

Jean Lambert MEP

London's Green Party Member of the European Parliament

E-News - April 2011



Dear friends,

Welcome to my latest e-newsletter which provides a summary of my recent work as Green MEP for London.

We go to the polls on 5th May to decide on whether to replace the unrepresentative First-Past-The-Post voting system with the fairer Alternative Vote system. Under the proposed change, AV will give voters the chance to rank candidates in order of preference rather than vote for just one candidate/party. This would mean that the successful candidate would have to get the support from at least half the voters, unlike the current system where the candidate with the most votes wins the seat, even if the majority of voters haven't backed them. Today, barely 1 in 3 MPs can claim support from a majority of their voters.

I'm strongly supporting the 'Yes to AV' campaign, as are many others from progressive political parties. I urge others to vote for change and vote 'Yes' in the referendum. More information can be found at: <http://www.yestofairervotes.org>. *Don't miss out on your chance to change parliamentary history for the better.*

Public Services and Economy

Campaigning against the cuts

The UK Government decision to impose savage cuts on public spending is having a major impact on a wide range of public services across London. It is also affecting the finances of many London voluntary groups, who rely on public grants.

I have spoken out against these cuts in specific areas, for example, in the campaign to save Redbridge's King George Hospital A&E Department, and have given advice to community groups who face cuts about other possible funding solutions.

I also supported Shelter's campaign to save the housing safety net from Government cuts.

I joined the TUC-organised mass protest against the cuts and have encouraged others to get involved in campaigns to defend essential public and community services.



Pic: Jean with fellow Greens campaigning against the cuts at the TUC protest in central London.

What is a Green Job? DVD launch

Working with small businesses from different London boroughs, I made a short film about how companies can build green practice into their businesses. The film also highlights the European Union's role in providing support for green job creation and training, for which I have been pressing the EU Commission. I launched the film at Dalston's Arcola Theatre with local businesses. The dvd is available free on request from my London office or you can watch it at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGsAvSSQ14&feature=related>.

Environment and health

Air pollution

The UK Government continues to fail to tackle air pollution effectively in London and elsewhere and is breaching EU air pollution standards. I have been working with London clean air campaigners and Green London Assembly Members to press the Commission to take action against the UK Government until it lives up to its responsibilities. The Commission has granted the UK an extended deadline, until June 2011, to meet air pollution standards. Failure to do so will lead to further action at EU level. An estimated 4,300 people die prematurely every year in London because of poor air quality. Many more suffer respiratory disorders. I will continue to press for action in order to protect the health of Londoners. For more info see http://www.jeanlambertmep.org.uk/news_detail.php?id=652.

Nuclear waste

New EU legislation is currently being developed on handling nuclear waste. As a member of the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee, I am reporting on the health and safety (for workers) dimension of the legislation. Given the huge safety risks surrounding nuclear power, as has been highlighted by the Fukushima nuclear disaster, I have been pressing for the most stringent safety standards to be adopted. I remain extremely concerned about the dangers and waste legacy that comes with nuclear power.

Road Safety

Written declaration adopted. An important written declaration was adopted in March by the European Parliament following a successful campaign from London road safety campaigners. It presses for lorries to be fitted with new technology to minimise blindspots. This could save lives in London. I supported the declaration and urged other MEPs to sign up.

Animal Protection

Ealing Animal Welfare Bazaar, Making Tracks newsletter

Animal protection issues continue to be a high priority with my London constituents, and the European Parliament plays a legislative role in this area. Along with Green colleagues, I continue to support a wide range of campaigns. I attended the annual Ealing Animal Welfare Bazaar where I met a number of campaigning groups.

With Green MEP for the South-East, Keith Taylor, I published a new joint newsletter, Making Tracks, which highlights our work on animal protection issues. Copies are available from my London office or online at http://www.jeanlambertmep.org.uk/news_detail.php?id=650.

Human Rights and Civil Liberties

Newroz

Kurdish New Year was celebrated in Finsbury Park by London's Kurdish community. As a longstanding friend of the Kurdish community I spoke at the event and continue to work with people from the community on a range domestic, human rights and environmental issues. Recently I have been calling for Turkey to allow greater media freedom.

Shaker Aamer and Guantanamo Bay - Downing Street Letter

I have supported the campaign for the closure of Guantanamo Bay for many years, and had hoped to see it closed soon into the Obama administration. I have also pressed for the release of London/UK detainees. Shaker Aamer is the last UK resident to be held in Guantanamo Bay. I co-signed a letter to the Prime Minister calling on him to take further action for the release of Shaker Aamer, and joined the delegation delivering it to Downing Street. I have also called on the UK and other EU Member States to take more detainees currently held in Guantanamo in order to hasten its closure. The campaign for the release of Shaker Aamer continues.

Equalities and discrimination

LGBT issues

As a member of the European Parliament's cross-party LGBT Intergroup, I have an active interest in LGBT rights. Following the tragic murder of David Kato, LGBT activist, in Kampala, Uganda, I co-signed a statement with the European Parliament's Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, the Co-President of the Africa Caribbean Pacific Joint Parliamentary Assembly, and the Co-Presidents of the Intergroup on LGBT Rights. We called for EU Member States to apply all possible pressure on Uganda to decriminalise homosexuality and for the European External Action Service in Kampala to provide unconditional assistance to LGBT human rights defenders.

The Parliament also adopted a strong statement on the murder, ahead of the Ugandan Presidential elections. See <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2011-0074+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>.

International

Nigerian Elections

Following meetings with Nigerians from London and my raising of issues with the Commission about monitoring the forthcoming elections in Nigeria, I joined the European Parliament election observation mission in April. The EU has an important role to help encourage free and fair elections in Nigeria and elsewhere, and I am playing a part in that.

South Asia Delegation

As Chair of the European Parliament's South Asia Delegation, I have a particular engagement with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nepal and Bhutan.

In February I met the Pakistani EU Ambassador to discuss shared issues of concern. Following the brutal assassination of the Pakistani minister for minorities, Shahbaz Bhatti on 2nd March, the European Parliament adopted an emergency resolution - which can be read at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2011-0098&format=XML&language=EN>.

I recently led a delegation visit to the Maldives and Sri Lanka, and have held meetings with Maldivan Ambassador and Minority Rights Group about the situation in the Maldives.

In Sri Lanka I met the Minister for Foreign Affairs, with whom I raised issues of arbitrary detentions, with the leader of the opposition and also with civil society groups. We were able to visit the north of the country and a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

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Need advice?

If you are a London resident and are considering getting in touch you might want to look at my Advice for Londoners webpage. It highlights common issues that have been raised with me and points towards useful sources of support, information and advice. See <http://www.jeanlambertmep.org.uk/advice>.

Sign up for my eNews?

This e-News is published approximately every two months. To receive it directly to your inbox, email INFO to jeanlambert@greenmeps.org.uk.

Sign up for my hard copy newsletter?

I also produce a hard copy newsletter, which you can receive free of charge. If you would like to receive it, please let my office know, giving your name and address. It can also be viewed on my website.

Information about the work of other Green MEPs and views of the Greens-EFA group in the European Parliament can be found at <http://www.greens-efa.eu>.

Information about the working of the European Parliament can be found at <http://www.europarl.org.uk>.

The above is only an outline of my recent work. For further information, please visit <http://www.jeanlambertmep.org.uk> or email jeanlambert@greenmeps.org.uk.