

CONSERVATIVE MEPs *in touch*

Cameron backs Conservative MEPs' fight for air quality and against Heathrow expansion



David Cameron is backing London's Conservative MEPs as they fight to protect and promote your interests in Brussels.

The European Union looms ever larger in our lives, whether we like it or not. Your London MEPs have been committed to positioning Britain at the heart of the EU as a leading voice for reform. Their vision for the EU has been one of achieving real benefits – on fighting global climate change, increasing global economic competitiveness and fighting global poverty.

Conservative MEPs want to ensure that the EU does less and does it better, and are actively fighting for reform and more financial transparency in the EU institutions.

One policy area in which the European Parliament has real power is protecting the environment through the necessary legislation to ensure the quality of the water we drink, the food we eat and the air we breathe.

Conservative MEPs continue to be committed to using EU environmental legislation in support of our party's policy to oppose a third runway and sixth terminal at Heathrow which will impact directly on London's air quality.

The government's plan, which has encountered huge resistance among communities in west London, would lead to increased traffic congestion and air and noise pollution in the local area and for those Londoners living directly under the flight path.

The role of the EU in Heathrow expansion

The government has unsuccessfully sought to water down EU air quality directives, fearing that legislation already in place would hamper the Heathrow expansion project and bolster the case of local campaigners.

Over 200 million passengers travelled by air in 2008, a fivefold increase since 1970. This rise is unsustainable, which is why Conservative MEPs are looking at alternate means of travel including the construction of a modern high-speed rail network to the south west and north of Britain which will link to the Channel Tunnel network and mainland Europe. Although aviation currently only accounts for about 3% of

the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions, the sector has seen an 87% increase in Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) since 1990. In the UK, flights are responsible for an estimated 7% of the nation's carbon emissions. But this is projected to increase to as much as 25% over the coming decades. The European Commission has announced that the Emission Trading System will cover commercial flights within the EU from 2011, and all flights to and from the EU in 2012 as CO₂ emissions from EU international aviation increased by 90% between 1990 and 2005, and are the fastest growing source in the EU.

Air Quality and London

The UK Government is currently on the receiving end of legal action from the European Commission for breaching EU Air quality legal standards for dangerous airborne particles (Particulate Matter 10) and missing the deadline to apply for a time extension to comply with them. Government maps obtained by the Campaign for Clean Air in London under the Freedom of Information Act, show that the UK Government expects to breach health based air quality laws on Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), a toxic gas, in London in 2010.

Worsening Air Pollution is believed to be the cause of many respiratory diseases including aggravating childhood asthma and is likely to impact adversely on Londoners' health and life expectancy.



John Bowis at the International Climate Change Conference in Poznan



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 **Conservatives**
in the European Parliament



What people say about Charles

Due to your kind letter of support our application [for EU funding] was successful. You were brilliant! – Flying Gorillas dance company, WI1

It is very heartening to know that you are so concerned about animal welfare – constituent, Bexleyheath

Thank you very much for your help in securing my maternity healthcare – constituent, Middlesex

We are extremely grateful for your work – Christian Solidarity Worldwide

You have been a steadfast friend of India – PK Singh, Indian ambassador to the EU

Thank you for your valuable support and understanding at a critical time of Bangladesh's political history – Sheikh Hasina, PM of Bangladesh

Thank you for all your support and loyalty to the Greek Cypriot community of the UK – Eleftheria newspaper

You are brilliant and obviously quite dedicated in the important work that you do – New West End Synagogue

A friend to London's diverse communities

As foreign affairs spokesman for the Conservatives in the European Parliament, Charles places huge importance on connecting with constituents who are part of London's many and varied ethnic communities.

Charles is a member of the steering committee of Conservative Friends of Bangladesh and in December 2008 he was the chairman of the European Parliament election observation mission to Bangladesh.

As chairman of the European Parliament Friends of India, Charles has played a key role in efforts to enhance trade links between the EU and India.

At the end of 2008 Charles travelled to Cyprus with David Burrowes MP to lend his support to peace talks being held between the Cyprus President as leader of the Greek Cypriot community and Turkish Cypriots in the north of the island.

Global warming is one of the Conservative party's chief concerns and some countries in the South Pacific are facing an existential threat due to rising sea levels. Charles has been working

with the embassy of Tuvalu in Brussels to help the country highlight its plight and gain assistance from the international community. Charles has coauthored resolutions and repeatedly debated the terrible bloody conflict in Sri Lanka and called for a temporary ceasefire and evacuation of innocent civilians from the conflict zone.



Charles with David Burrowes MP and Maria Kokkinou - Boege, Chairman of the association of overseas Maronites visiting the monastery of Prophet Elias in northern Cyprus - bombed in and deserted since 1974

Kicking up a stink in west London

Many people in west London are concerned about flooding – particularly those with basement properties. Why then is Thames Water planning instead to spend £2.5 billion on a 'super sewer', which is likely to destroy some of our precious green open spaces? Experts say the company's plan will do virtually nothing to alleviate our city's real flood threat.

