



Brian Simpson

Labour Euro MP for the North West

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Welcome to my December round-up from the European Parliament.

Labour MEPs have spent the final week before the break at the European Parliament in Strasbourg voting on a raft of new proposals.

Human Trafficking

On Tuesday Labour MEPs voted for new rules to crack-down on human trafficking. Despite pressure from campaigners, the Coalition government has refused to opt in to the proposals, meaning that the new rules won't apply to the UK. Working with other EU countries is the obvious way to protect vulnerable people, mostly women and children, and stop this modern day slavery. Yet Cameron's Tories have sat on the sidelines.

One million signatures: a new EU law

On Wednesday, the European Parliament voted overwhelmingly to introduce a new idea: if you gather a million signatures of EU citizens within one year then you can ask the EU to write a new law. The "citizens' initiative" will begin in 2012 and I hope it will encourage voters to get involved in EU politics.

Transparent and fair financial markets



Labour MEPs secured another victory for more transparency in financial markets. My North West Labour colleague, Arlene McCarthy, successfully fought Tory MEPs to push for a new law which would force financial markets to be more transparent in their dealings.

Battery cage eggs

As Labour's spokesperson on Agriculture issues in the Parliament I was delighted that Labour MEPs and our Socialist colleagues voted on Thursday to force each EU country to meet high animal welfare standards and replace battery cages for hens by the start of 2012. British farmers take the lead in Europe on animal welfare and Labour MEPs have always argued for other countries to follow our lead.

Sleigh full of EU rights this Christmas

Wherever you buy your gifts this Christmas, not even the Grinch can steal your consumer rights, as you'll have the backing of Europe-wide laws. Labour MEPs have been championing consumer rights in the European Parliament for many years. Manufacturers have to give you a minimum two year guarantee on their products, so if things go wrong you have a right to a refund or repair. Also, just this week in Strasbourg, Labour again kept up the pressure to ensure that any chemicals used in plastic children's toys are safe.

Oldham East and Saddleworth by-election

Last Sunday, we selected a brilliant candidate to fight to keep Oldham East and Saddleworth a Labour seat in the January by-election. If you can spare an hour or two to help Debbie Abrahams and her team then please contact the campaign office on 07872 417 249 or David Mellor on 07896819367.

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Brian Simpson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line at the end.

Brian Simpson MEP

Labour MEP for the North West of England
Chair of the European Parliament's Transport Committee