

Jean Lambert MEP

LONDON'S GREEN MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

For peace, social justice and the environment



Winter/Spring 2007/08



Is your home insulated? Jean calls for better insulation to help tackle carbon emissions

Tackling climate change

Addressing climate change effectively means conserving energy. Yet while half of domestic energy is used for heating, one third can escape through poorly insulated walls. New building standards are dealing with this problem, but in London almost a million houses still need cavity wall insulation.

Jean's report ***Hothouses: Climate change and London's housing*** found that the Government's policies are failing. Instead it presents a number of recommendations for tackling the issue including more free insulation.

Jean has highlighted that insulating our homes is essential not only for

combating climate change, but to prevent vulnerable people suffering in extreme weather conditions.

Almost a quarter of pensioners in inner London live in poverty and a large proportion cannot afford to heat their homes. Jean has been working with London's Older People's Strategy Group to address these social and environ-

Defending the rights of refugees

Jean continues to work hard on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers, visiting detention centres in the UK and across Europe.

Those who are applying for asylum must have access to legal representation and have the right to live in dignified conditions with proper access to medical care. Jean said, "*Meeting detainees face-to-face means I can check that their rights are being respected.*"

Jean also supported the launch of the European Refugee Advocacy Organisation (ERAD), set up to encourage and empower refugees and asylum seekers to defend their own rights. "*Asylum seekers and refugees can be particularly vulnerable when they have been forced to leave their homeland, family and friends. Sadly their opinions and wishes on the details of their new future are regularly ignored.*"



Jean at the launch of the European Refugee Advocacy Organisation (ERAD)



Jean with Aldaine and Charles after being interviewed for their environmental justice project

European Year of Equal

Throughout the European Year of Equal ensure that new legislation will mean e protection from discrimination is very p disability, religion or belief and sexual orie voice the concerns of those groups to deman

Empowering young people

Research commissioned by Jean found that many young people feel disconnected from the decisions concerning their local environment and their lives. This led to her funding a new project to encourage young people to engage in politics and environmental issues.

Jean worked closely with students from Newham Sixth Form College to produce a DVD entitled **EU4U! Your voice can make a difference!** The students received training and work experience with the support of London based organization, Capacity Global. The film explores the links between their immediate environment and quality of life and has been well-received by hundreds of schools around the country.

Noureddine Touak, 18, from Newham said: "It's been a great experience that made me feel special and focused my mind."

Jean, who was previously a teacher in Walthamstow, believes the DVD serves as an excellent tool for teachers, youth groups, students and budding young politicians. She is now funding a new project with young people in Bermondsey. They are researching attitudes to the environment and politics and intend to present their findings to the European Parliament during a visit to Brussels in 2008.

For a free copy of the EU4U! DVD please contact us.



Jean presents the AGE report on social inclusion and older people to the European Parliament

Listening to older people

Alongside AGE, the European Older People's Platform, Jean, as co-president of the Intergroup on Ageing, presented a toolkit to the European Parliament on how to include older people in decision-making.

Speaking up for poorer pensioners, Jean has called on the European Commission to assess pension allowances and to reject mandatory retirement, allowing people to work longer if they wish.

In Croydon, Jean also shadowed an older person for a day to find out more about the difficulties they face in the city. Together they will address Help the Aged's conference **Age Equality: Ours by Right** marking the end of the Year of Equal Opportunities for All.

Standing up for women

Jean is committed to highlighting the plight of women. She recently chaired an Amnesty International hearing with three 'comfort women' forced into sexual slavery in Japan during the Second World War. Jean insists that their suffering must be acknowledged by the Japanese authorities and has called for action from the European Parliament.

In addition, Jean is acutely aware of the gender pay gap, particularly in London where women's pay is on average 23 per cent lower than men's. She continues to demand fair wages and improved working conditions for women and recently attended the Fawcett Society's **Women's No Pay Day** event in Westminster.



Ellen van der Ploeg testifying at the 'Comfort Women' hearing, chaired by Jean

Opportunities for All

Opportunities for All, Jean has worked tirelessly to ensure everyone receives equal treatment. Currently, legal is patchy, and it is particularly lacking regarding age, discrimination, and it is particularly lacking regarding age, representation. Jean is using every possible opportunity to promote equality for all.

Demanding equality for disabled people



Jean at 1million4disability demonstration organised by the European Disability Forum

Following a meeting with disability campaigners that Jean hosted in the European Parliament, she has called on the Commission to enhance and protect disability rights. Jean is a co-sponsor of a written declaration which urges the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

If adopted, the Convention would identify where accessibility is preventing disabled people from participating fully in society and what must be done to alleviate the problems.

