issues decided in the European Parliament that directly affect Londoners.

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.

## **Schengen under threat**

Following the North African migrant crisis, and subsequent [argument between Italy and France](#) on people fleeing Libya and Tunisia, some [Member States are attacking the Schengen agreement on Europe's free movement of people](#). The Danish government has in fact reinstated its borders within Europe, and now [the EU's agreement governing free movement in Europe is under threat](#).

[We need to defend Schengen](#). During May, I have [made this argument in the British press](#), being very clear on how [passport free travel in the EU is at the heart of Europe's social and economic life](#). I've spoken on the [BBC's Today programme](#) and written for the [European Movement](#) on the [proposed revision of Schengen](#), as well as to the [Independent newspaper](#) on the UK government's stance. I've also [spoken out from the European Parliament](#) on the issues surrounding this new attack on free movement in Europe.

At heart, the real issue is that the Schengen agreement could fall prey to [Member States' reluctance to fix asylum and immigration policy](#), and I made this point during May when I wrote [in the Guardian about the complexity of Schengen's recent history, and its development, in Europe](#).

## **Victims of Crime**

This month, I met with Commissioner Viviane Reding and welcomed her [new proposals from the European Commission on the rights of crime victims](#) in Europe.

[Labour in Europe has long argued for such rights](#) and I welcomed the Commission's announcement. If abroad, the process of investigating crimes can place great strain on victims and their families. I want to ensure that such needs are not forgotten, and [that Londoners falling victim to crime receive the same high quality of help, reassurance and support that they would if they were at home](#). Proposals include an EU victim support office in every Member State working with established victim support structures to provide translation and practical help with law enforcement, the courts, hospitals and so on.

### **Socialists and Democrats keep pushing for financial reform**

In April, I reported to you how Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament achieved two milestones in financial reform: 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](#).

I also reported how 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.

Labour MEPs in Europe are keeping the pressure up, this [month calling for openness in bankers pay and backing proposals in the European Parliament that include a call for banks to declare how many people they pay over €1 million per year](#). I also appeared on Sky News, The Jeff Randall Show, to explain the latest developments on the recent ECOFIN meeting on the Irish and Portuguese bailouts and new EU legislation restricting short selling and tax evasion.

### **Seasonal Workers**

I've written for the [Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants](#) about how Europe is facing difficult decisions on legal migration and seasonal workers, especially given current events and the pressures on the Schengen agreement.

As the European Parliament's Rapporteur on the [Seasonal Workers Directive](#), I can see how the [European Parliament's new powers under the Lisbon Treaty have allowed MEPs to undertake real efforts to fix asylum and immigration laws](#) in Europe, and swim against [the tide of populist anti-immigration rows](#) in countries like Italy and France.

### **Opposition Watch**

The **Conservatives are starting to show serious rifts on Europe**, with their Budgets spokesperson James Elles MEP accusing eurosceptic Tory MEPs of damaging attempts at constructive EU engagement. He said "Those in our ranks, who are allowed too much leeway on wanting to withdraw, are being disloyal to the Party at a time when our leadership needs - and deserves - utmost loyalty. These people should put up or shut up in the interests of the Party."

Following **UKIP's disastrous showing in the May 6th elections**, South East MEP Marta Andreassen attacked party leader and fellow UKIP MEP Nigel Farage, calling for him to quit the leadership.

Although UKIP did not lose any councillors, it made no gains. Farage had suggested UKIP could 'double' its number of councillors. Andreassen said "It is time for change. **Mr Farage has abjectly failed to deliver** and is not leading the party on the course to victory. Even he must recognise this fact."

### **Labour Party News**

Peter Hain MP has reported on both Labour's policy making review ([Partnership into Power](#)) and the party's structures ([Refounding Labour](#)). The European Parliamentary Labour Party is making a submission which I will send to you.

In addition, the "[New Politics, Fresh Ideas](#)" policy review being led by Liam Byrne has already had 12,500 responses online.

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

Romford CLP - May 26th 2011

Hackney South CLP - June 23rd 2011

Ealing Central and Acton CLP - July 28th 2011