

## Caroline Lucas, Green Party MEP for the South East



### News Bulletin

### Autumn 2009

This newsletter is a digest of the work of Caroline Lucas, Green Party MEP for South East England, for Autumn 2009.

It aims to provide a summary of Caroline's work for constituents – and anyone else who wants to know more about her work in the European Parliament, her constituency visits and key campaigning issues.

If you would like to be added to the recipients' list, or have any comments on the content of this newsletter, please email us at: [carolinelucas@greenmeps.org.uk](mailto:carolinelucas@greenmeps.org.uk)

For more information see Caroline's new-look website: [www.carolinelucasmep.org.uk](http://www.carolinelucasmep.org.uk). You can also read her MEP blog at [www.carolinelucasmep.org.uk/carolines-blog](http://www.carolinelucasmep.org.uk/carolines-blog).

To see Caroline in action in the European Parliament, please click here : [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3ewUcw1qyQ&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3ewUcw1qyQ&feature=player_embedded)

### **European politics**

Caroline is now serving her **third term** in the European Parliament after being re-elected in the June elections. Ten MEPs were elected to serve the South-East region: four Conservatives, two each for UKIP and the Lib-Dems and one each for the Green and Labour parties. The Green Party received 271,506 votes, beating Labour, who received just 192,292, into fifth place.

The Green group gained a **further 10 seats** across Europe and is now the **fourth largest in the Parliament** – bigger than the newly formed Conservative group – meaning that Green MEPs like Caroline can be more influential on key EU issues.

Commenting on recent speculation that former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair may run for the **Presidency of the EU**, Caroline said: "The suggestion is nothing short of absurd. Can there be anyone outside of Government who really believes that the man who

snubbed the EU over Iraq and joined with George W. Bush to lead us into an illegal war is now the right person to become the EU's first Council President?"

Over the next few weeks, the priority for the Greens is to intensify the pressure for an ambitious outcome from the **Copenhagen climate change summit** in December. Caroline is heavily involved in negotiations to **strengthen the EU's position**, in order for it to demonstrate real leadership at the talks.

### **Constituency visits and case-work**

When the **Vestas wind turbine manufacturing plant** on the Isle of Wight was threatened with closure, Caroline actively supported the campaign to keep it open – and called on the Government to step in to save the plant's **600 green jobs**. When the closure went ahead, Caroline said the situation represented "a **spectacular failure by Government ministers to adequately promote green industries** - and protect the future of manufacturing in the UK".

Caroline recently joined ex-Vestas workers at the 'magic roundabout' protest camp near the closed Isle of Wight factory **in solidarity with their fight for green jobs**. She met with workers, community representatives and campaigners to discuss the ongoing protest – and criticized the **withholding of redundancy payouts** for those who had tried to defend their jobs. Caroline has also asked the local authorities to push the Government for a **Sustainable Community Strategy** to ensure that the workers have a say in plans to enhance the renewables industry on the island.



**Caroline at the Isle of Wight 'magic roundabout' Vestas protest camp**

Caroline met with young people at Brill School in Buckinghamshire to talk about the need for **urgent action on climate change** – as part of the '**Climate Rush on the Run**' roadshow travelling across the South of England. She also took part in a Green Fayre in Kingsbury in Aylesbury alongside TV chef and green campaigner Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall.

Caroline travelled to **Havant** in October to help launch its **annual literary festival**, of which she is a patron. She spoke to festival visitors about the power of language in

politics – and praised the festival's focus on art inspired by the Hampshire countryside and the need for conservation of the natural world.

When energy giant E.On decided to **suspend its plans** to build a new coal fired power station at **Kingsnorth** in Kent, Caroline called it “a victory for those who have taken to the streets in the fight against climate change”. She said: “Kingsnorth has been nothing short of a **PR disaster** for the UK Government – and for E.ON, which has tried in vain to convince the world that it is genuinely committed to a cleaner, more sustainable future”.

Caroline has urged the European Commission to launch a **full investigation** into American tycoon **Donald Trump's controversial plans** to build a golf course and resort development on valuable ecological land in Aberdeenshire. In a letter to the Environment Commissioner, she expressed concern that outline planning permissions for the development granted by Aberdeenshire Council could be **in breach of European law on the environment**.

Caroline recently gave her support for **BERATE - Bedminster Residents Against Tesco Expansion** - in their fight against a new Tesco superstore development at Bristol City FC's Ashton Gate stadium. Local residents in the Bedminster area of Bristol have banded together to oppose the building of a 90,000 square foot Tesco Extra, which Caroline said would **"imperil the livelihoods of local traders"** and **increase road congestion**.

