



DR CHARLES TANNOCK, YOUR CONSERVATIVE LONDON REGION MEP

Reporting Back

Conservative Mayoral victory

May 3rd was, as expected mid-term, a bad day for the Conservatives in local elections, losing 405 seats nationally, with the sole exception the magnificent victory by Boris Johnson in London against Ken Livingstone. Londoners recognised the good work Boris has personally done as Mayor for the past four years and rejected the prospect of a high tax and spend administration under Livingstone. Sadly, we lost two hard-working AMs, Brian Coleman and Richard Barnes. I have worked with both over many years and they will be missed. However, we did retain our three excellent top-up AMs and did well in winning by-elections in Bromley Town, North Richmond, Hyde Park, Coombe Hill and Wimbledon Park, and I congratulate the new Councillors.

Eurozone crisis

Ten years ago when I was Financial Services Spokesman I wrote an article for the Wall Street Journal Europe predicting a decade later the 'one size fits all' monetary union would be tested and found wanting. I don't wish to gloat although I was criticised by the paper which dismissed my thinking as scaremongering from a Eurosceptic Tory.



With Fra' Matthew Festing, the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta, and Anna Zaborska MEP

How right we Tories were to be sceptical of the Euro which was set up as a political project without the necessary economic and political union of the 17 disparate economies of the Eurozone with varying track records of fiscal probity and levels of both private and public debt and spending. Prime Minister Cameron was right to use his veto when assurances about the EU supervisory agencies were not forthcoming and the City's interests were in jeopardy. However, an unmanaged collapse of the Eurozone would have grave consequences to the UK economy.

Hosting the Knights of Malta

I have taken a big interest in supporting persecuted Christian communities in the Middle East such as the Copts and Assyrians, as well as in the Communist world, and supporting Christian charitable groups. I recently took over as Chairman of the European Parliament-Order of Malta Friendship Group. The Sovereign Military Order of Malta, to give it its full name, is an international Catholic charitable group which does medical missionary and humanitarian work globally. I hosted an exhibition to raise the profile of this organisation which receives some €2 million yearly for its humanitarian work from the EU. The Grand Master, who is British, came and opened the event in the Parliament, which was very well attended.



With Mayor Boris Johnson, Jo Johnson MP and James Cleverly AM on Polling Day for the Mayoral/GLA elections in Orpington

Opposing the EC's budget plans

Your Conservative MEPs have pledged a full scale battle against attempts by the European Commission to increase the EU's budget next year by nearly 7%. The inflation-busting increase, sought in defiance of all requests for restraint, would add more than £7bn to total spending and send the UK's annual contribution spiralling to £14bn, or £666 per household. The last time they asked for more than 5% they ended up with 2% - neutral after allowing for inflation - so we will fight for a similar result this time.

Argentina oil grab must be blocked

Following Argentina's confiscatory, unilateral takeover of Spanish-run oil company YPF, the UK and EU should commit themselves to robust support for Spain. Whenever Argentina's president, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, sees the possibility of hijacking a natural resource, respect for international law comes a poor second best. After oil was discovered off the Falklands she suddenly revived Argentina's claim to the islands.

UK human rights stance over court and convention

As Human Rights Spokesman I have told the European Parliament that it should not be up to unelected and unaccountable judges in Strasbourg to decide on the UK's national security matters, and that the European Court of Human Rights' (ECHR's) powers should be reined in. A total of 47 countries reached agreement in Brighton last month to cut the ECHR's backlog of cases.

The recent decision to prevent the UK deporting terrorism suspect Abu Qatada is one example of the court interfering with how democratic countries govern themselves. The demand of the Court that prisoners are given the right to vote is another. In addition, Britain's Conservative MEPs have taken a firm stance against EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights.

The EU is supposed to join the convention under the terms of the Lisbon Treaty, which was signed for the UK by Labour. This potentially

could allow the EU powers through the European Court of Justice to interfere with our domestic legislation and to veto future needed reform of the Strasbourg court and the right to appoint judges.

Tough sanctions against Iran

As Foreign Affairs Spokesman I welcomed the EU sanctions against Iran, whose nuclear military plans constitute a major threat to global stability and a potential risk to peace in the Middle East.

Iran's ambitions are likely to lead to a regional arms race if it is allowed to possess such weapons in breach of its international Non-Proliferation Treaty legal obligations.

The measures agreed by the EU, in denying Iran some of its oil revenues and by making it harder for the leadership to move money around the world, will put pressure on Tehran to come back to the negotiating table.

It shows that when there is a clear and urgent need for action, the EU does not always dodge the issue. This is Europe speaking as one voice for once.

ECR urges Bahrain to reform

March marked the anniversary of the peaceful popular movement calling for respect for fundamental human rights and democratic reforms in Bahrain.

There was evidence of disproportionate use of force by the security forces to crack down on protestors. However, the government, led by the King, has listened to the international community and established an independent commission of inquiry, as well as proposing constitutional amendments.

As Spokesman on Human Rights, I have called upon Bahrain to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to allow entry into Bahrain for foreign journalists and international human rights bodies so that the criminal investigations which are now underway can be observed by outsiders. I have also contributed as Conservative Party Human Rights Commissioner to a report on this issue.

Drive for cheaper medicines stalls

The European Parliament is considering a trade agreement with Israel that facilitates the import of high-quality and affordable medicines into Europe.

But whilst many may think the Parliament would be eager to ratify this agreement, it has instead been politicised and the legislative process stalled for two years. On the Foreign Affairs Committee I have argued that the EU should be taking steps to strengthen our relationship with all our neighbours, including democratic Israel, and by association build on our influence in the Middle East peace process.



Welcoming to the European Parliament in Brussels, with my colleague Syed Kamall MEP, a visiting group of students from Copland Community School and reinforcing the importance of engaging in the democratic process

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 **Conservatives**
in the European Parliament

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