

# David Martin & Catherine Stihler

Labour Members of the European Parliament for Scotland

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

**Welcome to our 2009 Annual Report and another year of dramatic and important developments in the European Union.**

**With 375 million citizens eligible to vote, the 2009 European Parliament Election was the second largest democratic exercise in history - second only to the Indian general election also held (in five phases) this year.**

It is an honour and a privilege for us to have been re-elected to represent Scotland in Europe. The decisions that we make in Brussels will be driven by our determination to bring home the very best deal for the people of Scotland. The legislation on which MEPs vote impacts on a many number of bread-and-butter issues that are of concern at a local level in Scotland - better jobs, more security, and a cleaner environment.

Globalisation, the technological revolution and the global recession have placed enormous pressures on whole communities. We support a strong economic recovery plan for Europe that focuses on tightening the control of financial markets, promoting economic growth, and investing in research and innovation. We will work hard for Scotland to fight for a proper balance between Europe's social and economic goals, further extension of protection against discrimination in the workplace, and more protection against new health and safety risks in the workplace.

The major challenges facing Scotland and the rest of the world are best dealt with by joint European action. We live in a globalised world, where threats do not stop at our borders or elsewhere. Financial crises, flu pandemics and global warming know no boundaries. This past year has seen Europe implement an ambitious and far-reaching climate change package including legally binding targets which will cut greenhouse gases by up to 20% based on 1990 levels. All member states are on the road to a 20% increase in their share use of renewable energy by 2020. By engaging strongly with the global powers and polluters - namely USA, China and India - the EU will take



**Following their successful re-election on Thursday June 4th, David and Catherine attend the European Parliament Election Declaration in the High Street, Edinburgh.**

centre stage to promote the need for urgent action to be taken to save the planet.

Over the past fifty years, we have been forming a closer union with our European partners and the EU stands on the brink of important new developments. The recent 'yes' vote in Ireland was the second to last step in ratifying the Lisbon Treaty - our best shot at reform for a generation. Under Lisbon, member state parliaments will, for the first time, have a say in drafting and rejecting legislation. The Lisbon Treaty is a crucial step towards making Europe the world's most competitive, effective and dynamic knowledge-based economy and will strengthen the relationship between the European and Member State parliaments. *[As a Member of the Constitutional Affairs Committee David Martin will be re-writing the Parliament's rules to enable full implementation of the Treaty's increase in democracy.]*

The United Kingdom has benefited greatly from being a member of the EU. The EU is the world's largest single market, and every day Scottish-based companies take full advantage of the benefits of EU membership on offer. Although the EU is one of the richest parts of the world, there remain

disparities between the income and opportunities for European citizens. For over twenty years, the regeneration of Glasgow has been made possible partly due to financing from the EU. Scotland has been receiving European funding for over two decades, and to date roughly two billion pounds has been spent on a number of projects. Thanks to EU 'flagship' funds, Scotland is now home to the world-class Glasgow Science Centre, a spectacular visitor's centre at Loch Lomond Shores and the world's only rotating boat lift - The Falkirk Wheel. With what Glasgow has to offer, no wonder it was picked as the host city for the 2014 Commonwealth Games. We will continue to fight hard for European funding for local projects throughout the whole of Scotland. No area should be allowed to sink into the poverty gap and be left behind.

It is clear that many challenges lie ahead, the road will be long and tough. With the financial crisis, energy security and climate change high up the political agenda, it is safe to say that the Parliament will be kept very busy in the months and years to come.



Group of the Progressive Alliance of  
**Socialists & Democrats**  
in the European Parliament



## New Vision for Financial Supervision

Since re-entering Parliament, I now actively serve on the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs - the only MEP representing Scotland on this committee. One of the biggest global challenges facing us is the proper supervision of financial services, and it is vital that we lead the way by deciding how best to regulate at EU level.

