

Delivering for Britain

News from your London Conservative MEP team

Autumn 2008

Credit Crunch Time for Better Regulation NOT Overregulation

As governments move to counter the credit crunch London's Conservatives MEPs are calling for better regulation not more regulation – of the City of London. They fear that a knee jerk reaction from well meaning but inexperienced politicians could undermine the city's competitiveness.

Many of the rules that prevented retail banks taking on similar investments to investment banks – that had existed since the Wall Street Crash – were repealed by the Clinton administration in America. This left traders free to take unacceptable risks with investors' money. Similar rules are likely to be reintroduced but the risk is that they will go much further, and undermine London's competitive edge.

Syed Kamall said: "These are testing times and it is easy to



take firm action and then miss the unintended consequences. Over regulation could stop capital flowing to the most productive parts of the economy and undermine our long term competitiveness." ■

Time to Stop the Strasbourg Madness

October saw the return of the MEPs' monthly move to Strasbourg Parliament for the first time since the ceiling collapsed. Your London Conservative MEPs have long argued that the parliament should have one seat, but this can only be changed by amendment to the treaties, and as ever Gordon Brown is unwilling to act.

John Bowis explained "The annual cost of shifting between two parliaments is 200 million Euros a year, and it offers little real benefit. Repairing the ceiling of the Parliamentary Chamber after 10 tonnes of steel and masonry landed on

77 seats must have incurred massive costs."

A number of MEPs would have been seriously injured by falling debris had the collapse taken place during a sitting.

Dr Charles Tannock said: "Staying in Brussels has been so much easier and cheaper and safer than packing up and moving. I hope that Gordon Brown will start listening to the 1 million people who signed the 'One Seat' petition. We really must end this madness." ■

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Charles Tannock

Role as Foreign Affairs Spokesman

This has involved Charles in a very wide range of policy issues. He has co-authored resolutions addressing human rights issues such as the execution of juveniles in Iran, the murder of albino people for their body parts in Tanzania, the persecution of Buddhist monks in Vietnam and the situation of pro-democracy dissidents in Belarus. As president of the Friends of India he co-authored a resolution dealing with the EU-India summit as well as writing the foreign affairs committee's opinion on the EU-India free trade agreement, which will be a big leap forward in the EU's and in particular the UK's commercial relationship with the emerging economic giant that is India. As a firm friend of democratic Taiwan, Charles successfully lobbied the French EU presidency to support Taiwan's



Charles meeting Ingrid Betancourt, the former presidential candidate in Colombia who was held hostage by FARC guerrillas for six years until her recent daring liberation by the Colombian army.

participation in UN agencies such as the WHO, and he co-authored a written declaration supporting the broadcast of a pro-democracy Chinese-language TV channel in Europe. He was quick to condemn the Kremlin's disproportionate use of force back in August when Russian forces invaded Georgia and drafted the section dealing with EU-Russia relations in the resolution on the EU Council summit. Charles has also intensified efforts to highlight the persecution of Christians and other minorities around the world by raising such issues with the Council and Commission in debates and parliamentary questions.



Participating in a panel at the recent Yalta European Strategy conference in Kiev, on the topic 'Are we in a new cold war'. Fellow speakers included the former speaker of the Georgian parliament Nino Burjanadze and ex-president of Poland Alexander Kwasniewski.

London

The concerns of London's citizens and businesses figure uppermost in Charles's work. He has raised many different issues raised by constituents with the relevant EU authorities: preferential ticket pricing on Eurostar; the cost of interbank transfers from pounds to euros; proposed changes to legislation on the artist resale right, potentially severely affecting the art market in London; allowing businesses other than banks to operate cash machines across Europe; combating energy wastage from light pollution; and the dangerous consequences of the mysterious decline in the honey bee population.

Charles was also pleased to catch up with so many friends at the recent Conservative party conference. As well as taking part in fringe debates on security and energy policy, he was proud to co-host the annual reception for London's Cypriot community. ■



Charles campaigning with Church Street Conservative Councillor Mehruz Ahmed with London colleagues Syed Kamall MEP and Mark Field MP (Cities of London and Westminster)

Working for a greater London

Mandy's Leaving Present for Londoners

One of Peter Mandelson's last decisions as EU Trade Commissioner was to renew the unpopular import taxes on shoes. British and EU customers will continue to pay a levy of 16.5% and 10% for Chinese and Vietnamese shoes respectively. Unsurprisingly this is hugely unpopular with shoppers, retailers, manufacturers and even EU member states: 15 of whom voted to end to the tax.

