



Allister puts spotlight on McGuinness

In a debate in the European Parliament in Strasbourg on terrorism, Jim Allister MEP rounded on Sinn Fein's opposition to extradition of a republican, McAliskey, to face terrorist charges in Germany as exemplifying non-commitment to the EU-wide battle against terrorism. Referring to arrests at Frankfurt, he said Europe would be outraged if any government minister opposed the extradition of someone wanted in that regard, yet this was precisely what McGuinness was doing in respect of republican terrorism. Referring to ETA's return to terrorism, he cautioned that often terrorist's supposed espousal of democracy was tactical and self-serving.

In the course of his remarks Jim Allister said:-
"There are two essential points which I want to make in this important debate.

First, all, or most, can come to this House and deplore and denounce terrorism, as well we might, because it is vile and indefensible in all its forms, but, within the EU, do we consistently practice what we preach?



This morning at Frankfurt we had a reminder of the ever present threat of terrorism. If any government minister anywhere in the EU were to condemn those arrests, or resist later connected

extraditions, we'd be outraged, because terrorism is terrorism and is not sanitised by the passage of time.

Yet, in my small country, just weeks ago, we had the Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness, who knows more than most about the hideous practice of terrorism, reverting to form and vehemently attacking the German Government's current application, under a European Arrest Warrant, for the extradition of an Irish republican terrorist suspect, McAliskey, for a bombing some years ago in Germany. Such is intolerable - just as was the harbouring by Ireland of 3 IRA terrorists convicted in Columbia.

So, it behoves us all in Europe, does it not, to lead by example. We cannot pick and choose in attacking and resisting terrorism. If we are against it, we must be against it all and act accordingly. If you genuinely support the rule of law then you do not attack and protest against the means of securing international justice.

My second point is that the recourse of ETA to active terrorism is a timely reminder that seldom does the terrorist leopard change its spots. Those who stoop to terrorism have the amoral mindset capable of switching, for tactical reasons, to supposed commitment to political means, if for the time being it better serves their purposes. We should be ever wary of such and never make the mistake of judging terrorists by our own standards."

Who said it?

"Unionists shouldn't be frogmarched into the morally unacceptable because of the fear of some mythical Plan B."

*Ian Paisley Junior
December 1999*

Fishing Policy 'hopeless failure' - Allister

In a debate in Strasbourg on the state of the fishing industry, Jim Allister MEP described EU policy to date as a "hopeless failure". Attacking Brussels for clinging to a TACs and quota system which it knew was failing, he highlighted the huge decrease in the number of fishermen and their income. Welcoming some indications that, at last, the Commission might look towards change, he insisted that reliance on "effort management" would not work if it is overlapped with the quota system.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-
"We've had years of talk about sustainable fisheries and as many years of bureaucratic controls, yet stocks, in the main, are no better, but fishermen are a lot fewer and a lot poorer. It's hard to escape the conclusion that fisheries policy to date has been a hopeless failure - fishermen have been saying this for years, but till now the Commission has not been listening. TACs and quotas, as the key instrument of control, have been a disaster, generating the scandal of discards and poverty for many.

Yet, within the now proffered Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) model, we still have this flawed overlapping of the TAC/quota system with the fishing effort system. They must be disentangled. We can't have both.

Yes, we all want sustainable fisheries, but that means sustainability for fishermen too. It means discouraging discards, simplifying the technical measures and embracing flexibility. Let's go there as quickly as possible."



Allister points a way ahead for PPS14 debacle

Jim Allister who, as a lawyer, had years of experience in planning law has entered the PPS 14 debate and suggested the way ahead is to have necessary restrictions across the Province but, critically, with special provision for the children of established rural dwellers.

Statement by Jim Allister MEP:-

"With the judicial declaration that PPS 14 is unlawful, it is obvious that it cannot and should not be taken into account in evaluating planning applications. Likewise, a mechanism must be swiftly put in place to review rejection decisions based upon the now defunct PPS 14. This should be a priority for DOE.