The proposals on the Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive (AIFMD) are being examined with a view to promoting greater transparency and tightening restrictions on hedge fund leverage, on private equity transactions and other mutual funds, which I strongly support. The impact of AIFMD could have a serious effect on the financial sector in Scotland with consequences for investment trusts, not to mention jobs directly reliant on Scottish financial services. Never forget that the biggest

recorded loss in history was by a Scottish company. Therefore, it is essential that we get it right, and Labour MEPs are at the forefront of these negotiations.

The purpose of this Directive is not protectionism, or just to stop a similar crisis from occurring again. It is to prevent any future crisis from occurring by removing unacceptable risks to our real economy. Avoidance of such risks is of utmost importance in order to ensure the economic security of European workers

and the stability of the British economy.

Presently I am the leading Socialist MEP working on establishing an early warning system to help combat VAT fraud. This information exchange system would be standardised and routinely updated across tax authorities in all 27 member states to help in the battle against tax evasion, and I look forward to the forthcoming debate on this and the other proposals in Committee.

## Putting People First

- In July I joined the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee as a full member. The Committee makes various decisions to ensure that Scots and Europeans alike receive fair treatment when making purchases and that competition is transparent, reducing prices for consumers. The Committee recently made decisions to ban the trade of seal products, strengthen regulation for the safety of toys and make roaming charges for mobile phones affordable.

- I have been selected to be the author of a report on the regulation of marketing of Construction Products. In the current economic climate our construction sector, which employs 8% of Britain's workforce, needs assistance to return construction to levels seen two years ago. By reducing the time it takes for producers to gain approval of new products we can reduce the burden and paperwork. I also hope to help SMEs and micro-organisations to get their products on the market with a streamlined service tailored to their needs as I recognise that they don't always have the resources available to dedicate to administration. This will result in maintaining the easily recognisable 'CE' marking so that builders and consumers know which products have been tested to strict EU standards. The quality of products on the market will not be compromised, but consumers will have a greater choice of products whilst the construction industry will receive a much needed boost.

- For older constituents with limited financial means, the high cost of insurance can be a barrier to



*Catherine was very happy to be asked to present workers from Dounreay with certificates following the completion of courses they undertook through their local trade union network.*

travel. Indeed, even if cost is not a consideration, older people may find that they are prevented from purchasing insurance from some companies on the grounds of their age, especially if the company imposes a maximum age limit. These factors can make it difficult for healthy, active older people to travel abroad whether to visit relatives or solely for pleasure. Draft legislation at the European level could put a stop to unfair age-based pricing in the insurance sector and this is something I am going to pursue over the course of the next term. I am going to push for insurance companies to base their quotes on actual risk, as opposed to assumed risk, which will result in a fairer deal for elderly people. Numerous constituents have contacted me with their concerns and asked me to act on their behalf. I will work hard to make sure no one is left behind because they have been discriminated against because of their age.



*Catherine with Rhoda Grant MSP, supporting the 'Black Pudding Campaign', designed to gain European Protected Status for Stornoway Black Pudding.*

## Human Rights Violations in Columbia

Since the beginning of this year, the European Commission - in its role as the EU's International Trade chief - has been negotiating a Free Trade Agreement with Colombia designed to facilitate and increase the volume of trade in goods, services, investment and intellectual property. In my opinion any trade agreement with Colombia at this time is inappropriate given its unenviable status as the world's most dangerous place for trade unionists (109 trade unionists have been killed since January 2007). In addition I believe that the EU's international credibility would be seriously damaged if it were to conclude this trade agreement given that Canada, Norway and the US have blocked similar trade agreements due to human rights concerns. As the International Trade spokesperson for the European Parliamentary Labour Party, I have been working closely with Justice for Colombia (a trade union coalition) and AB Colombia (an NGO coalition) in order to bring influence to bear on the European Commission to halt these negotiations. In

Strasbourg last month, I put the question to Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton how the European Commission could continue negotiating with Colombia in light of the wide scale documented human rights abuses in that country. As a Member of the International Trade Committee and the Human Rights Committee I plan to continue to push for greater rights for the Columbian people.



