

## Environment, Public Health and Food Safety



**Martin Callanan MEP**  
Environment Spokesman

### Conservatives in Europe: Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Over the past year, in addition to leading the European Conservatives and Reformists Group in Brussels and Strasbourg, Martin Callanan MEP has continued his role as Conservative Spokesman on the Environment. He is joined on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee by Marina Yannakoudakis MEP as a full member, and Julie Girling MEP, Struan Stevenson MEP, Vicky Ford MEP, Jim Nicholson MEP and Jacqueline Foster MEP as substitute members.

Together, the Conservative Environment team have continued to pursue their manifesto commitments to:

- Ensure that tackling climate change and moving to a low carbon economy are central EU priorities.
- Strive for a comprehensive global deal on cutting carbon emissions and support EU action to promote greener forms of energy.
- Ensure legislation to control the pollution of air, soil and water and the management of waste is drawn up in a balanced way and implemented evenly across the EU.

### Reducing sulphur emissions in marine fuels

In the past year, Martin Callanan MEP has worked on legislation aimed at reducing the harmful emissions from ship engines. Exhaust fumes and gasses from ships are known to contribute to poor air quality throughout Europe, with knock-on effects on public health and the environment through acid rain.

Martin fought hard to ensure the European Parliament got the balance right between cleaning up shipping fuel and by doing so in an economical way which will not significantly raise operating costs for ship owners. If the cost of transporting merchandise and cargo by ship becomes too expensive, it could lead to a shift from shipping to land transport – which would clearly not be in the environment's interest.

### Pharmacovigilance

Responding to the recent medical scandal over diabetic weight-loss drug Mediator, which has been linked to the deaths of approximately 1,300 people, Marina Yannakoudakis MEP has been working with other political groups in the European Parliament to

strengthen rules on pharmacovigilance. Marina played an important role in negotiations with the Council. She helped to secure a final agreement that will enhance patients' trust by monitoring and collecting robust data on adverse drug reactions. This will ensure that vulnerable consumers will be better informed on how to use medicines and will be able to report adverse effects directly to national authorities.



**Environment Committee members (l - r), Julie Girling MEP, Martin Callanan MEP (Environment Spokesman) and Marina Yannakoudakis MEP**

## Voluntary donation of tissues and cells

Proposals by Marina Yannakoudakis on tissue and cell donations, including bone marrow and umbilical cord blood, which would make it easier to find matches across Europe and help save lives, were overwhelmingly approved in June by the European Parliament's Environment Committee.

Marina's report stresses the need to ensure traceability and transparency in the various donation



Marina Yannakoudakis MEP

systems across the 27 EU Member States. It also calls for increased co-operation between donor systems to help better match tissues to recipients. Whilst maintaining that the human body should not be a source of financial gain and rejecting the practice of paying for tissues and cells, including sperm and eggs,

the report does include proposals for the fair and adequate compensation of donors. The report also calls for more information to potential donors, including better information of new and innovative methods of donation such as giving umbilical cord blood. Marina hopes that her report will increase the sharing of best practice in the European Union so that other Member States can build on the success of cord blood collection schemes in the United Kingdom run by NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) and the Anthony Nolan Trust.

## Shale gas

Martin Callanan is currently working on the controversial issue of extracting shale gas. The European Parliament is in the process of undertaking studies into whether the extraction of this alternative form of natural gas is safe, and whether it should be relied upon as a future energy source across the EU. Martin is taking a pragmatic approach – looking beyond the myths and propaganda and urging the Parliament to look at the scientific facts. Martin is calling for a strong regulatory framework for the exploration and extraction of shale gas, with clear rules for best practice, but is conscious that if shale gas extraction can be found to be a safe and secure

process, it has the potential to transform the European energy sector and to make the EU less reliant on foreign, unstable sources of energy.

## Oil and gas prospection

Conservatives are leading moves to resist any undermining of the UK's gold-standard offshore oil and gas safety rules. Scottish Conservative MEP Struan Stevenson is currently preparing to ensure that new EU proposals aimed at harmonising offshore oil and gas safety do not endanger both investor confidence in the North Sea and do not water down the highest standards of environmental protection. Whilst acknowledging that there are considerable disparities amongst Member States' laws and practices, and that there is a need across the EU to raise standards of control of major hazard risk to the UK's level, Struan is fighting against a one-size-fits-all approach which could weaken the UK's regime and undermine its ability to ensure the safe exploitation of the UK's own energy resources.

## Biocidal products

On behalf of the Conservatives, Julie Girling MEP helped avert plans to ban Britain's most commonly-used rat poison from general use. Earlier clauses in draft legislation on pest-control materials, known as biocides, could have banned farmers and other property-owners from using Difenacoum, widely-used to combat rat and mouse infestations.

The main objection raised in Parliament was that the substance could be harmful. Of course any poison is, by definition, harmful. What matters is how carefully it is used – but the Parliament's original proposal for an effective ban was excessive, damaging, and potentially another unwarranted piece of European interference. Although the regulatory



Julie Girling MEP

compromise on biocides is not perfect, it does address the pest control industry's concerns, effectively providing it with the flexibility it needs while ensuring that Difenacoum will remain available for use in Britain and across Europe. 🟢🟡