In terms of the future, we certainly can't afford a free-for-all in the countryside, which would be a danger outside policy areas, or green belts, which are mostly in the east of the Province. There must be geographical equality in any new policy, with concessions equally applicable to those living within policy areas.

I believe the way ahead is to major on the introduction of a "kinship" exception, so that

the families of established rural dwellers, where they have enough land to provide a site, can build, but with an enforceable penalty clause to prevent profit-making through early sale. This would be in addition to the existing exceptions pertaining to necessary farm dwellings.

The people who have really hurt, under the restraint of policy areas and who were feeling the pinch under PPS14, are the sons and daughters of farmers and genuine rural dwellers. It is these people, not the profiteers, who deserve consideration. Hence, the merit in developing a "kinship" exception in any even-handed restriction on building in the countryside."



Meeting with EU task force Co-ordinator

Jim Allister has met the co-ordinator of the EU Task Force on Northern Ireland, senior Commission official, Ronald Hall, Director of Regio B (Development of Cohesion Policy).

Mr Allister stressed the necessity of keeping the Task Force focused on core economic issues and the avoidance of being sidetracked onto mere soft social issues, such as largely happened with PEACE funding. To this end Mr Allister submitted a paper analysing the weaknesses of the Northern Ireland economy showing the severe deficit in R & D expenditure and over-reliance on the public sector, as well as the scale of economic inactivity, all of which are contributing to a sluggish and imbalanced economy.

Commenting Mr Allister said, "This was a useful meeting at which I was able to press the case for maximising the focus on economic advancement. I see particular scope in better

access to R & D funding through the 7th Framework Directive, more deployment of EIB funds and developments such as promoting aquaculture under the European Fisheries Fund.

I also stressed that the Task Force should resist contentions that our economic future lies in an all-island approach. Economic co-operation with the Republic has its place, but ours is a British economy, with our future and prospects tied by trade, affinity, economic policy and opportunity to the much larger and more stable UK.

Commissioner Hubner, who chairs the Task Force, will return to Northern Ireland in the coming weeks and when she does, it is important that she has an in depth engagement with the business sector, because it is through growing the private sector that we will grow our economy."

Allister attacks EU plan for Brussels prosecutor

MEP Jim Allister QC has warned that EU Justice Commissioner Franco Frattini is set to pave the way to a single European prosecutor who would have powers to initiate and proceed with the investigation of serious cross-border crimes.

Statement by Jim Allister MEP:

Commissioner Frattini said recently, "*I am convinced that Europe will have its general prosecutor in the future*". His words come just two months prior to his plan to table a two-step strategy aimed at strengthening Eurojust, the EU's judicial body and seen as the key-stone for a single European prosecution office.

"Once the reform treaty (new constitution) is adopted and enters into force, we will start talking about Eurojust having the power and the responsibility of initiating an investigation, not only of coordinating [it]", Frattini added.

Initially, he envisages an EU prosecutor in areas "where important European interests are at stake", namely in dealing with financial crime, fraud and counterfeiting at European level. Any such move, of course, would also require harmonizing definitions of crimes or introducing a European criminal code, along with surrender of control from member states.

Mr Frattini has set his hopes on the new EU treaty, which - if finalised and rubberstamped by the entire 27-nation bloc - will scrap national governments' exclusive control over sensitive matters of justice and home affairs in favour of the so-called qualified majority voting system. "*I hope the UK will de facto opt-in in many if not all areas covered under the regime*", Mr Frattini said. I hope we will not, because to do so would be to surrender a pivotal facet of our criminal justice system to Brussels.

The very idea of a European prosecutor would be a fundamental assault on our distinct British justice system and processes, and on our national sovereignty. It is for the British Parliament and, where relevant, devolved institutions, to shape and determine our criminal law and for British prosecuting authorities, not inter-meddlers from Brussels, to enforce it.