Meeting in Glasgow with Mönseñor Hector Fabio (right) director of Caritas Colombia to discuss tackling poverty and inequality in Columbia.



**"In my opinion any trade agreement with Colombia at this time is inappropriate given its unenviable status as the world's most dangerous place for trade unionists."**

## EU and Caribbean reach new bilateral trade agreement

In March this year my report analysing the new trade agreement between the EU and the Caribbean was debated and adopted by the Parliament in Strasbourg. This trade agreement, part of a series of similar agreements being negotiated with regions in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP), was designed to help the Caribbean countries diversify their exports and prioritise high-value, processed goods over low-value commodities. The European Commission and the then Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson were strongly criticised during the negotiations for demanding the Caribbean excessively open up its markets. As a Member of the ACP Parliamentary Delegation, I worked closely with organisations, such as Oxfam and the World Development Movement, who were very concerned that the European Commission was not focussing on the development objective of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and I incorporated into my report several recommendations to the Commission. In particular, that the impact of the EPA should be monitored by Caribbean and European politicians through a Joint Parliamentary Monitoring Committee which would publish a report every 5 years highlighting changes to be made to the EPA. I hope to be a member of the committee when it is established and to work with Caribbean colleagues in ensuring that the EPA helps Caribbean countries stimulate economic growth and improve the welfare of their citizens.

## Successful ban on trade in seal products

In May this year, almost two years after the original proposal from the European Commission, the European Parliament adopted its report on the EU ban on seal products. In last year's Annual Report I outlined the European Commission's proposal which, while hugely welcome, included several loopholes such as the exclusion of seals which had been killed in a 'humane way'. Unsurprisingly, animal welfare campaigners opposed in principle the fact that the seal hunt could ever be made humane. I was nominated by the Socialist Group to write a report for the Parliament's International Trade Committee on the proposed ban and I submitted several amendments suggested by colleagues

at Humane Society International and the International Fund for Animal Welfare to make the ban more robust and close potential loopholes. Although the Conservatives opposed all of these amendments at the vote in my Committee, the Socialist Group was able to build a majority alliance with other parties with the result that the amendments were adopted by Parliament in Strasbourg. It is thanks to the devotion, commitment and tireless energy of animal welfare organisations and their members who wrote to MEPs, that the Commission proposed this legislation which will end the cruel and bloody annual killing of thousands of baby seals.

## Taking the fight for Chambers jobs to Europe



Chambers is a viable Scottish based company, one of the few remaining Scottish publishers and part of the fabric of the history of Edinburgh – Chambers Street is named after one of its founders, William Chambers,

In the light of fears that the parent company Hachette may move operations to London and Paris, I recently met with Liam Rodger, National Union of Journalist (NUJ) representative at Chambers Harrap, and his colleague Mary O'Neill (pictured), to hear the case for keeping the publisher and its 27 employees in Edinburgh.

## New Group – New Logo New Determination to create a strong Socialist voice in Europe



Group of the Progressive Alliance of  
**Socialists & Democrats**  
in the European Parliament

Regular readers of the Annual Report might wonder 'Why the new logo?' Following the European Elections in June the European Socialists and the Italian Partito Democratico have united to form the second largest political group in the European Parliament – The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D).