Syed Kamall said, "Putting a tax on shoes raises living costs in London, especially for families on low incomes during these difficult economic times. Lord Mandelson professed to be sympathetic to open trade but he still persisted with this levy. Leather shoes are hardly a luxury item, and they should be as cheap as possible."

The taxes exist to push up the cost of Chinese and Vietnamese shoes to a similar price as those made in Southern Europe.



Syed campaigning with Edwin Northover and Conservative activists in Forest Ward

Economic & Monetary Affairs

Syed has attended the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee discussions on the current financial crisis. He said, "In a globalised economy, coordinated action is valuable and it is important that London is represented at discussions such as these. But we should be careful of any EU-backed attempt to undermine London and the free market system. Many MEPs envy the fact that London hosts Europe's two largest financial centres, the City of London and Canary Wharf. We must ensure that they do not use this crisis as excuse to over-regulate London and drive more business to the continent."

Report on Opening up Trade in Services

A report on opening up trade in services authored by Syed



Syed campaigning with Jemma Hemsted and Conservative activists, Chingford

after he was appointed as Rapporteur by the International Trade Committee of the European Parliament recommends greater freedom for European firms to offer their services in foreign markets and for foreign firms to compete on equal terms here in Europe. If the recommendations of the report were adopted by the European Commission and agreed at the WTO, they would be worth hundreds of billions of pounds in extra global trade deals around the world, gradually enabling living standards to be raised for most people on the planet. Given the service sector makes up 75% of the EU's Gross Domestic Product, such reforms are therefore central to our future economic success.

Syed wins International Legislator of the Year Award

Syed Kamall has been named International Legislator of the Year by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) which promotes 'best practise' amongst politicians from throughout the world. It enables American legislators to exchange ideas with their foreign counterparts.



Syed receiving the ALEC International Legislator of the Year award in Chicago

The award was given for Syed's work in promoting the principles of free enterprise, limited government and liberty. Syed has suggested that a British version of ALEC could be created. In a global environment it is important that politicians have the opportunity to exchange ideas and share best practice across borders. ■

Time to Act on Climate Change

Snow in October; flooded homes and gardens nowhere near a river; tropical diseases moving North – threats to London from Climate Change are with us now, before we begin to take action such as the proposed Thames Barrage at the Estuary to keep our living rooms above water.

John Bowis has been at the forefront of developing EU wide action to tackle these threats. The EU Council has agreed an ambitious cut in green house gases of 20% by 2020. Parliament is now working on a package of measures on Emissions Trading; Sustainable use of Renewables for transport fuels and energy; Carbon Capture & Storage research and Car emissions.

"When developing our tools for tackling climate" says John,



John underlining the climate change flood threat to London.

"we must take the needs of industry into account, not least at a time of economic turmoil. But environmental innovation has been shown in Germany to create jobs and the cost of inaction on the climate threat would be colossal for our City."

John represented the

Parliament at the UN Climate Change Conference in Poznan, a major stepping stone towards a global commitment to reduce green house gases.

John leads on Cross-border Health

"A new era for patients has come from European Court judgements", said John when appointed to write the Report for the Parliament on Cross-Border Health "now we need to give legal certainty both to patients and to health service managers. It is time for elected politicians to make policy and not unelected lawyers."

In future, people facing undue delay for treatment will not have to wait; they will be able to go to another EU country, have the treatment and have the bill sent back home, so long as the treatment is normally available in their country

and the cost is no more.

Following John's 2005 Report on Patient Mobility, he has kept the pressure on the Commission to bring forward this proposal.

"Patients already have a right to access

healthcare abroad if they are on holiday or working abroad. This new right is to go for planned treatment. Now we need to provide answers to the questions of when you qualify, how you proceed, where you can go, what happens after the operation and what if something goes wrong. I am also determined this should be an opportunity for all and not just those who can afford it.

"This directive will enable patients to seek treatment across the European Union with a greater sense of confidence and security. It is good news for patients but it will only work if everyone – patients, family doctors, specialists and budget holders – understand how the system is to be implemented." ■



John in Guatemala looking at sustainable biofuel potential.



John as keynote speaker at the European Health Forum with, far left, the Chancellor of Austria, second left, the Deputy WHO Director and, third right, the EU Health Commissioner.