

# Report from our MEP , Bill Newton Dunn

## dated 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2012

This is my last report before the European Parliament breaks for a summer holiday at the end of this week. There are several ongoing issues to brief you about.

### **Brussels v Strasbourg**

The parliament continues its fight for one seat, and not to have to go to Strasbourg every month. On 5th June, the European Court of Justice held an open hearing into written pleadings into the 'Calendar' case brought by France and Luxembourg against the decision by the European Parliament to hold two plenary sessions in Strasbourg during a single week in October 2012 and 2013 instead of in separate weeks.

Parliament argued that its calendar is a matter of internal organisation and that 12 sessions are still being held in Strasbourg, albeit two in one week. France said the decision broke the EU Treaty. Luxembourg argued that Parliament wants to determine the location of its Seat, contrary to the treaty, not to improve efficiency.

The indicative opinion of the court's Advocate-General will be published on 6th September and a final ruling from the judges is expected in the autumn, after the October 2012 plenary session week.

The published manifesto of our Coalition government says it would help our fight for one seat - but, deeply disappointingly, our government decided not to help "on the grounds that we don't want to upset the French". One pledge they have not kept.

### **Barroso lashes British Conservative MEPs**

Last week Barroso, president of the European Commission, lambasted Conservative MEPs, accusing them of "taking delight" in the eurozone debt crisis despite the damage it could do to Britain. He pointed out that they do not support their own Prime Minister.

See <http://euobserver.com/843/116859>

It reminds me of the Tory backbench MP rebellion last night in London when rebellious backbenchers also defied Cameron. Tories need to remember that they have not won a General Election for twenty years, and may never again if they continue like this.

### **Voting performance by national governments in the Council of Ministers**

An interesting insight at <http://euobserver.com/843/116917>

### **Animal Welfare strategy**

MEPs approved a new EU strategy for protection and welfare of animals. See

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/pressroom/content/20120703IPR48251/html/Animal-welfare-MEPs-call-for-crackdown-on-offenders-to-protect-public-health>

### **Motorbikes regulation**

The manufacturers organisation (ACEM) report that "the discussions in the EP and Council appear to be drawing to a close. The process has been an uphill struggle so far, but we were able to straighten out several important details which, if left alone, would have seriously compromised the objective of creating a reliable and favourable framework determining a stable business environment for the motorcycle industry - a critical priority in these difficult times."

I am told that the headquarters of "MAG", which is one of the UK motorcyclists member organisations, and which has been violently hostile to the forthcoming EU law, that they now accept the European Parliament's position. I hope that their headquarters have informed their members.

The latest situation is at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?>

### **Single EU Patent**

The long-awaited proposal to have a single EU patent (instead of 27 separate ones) has been delayed again.

See <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/pressroom/content/20120703IPR48182/html/EU-patent-Parliament-postpones-vote-due-to-Council's-last-minute-change>

### **Committee on Organised Crime**

The parliament's new special committee to investigate Organised Crime and how it hits Europe in so many ways, is hard at work.

This week we have heard briefings about the murderous Camorra in Naples ripping off Hollywood blockbusters (by bribing insiders in the studios) selling cheap DVDs and with some of the proceeds going to Hezbollah terrorists in the Middle East We learned how Romanian begging gangs work across Europe including the UK using women and children who live in slavery and must beg every day...about the drug routes from Afghanistan and Columbia...about trafficking of human beings from Africa and eastern Europe...about trade in rare animals and animal parts and in valuable but toxic waste...about some of the vast economic activities in counterfeit goods and medicines and smuggling of tobacco, all of which destroy legitimate European jobs. On Monday and Tuesday I shall be with a small delegation in Serbia to learn about organised crime in the Balkans.

### **ACTA (the Anti Counterfeiting Trade Agreement)**

MEPs experienced a prolonged deluge of emails from geeks around the world - but less than forty came from the East Midlands - using identical wording arguing that the ACTA treaty should be destroyed because of dangers to their personal freedom.

Western industries, on the other hand, argued strongly that they need protection from counterfeiting and from free downloading from the internet. But they were too logical and they failed to deluge MEPs in a similar way.

The result was an overwhelming defeat for the treaty. I was one of the few who defied the torrent and voted in favour because I believe that if you have to pay for something in a shop you should also pay for it on the internet, but geeks say everything should be free on the internet. The Commissioner says the treaty is not dead and will be brought back.

Afterwards, triumphant geeks emailed from around the world. Two geeks unwisely gave their game away, by warning about their next targets, the EU-Canadian free trade agreement and also "INDECT" which is a research project in the area of intelligent security systems performed by several European universities since 2009 and funded by the EU.

### **Change in rotating presidency of Council of Ministers.**

The chairing of the other chamber, the Council of Ministers, changes every six months.

Denmark has just finished its half-year. The Cypriots have taken over until December. Next year it will be Ireland from January 2013 and then Lithuania from July 2013.

### **Finally...Holidays**

MEPs are going on holiday. The parliament will re-open on 1st September. Later in July I shall go with a group of seven MEPs to visit new internet businesses in Silicon Valley in California - paying my own expenses, before you ask ! We want to learn why there is no such equivalent in Europe, or in the East Midlands for that matter, and what new surprises the internet is going to bring to us all. I will report our findings on my website [www.newton-dunn.com](http://www.newton-dunn.com)

All the best, and I wish you a dry August this "summer".