

Focus EXTRA

NEWS FROM YOUR LIBDEM EURO MP LIZ LYNNE

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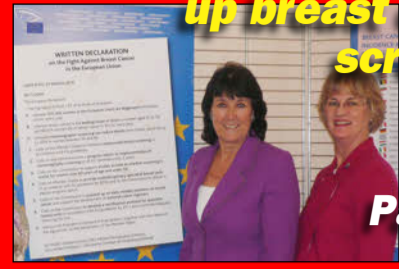
EU acts to end roaming nightmare



Page 3

CANCER CARE:

MEP Liz wins bid to step up breast cancer screening



Page 2

65 NOT OUT!

Compulsory age of retirement is scrapped by Coalition



Charity campaigners and LibDem MEP Liz Lynne celebrate victory after long campaign to stop older people being chucked on the scrap heap.

The Coalition Government has agreed to scrap the compulsory retirement age, a change long championed by MEP Liz Lynne and Age UK charity campaigners.

The Chancellor confirmed in August that he will phase out the Default Retirement Age, preventing staff from being sacked just because they reach a certain age while still capable of doing a job.

Local Lib Dem Euro MP Liz Lynne has campaigned with charities such as Age Concern for many years on the issue, in Westminster and in the European Parliament.

The West Midlands region MEP said: "I am delighted the campaign has succeeded at last. This rule was a ridiculous piece of unfair discrimination against older people that successive governments did nothing about. This is a big plus for the Coalition government.

"Abolition will end the sudden cliff edge of retirement that forces people to stop working at a certain age

whether they want to or not, while maintaining an age at which people can receive a pension.

"At this time of crisis, it is economic madness to force experienced workers to retire before their time and stop paying taxes. It is also totally unfair to get rid of staff just because they are 60 or 65."

Flexible retirement

"The key is that the pension age will still be set by government but people will have flexibility on whether they want to keep working.

"The test for those who want to carry on working will be whether they are capable of doing their job, not how old they are."

"Labour's approach was very different. In the so-called Heyday case when Age Concern sought judicial review, backed by the European Commission, Labour ministers fought tooth and nail to keep the retirement rule in the High Court, even when the issue was reconsidered last July."

Yes to High Speed 2, but get the route right

Local Euro MP Liz Lynne is backing the plan for HS2 - a new high speed rail line from the continent and London to our region and beyond - but says the coalition must look again at the route designed in secret by Labour.

The Lib Dem MEP Liz Lynne has been a longstanding supporter of extending Europe's high speed network to the regions, including Eurostar services on existing main lines.

She welcomed news that the coalition government will take forward the HS2 plan for a 250 mph rail link as a top priority, though with some changes to the route.

"This plan is vital to our long term economic future in this region, we need to be plugged into the economic centre of gravity in the rest of Europe without more airports or motorways.

"But I am glad to see the route produced in such secrecy by Labour will be looked at again. The Conservatives are keen that it goes via Heathrow instead and there is an opportunity now to get the rest of the route right and cause the minimum impact to residents, especially in Warwickshire.

"The coalition has also confirmed that international services through the Channel Tunnel are a key part of the scheme. It is very important that

the cross party agreement for the plan in principle is maintained.

"We need a proper and full consultation and fair compensation for householders - we need this line to be built soon but it is worth taking extra care now to plan it properly."

• Liz Lynne has also continued her campaign for international services from our region on existing lines.

She said: "Sadly, Eurostar is reluctant to move on this, but I am delighted to hear that German Railways (DB) are now planning to run through the tunnel to Britain.

"If DB want to compete with Eurostar then more power to them!"



INSIDE New laws protect nurses from needlestick injuries

Page 3

Parliament acts on breast cancer



Liz Lynne and breast cancer campaigners are celebrating after the European Parliament formally adopted her written declaration calling for more action in the fight against breast cancer.

Liz and three other MEPs from different parties called for a sustained Europe-wide campaign to beat breast cancer by properly implementing EU breast cancer guidelines. The disease kills nearly 90,000 women in the European Union every year, including 12,000 women in the UK annually.

