

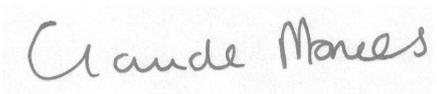
October 2009 Report from Claude Moraes MEP

Dear Friends

Please find below my report to you for October 2009.

By the time you receive this report the Lisbon Treaty will almost be ratified, with far reaching implications for London and the UK. It will bring equal law making powers for the European Parliament with Member States in a range of issues of importance to us. Also this month, the Parliament proposed a Directive on media plurality in the light of the Berlusconi's crisis of leadership. After leading on Justice & Home Affairs issues for the Socialist & Democrats Group on passenger name records, the transfer of personal data of EU citizens, mutual assistance between the EU & US on extradition and people trafficking, I witnessed the signing of these agreements in Washington DC.

I want to thank those of you who sent me your thoughts on our new website and newsletter. We will incorporate your views in the way that we communicate with you in the future.



NEWS FROM STRASBOURG, BRUSSELS AND LONDON IN OCTOBER

Lisbon Treaty

Ireland voted 'yes' in their referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. 67% voted in favour, 33% against. This is a remarkable turnaround from the previous referendum, nearly every constituency in Ireland voted in favour of the Treaty. Clearly, this was at the second time of asking, and the major factors involved were the state of the economy and the EU role in creating stability, and also various 'guarantees' given to the Irish people on elements of the Treaty. The Irish result, and the signature of the Polish President means that only the Czech Republic is yet to complete ratification, which is expected very soon.

David Cameron and the Conservatives will now have to say whether they still want a referendum should they be in power. As far as Labour is concerned Lisbon can give us the chance to make faster decisions in line with our left of centre values in key areas such as climate change, employment, regeneration, consumer protection and our trade relationships with the developing world.

Hedge Fund Directive

A major piece of European Parliament legislation which will affect London is the Directive on Alternative Investment Fund Managers (AIFM). The City of

London is concerned that the proposals will result in these funds relocating to areas with less stringent rules. Labour MEPs have been strongly critical of hedge fund managers who have contributed to ruining the financial system, and still take excessive bonuses. In this Directive we are supporting amendments which will add regulation but are careful to understand that the Directive will affect London jobs in the financial industry at levels other than the Hedge Fund Directors themselves.

This issue goes beyond normal left-right divisions. I recently spoke about the Directive to a group of senior figures in the City of London at an event held at ICAP. Lobbying by Labour MEPs is gaining traction with the Swedish Presidency. Labour MEPs have tabled amendments to ensure effective regulation.

Italian Press Freedom Debate

In October, I led for the Socialists & Democrats Group on media freedom & plurality in Italy and the EU. This is after what many perceive as attacks by Silvio Berlusconi against those who criticise or investigate him, his businesses or personal conduct. Berlusconi owns or controls nearly 90% of Italian broadcast, print and advertising media. The internationally respected press freedom organisation, Freedom House recently, downgraded Italy in its index of press freedom which makes Italy the worst ranking European state in the index.

The Berlusconi issue sets a European precedent for high media concentration of ownership. My key argument in the debate was for an EU Directive which set a reasonable limit on single ownership of all media in a single country. The EPP and the new UK Conservative group (ECR) voted against any regulation or investigation into media plurality. If you would like to watch my comments in the debate on this resolution please use the link below.

[Video: Italian Press Freedom>>](#)

Justice & Home Affairs Delegation to Washington

As Spokesperson for the Socialist & Democrats Group in the Parliament on Justice & Home Affairs, I cover issues such as asylum, migration and anti-terror legislation. Since 2001, there has been increased cooperation between the EU and US on the transfer of personal data including financial transactions. At first these requirements were informal and US authorities requested data that was not always relevant to combating international terrorism. The Parliament has now secured proper safeguards in the agreement between the US and EU on this information. In Washington the signing of the EU/US agreement and met with US Attorney General, Eric Holder, Homeland Security Secretary, Janet Napolitano, and a range of NGOs, Senators and Congressmen, and witnessed the signing of the EU-US Agreement on mutual cooperation to combat international crime including trafficking. Following the Lisbon Treaty, these issues will be fully legislated by the European Parliament as co-legislator with Member States.

Climate Change Package – Copenhagen

My Labour MEP colleague, Linda McAvan also attended the Delegation to complete similar work on climate change ahead of the Copenhagen Summit. At last weeks Brussels summit EU leaders including Gordon Brown discussed the upcoming conference to agree common positions including the difficult issue of funding for developing nations to reduce greenhouse gases. Leaders failed to agree how much each member state will contribute. We will keep you informed in the lead up to the conference.

