

# October Report from Claude Moraes MEP



Dear Friends,

Please find below my October 2011 Newsletter. It includes a briefing on the Eurozone crisis which our office has prepared in response to the many enquiries we have received. The outcome of the EU Summit on 27 October has been positive but there is a long a tough road ahead.

Also this month, Labour MEPs voted for a freeze on the EU Budget during a week where the UK's membership of the EU came under the spotlight in the House of Commons.

Best wishes

Claude Moraes MEP  
Labour MEP for London

## **The Eurozone Crisis**

[The Eurozone has been in the midst of a fast-moving and far-reaching crisis](#), and this month I've spoken to BBC News, BBC Radio and LBC Radio explaining the issue. European governments are working together to solve the problem, and the latest positive decisions were made on 27 October. There is still however a great deal of work to be done.

[I include a briefing that deals with some of the main issues and recent developments in the Eurozone crisis](#). The briefing comes in response to the many enquiries we've had asking for our centre-left analysis of the origins of and current developments in the Eurozone crisis. I hope the briefing is of some use in helping to understand Eurozone issues.

## **Labour MEPs vote for EU budget freeze**

[Labour MEPs have voted for a real-terms freeze in the EU budget for 2012.](#) We also voted for a number of proposals that would help deliver economic growth, such as EU regional development funds and research and development.

Labour's spokesperson on the European Parliament's budget committee, Derek Vaughan, said ["Given the tough economic times, our constituents expect us to deliver a responsible EU budget, and Labour MEPs believe that means it should be frozen next year".](#)

## **Tacking Harmful Commodity Trading**

[European Commission proposals announced this month](#) will need to be strengthened in order to stop traders from creating artificial highs in food prices. These highs put the world's poorest people at risk.

Labour is working hard on getting the [Market Abuse Directive through the European Parliament, and improving it on the way.](#)

Arlene McCarthy MEP, Labour's spokesperson on this issue, was clear when she said that ["The publication of these proposals gives us an opportunity to tackle harmful food and fuel speculation and to increase levels of transparency and openness in financial markets."](#)

## **Free Movement in Europe**

Schengen, the agreement providing for the free movement of people in Europe, is once again under attack.

Following migration due the Arab Spring, this year saw moves by Denmark, Italy and France to reintroduce internal borders in Europe. [Now, Bulgaria and Romania's bid to join the passport-free Schengen travel zone has been rejected by Finland and the Netherlands.](#)

This is wrong. Bulgaria and Romania are both EU countries, fully entitled after years of waiting to free movement for their citizens.

It would be easy to understand Finnish and Dutch opposition as based on security issues and concerns about immigration from third-party countries. This is however false, hiding [the strong influence of domestic politics on this issue.](#) In short, the far right in both countries is calling the shots, infecting the mainstream with anti-Eastern Europe policy and endangering the basic building blocks of Europe of tolerance, community and free movement.

I was interviewed on this issue for Public Service Europe and stand by my view that, as EU countries, [Bulgaria and Romania are entitled to enter the Schengen Zone.](#)

## **Turkey and Europe**

Turkey is in the news recently having suffered another bad earthquake. I've long supported [Turkish membership in the European Union](#), and at a time of economic and fiscal uncertainty for Europeans, I believe the time is right to make the argument again.

Writing for [Next Europe](#), I've been clear that Turkey could offer Europe a lot. Many valid and important concerns still remain about women's, human and Kurdish rights in Turkey, and I believe the best way to improve these specific issues, as well as overall democracy in Turkey, is through Turkish membership in the European Union. Turkish membership would also [boost Europe's economics, aide our ageing demographics and increase our available markets](#) all in one move.

## **The state of Europe's left**

I've spoken [to Public Service Europe about the current condition of Europe's left](#). In my view, there's some reason for optimism that, looking at countries like France where there is an upcoming Presidential election, the European left could return to or retain power in difficult times.

## **Slovakia and the Euro**

I wrote this month about [Slovakia's vote on the European Financial Stability Facility](#) (EFSF), which eventually passed the Slovak Parliament.

## **Justice and Home Affairs Issues**

During October, I coordinated the response from the [Socialists and Democrats Group](#) to the following legislation: EU Response to the Abuse of Children and the Internet; the Passenger Name Record Exchange between the EU and Australia (anti-terrorism measure); EU Refugee Resettlement Programme; EU Refugee Entry Criteria. Please contact our office for further information.

## **Marking the 60th anniversary of the Geneva convention**

I convened a meeting of three key NGOs to mark the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Convention and to call for political progress on the so-called Asylum Package, a number of directives which would create more coherence in Europe's response to asylum pressure mainly in the Mediterranean.

The [International Red Cross](#), the [United Nations High Commission for Refugees](#) (UNHCR) and the [European Consultation on Refugees and Exiles](#) (ECRE) all produced their leading speakers in an event which was hugely well-attended and set some political priorities.

## **Opposition Watch**

The EPLP and the leader of Labour MEPs Glenis Willmott worked closely with the Labour Party front bench over [the recent Tory-splitting referendum motion in the House of Commons on the 24th October](#).

The issue of Europe is clearly splitting and compromising the Conservative Party. Very few Labour MPs voted for the referendum motion.

## **Labour Party News**

[Ed Miliband](#) came through with strong lines on renewing and refreshing the European debate this month, as well as keeping the political priority on solving the Eurozone crisis.

There's now an EPLP place in the Shadow Cabinet and in October a number of Labour backbench MPs and Ministers including Jim Murphy MP came to speak with the EPLP.

## **Ken for London 2012**

The [Ken Livingstone](#) for Mayor campaign is in full swing. Sadiq Khan MP recently invited Labour supporters to join him on Wednesday 19th at Labour Party National HQ at 39 Victoria Street, and call voters from 6pm till 8pm on Ken's behalf. If you can't make one of Ken's many events or public meetings however, [you can tell Ken your ideas, views and suggestions](#) online.

## **One Society, Many Cultures**

This month, One Society Many Cultures and Unite Against Fascism Convention hosted around 400 delegates at a National Convention which tackled the issues surrounding how we defend multiculturalism and oppose racism, fascism and Islamophobia.

I spoke at the Convention [about the attacks in Norway this summer and how to learn important lessons in response to the growing far-right in Europe](#).

## **CLPs**

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

Romford CLP - October 26th

Hornsey and Woodgreen CLP - November 23rd

Enfield North CLP - November 24th

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