The guidelines call for nationwide breast screening, multidisciplinary specialist breast units in each Member State and for national cancer registers. Liz's declaration also calls for the European Commission to look at whether screening is useful for women over 69 years of age and under 50;

It has now been signed up to by 381 MEPs, 12 more than the 369 required to be a majority of the Parliament.

Liz said: "This is fantastic news for the campaign against this disease. Some countries, including the UK, have made progress, but the disparities in screening, diagnosis and morbidity between EU countries is huge."

"Mandatory screening is one of the most important ways to reduce deaths. We also need to make sure multidisciplinary specialist breast care units are in place in line with EU guidelines by 2016."

Liz victory as MEPs back call to stop horse cruelty

Liz Lynne's campaign to end cruelty to horses being transported long distance for slaughter has been adopted by the European Parliament.

Her written declaration calling for action was signed by 405 Euro MPs, well over half, so it has now been adopted.

Backed by World Horse Welfare, the declaration highlights the scandalous suffering endured by many horses as they are moved in lorries and trailers.

Liz said: "The European Parliament has agreed with a petition signed by 120,000 citizens to end this appalling and unnecessary cruelty to horses. We are demanding that the European Commission acts to stop the law being so widely flouted."

Over 100,000 horses are transported long distance across the continent to slaughter every year, many in inhumane conditions, causing exhaustion, dehydration, injury and death.



Liz Lynne presses Commission to protect care of older people

Lib Dem Euro MP Liz Lynne has demanded more action to protect elderly people in long term care at a cross party meeting between MEPs and EU Employment and Social Affairs Commissioner László Andor.

The purpose of the meeting of the Parliament's Age Intergroup was for MEPs with a special interest on age issues to quiz the Commissioner directly about issues affecting older people across the European Union.

Liz Lynne is Vice President of the Employment and Social Affairs committee and co chair of the Parliament's all party Age Intergroup.

She said: "It is scandalous that so many older people receive appalling levels of care and for abuse of

older people to be so widespread, which is why I was pleased to be able to raise these issues directly with the Commissioner."

Human rights

"I am pleased the Commissioner hinted at a future EU green paper on tackling the abuse of older people and that work is underway to produce a working paper on long term care.

"For too long, Member States and EU Institutions have failed to adequately address these pressing human rights issues.

"I hope we can now move towards guidelines on a code of conduct that EU Member States can sign up to for minimum quality standards in long term care. This is a question of human rights."



Liz Lynne has welcomed indications by Employment and Social Affairs Commissioner László Andor that he will draw up an EU green paper on elder abuse and a working paper on long term care.

LIB DEMS HELP SAVE WONKY CARROTS



Liberal Democrat MEPs have played a key role in ensuring that crooked carrots and cucumbers can continue to be sold in shops.

They have voted down a bid by Spanish MEPs to restore old EU rules that restricted the sale of imperfect-looking fruit and vegetables.

The controversial proposal to reinstate the 'community marketing rules' gained the support of the European Parliament's agriculture committee last month, but it was heavily defeated by a vote of all MEPs.

West Midlands Liberal Democrat Liz Lynne MEP welcomed the rejection of a scheme which she said had in

the past led to perfectly healthy fruit and veg being thrown away.

GOOD TO EAT

She said: "I want EU rules to ensure that food on sale is safe to eat, but shoppers can make up their own minds about whether to buy bendy bananas or crooked carrots."

But the MEP admitted that supermarkets often responded to consumer demand by telling farmers only to supply them with good looking produce.

Liz commented: "People say they want choice, but unfortunately the majority of shoppers tend to avoid buying fruit and vegetables that they think look strange, even though they are perfectly good to eat."

'Provenance' food labels will boost local speciality producers

The EU Parliament's vote for food labels to show the country of provenance is a triumph for consumers, says Euro MP Liz Lynne.

In a series of close votes on the controversial Food Labelling Directive, MEPs decided to outlaw the practice of repackaging and reprocessing foodstuffs bought from all over the world and then branding it as 'Made in England' or another EU country.

West Midlands region MEP Liz Lynne has long campaigned for a system of honest and accurate labels for food and other goods.

She discussed the plans for provenance labels with NFU Deputy President Meurig Raymond, who also strongly backed the proposal.