Lithuanian ‘Section 28 Anti-Gay’ Law

A Lithuanian law, entitled ‘The Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effects of Public Information’, aims to criminalise information on gay and lesbian relationships “if accessible by minors”. The European Parliament has strongly condemned the law which is similar the UK’s Section 28. I spoke for the Socialist & Democrats Group in the debate on the Resolution that called for the Commission to investigate whether this law is illegal under EU law. The Resolution was passed, which is often difficult to achieve for anti-discrimination measures in a centre-right dominated Parliament. The UK Conservatives and their Czech and Polish allies voted against the Resolution. If you would like more information please click the links below.

[Video: Lithuanian Law on Protection of Minors Debate>> Resolution>>](#)

Frontex Border Agency

Frontex is the EU’s agency responsible for helping to manage its external borders and assist member states dealing with asylum and immigration matters. I led for my Group, after a summer in which dozens of people have died on the journey from the Africa to Europe. I have been concerned that humanitarian aspects of the EU’s asylum and border policy were not receiving sufficient focus. MEPs have consistently been calling for Frontex to be properly resourced and to allow the agency to conduct sea operations. In the same debate MEPs also discussed the deportation policy of the Italian government in which they send migrants back to Libya without making any assessment on their need to protection. MEPs are deeply concerned with this policy. Libya is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and has an appalling human rights record.

OTHER EU STORIES IN OCTOBER

Dairy Prices - Sakharov Prize 2009 – External Action Service – Schengen Information System – Guinea Arms Embargo. Contact the office if you would like to know more on any of these stories.

LABOUR PARTY NEWS

In my last report to you on the June European elections, I thanked many of you for your help and support during the campaign. I also would like to add my thanks to London's Trade Union & Labour Party Liaison Organisation (TULO) who organised a series of mobilisation meetings at the House of Commons to engage with London trade unionists about the campaign.

Labour Party Conference

There was a full Labour MEP programme at Conference this year and I headlined fringe meetings including an EPLP fringe on combating the far-right in the UK and EU.

New Book on Labour MEPs

A new book on Labour MEPs, by a former Labour MEP, has just been published. Anita Pollack (London South West 1989 – 99, who also worked for the leader of Labour's Barbara Castle from 1980 – 89, has written a history of Labour MEPs covering the first twenty years of the election European Parliament.

"Wreckers or Builders? A History of Labour MEPs 1979-1999" ISBN number 978-0-9556202-9-4, is available for £20 from Turpin Distribution Services. If you would like a copy (free delivery in the EU) please contact 01767 604 951 or email: custserv@turpin-distribution.com

MY PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS IN OCTOBER

In October, I asked parliamentary questions on the following subjects to the European Commission and Council. The answers to these questions will appear on www.europarl.europa.eu the website of the European Parliament.

West Africa & Economic Partnership Agreement

I have mentioned in previous reports about concerns many have about the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Many argue that they unfairly force developing nations to open their markets to EU goods, while restricting access to EU markets for their products. I asked the Commission what progress has been made in negotiations with West African states on their EPAs.

VISITS AND MEETINGS IN OCTOBER

01 Oct – Meeting with Delegation Chairs, Brussels
01 Oct – European Asylum Support Office Trialogue (This is a stage in the legislative process), Brussels
01-06 Oct – Justice & Home Affairs and Internal Market Committees, Brussels
02 Oct – TUC Network Europe, London
06 Oct – Meeting with Deputy Chief Executive of UK Border Agency, Brussels
06 Oct – EPLP Meeting, Brussels
06 Oct – Socialist & Democrats Group Coordinators Meeting, Brussels
07 Oct – Political Group Meetings, EPLP & S&D, Brussels
07 Oct – Meeting with Lord West, Home Office Minister
07 Oct – Meeting with Vice-President of the European Commission, Jacques Barrot on the EU Asylum Package
07 Oct – Meeting with Hillary Benn MP, DEFRA
08 Oct – Justice & Home Affairs Committee, Brussels
08 Oct – Joint Meeting with Justice & Home Affairs, Legal Affairs and Constitutional Affairs Committees on proposed ‘Stockholm Programme’.
08 Oct – Meeting with representatives of Council on European Asylum Support Office
13-15 Oct – Political Group Meetings, EPLP and S&D, Brussels
14 Oct – Leading for Socialist Group on Italian Press Freedom Debate
14 Oct – Meeting with Sadiq Khan MP, Transport Minister on London Transport Issues
14 Oct – Meeting with London Councillors and Greater London Enterprise on Regeneration, Brussels
14 Oct – Meeting with the Kashmir Lobby, Brussels
17 Oct – Regional Euro Forum, East Midlands
19-22 Oct – Strasbourg Voting Week
21 Oct – Meeting with Trade Commissioner, Cathy Ashton, Strasbourg
22 Oct – Report to Hackney North CLP, London
25-28 Oct – Justice & Home Affairs Delegation, Washington, DC