## **Campaigns and Issues**

### Food and Farming

Caroline spoke out when EU agriculture ministers agreed to include meat and food products sourced from **cloned animals** in the proposed **'Novel Foods Regulation'**, which is a potential stepping stone towards legislation to authorise such products. She warned that in upcoming negotiations, “the European Parliament must stand firm in calling for a **ban on meat from cloned animals**. Animal welfare, food safety, consumer confidence and the future direction of agriculture are at stake”.

Caroline also criticised agriculture ministers for refusing to commit to **labelling** products obtained from **GM-fed animals**. She believes that people have the **right to know** if GM products have been used in the making of their food.

In a letter to DEFRA, Caroline queried the continued illegal use of the **“indiscriminate and inhumane” Gin (leg hold) trap** in England and Wales. She has received a number of constituent letters on the issue and is calling for a **complete ban on the sale and possession of the traps** – to close a loophole which currently exists.

### Peace and Human Rights

Caroline has been elected as **Vice-President of the Euro-Parliament's permanent delegation to Palestine** and so will continue to play a significant role in the Parliament's work on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

She responded angrily to news that Israeli soldiers had boarded a **Free Gaza boat** carrying urgently needed supplies off the shore of Gaza and cut all of its official communication. Caroline urged the Israeli authorities to **guarantee the safety** of the human rights campaigners onboard.

Caroline nominated a Gazan doctor and peace campaigner for the European Parliament's prestigious **Sakharov Prize for human rights**. Dr Izzeldin Abuelaish, a gynaecologist who provides healthcare for both Palestinians and Israelis, became known worldwide when three of his daughters and a niece were killed in an Israeli bomb attack. Following the incident, the doctor created an international foundation called **Daughters for Life** to promote the education of women and girls.

Caroline **condemned the recent raids and destruction of the 'Jungle' refugee camps** in Calais, during which hundreds of adults and children from war-torn countries such as **Afghanistan and Iraq** were detained. She called for the French and British governments to fulfil their responsibilities to seekers of asylum under both EU and international law. She also joined with MEP colleagues to warn that French and British plans for a mass deportation back to Afghanistan were a **breach of human rights law**.

Caroline questioned the validity of a **new £9m police scheme** for monitoring thousands of political activists under the heading of "**domestic extremism**". She warned of an increasing tendency to **class peaceful protesters alongside terrorists** – rendering them subject to the same surveillance measures and imperiling the **legal right to protest**. Caroline is waiting for a reply from the Metropolitan Police commissioner as to whether or not she is on the database.

### Transport & Aviation

Caroline welcomed BAA's decision to **halt plans to build a third runway at Heathrow** and paid tribute to local people and environmental campaigners who opposed it. Unfortunately, there remains a possibility that the project will resume in the future, so Caroline will continue to campaign against these **environmentally and economically unsustainable** plans.

She made submissions to a number of **regional airport noise consultations**, arguing that the way noise blights the lives of those living near airports needs addressing via **concrete and enforceable upper limits** rather than just action plans that shift the problem elsewhere. Caroline asked the Government Office South East to **call in plans to expand Gatwick airport**, as it is a scheme that has national impacts and should be considered by the Secretary of State.

Caroline welcomed **long-overdue proposals** by EU environment ministers for targets to **reduce global climate emissions from shipping and aviation** in the run-up to Copenhagen, but warned that because the targets would only be measured from 2005 levels, this would actually allow emissions to *increase* on 1990 levels. She criticized the extent to which these industries **still receive special treatment** when it comes to climate policy.

## Animal Protection

Caroline was named as the **new President of the European Parliament's cross-party Animal Welfare Intergroup** – one of the most effective, high profile cross-party groups in the Parliament. She commented that, "with key challenges ahead, like the revision of EU law on the protection of animals used in experiments, it's **more vital than ever** that the Animal Welfare Intergroup continues to **champion animal protection** across the EU."

Caroline once again called for **an end to the exploitation of wild animals kept in captivity** for 'entertainment', particularly when the controversial *Martin Lacey's Great British Circus* toured its performing animals across the South East. She has raised concerns about the **welfare of the animals kept by circuses** in correspondence to the Commission.