Liz Lynne said: "This is a good day for British farmers whose welfare standards are some of the highest in the world, a good day for British consumers and also for animals.

"This vote means no one will be able to get around our high standards by rebranding food as British when it isn't, and conning customers.

Protecting local specialities

"Now consumers who support these rules will easily be able to buy food which conforms to them.

"These labels will also help genuine local speciality foods of all kinds which are such a feature of the West Midlands region by taking away unfair competition from imitations."



Liz Lynne and the NFU's Meurig Raymond welcome the new label rules.

EU price cap stops mobile roaming nightmare

NEWS IN BRIEF



Now holidaymakers can use a mobile to surf abroad without fear of massive unfair charges.

Tougher rules to limit charges for using a mobile in other EU countries are a big boost for travellers, says Liz Lynne.

The latest phase of the EU's Data Roaming regulation was applied in July, just in time for the summer holidays, after phone operators lost their bid to outlaw an EU cap on roaming charges at the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg.

The rules also stop consumers running up huge bills when surfing the web via a mobile phone or laptop when they are abroad in the EU. The cap follows one case where a French man was billed €46,000 for watching a film on his phone while in another EU country.

Liz said: "These tougher rules protect anyone travelling around other EU countries, either for work or on holiday. The mobile price cap was clearly needed. The operators were completely beyond the reach of national regulators like Ofcom.

"I have had people in my constituency come to me with eye watering bills who had no idea they were incurring such massive charges by using their phones.

"The cap means this abuse of power will stop - the EU is standing up for the ordinary consumer against monopoly profits."

The Roaming Regulations include:

- a monthly default cut-off for data roaming of €50 to stop 'bill shocks', with options for a different limit.
- roaming charges cut to a maximum of €0.39 (about 33p) per minute for calls made and €0.15 per minute for calls received
- Receiving voicemail is now free.

Earlier rules still in force include:

- Sending a roaming text is limited to €0.11, receiving one is free.
- Per second billing after first 30 seconds for calls made and calls received.
- Customers must be kept fully informed by SMS or other means of their operator's charges.

EU micro loans launched

LibDem MEP Liz Lynne is backing a new EU scheme to fund loans for unemployed people and very small firms who want to set up or expand their business.

The European Microfinance Facility was launched in June and gives new entrepreneurs or small firms with less than 10 employees easier access to loans of up to 25,000 Euros (£21,000).

An initial 100 million Euro budget will be used to lever in additional funds of up to 500 million Euros more from institutions such as the European Investment bank.

Liz said: "This plan will help the problems caused by the bank lending crisis for people trying to earn a living and I strongly welcome it. I will be making sure it is properly publicised by banks, and that the process of applying is made as easy as possible."

Call to extend Chiropractic care

Liz Lynne is backing a cross party call for Europe's health services to recognise the benefits of chiropractic and extend access to the specialism in all EU countries.

The Lib Dem MEP has signed a Parliamentary Declaration expressing 'serious concern' at the lack of uniform recognition and access to specialist chiropractors.

Liz Lynne said: "Chiropractic has been proven to be an effective way to treat a large number of conditions through muscular and skeletal manipulation. Many find it works when other more complex procedures do not. It does not use drugs and is cost effective.

"Sadly the provision of chiropractic across the NHS and most other European health care systems varies wildly.

"This is despite the care taken by chiropractors to organise the profession properly to maintain common standards. They are a good example to other professions such as acupuncture, homeopathy and osteopathy, all widely available on the NHS. Given the need for value for money, it is crazy not to take more advantage of chiropractic."

Campaigners hail new law to cut needlestick risk to nurses

Euro MP Liz Lynne hosted a reception with Health First Europe to mark victory in a long campaign for a law to tackle the risks faced by nurses and other health workers from needle stick injuries.

The event in the European Parliament in Brussels followed a final decision by EU ministers to adopt new laws to prevent needle stick injuries in the workplace.



Nursing organisations and campaigners estimate that every year, across the EU, up to one million preventable injuries are sustained from needle stick and sharp objects in medical workplaces.

For the UK alone, the estimate is 100,000 annual incidents. These injuries can transmit blood borne infections such as Hepatitis C and HIV. Liz Lynne, First Vice President of the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee, has campaigned for this law since 2004 and drafted the European Parliament's recent resolution on the subject.