This, of course, is but one of the manifestations of the recast Constitution which undermines our national control and autonomy, which makes the necessity for a referendum so imperative. In this regard I greatly welcome the groundswell of support among even Labour MPs for a referendum, as reflected in reports of as many as 120 backing the call."

Allister answers Robinson

“I note Peter Robinson has dusted down another David Trimble speech to proclaim how strong the Belfast Agreement has made the Union etc and that all, who refuse to see it - like himself until his St Andrews road conversion - are “flat-earthers”! There is nothing “flat-earth” in holding to democratic standards which identify Sinn Fein as unfit for government, mandatory coalition as an absurdity and cherry-picking on the rule of law as unacceptable.

As for Peter Robinson’s call for me to resign from Europe, I am happy to judge it by the standard of

his own past words. When I resigned from the DUP, it was Peter Robinson who said it would be hypocritical for them to expect me to fight a by-election since the DUP had taken in Jeffrey Donaldson, Peter Weir and Arlene Foster on the basis that their resignations from the UUP did not require by-elections.

Moreover, it is not me who has abandoned my mandate to embrace what was supposedly “*out of the question*”, namely IRA/Sinn Fein in government. It is not Jim Allister who has somersaulted.”

MEP resorts to Ombudsman

Jim Allister MEP has confirmed that he is referring excessive delays in responding to his correspondence, by the First Minister and the Head of the Civil Service, to the Ombudsman, believing that such constitutes maladministration.

In a statement Jim Allister said:-

“As long ago as 1 May 2007 I wrote with pertinent enquiries as to the appointment of special advisers by the incoming Ministers. Despite reminders, I have still not had a reply. Since we are now in the 5th month since I wrote, I am not prepared to tolerate the delays any further. Thus I am referring the matter to the Ombudsman. It seems to me a clear case of maladministration. I am also referring delays of over 3 months by the First Minister in replying to correspondence.

Devolution is supposed to bring greater accountability and transparency to government. Yet, I have to say, I never had to wait this long under Direct Rule for ministerial replies. Just what has the Executive to hide?

On the 18 special advisers, being paid for by the taxpayer, I have enquired as to how many have criminal convictions, whether they are security vetted, what restrictions exist on their access to documents, by what process were they appointed and how much public money is being paid to them. Surely, the public are entitled to know the answers to these basic questions. If this had been happening under Direct Rule, there would have been uproar from the local parties.”

IMC report turns blind eye

Statement by Jim Allister MEP:

“The latest IMC Report yet again displays a willingness to overlook matters which are inconvenient for the political process.

1. The continued existence of the IRA Army Council is ignored. As I pointed out in April following the publication of the last IMC report, this blind eye approach does not do anything for the credibility of the Commission.

2. The last IMC report did at least mention the IRA’s much talked about but soon forgotten “ill-gotten gains” (“*we remain unable to determine how the organisation is dealing with the question of previously illegally gained funds*”) but they, like Dr Paisley, seem now to have forgotten about them.

3. In July I wrote to Lord Alderdice providing him with correspondence I received from the PSNI confirming that the life of Larry Zaitschek’s wife was still under IRA threat. Despite an assurance that this matter would be discussed by the Commissioners there is no mention of it in the latest report. Why?

4. The report amounts, also, to a whitewash on the threat posed by “loyalist” paramilitaries, considering that in July a policeman was shot by such.

This report does little to dispel my view that that the IMC is little more than a sock puppet of government.”

Allister meets EU Ambassador to Vatican

Jim Allister MEP has held a meeting in Brussels with the EU's Ambassador to the Vatican, Dr Luis Ritto. The meeting was held at the Ambassador's request and follows a long-running campaign, through parliamentary questions, by the Ulster Euro MP to have the Commission formally protest to the Vatican over its handling of clerical child abuse cases.

