

CONSERVATIVE MEPs *in touch*

London returns three Conservatives again

Londoners went to the polls again in June to elect their London Region MEPs. Voters once again returned three Conservative MEPs, Charles Tannock, Syed Kamall, and Marina Yannakoudakis. Charles is Conservative Spokesman on Foreign Affairs and Human Rights and Vice Chairman of the European Parliament Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. Syed has been appointed Vice-Chairman of the Constitutional Affairs Committee and is representing London's interests on financial services issues on the Economic & Monetary Affairs Committee. Marina has taken over former London MEP, John Bowis' responsibility for environmental, public health and food safety interests as a full member on the Environment Committee and is also a full member of the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee as ECR Group Coordinator and spokesperson for the Conservative Delegation.

New ECR Group decides new Parliament President

Conservative MEPs were instrumental in President Jose Manuel Barroso's successful election campaign for a second term during the Strasbourg Plenary session in September. The European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) pan-European



group in which Conservative MEPs now sit was key in getting Barroso elected. The fact that the first group addressed by Barroso in his pre-election run up was the ECR shows the importance the Commission President attaches to our new grouping. Following the vote, President Barroso was returned on a pledge of a solid centre-right and reformist agenda. As a new force in the European Parliament with a crucial number of votes (54), the ECR Group will continue to play an important part in shaping European politics for the next 5 years.

Lisbon ratified

In the absence of the referendum which Labour promised the British people, the Lisbon Treaty has been ratified. The Conservatives continue to oppose this Treaty in principle and the transfer of powers that result. David Cameron will work to win back powers for the Member States in the areas of social and employment policy and criminal justice. Conservative MEPs will do all they can to support these efforts. As the Lisbon Treaty contains a mechanism to abolish vetoes without the need for a new Treaty, we will change the law so that any use of a so-called ratchet clause would require full approval by Parliament. Conservatives will be much tougher in countering the federalist forces in Europe. It will march in step with the anti-federalist campaigns of our new grouping in the European Parliament. ■



Charles with Monsignor Fabio Henao who heads the Colombian branch of the catholic charity CAFOD (Caritas) at a fringe meeting of the Manchester Conservative conference where Charles participated in the debate on UK and EU-Colombia relations with a focus on Human Rights in that country.

Supporting West Londoners, stopping Heathrow expansion

West Londoners who suffer constant noise and air pollution as a result of living so close to Heathrow have found a strong champion in Charles. Charles recently visited a primary school situated under the Heathrow flight path.

The incessant noise and disruption that the children had to cope with confirmed his view that this would simply mean more misery for local residents. He has always been totally behind the party's policy not to expand Heathrow further with a 3rd runway and 6th Terminal, and he was able to explain his ideas at a fringe meeting during the recent Party conference where he explained how Conservative plans to develop a high-speed rail network will help to reduce the demand for short-haul and internal air traffic. Charles also pointed out that many senior business figures are also sceptical about expanding Heathrow.



Charles attending the Sevenkings (Ilford) Gardwara on the occasion of Nagar Keertan (the Sikh annual remembrance religious procession) with Kahmal Singh Nawal reading the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (the Sikh Holy Scripture)

Party conference

Also during the party conference, Charles organised a lunch for visiting delegates of Taiwan's ruling party, the KMT. The first time the KMT, our sister party, had ever sent delegates and it was a highly successful occasion with plans for a future Conservative Ministerial visit to encourage Taiwanese investment in the UK. Charles also led a delegation of MEPs to Taiwan at the end of October in his capacity as chairman of the Friends of Taiwan in the European Parliament.



Charles with Mayor of London Boris Johnson

New parliament, new responsibilities

Charles has retained his position as the Conservative delegation's foreign affairs spokesman in Brussels and is now also the coordinator for the entire new ECR Group for foreign affairs. Charles continues to serve as a member of the EP delegation for relations with India, and in addition he has been elected a vice-president of the EP delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. This link to NATO has already brought a new dimension to his security and foreign affairs work; Charles was recently visited by a Royal Navy admiral to discuss the long-term security implications of climate change.

The ECR Group has got off to a good start despite scandalous efforts by political opponents to smear our Polish ally Michal Kaminski, who chairs the Group. Charles was happy to defend him during an interview with Channel 4 News.

Distinguished award

Charles was delighted to be informed over the summer that he has been awarded the Medal of Mkhitar Gosh in recognition of the work he has done for the Republic of Armenia over the years. The medal was presented by the Armenian ambassador to the EU. Charles will visit Armenia shortly as a board member of the European Friends of Armenia.

Helping London Business

Charles was recently invited to address a seminar of the CBI London members at Centre Point and to explain the workings of the EU institutions in particular the European Parliament. He was also asked what changes the Lisbon Treaty would mean for British business and how the powers of MEPs would rise post Lisbon

if it were ratified. The delegates many of whom were from the government affairs departments of their companies were particularly interested on how to best target MEPs and how to identify which ones were the key "movers and shakers" for particular policies and draft EU directives. Although Charles does not currently sit on a legislative Committee he was able to explain after many years of experience as an MEP how to maximise London business interests and cut through the labyrinthine Brussels network.

