



Linda McAvan MEP Yorkshire and the Humber

79 High Street, Wath-upon-Dearne, Rotherham, S63 7QB
e: lindamcavan@lindamcavanmep.org.uk t: 01709 875665
w: www.lindamcavanmep.org.uk twitter: @lindamcavanmep



In this Issue:

- **Eurozone latest**
- **WEEE updated**
- **Implant scandal**
- **Lib Dem MEP resigns**
- **Sponsored walk**

Fishing's future

As the European Parliament prepares to start reforming the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), Linda this week met with representatives from the fishing industry, environmental campaigners and journalists at an event co-hosted with Ocean 2012. This organisation is campaigning for a new CFP that ends over-fishing and helps maintain healthy fishing stocks.

Joining them was Charles Clover, a writer who set up the [fish2fork](http://fish2fork.com) website which rates restaurants on the sustainability of the fish they serve, and Jeremy Percey, Chief Executive of the New Under Tens Fishermen's Association. There are many changes needed to protect fish stocks, but it is also clear that fish levels will not recover if consumer habits remain the same. Creating consumer pressure by developing sustainability labelling schemes for restaurants as well as retailers is one of the new ideas we are discussing.

International Women's Day Dinner 2012

As some of you may know, to mark International Women's Day I host annual fundraising events which over the years have been given fantastic support from women from all over Yorkshire and the Humber. Together, since 2006, we have raised around £35,000 for women's charities, with the main recipients being the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia and the Tasibeh Girls' School in Pakistan.

This year is no different and the International Women's Day Dinner 2012 will be held on Thursday March 22 at the Cedar Court Hotel, Wakefield.

This year we have decided to support Practical Action's *Hitting Hunger Hard* campaign which is dedicated to helping families meet their food needs in Sudan, a country where nine out of 10 people live in acute poverty. Based in Kassala state, eastern Sudan, *Hitting Hunger Hard* will help families grow their own food by funding small scale farming technologies, skills training and basic food processing. The specific part of the project we are raising funds for is Practical Action's plan to introduce 40 women's co-operative farms, which cost just under £300 each and will allow women to work together to improve their incomes.



Supporting women farmers in eastern Sudan

At the dinner we will be joined by guest speakers: a Practical Action fieldworker who will explain in greater detail how *Hitting Hunger Hard* works and Shadow Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Rachel Reeves MP.

Tickets cost £30 which includes a pre-dinner reception from 6.30pm and wine with a three-course meal. Tables for up to 10 women can also be booked. As always this will be a women-only event.

If you are interested in joining us at the dinner and raising money for women farmers in Sudan please get in contact with my office. You can email womensfundraisingdinner@gmail.com or ring Maggi or Nicola on 01709 875665.

Linda

Working in Europe for everyone in Yorkshire and the Humber



Wallis sparks row

Diana Wallis, Liberal Democrat MEP for our region, has resigned from her seat, just a day after her bid to become European Parliament president ended in failure. The decision was met with controversy as her husband, Stewart Arnold, second on the Liberal's list in 2009, was next in line to



Wallis resigns

become MEP. After a week of internal party squabbling, he has now turned the position down. Rebecca Taylor, third on the list, is now expected to take on the seat.

WEEE rules updated

The European Parliament has backed new rules which should make the recycling of electronic waste easier. The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEE) was first introduced in 2007 to set targets for recycling electronic waste in the EU. The focus is now on increasing recycling levels of smaller electronic goods like hairdryers, MP3 players and toasters. The regulations will allow consumers to take their unwanted electronic goods back to retailers, with no requirement to purchase anything. Britain lags behind some countries in Europe when it comes to recycling small electronic goods so it is imperative the UK government introduces this in-shop recycling. It will help us reduce the amount of electronics ending up in landfill where it can cause leaking of toxic chemicals in to the environment. With many electronic goods, particularly mobile phones, now containing extremely rare and expensive materials like gold, platinum and titanium, the cost of which continues to rise, it also makes sense to recover these valuable elements.

Summit looks for Eurozone deal – concern over Hungary

Leaders of national governments will meet next week at a European summit in a further attempt to reach agreement on new financial rules for the Eurozone and to secure a write down of some of Greece's debt. Following his December "veto" David Cameron will not be able to take part in any decisions on the new treaty. This has not stopped the Prime Minister from lecturing the rest of the EU on economic policy, despite his destructive austerity policies failing to create any discernable growth in the UK. Britain, of course, is not the only country with a beleaguered economy. Bleak new figures from Spain show that 22.8% of the workforce, over five million people, are now unemployed and it looks possible that Portugal may require another bail out. While the financial crisis has dominated the headlines, there are real fears about the health of Hungarian democracy following changes to the constitution. Changes to media law, parliamentary procedures and economic policy are under close scrutiny by the rest of the EU to see whether they conform with the basic principles of democracy and the rule of law, a requirement of membership for any EU Member State. Last week Hungarian Prime Minister, Victor Oban, felt the need to attend the European Parliament's debate on the situation in his country to try and justify the planned changes.

Reform needed after implant scandal

Following the PIP implant scandal, which saw thousands of women in Britain, France and across Europe receive breast implants made from industrial, rather than medical grade, silicone, Linda set up an emergency debate in Brussels this week to start work on new EU-wide rules to prevent such a scandal from happening again. Shockingly, incomplete record keeping has made it impossible to trace all the women who received faulty implants. Linda is calling for the introduction of a traceability system, which will give each implant a unique identifier and a mandatory register of patients. The European Commission conceded that inspections of manufacturers should be unannounced rather than coming after a six-week warning, which allowed PIP to escape censure for so long. Following the revelation that the US had banned PIP products in 2000, better communications between international regulatory bodies is also essential.

Sponsored walk kicks off fundraising

Fundraising for the *Hitting Hunger Hard* campaign got underway with a sponsored walk organised by members of Rotherham Labour Party. Walkers raised enough money to fund two women's farms.