In particular, she has written to the Commission and the British government to highlight a **potential breach of the EU's Zoos Directive** in the case of a zoo near Bristol in South West England, which has been accused by undercover investigators of **breeding tigers and camels** for use by the *Great British Circus*.

Caroline has been working hard to **toughen EU legislation on the use of animals in testing and research** through the revision of EU Directive 86/609, and to promote the replacement of animal testing with viable **non animal** alternatives.

She launched a **new Written Declaration** calling for increased funding for the development of alternative methods to animal testing – and a 1% 'research levy' on products that contain ingredients tested on animals. The WD, like an **Early Day Motion** in the House of Commons, will become the official position of the European Parliament if it can attract the support of at least half of all MEPs. It calls for the Commission to introduce **quantitative targets** for reducing the number of animals used in experiments, and bring in **compulsory inspections of testing facilities** in order to dramatically improve standards. Read the full WD [here](#). You can lobby your MEP to sign it before 21 January 2010 – the [WriteToThem](#) website can help you do this.

On the same issue, Caroline joined an all-party delegation to submit a **1.5 million strong petition** to 10 Downing Street, calling on the Government to develop a 'road map' to move towards the end of animal testing. She also supported an NGO initiative to present MEPs with the **world's first ever web-based march** – with more than 65,000 people taking part to call for the replacement of animal research to be accelerated.



**Caroline and Mike Hancock MP help to deliver the Uncaged petition to 10 Downing Street**

### Environment & Energy

Caroline has been closely involved with the EU's negotiations on **climate change policy** ahead of the UN climate summit in Copenhagen in December. She is pushing for an international climate deal that includes **binding emissions reductions targets** for industrialised countries in the high end of range recommended by the **IPCC**. This is 25-40% by 2020 based on 1990 levels, to give us even a 50:50 chance of limiting warming to less than 2°C.

Caroline is urging EU leaders to consider going **beyond the 30% reduction target** – which they have committed to only if an international deal is reached – if they are to show real leadership at Copenhagen.

Caroline has also warned that the Commission's proposals for the **financing of international climate efforts** and, importantly, funds for **adaptation and mitigation efforts in developing countries**, have so far **fallen way short** of what is needed.

Caroline welcomed the **10:10 initiative**, which looks set to become one of the biggest ever civil society campaigns between now and Copenhagen. She hopes that grassroots campaigns like this will help to step up the pressure on the key decision makers to reach an **effective successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol**.

Caroline and Jean joined in a **Greens/EFA Group initiative** in Strasbourg, at which a rapidly-melting six foot ice sculpture of a man was built to symbolise the devastating impact of climate change. The Green MEPs took the opportunity to urge EU leaders to **get a grip on crucial environmental policy**.



### **Caroline with London's Green MEP Jean Lambert in Strasbourg**

#### Economics and International trade

Caroline has expressed concern over speculation that the **EU might award Sri Lanka an extension of the privileged trading agreement** it currently enjoys with the EU. The extension of the GSP Plus export privilege is being discussed in Brussels, and Caroline believes that Sri Lanka should not be awarded the extension until it meets its **human rights obligations**. Sri Lanka must **respond to the UN appeal to give freedom of movement** to detainees who are still in refugee camps following the civil conflict between the Government and Tamil rebels.

Caroline recently wrote to the **NHS** to highlight the **ethical implications of its water cooler contract with Eden Springs**, owned by Mayanot Eden Ltd – an Israeli mineral water producer supplying water sourced from Lake Kinneret in the Golan Heights. This region, widely recognised to be part of Syria, has been **illegally occupied by Israel** since the six day war in 1967 and was unilaterally 'annexed' in 1981, a move condemned internationally. Caroline has called on the NHS to **end its contract with Eden Springs** and follow Scotland's example by boycotting the company.

Caroline was shocked to learn that the COLAT (Committee on Latin America of the EU Council) has decided to include **Honduras** in the negotiations on a future **Association Agreement**. Following the installation of a *de facto* government after a military coup, the EU made it clear that all negotiations for a preferential trade pact were to be suspended until the return of the ousted President Zelaya. Caroline signed an [open letter to the European Council](#) demanding that these negotiations are not resumed.

Caroline recently supported a campaign in the European Parliament to highlight the importance of **providing opportunities for fair employment**, in order to adequately tackle **global poverty**. Around 150 world leaders have already pledged to put this priority at the heart of their national and international policy-making. For more on the campaign, visit the [Decent Work website](#).



