

Delivering for Britain

**News from your London
Conservative MEP team**



Summer 2006

London turns BLUE



Help us end the Strasbourg Jaunt

Your London Conservative MEPs: John Bowis, Syed Kamall and Charles Tannock are asking Londoners to sign an online petition at www.oneseat.eu calling for the European Parliament to end the monthly trek to Strasbourg and establish one seat in Brussels. Every month, papers, staff, officials, and 700 MEPs move to the remote city on the German border. Since this jaunt is enshrined in the EU's treaties, only national governments can put a stop to it. The MEPs have recently exposed a further scandal as the French authorities stand accused of charging an inflated rental price for the use of the Parliament building in Strasbourg, thereby further burdening the UK taxpayer.

"This must stop. We need Londoners to show the governments of Europe that MEPs and the public want to end this ludicrous waste of money. Let's all put pressure on the French government for one parliament building only – in Brussels. We can all think of good causes in London which could make far better use of this vast sum of money". ■

Following the success of the local election campaign, we should like to congratulate both our new Conservative councillors and those who were re-elected. On a fantastic night for Conservatives, we captured six new boroughs and now control 14 of London's local authorities. We made significant gains in other boroughs, making us the capital's largest party in local government. It was music to our ears to hear Tony Travers, the LSE local government expert say that "London is no longer a Labour city". That is a tribute to all of you who worked so hard for our party. We commiserate with those who did not win this time, but who live to fight another day. Between the three of us, we managed to help wards in most of the London boroughs and will continue to do so in the months ahead.

We would like to send our condolences to Mrs Carroll Forth and to members in Bromley and Chislehurst on the untimely death of our colleague Eric Forth MP.

So – sign up on www.oneseat.eu



John Bowis is the Conservative Environment and Health Spokesman in the European Parliament.

Read more on page 2



Syed Kamall is the Conservative representative on the International Trade and Internal Market committee.

Read more on page 3



Charles Tannock is the Conservative Spokesman on Foreign Affairs and Human Rights.

Read more on page 4



John having his blood pressure taken as part of a Stroke awareness campaign



No requiem for church organs

John extracted a clear position in parliament from Commissioner Margot Wallstrom regarding the threat to church and concert organs from a new EU commission directive to cut the amount of lead in electrical devices: "You can rest absolutely assured that the directive does not cover church organ pipes," she said. Despite this categorical denial, the British government is still acting as if the directive does cover church organs.

Known as the king of musical instruments, the pipe organ – found in many London cathedrals, churches and concert halls, including St Paul's, Temple Church, the Festival Hall and the Royal Academy of Music – has been around in its present form since the 14th century.

Urgent action on diabetes pandemic needed

John Bowis persuaded a record 423 MEPs, including many colleagues in the EPP-ED Group, to sign his Written Declaration calling on the EU and Member States to focus on the prevention, diagnosis and control of diabetes.

"More people die in our world from diabetes related illness than from AIDS," said John who lives with Type 2 diabetes. "That's the scale of the diabetes pandemic we face but there is no sense of urgency to tackle it."

In London, GPs reported 278,000 patients with diagnosed diabetes Type 1 and 2 at the end of last year. This is just the tip of the iceberg with an estimated 50% of people with diabetes not being diagnosed. A total of 25 million people in the EU are affected.

Mental health challenges

More than a million Londoners had a common mental health problem in 2003 with a further 199,000 experiencing a depressive episode. The economic and social cost of mental health is an estimated £77 billion in England.

John has written the European Parliament's response to the Commission's Green paper on mental health. He highlights the need to tackle the stigma of mental illness, to give a voice to mental health patients and to put mental health, in terms of health promotion, on an equal footing with physical health.



John discusses mental health with national experts in Slovenia. John is the author of Parliament's report on Mental Health.



John takes a look at a new coach that has been adapted to allow access for passengers with reduced mobility

Safer, cleaner and quieter streets

A new EU strategy on the urban environment is currently being debated in the parliament. John has tabled several amendments to ensure that air quality, noise from car and domestic music systems, flood prevention, clean streets and urban planning for safer places to live are at the heart of any future strategy.

Contact

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Working for a greater London

Syed campaigning with
Edmonton Conservatives



Standing up for London in Brussels

Syed is leading the Conservative response to the proposed TV Without Frontiers Directive in the Internal Market Committee of the European Parliament. He is working closely with representatives of the media industry to ensure that the Commission's proposals do not damage London's creative media sector.