Life threatening

Liz said: "This is to mark a very important victory for healthcare workers.

"At last people who dedicate their lives to care for others will be protected from a daily threat of life threatening infections caused by needle stick injuries. Many of those injured face an agonising wait to find out whether they have a blood borne infection such as HIV or Hepatitis C.



Liz Lynne and Health First Europe celebrate the new law to protect nurses and staff.

"The campaign for this new law has involved nursing groups, health campaigners and many individual politicians from different parties.

"Most injuries from needles and other sharp objects are avoidable, and these new laws should cut them dramatically. This event was an opportunity to say 'thank you' to the campaigners and also to encourage further pressure on

governments to implement the new law swiftly.

"European Union member state governments have been given two years to bring in domestic legislation, but given the urgency of the situation, with 200,000 needle stick injuries likely in the UK health sector alone in that time, I hope the coalition will take this forward as quickly as possible."

End 'staggering ignorance' on role of freelancers and self employed

The European Parliament has backed Lib Dem MEP Liz Lynne's call for more attention to the needs of independent professionals and freelancers.

There are over 1.4 million freelancers in the UK alone and across the EU it has been estimated that independent professionals make up 9 - 13% of the workforce. Earlier this year Liz Lynne helped launch the EU Independent Professionals Forum (right).

After the vote, Liz said; "I am delighted the Committee backed my call for greater recognition and support for independent professionals, who play a vital role in our economy and our communities.

"All too often independent professionals, whether IT consultants, translators or freelance journalists, struggle to make their voices heard. The way that EU legislation has traditionally been produced, means

that independent professionals and self employed people have little or no way into the policy making process; I hope today's vote is one step towards changing that.

"But we have a steep hill to climb if we are to challenge the staggering ignorance on the important role played by independent workers across the European Union."



Beware Spanish bulldozers

Local Euro MP Liz Lynne has warned residents thinking of buying a property in Spain to beware of it being bulldozed due to an unresolved conflict in Spanish law.

Liz and her Lib Dem colleagues in the European Parliament are demanding action from the Spanish Government to end the practice of 'land grabbing', where many foreign nationals in southern Spain have seen their homes seized and bulldozed - due to retrospective enforcement of the Spanish Coastal Law by regional government.

Liz Lynne spoke out after a meeting of the Petitions Committee in the European Parliament.

She said: "People are getting desperate. I have a number of constituents from my region in this situation but many Span-

iards have also seen houses and villas bought outright years ago with the full consent of the local council being demolished by regional government.

"Although the Coastal Law was passed in 1988 it is now being implemented retrospectively and quite arbitrarily. The law is being used to cover properties built in the 1960s alongside man-made sea water canals, which can be miles from the sea.

"We are campaigning to ensure the Spanish Government sorts out the mess with new legislation if necessary.

"The Spanish Minister was confronted by LibDem Euro MPs at the meeting demanding action.

"In the meantime though my advice to potential buyers of properties along the Costas is to take extra care."

EU Pet Passport scheme is extended

New EU rules will allow family pets to take continental holidays for years to come.

Agreement has been reached to extend the Pets' Passport' scheme for cats, dogs and ferrets that have been vaccinated against rabies.

British pets are likely to benefit the most. They make up 60% of all the animals in Europe taking advantage of the arrangements.

Local Liberal Democrat Euro MP Liz Lynne says the pet passport scheme is an idea that the UK gave to the rest of Europe.

Speaking at the Parliament in Strasbourg, Liz Lynne said: "The extension of Pets Passports is great news for pet owners. The UK's Pets' Travel scheme is 10 years old and ended the misery of quarantine arrangements for

thousands of pets and their owners.

"More than 600,000 animals have crossed our borders since then. These arrangements were copied and extended throughout the EU in 2005 and have proved a great success."

Rabies incidents across Europe have fallen from 2,679 cases in domestic animals in 1990 to just 251 in 2008, with none of the cases attributable to animals with 'passports.'

But some EU countries still maintain their restrictions. In Portugal, for example, ferrets are classified as 'vermin' and may be destroyed by the authorities.