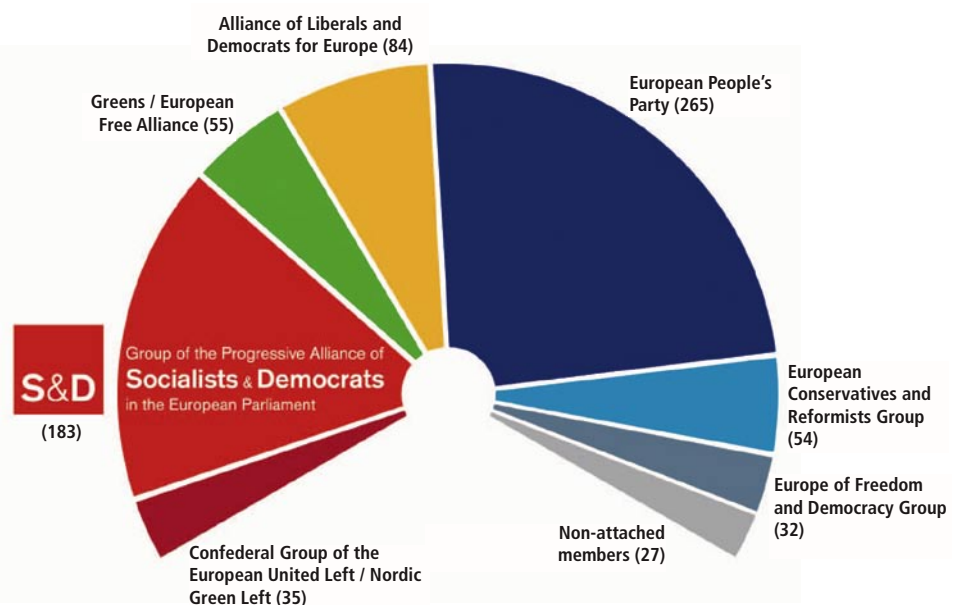
The 183-strong group elected German socialist Martin Schulz as its leader, and he set out three key challenges: to ensure greater social justice in Europe, to enhance democracy and to protect human dignity in the face of growing extremism across the continent. The new S&D Group– the only European Parliament Group to represent all 27 EU countries – has set out 11 key demands to set a new direction and impetus for the future:

1. A new Recovery Plan for Europe, based on improved coordination of European macroeconomic policies aimed at creating and safeguarding employment;
2. A European Employment Pact, to be based on common actions at European and national level, to safeguard employment, create new jobs, promote equal pay and improve workers' rights and working conditions; including the revision of the Posting of Workers Directive.
3. A new Charter of Women's Rights to promote gender equality and remove the barriers to a fuller participation of European women in all aspects of life;
4. A Social Progress Pact to make clear that neither economic freedoms, nor competition rules take priority over fundamental social rights, including and to tackle the full social consequences of the crisis, preventing a rise in poverty, inequality and exclusion.
5. Effective regulation and supervision of the financial markets, covering all financial actors and instruments;
6. Stronger and more effective European financial instruments, including a new initiative for Eurobonds.
7. New mutual solidarity across European Member States – a common European roadmap out of the crisis, which should safeguard sustainable social systems;
8. A more comprehensive and coordinated European external action toward our partners in the world to promote a European roadmap for a global new deal to aid developing countries;
9. A coherent European economic strategy for after 2010, which creates a more inclusive, eco-efficient knowledge based economy;
10. A new legal framework to safeguard and clarify the legal status of public services throughout Europe.
11. A European budget commensurate with the challenges to be faced, which reflects accurately the priorities of the Union and its citizens.

For more information go to: <http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu>

## Political make up of the 2009-2014 European Parliament

Labour MEPs including David Martin and Catherine Stihler are members of the new Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats in the European Parliament. The newly elected Leader, Mr. Schulz: said: 'It is up to us to ensure that Europe becomes fairer than it is now. We need to improve the performance and visibility of the new Parliament so that people know what we do'.



### David Martin MEP

Midlothian Innovation Centre  
Pentlandfield, Midlothian EH25 9RE

Tel: 0131 440 9040

Email: [david@martinmep.com](mailto:david@martinmep.com)

[www.martinmep.com](http://www.martinmep.com)

### Catherine Stihler MEP

Constituency Office, 25 Church Street  
Inverkeithing, FIFE KY11 1LG

Tel: 01383 417 799

Email: [cstihlermep@btconnect.com](mailto:cstihlermep@btconnect.com)

[www.cstihlermep.com](http://www.cstihlermep.com)