For 2 years Mr Allister has been pressing the EU to challenge the Vatican on the incompatibility of its infamous document, 'Crimen Sollicitationis' with its obligations as a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

'Crimen Sollicitationis', as exposed in a BBC Panorama programme, encourages child abuse allegations against priests to be handled internally within the Roman Catholic Church, rather than through reporting to the police and lawful civic authority. UNCRC, on the other hand, requires signatories to ensure that children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled in each jurisdiction. Clearly, advocating secretive internal Church disposal of complaints abrogates these affirmations and rights.

Jim Allister has been pressing the Commission as to why it has not made strenuous representations to the Vatican, as it would with other countries if they were found in a similar position.

In a statement Jim Allister said:-

"In response to my persistent probing of this issue, Dr Ritto invited me to meet him. Naturally, at the meeting, I pressed the Ambassador strongly on the issues raised in my questions and expressed the view that for no other reason than it was the Vatican, the EU had been soft-peddling with the "Holy See". The Ambassador confirmed to me that he had encouraged the Council of Ministers to pursue the issues, but they, including the UK Minister, did not want to get involved. However, I was encouraged to discover that nonetheless he, on behalf of the Commission, was going to pursue the issue and was planning to meet the Deputy Secretary of State of the Vatican to raise these very issues. Dr Ritto will report back to me thereafter. He professed considerable concern about the impact of 'Crimen Sollicitationis'

The import of 'Crimen Sollicitationis', which is still in place, is quite shocking. It was issued to Bishops in 1962 by "the Supreme and Holy Congregation of the Holy Office". It states it is to be stored in the "secret archives" and is to be treated as "strictly confidential". It specifically tells bishops how to handle allegations that a priest made sexual advances towards a parishioner, particularly in the confessional. It speaks of transferring such priests - something which was frequently done in the Republic of Ireland and elsewhere. However, the document goes on to declare that these matters are to be pursued "in a most secretive way" and investigators "are to be restrained by a perpetual silence" and are required "to observe the strictest secret, which is commonly regarded as a secret of the Holy Office in all matters and with all persons, under the penalty of excommunication..."(para 11). Moreover, an oath of secrecy also is required of those accusing the priest and any witnesses.

It seems to me that this document provides the link in the thinking of all those who hid the truth for so many years. Admonitions that information regarding accusations against priests are to be deemed "a secret of the Holy Office" explains much of the success in burying allegations for decades.

Since this directive is still operative and is wholly incompatible with the duties under UNCRC, and prejudicial to the rights of victims, it is right and imperative that the Vatican should be pursued vigorously on its utter unacceptability. I look forward to Dr Ritto reporting back to me in a few weeks."

The relevant series of questions and answers can be viewed at:

<http://www.jimallister.org/default.asp?blogID=737>



Farming News

Meeting with COPA-COGECA on Future of CAP

Jim Allister MEP has met with COPA-COGECA, the umbrella organisation of Farming Unions and Agricultural Co-operatives in Europe, to discuss the future of the Common Agricultural Policy. The meeting took place in Brussels with Secretary General of COPA-COGECA, Mr Pekka Pesonen.

Mr Allister commented,

‘The Commission is intending to publish its proposals on the CAP ‘Health Check’ in November. I welcome the opportunity to hear the farming lobby’s views on what the Health Check should achieve, and what dangers are to be avoided in these negotiations.’

‘In relation to the CAP and the dairy sector, COPA-COGECA welcomes the recent uplift in prices across EU Member States. However, they do share my concerns about the effects on milk production in some parts of Europe, should quotas be abolished as the Commission is suggesting. The likely impact on the Northern Ireland dairy industry, should quotas be phased out is something which must be urgently

assessed. This is particularly the case with the significant investments local farmers have made in purchasing quota over the years.’



‘The Review of the LFA scheme was also discussed, as was the current difficulties facing the beef and intensive sectors Europe-wide. The provision of appropriate safety nets for these and other sectors was discussed.’