### Caroline attends a Decent Work campaign event

Commenting on the **G20 summit in Pittsburgh**, Caroline warned that it was 'now or never for the leaders of the world's biggest economies to show they have learned the lessons of the financial and economic crises'. She called for **strict and consistent measures to regulate financial markets, address tax havens, and cap bank bonuses**.

### Women's Issues

As a **new member of the Parliament's Women's Committee**, Caroline is working to define, promote and protect gender equality and women's rights within the EU and internationally.

Caroline wrote to Gordon Brown ahead of a European Council summit to handle nominations for the EU's so-called "top jobs", and urged him to ensure that **women and men in the EU are represented equally** in decision-making processes at the very highest levels of European government.

Almost 40 years after the Equal Pay Act, women working full time across the UK still earn an average **17% less per hour** than men working full time. Caroline supported the **Equal Pay Day Campaign**, jointly run by the Fawcett Society and Unison, which seeks to amend UK legislation currently before Parliament to ensure more is done to **close the gender pay gap**.

Caroline has expressed concern about the **poor licensing of lap dancing clubs in the UK**, which are currently licensed in the same way as cafes or pubs. She supports the Policing and Crime Bill Report being debated by the House of Lords which seeks to **give communities a greater say** in planning decisions, provide **workers with better protection** and tackle commercial sexual exploitation by reclassifying the clubs as **'sex encounter establishments'**. However, in a letter to Baroness Uddin, Caroline warned that the new licensing regime must be compulsory, and that it must not exempt venues which hold lap dancing sessions less than once a month.

## Media and Information Technology

In her role as MEP, Caroline is committed to **resisting attempts** by the EU Council and the UK Government to **attack due process and freedom of expression rights** on the internet. She is very concerned about Lord Mandelson's **draconian plans** for a 'three-strike' rule for **illegal downloading**. These proposals mirror the French 'Hadopi' internet piracy bill, which could see users' internet connections being permanently disabled if they are found to be downloading content illegally up to three times.

Caroline argues that this anti-piracy measure is **excessive** given the complex dynamics behind **filesharing**, and shows the EU **failing to defend citizens' interests**. The European Parliament voted by 88% for Amendment 138 twice, so Caroline says it must now stand up to the Council's blatant attempts to **erode citizens' rights** and **deprive people of an essential service**.

## LGBT

Caroline continues to work hard to **promote LGBT rights** in the UK and throughout Europe. In a recent letter to David Miliband MP, she thanked the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for the support it has given the LGBT community via British embassies. She highlighted, however, that in some Eastern European countries, **threats of violence** are still a reality – and called for the UK to continue to promote freedom of assembly and expression for *all* citizens, and to ensure that those who incite or threaten violence against members of the LGBT community should be **vigorously pursued and prosecuted**.

Caroline has written to the Commission to express concern about Gibraltar's recent failure to pass law **lowering the age of consent for same sex relationships**. Under the current system same sex partners are discriminated against because the age of consent is 18, compared to 16 for heterosexual partners. Caroline urged the Commission to pursue the matter up with the authorities in Gibraltar.

## Press Highlights

**Guardian** web chat – Caroline responded to readers' questions online

**Metro** – profile piece on green politics and the Green Party conference. You can read the article [here](#).

**Sunday Times** – profile piece due to be published November / December

**New Statesman** – panellist for eco 'heroes and villains' feature, due to be published

**Green Party conference** - BBC News, BBC Radio 4 Today, BBC Radio 4 Week in Westminster, BBC 5 Live, BBC Southern Counties, ITV Granada, Independent, Guardian

Caroline's views have also been covered by the Guardian, FT, Independent, Independent on Sunday, Politics.co.uk, New Statesman, Press Association, DeHavilland, eGov Monitor, Parliament magazine, and many more.

### **Find Caroline online**

\* To become a supporter of Caroline on Facebook, click here (you must already be registered) - <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Caroline-Lucas/8948360263>.

\* All of Caroline's news releases, speeches, articles, publications and correspondence with the European Commission and UK government departments – as well as further information about the European Parliament – are available on her website: [www.carolinelucasmep.org.uk](http://www.carolinelucasmep.org.uk).

### **Contact Caroline**

Write to: Caroline Lucas MEP  
Suite 58-60  
The Hop Exchange  
24 Southwark Street  
London SE1 1TY

Call: 020 7407 6281

Email: [carolinelucas@greenmeps.org.uk](mailto:carolinelucas@greenmeps.org.uk)