The reason why Thames Water is pushing this issue is because of pressure from the Labour government, which is itself worried about being fined by Brussels over a specific water quality EU directive. Together with local community leaders Charles opposes this project and in favour of more concrete measures to protect local residents' homes from flooding.

Of course, no one wants sewage seeping into the Thames, but building a massive septic tank under the Thames, with all the costs and chaos it will bring, isn't the answer.



Charles with Sean Bailey discussing the "super sewer" in Hammersmith

A voice for the silenced

Defending the rights of religious minorities around the world forms one of Charles's key roles on the human rights sub-committee of the European Parliament.

He has recently highlighted the plight of the Rohingya Muslims living under the brutal military junta in Burma and has raised concerns about the treatment of Ahmadiyya Muslims in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia where they face persecution or even banning and whose

world headquarters is in south London. Charles is also a strong defender of the human rights of the followers of the Ba'hai faith, who face discrimination and barriers to the free exercise of their faith in many countries, especially Iran and Egypt.

He has also called on the EU to act to protect the rights of Christians living in many parts of the world where they face persecution or discrimination, notably China, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Eritrea and Egypt.

Charles uses every available opportunity to pressure the Chinese government on human rights issues. Recently he sponsored a Written Declaration in the European Parliament calling for satellite TV provider Eutelsat to resist the Chinese government's attempts to ban transmission of NTDTV. He coauthored a resolution on Tibet calling for meaningful autonomy and respect for Tibetan culture by China.

Charles has recently protested strongly at the expulsion of NGOs from Darfur following the indictment for crimes against humanity against President Bashir of Sudan.

No time to call time on overtime



Charles protesting with residents against the cuts in local NHS services in Islington

Britain's opt-out from the provisions of the maximum 48-hour working week as set out in the EU's Working Time Directive (WTD) has been vital to the flexibility of our economy in recent years.

As a former NHS consultant, Charles knows all too well the importance of our medical students and trainee doctors gaining adequate experience. However, the gradual erosion of the opt-out voted for by Labour MEPs has meant that junior doctors now have to count time (even if spent asleep) resident on call as working time.

Taking the heat off the NHS

Although Charles's days as an NHS doctor are now long behind him, he keeps a close eye on UK health policy and how it is affected by new EU proposals. He is a member of a number cross party health groups in the Parliament including the European cancer patient coalition and those supporting sufferers from epilepsy, cervical cancer and mental illness.

A recent directive tightening industrial pollution controls would have massively increased costs for NHS trusts to keep their standby heating boilers going.

Charles supported amendments in the European Parliament that removed NHS standby boilers from the scope of the directive, and MEPs approved the amendments by a huge majority. It's a small example of how Conservative MEPs are making a big difference to the health care facilities of Londoners.



Charles talking to London Bangladeshi community leaders and Joanne Cash in the presence of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina

British Conservatives save the British Pint

After pressure from the British Conservatives, the European Commission has formally announced that pounds, ounces, pints and miles are all here to stay.

Since 1995, goods sold in Europe have had to display metric weights and measurements alongside the imperial measurements. After the Labour Government refused to save imperial units, this tradition was due to end in 2009. But European industry Commissioner Gunter Verheugen has now reassured Conservative London Syed Kamall MEP that the tradition will continue indefinitely.

Mr Kamall, who is Conservative international trade spokesman in Brussels, said:

“These traditions distinguish Britain from her neighbours and many people consider them important.

“We now have the best of both worlds. Many younger Londoners already work in litres and grams and they will be able to continue to do so, but we can also keep our conventional measurements for those people who prefer them. Our imperial measurements system also gives us an edge when trading with the USA, which has never gone for metrification.

“Conservative MEPs will keep fighting for British traditions. The EU should not force us to give up all that makes us what we are as a nation.”

Standing up for working men and women

Conservative MEP for London, Syed Kamall has spoken out against Labour's support for the Working Time Directive. Labour and Brussels Eurocrats want to stop British men and women working overtime to earn extra cash for their family.

Labour's plans are a kick in the teeth for British workers who may want to work longer hours to pay for extra bills or family holidays. While many people have a healthy work-life balance, others may choose to put in extra hours to achieve their ambitions. Forcing British employers to send workers home against their will is nonsensical. In cases where this measure makes workers less productive, it could cost them their jobs, especially in these difficult economic times.

Syed Kamall said “My father was a bus driver and whenever we received an unexpected bill or whenever there was the cost of a school trip to pay, he would put in a few hours' extra overtime. If the Working Time Directive had been around, that would not have been possible.”

