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e-fa News Round-Up December 2010

News bulletin from the European Free Alliance Group

The European Free Alliance (EFA) draws together political parties fighting for democracy and self-determination for the stateless nations and regions of Europe. European Free Alliance MEPs sit in a European parliamentary group with the Greens, making up the fourth largest group in the European parliament.

EFA MEPs are:

Jill Evans MEP - Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales (EFA Group President)
Ian Hudghton MEP - Scottish National Party (Vice-President)
Frieda Brepoels MEP - Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie (Vice-President)
François Alfonsi - U Partitu di a Nazione Corsa - Europe Ecologie
Oriol Junqueras MEP - Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya
Alyn Smith MEP - Scottish National Party
Tatjana Zdanoka MEP - For Human Rights in a United Latvia

EFA MEPs have been in Strasbourg and Brussels for committee meetings and plenary sessions of the European Parliament during December as well as in their constituencies.

Important issues for EFA MEPs this month have included:

- Reducing CO2 emissions
- Christmas Trees
- EU Russia Forum
- EU Cohesion Policy
- 'The Latvian Candidate'
- Reform of the milk market

Reducing CO2 emissions

In early December Plaid MEP Jill Evans hosted the Brussels launch of the Zero Carbon Britain Report, published by the Wales-based Centre for Alternative Technology. Jill is pictured with Gunnar Boye Olesen of INFORSE-Europe, Denmark (left) and Paul Allen, of the Centre for Alternative Technology.

Read the report and get more information at www.zerocarbonbritain.com **Vrolijk Kerstmis**

The European Parliament Christmas Tree provoked a certain amount of controversy this year when the Dutch language version of the Christmas greeting was omitted.

Flemish MEP Frieda Brepoels saw to it that this was swiftly corrected, thereby emphasising the officially bilingual status of the city of Brussels (Dutch & French).

Frieda is pictured alongside Green MEP Bart Staes adding the Dutch language greeting *'Vrolijk Kerstmis'* to the tree.

EU Russia Forum

Russian speaking MEP Tatjana Zdanoka hosted the fourth EU - Russia forum in Brussels at the end of November. The event brought together experts and researchers, politicians, representatives of civic and religious organisations, journalists, and leaders of cultural and educational projects from Russia and the EU.

The Forum was initiated by the European Russian-speakers Alliance as a venue for non-governmental dialogue between Russia and the European Union. The event was organised in partnership with the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament and the "Russkiy Mir" Foundation.

Amongst other things, the forum called for progress in establishing a visa free travel regime between Russia and the EU, and called for greater co-operation between the two in the field of energy.

EU Cohesion Policy

Corsican MEP François Alfonsi and SNP MEP Ian Hudghton co-hosted a seminar with Green colleagues to discuss the future of EU Cohesion Policy, in early December. The Greens/EFA Group has produced a discussion paper on the future policy.
The paper rejects any attempt to re-nationalise Cohesion Policy. It goes on to emphasise the added-value of a cross-sectoral approach whilst rejecting the creation of new sectoral funds and urging increasing synergies between funds.
Reply to this email to request a copy of the discussion paper.
'The Latvian Candidate'

Tatjana Zdanoka hosted the launch of a book entitled *'The Latvian Candidate: Strange Adventures of an alien in Europe'* at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The book tells the story of Giulietto Chiesa, a Russian speaking former Italian left-wing MEP and one-time Moscow correspondent of *La Stampa* who stood as a candidate for the 2009 European Parliament elections in Latvia.
More information at www.ilcaduceo.it/chiesa.asp

Reform of the milk market

SNP MEP and Agriculture Committee Member Alyn Smith welcomed new European Commission proposals on regulation of the milk market, as an important first step towards re-balancing bargaining power in the supply chain, and for securing milk farmers a fair share of margins generated in the chain. Alyn commented: *"There is a severe structural imbalance in the dairy supply chain, with milk farmers, and their weak bargaining power, continuously squeezed by higher input costs while at the same time receiving a smaller share of the margins from the processors and retailers. With many farmers not even receiving enough to cover their production costs, we are putting the long term future of dairy farming at risk. I'm glad that the Commission have finally recognised that systemic reform is required to ensure that the market can deliver for our farmers."*

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Responsible MEPs



Jill Evans

Member



Ian Hudghton

Member



Heather Anderson

Member

Contact person



Steven Cornelius

EFA Press, Communications & Campaigns Officer

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