‘The Health Check must be about refining the system which is in place to work better for farmers. For example, under current Single Farm Payment rules, cases of duplicate claims have been met with a presumption of fraud, resulting in disproportionate penalties being applied to landowners and farmers. It is simply not enough to tackle red tape, but also the mindset which lends itself to such a draconian bureaucratic approach in the first place. The last couple of years have reinforced the importance of farmers as providing not only Europe’s food requirements, but also increasingly energy.’

Growing demand for food from emerging economies, most notably China, in combination with climatic factors and competing demand for limited land reserves is resulting in much reduced feed stocks. Therefore, the importance of safeguarding a viable, sustainable agricultural industry has never been greater.’

Mr Allister subsequently made a detailed submission to the Agriculture Commissioner on the Health Check, which can be viewed at:

<http://www.jimallister.org/default.asp?blogID=733>

‘Brand Island’ approach “Absurd”

Jim Allister MEP has condemned a recent statement by Bairbre de Brun where she has called on the Commission to formalise a ‘Brand Ireland’ approach to agriculture.

Mr Allister said,

‘This is yet another example of Sinn Fein attempting to manipulate the agriculture portfolio, to fit within the Party’s warped Political aspirations. He added, ‘In the latest incidence of Foot and Mouth in Surrey, the mechanism already existed whereby Northern Ireland livestock and meat produce could be excluded from a GB ban on exports. De Brun’s assertion that, ‘The EU decided wisely to treat the North as being unlinked to the British food industry’, and that this approach should be, ‘formalised’ has wider connotations.’

‘This latest attempt to align the Northern Ireland agricultural industry with the Republic of Ireland is an absolute non-starter. What de Brun is proposing would jeopardise trade from Northern Ireland if foot and mouth were to be discovered in the Republic of Ireland. Moreover, to state that Northern Ireland is, ‘unlinked to the British food industry’ is a ridiculous statement. GB is the largest market for Northern Ireland food and drink sales, accounting for 39% of total sales. Clearly, de Brun’s stance is motivated primarily by political aspirations.’

‘De Brun’s Party colleague, Michelle Gildernew’s initial attempt as Minister to force an All-Island approach to the marketing of Northern Ireland food was immediately discounted by the local agri-food industry, as being misguided and potentially detrimental to the industry. De Brun obviously needs to learn the same lesson.’

Allister re-iterates call for ban on Brazilian beef

In the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Jim Allister MEP was among the panel of MEPs who spoke out at a press conference calling for a ban on Brazilian beef imports into the European Union. Brazilian beef imports are currently prohibited from crossing the borders of various countries, including Japan, New Zealand, Australia and South Korea, yet are still considered by the European Commission to be safe enough for European citizens.

Speaking at the conference, Jim Allister remarked:-

"I find it inexplicable that beef coming from Brazil, which is banned from being imported to various markets across the globe, should be allowed to enter our domestic market with impunity. The health and safety standards which we apply to our own farmers, should equally be required of those from whom we import, otherwise the threat to food security is obvious. The health of the European consumer is no less important than that of the American citizen, so why should we allow Europeans to eat what Americans reject?

An outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Europe from imported South American beef would be catastrophic, both in terms of our food industry and the cost to the European taxpayer of dealing with the aftermath. We can't afford to take the risks presently posed by the Commission's complacent approach.

I look forward to this initiative in the European

Parliament maximising the pressure on Commissioner Kyprianou to act."

Jim Allister followed up the initiative in Strasbourg, by raising the issue with the Council of Ministers during parliamentary question time. Sadly, it is clear that the EU, which held a summit with Brazil in July, is sitting on its hands on this issue. Mairead McGuinness MEP had asked the Portuguese President of the Council whether at the EU-Brazil Summit on 4 July he had raised concerns about imports of Brazilian beef.