Green crimes on the Brussels agenda

The European Commission is planning to dictate to national governments what criminal penalties they must impose on people committing “green crimes”. It wants to lay down minimum EU-wide penalties of between one and ten years' imprisonment for crimes like the possession of protected wild plants and animals. “This is not Europe's job,” said Syed Kamall. “While I welcome Britain co-operating with other

EU countries to combat environmental crime, these proposals override the ancient right of the British Parliament to define what is a crime in our country, and what the punishment should be. I believe we should all be concerned that the European Commission is using the environmental agenda as an excuse to massively increase its powers at the expense of national parliaments.”



Fighting EU waste: Syed testing asking Londoners to sign the petition to close down the European Parliament in Strasbourg



How the EU works: Syed being interviewed by BBC London at the launch of his pocket guide to the EU



Listening to Londoners: Syed listens to the impact of the EU on market traders



Referendum on the Lisbon Treaty: At the launch of the “I want a Referendum Campaign” in Hammersmith

Hands off our fishermen

British Conservatives have opposed loony EU plans to regulate recreational anglers under the Common Fisheries Policy! The rules which were unveiled to the European Parliament would require sporting fishermen to purchase licenses and log every fish they catch.

Syed Kamall asked “Where is the need for this cumbersome scheme? The Common Fisheries Policy has already wiped out what used to be Britain's best renewable resource off our coasts. Now recreational anglers are to be penalised like the British fishing fleet. Europe wants to make a Sunday sitting on the canal feel like another day at the office. It is so sad that European bureaucracy has come to this. You really couldn't make it up.”

MEP Calls for Ban on Police Hacking

Syed Kamall, MEP for London, has called for a ban on police hacking computers without a court order. The call comes following a report from the European Commission encouraging police to hack computers: British Police used these powers on 194 occasions last year.

Dr Kamall is concerned that the powers are an attack on civil liberties and that they should be subject to the same rules as a search warrant on homes. Search warrants require the permission of a magistrate.

Syed said: “Most people store all their confidential information on their home computers and it's only right therefore that we should have a courts say on whether they can be searched.

We all support the important work the police do but this is not an argument for giving them unchecked power over us. Getting the courts permission, such as in the case of Search Warrants, is a swift process and there is no reason to remove this necessity in the case of computers.”

European Health Card

Conservative MEPs have welcomed the introduction of a new European Health Card for travellers to countries in the European Economic Area (EEA). The card, which replaces the old E111 form, entitles holidaymakers to cheap or free healthcare when travelling in Europe.

Syed said “British travellers should make sure they get the card before travelling as this will make life considerably easier should you be unfortunate enough to fall ill.”

The card does not replace insurance for getting you home in case of an accident or emergency but it does cover the equivalent of NHS bills. If you want to take up this card ahead of any holidays in EEA countries this summer, you can apply for one by logging on to www.ehic.org.uk.

Warning of danger to British food

Syed Kamall has been working with Conservative colleagues to allow British farming to continue to use pesticides. In January, the European Parliament voted to restrict the use of pesticides in the EU. If the legislation is enacted, this could raise food prices and damage the farming sector in Europe but will also create uncertainty for farmers in poorer countries who export their produce to European countries.

The EU will be faced with a choice of either letting in imports of goods that breach the requirements or else banning imports of these products too. If they let in the imports, then EU producers will be undercut; if they ban imports treated with pesticides, then many farmers in poorer countries will go out of business.

Syed said: “There is no need for the EU to go down this road, especially in the absence of proper scientific analysis and an impact assessment. Most pesticides make a positive contribution to agriculture, consumer health and economic development. Why then does the European Union insist on a policy to make life more difficult for human beings? British Conservatives will continue to fight for a common sense approach to food safety.”

John Bowis signs off after 25 years of representing Londoners

“From Kingston Council to Battersea’s MP to MEP for London I have had wonderful support from an army of Party officers and activists. I am so very grateful to each and every one. I have been very fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve as Education Chairman, as Minister at Health and then Transport and finally for ten years as Party Spokesman for the Environment and Health in the European Parliament. I hope I have been able to contribute something to each for the benefit of our constituents and of our Party. Although I am retiring from the European Parliament I intend to go on trying to make a difference in these fields.

Rather than write an essay on the many and varied activities I have been involved with over the past decade, I thought I would put it into a pictorial journey. In doing so I pay tribute to my fellow London MEPs, who have been my friends and colleagues over these years: Nicholas Bethell, Theresa Villiers, Ian Twinn, Charles Tannock and Syed Kamall.”

JOHN



Campaigning in London



Working for Pets Passports



Checking out London's Wildlife Reserves

Celebrating World Diabetes Day with the Children of Europe'



At Mother and Baby Vaccine Clinic in Mali'



With the street children of Indonesia



Receiving MEP of the Year Award



On the hoof for Animal Welfare



Highlighting Labour's Fridge Mountain Failure



Supporting Fulham FC working with London schoolchildren



Protecting London's Environment



Defending British Beer against Damaging Labelling Proposals