



## Brian Simpson

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Welcome to my July round-up from the European Parliament

Labour MEPs spent this week at the European Parliament in Strasbourg debating and voting on a wide range of issues, from road safety to helping British farmers.

### **112 or 999?**

On Tuesday the European Parliament decided that more needs to be done to publicise the single emergency services number that works throughout the EU in addition to national numbers like 999. The 112 emergency number was created over 20 years ago, yet a recent survey shows that only one in four people know that they can call this number in any EU country. As many of us will take holidays in other European countries this summer, it's a great idea to have one number that we all know to call in case of emergency.

### **Coalition government refuses to make our roads safer**

As Chair of the European Parliament's Transport Committee I was delighted that we voted through new laws on Wednesday that allow drivers to be prosecuted for road safety offences they commit in other EU countries. However, thanks to the Tory-LibDem government, Britain is the only EU country refusing to support the new measure. They have walked away from the possibility of cracking-down on the estimated 79,000 speeding and red light offences committed annually by foreign motorists on British roads. I am thoroughly disappointed to see the British government dismissing this important opportunity. They are putting political dogma before people's safety and the government should reconsider its decision and join the scheme as early as possible.

### **A boost for British farmers and shoppers**

As Labour's spokesperson on Agriculture I am delighted that on Wednesday the Parliament voted in favour of a new law that will help shoppers choose meat from British farms. The law requires almost all pre-packed meat sold in British shops to carry information about where the animal came from so shoppers can see where the meat began its journey to their fork. Labour MEPs have been leading the fight to introduce the new legislation and have vowed to keep up the pressure for the rules to be extended to cover processed foods, such as sausages and ready meals.

### **Tory MEPs derail key climate change vote**

On Tuesday, the Parliament voted on whether to increase the EU greenhouse gas emission reduction target to 30% by 2020. Labour MEPs supported this important initiative but climate change-deniers in the Tory Party meant that the vote was lost. Tory MEPs were determined to defy David Cameron's pledge to lead the "greenest government ever". This vote shows the hollowness of their commitment to environmental policy and is another example of the Tories failing to live up to their pre-election promises.

### **Use your mobile abroad for cheaper**

The EU is set to take even more action to drive down the cost of using mobile phones while abroad. Labour MEPs have led this campaign and we have already seen the cost of making calls and sending texts falling while in another EU country. Yet many mobile phone companies are still ripping-off users with hugely inflated charges for using the internet on 'smart phones' whilst abroad. I am pleased that the European Commission will now look at extending the rules to cover holiday internet usage to avoid the nasty shock of large bills upon your return.

### **Postal services throughout Europe**

There has been some concern within the European Parliament in regard to Postal Services and the lack of urgency in guaranteeing a so-called 'Universal Service' to customers. The liberalisation of post throughout the EU was only approved by the Parliament on the agreement that quality services, daily delivery and collection (5 times a week) and employment conditions were maintained. But all this seems to have been forgotten by the European Commission and EU countries.

In the UK, the Postal Services Bill put forward by the "Chuckle Brothers" Coalition gives Royal Mail a ten year guarantee for delivering the Universal Service; but then fails to define what that Universal Service will actually be, which to me is total nonsense. The government is determined to completely separate Royal Mail from the Post Office without an inter-business agreement and I can see a repeat of the fiasco of railway privatisation looming for our Post, unless we get behind the CWU in their [campaign](#) to protect our Postal services.

### **Light-hearted final thought...**

Now, I have it on good authority that the following story is true. A young lady recently went into a Bureau de Change in one of the Co-op Travel shops to buy Euros for her holiday. When asked how many she wanted, she told the cashier that she'd like €1000. Then, clearly mindful of the recent economic turmoil in Greece, she demanded that none of the Euros she was about to receive should be Greek ones. The cashier pointed out that a Euro was a Euro, regardless of the country it came from, and had the same value. Apparently, with some reluctance, she accepted the Euros on offer with a reassurance from the cashier, who by this time had a queue on her hands, that most of the notes were German in origin. Now if this story is true, I despair!

With best wishes,

Brian Simpson MEP

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

If you have a Labour Party event that you would like to promote in your area, please let me know and I will try to include it in my next email bulletin.

If I can help you, please get in touch:

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