From his evasive answer it was clear he had not, causing Jim Allister to intervene with this sharp riposte:-

Jim Allister (NI) - "I take that answer as a 'no' to Mrs McGuinness' question; that you did not trouble to press the Brazilian authorities about the lamentable health standards pertaining to their beef exports and the total lack of traceability in respect of their livestock herds.

It will come as a grave disappointment to farming and consumer interests across Europe that, when you had the opportunity, you failed to press this all-important issue.

When is the Council going to wake up to the health implications for the citizens of Europe and press Brazil for realistic traceability in respect of their livestock?"

MEP says anti-GM dogma driving up feed prices

With hikes every week in livestock feed prices, Jim Allister MEP raised, with the EU Commission, during Question Time in Parliament, the contribution being made by its delay in approving the use of cheaper GM-linked compounds.

Jim Allister (NI). - *"Is it not the case that the Commission's dilatory approach to approving GM derivatives is helping to inflate EU livestock feed prices? For example, the excessive delay in approving use of the corn by-product Hercules is severely damaging the competitiveness of our grain trade sector, yet GA 21, a GM product from Argentina, is approved in the EU for human consumption, but not for animal feed. Is it not time to rationalise and bring some sense to this situation and cut adrift some of the contrived political correctness that is driving it?"*

Mr Allister will be pursuing this issue further through tabled questions on why it takes twice as long to approve GM variants in the EU, compared with the USA, and seeking expedition on these matters.

Commenting Mr Allister said, "Our intensive sector, in particular, can't bear these repeated increases. The purist attitude in Europe to GM is a contributory factor, making our grain trade sector non-competitive. So called GM-free status is an unworkable nonsense, embraced by our current Minister's party, Sinn Fein and others out of touch with the realities of the market place. Our intensive sector needs real help, not foolish, unscientific dogma. I trust the Minister cut the ties that bind her to chasing the moonbeam of unattainable "GM-free status".

Allister joins Causeway controversy

“On the 100th day of devolution I warned that an all-inclusive Executive and the resulting absence of an Opposition, would lead to arrogance, bad decisions and poor government.

The Giant’s Causeway is an unparalleled national treasure and asset for Northern Ireland. It is imperative that it is developed, in all its facets and opportunities, exclusively in the public interest. Public benefit, not private gain, should be the priority.

Thus, I am dismayed by recent events. It is wholly inappropriate that a key development at the Causeway should be handed over to private control and profit. Even in a joint public/private venture there could be public control over management and prices, but handing untrammelled control to a private developer, where maximum profit will be the overriding

concern, is not just wrong, but utter folly.

Not least because the beneficiary of the Environment Minister’s intended course is also a member of the DUP, it is essential that public unease is adequately addressed by full disclosure of all the facts, including details of all representations made in his support.

Since I am also concerned by the public money lost in DETI’s seemingly synchronised abandonment of public development of the site, I have also written to the Minister, Mr Dodds, enquiring as to whether any EU funds were spent on what he has now abandoned, if so, how he intends to reconcile same with Brussels’ auditing requirements, and whether EU funds might have been available for a public project, but not a private venture.”



Jim Allister meeting with Markethill Dairy Group on the occasion of their fact-finding trip to Brussels.

Allister to raise dog fighting in Europe

Following the disturbing expose of dog-fighting on the BBC and in view of the pan-European dimension and the misdescriptions in EU dog passports, Mr Allister has raised this issue through parliamentary questions in the European Parliament.

“This barbaric practice must be stopped and European co-operation has a role to play in this regard. Thus, I will be pressing the EU Commission as to its attitude and proposals. The Commission has often come up with proposals on lesser issues, so, I will want to know what it proposes to clamp down on this barbarity across Europe.”

For an excellent article, arguing the case for a referendum on the new Reform Treaty (Constitution), by Bill Cash MP see http://www.europeanfoundation.org/docs/Jy_p0508.pdf