Yalta conference

Charles recently attended the annual conference of Yalta European Strategy in the Crimea. The conference came at a particularly interesting time in Ukraine's relations with the EU, with the presidential election in Ukraine due in January 2010 and neighbouring Russia still seeking sporadically to destabilize Ukraine. Charles is a strong supporter of Ukraine's EU membership aspirations and he is also a substitute member of the EP delegation for relations with Ukraine in this new parliament. ■



Charles meeting Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko, Prime Minister of Ukraine in the Churchill room at the Livadia Palace in Yalta, Crimea, during the annual Yalta European Strategy conference

Syed Kamall, working for a greater London



Working on the AIFM Directive in Committee

Syed and London Conservatives

In addition to standing up for London in Brussels or Strasbourg, Syed continues to go out on the streets with local Conservatives and to attend and speak at association or ward events 2 or 3 times a week across London. If you would like Syed to come and help or to speak at a local association or ward event, please email him at syed.kamall@europarl.europa.eu.



Syed with Kensington Conservatives

Protecting our savings and pensions

Syed has been appointed the ECR shadow rapporteur on the Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive (AIFMD) which introduces new regulations on hedge funds and private equity. Syed believes the Directive could damage the position of London as a leading financial centre. London is home to 80% of the EU's hedge funds and 60% of its private equity funds. Syed is concerned that the Directive as currently drafted may reduce the value of pensions and savings, limit access for entrepreneurs to venture capital and prevent citizens of EU countries from investing in poorer countries. Syed has also warned that more struggling companies will fail and more jobs will be lost if private equity firms are prevented from buying and turning around struggling companies.

Parent-led private schooling for the poor

Syed recently hosted an inspirational talk in the European Parliament by Professor James Tooley on the role of small parent-funded private schools in educating poor children in the slums of India and Africa, where the state provides poor quality education or none at all. Professor Tooley has published a book on his research called "The Beautiful Tree". For more information, please write to syed.kamall@europarl.europa.eu.



Being interviewed by the BBC's Tim Donovan

Fighting to keep down shoe prices

As a member of the International Trade Committee, Syed has opposed plans by the European Commission to keep the price of imported shoes artificially high. Inefficient Mediterranean manufacturers are lobbying for an extension of import taxes of 16.5% on shoes from China and 10% on those from Vietnam. Syed has called for these import taxes to be abolished to bring shoe prices down. Fortress Europe is forcing London families to pay more than they should for their shoes. ■



Syed with Beckenham Conservatives



Syed with Finchley and Golders Green Conservatives

Marina's brief in Brussels

Newly elected in June, Marina Yannakoudakis sits on the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM), where she is Conservative Delegation spokesperson and Coordinator for the group of European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR). She is also a member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) and is a member of the Parliament's Macedonia Delegation, as well as a member of the Intergroups on Small Businesses, Cancer and Climate Change and Biodiversity.



Marina at the pharmaceutical company, Celesio, which owns the Lloyds Pharmacy branch in the UK



Marina with new MEP, Derk-Jan Eppink, from the ECR Group

Speaking sense on maternity leave

Marina is opposing plans to impose an unreasonable burden on small business in stormy economic times by further extending maternity rights. Britain already has very generous maternity legislation, with mothers receiving pay for up to nine months, with six weeks at 90 per cent of their salaries. But the European Parliament's FEMM Committee is pressing for this to be increased further. In a letter published in the Guardian in September, Marina said: "The Women's Committee of the European Parliament is pressing constantly for longer paid maternity leave for women but such an absolutist approach could ultimately be detrimental for women." She concluded: "What women want most of all is choice and opportunity. I'm not against enhancing paid maternity leave but it's certainly not a priority at a time when we all need to tighten our belts – politicians included."



Marina meeting lobbyists at the Conservative Party Conference earlier this year

Stopping fake medicines

British patients are at risk from a growing number of fake medicines flooding the market. Marina, as a member of the European Parliament's ENVI committee, is working on plans to combat counterfeited medicines, including putting a security code on medicines and banning re-packaging. She said: "If people don't get the right treatment they could die. It's an area where European cooperation could benefit us all."



Marina campaigning with local residents in London for more Breast Screening Units

Fighting the spread of disease

Marina has recently been nominated by the ENVI Committee to be the "Contact Point" for the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, an EU Agency that aims to strengthen Europe's defences against infectious diseases. The importance of its work is seen as we deal with Pandemic Influenza (H1N1), or so-called "swine flu".



Marina with the Chairman and Secretary of the London Conservative Women's Association

Representing London

Much of Marina's time has been spent getting out and about meeting Londoners. Since her election she has been to events across the capital. Marina said: "I'll never forget I've been elected to represent your interests in Brussels, not the other way round!" She has also assisted in the cases of Britons arrested abroad and has asked questions in the European Parliament on behalf of her constituents. Marina sends out a monthly email newsletter to subscribers across the capital. To join her mailing list write to marina.yannakoudakis@europarl.europa.eu ■



Marina with London activists in Westminster