Pets' 'passports' are usually embedded microchips that provide proof of rabies vaccination.



Cheque fraud pledge

Liz Lynne has welcomed a pledge from European Commissioner Michael Barnier that he will try to close a loophole in cheque-cashing policy that has led to Britons abroad being defrauded of millions of pounds.

In several EU countries it is still possible to cash a cheque into a personal account when it has been made out to a business. People can do this by simply signing the back of the cheque. This was banned in the UK in 2006, but there are no common European rules.

Liz Lynne MEP said: "Many British people working or on holiday have been the victim of fraudsters exploiting this loophole. The situation is unacceptable and it is high time to act."

"The UK has shown that this loophole can be closed without causing business any problems. The rest of the EU should now follow suit."

Pressure needed on Israel as peace talks resume at last

Liz Lynne and Euro MPs from all main parties voted overwhelmingly in July for Israel to lift the blockade on the Gaza strip after the Israeli commando attack on an aid convoy.

A compromise text backed by the European Parliament in Strasbourg also urged the EU High Representative Cathy Ashton and other world leaders to be much more pro-active in pushing Israel to restart a peace process with the Palestinians.

The resolution strongly condemned the raid, which killed nine Turkish aid workers on one ship, and called on Israel to lift the blockade which is causing mass unemployment and near starvation to the Gaza strip's 1.3 million civilian population.

Liz Lynne said: "It was good to see MEPs from many parties

united and calling for the blockade to be ended, while reasserting Israel's right to stop weapons and condemning rocket attacks on Israel.

"This motion was considerably more extensive than the one Parliament passed in March. It calls for the EU to adopt a much tougher role pressing for real progress in the Israeli / Palestinian conflict.

"The vote showed how short-sighted the hardline Israeli government has been. The suffering caused to innocent people in Gaza is so extreme that Israel is losing friends around the world. Turkey used to be one of Israel's strongest allies, but no longer.

"Israel has a right not to have rockets fired on it, but causing mass starvation in the name of security is totally disproportionate."

"International pressure can work. It is encouraging to hear now that peace talks have resumed, but it is vital that the EU and America keep up the pressure on both sides to agree."



PIC: The devastation in Gaza as recorded by Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine. Israel's ban on cement imports has prevented many repair works.

Shropshire aluminium rolling mill exports to the world



Liz Lynne MEP visited Bridgnorth Aluminium earlier this year, on the former Star Aluminium site. The company is exporting aluminium sheet and strip products around the world, especially to the lithographic printing industry, using some of the most modern rolling mill technology.

Liz Lynne, who watched a health and safety rescue simulation with managers, said she was impressed by the company's recent modernisation. She pledged to continue her efforts to ensure EU regulations were kept simple and reflected the concerns and needs of manufacturing industry.

New Local Enterprise Partnerships must 'hit the ground running' says Liz

The region's new Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) need to hit the ground running to fight for a share of business and regeneration funding, says local LibDem MEP Liz Lynne.

Liz, who is Co Chair of the European Manufacturing Forum, welcomed the formation of LEPs in Birmingham, the Marches, Staffordshire and Coventry and Warwickshire by councils and business groups. She pledged to do what she can to help them co-ordinate bids for European and other funding.

Liz said: "The Regional Development Agencies did do

some things well but were inevitably centralised and bureaucratic. The new LEPs are leaner and more local and this is welcome for Shropshire, Herefordshire and Warwickshire in particular.

"There are EU funds available to help regeneration and other projects to boost business and manufacturing.

"I warmly welcome the £1 billion regional growth fund set up by Vince Cable in government. There is a need for more proactive local policies to help growth and jobs, while cutting costs and the sea of red tape left behind by the last government.

"In Brussels, I am keeping up the pressure on the Commission to deliver their promised cut of 25% on the burden of regulations for business and I will continue to work with the FSB to promote efficiency.

"300,000 people work in manufacturing in the region, but Labour did little to stop this declining and even helped the sale of Cadburys by allowing Kraft to borrow from a nationalised bank."

"I am hopeful that the coalition will be more effective. I hope they do make use of budgets like the EU's globalisation adjustment fund."

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