

Marina Yannakoudakis



Conservative MEP for London



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MARINA TALKS E-CIGS



■ Talking to Health Minister Jane Ellison MP about e-cigarettes

■ Marina met with Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health Jane Ellison MP to discuss the regulation of electronic cigarettes. Marina re-stated the European Parliament's position on electronic cigarettes, where an amendment tabled by Conservative MEPs not to regulate e-cigarettes as medical devices was passed by a majority of MEPs in October. The amendment imposes a mandatory inclusion of health warnings as well as advertising restrictions, while stopping short of regulating e-cigarettes as medicinal product, which would lead to a rigorous and costly authorisation procedure. Marina said: "We must

make every effort to help people stop smoking. If light touch regulation for e-cigs means that more people can be helped to stop smoking more harmful tobacco, then I believe that the member states should endorse the parliament's position." Jane Ellison MP said: "I am listening carefully to all the arguments. It was very helpful to hear from Marina about the European Parliament's point of view. We are also considering carefully the positions of the other member states on the appropriate regulation of these products."

TORY MEPS DELIVER

This month Conservative MEPs have:

- Paid tribute to Nelson Mandela. See Syed and Marina's comments here: <http://ow.ly/rzM5B>
- Voted down an amendment to proposed legislation, which would have shut down Britain's deep sea fishing industry overnight.
- Opposed sending an official European Parliament delegation to the repressive regime in Iran.
- Voted against plans for the EU to raise its own taxes and to borrow money.
- Backed legislation to bolster the safety and stability of the whole financial system, not just banks.

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EU SEX ED THWARTED



■ Conservative MEPs helped to defeat an extreme proposal to make sex education compulsory for infants as young as four and to allow Brussels to dictate abortion law to all EU countries including Britain. The report by Portuguese Socialist Edite Estrela sought to create a set of rules across the whole European Union relating to controversial issues such as abortion and contraception. An alternative motion sponsored by Marina as Conservative Women's Rights spokesman was adopted instead. The new resolution noted that matters like these are for member states to decide and not the EU. Marina said; "I firmly believe that it is not the role of the EU to dictate to member states, to women and to parents in these specific and highly controversial issues."



KOSHER MEAT SAVED



■ At Jewish New Year celebrations in Brussels

■ Marina welcomed the failure of an EU resolution calling for the labelling of meat from so-called “ritually-slaughtered” animals. Marina had opposed the resolution, which was tabled by a group of mainly Eastern European MEPs under the “written declaration” procedure. It attracted signatures from only 46 MEPs, while requiring 384 signatures to pass. Marina said: “I’m delighted that there was so little support for this resolution which was clearly discriminatory. It would have been a direct threat to shechita and dhabihah slaughter. I shall continue to fight to ensure that my London constituents have access to affordable kosher and halal meat.” In 2011, Marina led the fight in the European Parliament’s environment committee to protect religious slaughter from discrimination.

THALIDOMIDE



■ Marina met with campaigner Mikey Argy from the ‘Show your Hand’ Thalidomide survivors’ group. Marina supports financial compensation for the 467 British survivors from the German pharmaceutical group Grünenthal. This would help ensure that Thalidomide survivors can meet the cost of ongoing care, particularly given the debilitating conditions caused by the drug in old age.

CAMP ASHRAF



■ Your London MEP attended a conference in the European Parliament in support of the Iranian dissident hunger strikers protesting at the massacre in Iraq and demanding the release of the six women and one man taken captive during the killing. The Iraqi Government continues to hold seven members of the Iranian opposition as hostages. Marina has called on the Iraqi Government to release the hostages immediately and for the EU and UN to keep their pledge to protect the Iranian dissidents in Camps Ashraf and Liberty.

AROUND LONDON



Marina has been getting in the holiday spirit by delivering winter cheer to her constituents. On 1 December she took part in a Hanukkah lamp-lighting at the 30-foot menorah in Golders Green. Also in attendance were local MP Mike Freer and Mayor of Barnet Melvin Cohen. Marina also dropped by Hornchurch and Upminster Conservatives’ Christmas cocktails and gave a short speech about her work in the European Parliament to the Kew Conservatives’ Christmas Party. She had her first Christmas lunch of the season with London Deputy Mayor Victoria Borwick and London CWO. Newly re-elected London regional chairman Graham Postles also attended.

PALESTINE EVENT



■ Marina organised a conference in Brussels entitled “Christian Women in Palestine: Religious Freedom and Women’s Rights”. The event raised awareness of the plight of Christian women living under the Palestinian Authority who are subjected to daily harassment, intimidation and physical and sexual abuse. Marina invited speakers Howard Stern, an accredited mediator who specialises in conflict resolution and ‘Christy’, a Palestinian Christian woman who was forced to flee her home after her family were subjected to sustained discrimination and oppression. Hackney councillor Linda Kelly also attended the conference.



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM MARINA