On the International Trade Committee, Syed has pressed Peter Mandelson to open Europe's markets to agricultural produce from developing countries, which would lead to a fall in food prices and lift thousands of subsistence farmers in the developing world out of poverty. Syed has also criticised the European Commission's decision to impose tariffs on imported shoes from China and Vietnam, which will increase shoe prices and could put thousands out of work.

London survey

An independent poll commissioned by Syed reveals that while over four in five Londoners like to eat food from other European countries and enjoy going to the continent on holiday, a thumping 60% of Londoners believe there are no areas at all where the European Union should have more powers – not even to combat global warming or terrorism.

While over two thirds of Londoners claim to be interested in the activities of the EU, less than one in ten could name their local Member of the European Parliament. "We are a cosmopolitan city that loves Europe but distrusts the EU," said Syed Kamall. "According to this survey, only a wafer thin majority of Londoners want to remain in the EU, yet many people do not want to see any extra power handed over to Brussels."

European politics can be complex and difficult to explain but Syed is determined to find new and better ways of reporting back to the public – which after all pays his wages – about what is being done in Brussels in their name.



Syed with our new Tower Hamlets
Conservative Councillors

Syed to sit on globalisation & global poverty group

Syed has been appointed to the board of the Globalisation and Global Poverty Group which was set up by David Cameron to produce practical policy recommendations to help promote social, economic and political progress and alleviate suffering in the developing world. Syed was appointed because of his experience of sitting on the International Trade Committee of the European Parliament. He has also lectured on international trade, business and economic development and written extensively on trade and foreign direct investment in transition economies.

Social justice in London

Syed is working with Iain Duncan Smith MP and Philippa Stroud from the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) to identify community-based projects in London at the forefront of tackling social problems and fighting poverty. The CSJ is creating an alliance of Britain's most innovative and effective poverty fighters to inform policy makers on how communities can help themselves rather than relying on the state. Alliance members have proven track records in reducing crime, rehabilitating addicts, helping unemployed people back to work and restoring neighbourhood security. Further details can be found at: www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk. If you know of a project that Syed and the CSJ can visit, please email him at: syed.kamall@europarl.europa.eu.

Syed with Bromley and Chislehurst Conservatives



Four ways to contact Syed

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Charles Tannock



Charles Tannock with a group of MEPs on election night in Kiev in March congratulating former PM Yulia Tymoshenko on her result



Charles Tannock visiting Romford and with Andrew Rossindell MP and Cllr Michael White, Leader of Havering



Charles Tannock speaking at a conference on human rights at London University with London's Bangladeshi community

Recent Activities

Charles has been busy like all Conservative politicians with helping out local candidates in last month's May Borough elections in London. As Foreign Affairs spokesman, he chaired a live human rights conference call with Cuban opposition politicians and pro-democracy activists suffering under the increasing repression of the Castro communist regime which has got worse since the so-called "cocktail war diplomacy" sanctions were stopped by Jack Straw. Charles received a prize from the London Centre for Legal Aid Assistance & Settlement for the work he did defending Christian and Ahmadyia minority religious rights in Pakistan where they are prosecuted frequently under the Blasphemy Act. He has campaigned to withhold EU Direct Budgetary Aid from an unreformed Hamas-led Palestinian Authority till it recognizes Israel and desists from violence whilst ensuring that Palestinians still get humanitarian aid. He has been active in supporting the hopeful parents who have been rejected from adopting abandoned orphan children in Romania. Charles together with Tim Kirkhope MEP are the Conservative members of the Committee of Enquiry into CIA rendition flights in Europe where they seek to defend British and US interests in fighting terrorism whilst maintaining the absolute ban on torture. Charles addressed the first visit of MPs from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to the European Parliament.

As a member of the Economics Committee, he recently chaired a meeting of 400 VAT specialist lawyers and accountants discussing the Commission proposal to change the 1976 6th VAT Directive. Charles is the Rapporteur on duty free allowances into the EU and looks forward to a battle with national Treasuries to keep the allowances as high as possible to avoid being overtaxed by the UK Chancellor in particular.

Charles has led a petition of 800 signatures by residents of west London to the European Parliament who are opposed to the westward extension of Mayor Ken Livingstone's London Congestion Charge on the grounds that it infringes EU set limits of air pollutants by increasing traffic flows at the boundary. Charles and the petitioners will be calling on the Commission to hold the Mayor and UK Secretary of State to account for non-implementation of the 2003 EU statutory air quality limit values.

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For more information on London Conservative MEPs visit
www.conservatives.com/meps