Jean also supported disabled workers demonstrating in Brixton against the closure of the local Remploy factory which could leave 46 people without jobs or in lower-skilled work. She said “a proper independent review must take place, examining the opportunities to restructure and develop Remploy whilst retaining all the current manufacturing sites”.

Speaking out for LGBT rights

Jean has continued to voice her support for LGBT citizens across Europe. After investigating concerns she wrote to the European Commission demanding that it withdraws proposed funding from a Polish college linked to the homophobic and anti-semitic Radio Maryja.

The Commission promptly reassessed their funding criteria and stopped the funds for the college.

Jean is a member of the European Parliament’s Intergroup on Gay and Lesbian Rights which has launched a new Directive calling for equal rights and treatment for all in cooperation with ILGA Europe, the Europe Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association.

Confronting danger to London cyclists

“The lives of London’s cyclists are being put in unnecessary danger”, Jean warned, as the European Parliament delayed a directive requiring all HGVs to be fitted with wide view mirrors, to eliminate blind-spots and make pedestrians and cyclists more visible to drivers.

Fatal accidents involving cyclists in London often occur as a result of lorries turning left. Although new HGVs are fitted with wide vision mirrors there is no requirement for older lorries to be updated.

Banning battery cages

An EU-wide ban on battery cages from 2012 forms part of the Laying Hens Directive and whilst the UK has committed to adhering to the ban, animal protection campaigners are concerned that the Directive is under threat. Jean has raised the matter with the Commission and is supporting the Compassion in World Farming campaign to keep the ban.

“Although the UK action is welcome, it is long overdue. Battery-caged hens suffer restrictions on movement and other natural behaviour and have high levels of osteoporosis and broken bones – it’s scandalous that these cages are still legal,” Jean said.

The closure of Guantanamo

Jean continues to demand the closure of Guantanamo Bay detention facility and the release of all those detained for years without charge or trial. Over 380 people are still illegally imprisoned facing torture, brutality and injustice. Jean believes that the continuing use of Guantanamo demonstrates utter disrespect for human rights, with the US effectively giving the green light for other regimes to unlawfully detain prisoners and conduct torturous activities.

Supporting an end to nuclear arms

Jean, a long-standing supporter of CND, welcomed the Vanunu Freedom Riders on the final leg of their journey from the Faslane nuclear base.

Outside Hackney Town Hall she joined the cyclists in calling for a nuclear-free middle east and an end to the persecution of Mordechai Vanunu. The nuclear campaigner spent 18 years in prison, twelve of which were in solitary

confinement, for telling the world that Israel was secretly developing nuclear weapons.

Jean also addressed a separate protest against the American Missile Defence System base at Menwith Hill. She said *“The government approved this site without any parliamentary debate, entirely undermining the democratic process in this country.”*



Jean greets the Vanunu Freedom Riders in Hackney



Jean demonstrating with Greenpeace against Heathrow airport expansion, outside the CBI Annual Conference in Islington.

Campaigning for better air quality

Jean welcomed the European Commission’s decision to take action against the UK over its failing air quality. In London, road traffic is creating excessive emissions of particulate matter, which can be extremely harmful to the lungs and cause severe problems for those already suffering from breathing difficulties.

As well as reducing transport emissions, Jean wants the Government to reduce the overall amount of traffic and halt the expansion of London’s airports. Meanwhile, discussions are underway in Europe to add more stringent targets on particulate emissions to European law, which will only add to the pressure on the UK to clean up its act.

Calling for a living wage

Incredibly, it is still possible for someone to work more than 60 hours a week and be paid less than £11,000 per year. Low pay has led to almost a quarter of people in the UK living below the poverty line and inequality is increasing. To combat hardship, Jean continues to press for a living wage for all Londoners of at least £7.20 per hour.

Safeguarding public services

Backing the European Trade Union Confederation’s campaign for a legal framework to protect and strengthen public services, Jean continues to demand the security of public services across Europe.

“We must ensure our public services remain universally available and affordable” she said.

In London, Jean also gave her support to the **I Love NHS** demonstration, saying *“We must be vigilant about the threat from the Government to privatise.”*

To receive regular email newsletters about Jean’s work send an email with the word ‘INFO’ in the subject header to:
jeanlambert@greenmeps.org.uk

For more information or to contact Jean Lambert email:
jeanlambert@greenmeps.org.uk
Telephone: 020 7407 6269
Fax: 020 7234 0183
Post: **The Office of Jean Lambert MEP, Suite 58, The Hop Exchange, 24 Southwark Street, London SE1 1TY**

Contact the above for a copy of these articles in large print.