

Jean Lambert MEP

For peace, social justice and the environment

Summer/
Autumn 2008

LONDON'S GREEN PARTY MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Life as an MEP is always hectic and the last six months have been no different. Inside you'll find an overview of my recent activities, from championing equality and better services for Londoners to demanding action on climate change and improving safety on our streets. I will continue to voice your concerns, both here and in the European Parliament.

Jean



Engaging youths to tackle crime

Six students from the City of London Academy in Southwark presented their research on the links between environmental degradation and youth crime to the European Parliament in Brussels. The meeting, hosted by Jean Lambert, was the culmination of the Just Cities project identifying local environmental problems which can affect people's quality of life.

The youngsters met students from Berlin, Amsterdam and Paris who are undertaking research in their own cities as part of the same project, which is organised by Capacity Global and was commissioned by Jean.

"It is essential that young people feel safe in their local environment, but far too many feel that there are no opportunities for them. Many don't know how to make a difference. We need to produce the know-how and develop openings for them to get involved," Jean said.

Tolani Agboola, from the Southwark group said: "Many young people feel that nothing is



Southwark students in the European Parliament, at a meeting with Jean on the urban environment

being done to improve their situation. It would be good if more people had the opportunity to become involved in decision-making."

Sam Bradley, another member of the group, continued: "Youths are part of the solution, not the problem."

As a former teacher, Jean takes every opportunity to engage young people in

politics and produced a DVD with students from Newham Sixth Form College called **EU4U!** It explains the workings of the European institutions and looks at how European politics affects everyday life in London. For a free copy of the DVD or to find out more about the **Just Cities** project please contact Jean's office.

Action on climate change

Jean participates in a range of activities to demand tougher action to cut carbon emissions and put much greater investment in green industries and renewable energy. She is also involved in debates on preparing for the challenges to society that lie ahead.

Jean opened the **Campaign Against Climate Change** Trade Union conference, which played host to a wide range of respected speakers including fellow Green MEP Caroline Lucas and former Environment Minister Michael Meacher MP, as well as a range of union leaders, including the TUC.

Jean is a well-known expert on migration issues and also spoke at the **Climate Refugees**

conference organised by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). She joined Lord Stern and Hilary Benn MP, Secretary of State for the Environment, on the platform amongst other notable speakers.

She commented:

"One of the greatest impacts of climate change could be widespread human displacement as changing weather patterns cause crops to fail and create food and water shortages.

It's essential that we are prepared for this and acknowledge that we have a responsibility towards those who are adversely affected by our carbon emissions."

Working on skills and employment

Responding to the London Skills and Employment Board's consultation on its draft strategy, Jean emphasised the need for an appropriately trained workforce to help the UK shift to a low carbon economy.

Jean also highlighted the importance of local recruiting and the specific training needs of London's small and micro-businesses. You can find Jean's submission on her website.

In Strasbourg, Jean hosted an event with the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS) which saw the launch of a new report assessing labour migration following the expansion of the EU, looking particularly at the accession of Bulgaria and Romania.

The report shows that even with enlargement and free movement, migration within the union remains at a low level, concerning less than 2 per cent of the population.

Campaigning for peace

Jean visited Israel and Palestine on a fact-finding mission with a cross-party group of MEPs.

She was struck by the fear that people on both sides of the divide live with on a daily basis and the acute suffering of the Palestinians as a result of the sanctions placed upon the movement of essential goods, like food and medical equipment, into Gaza. On her return to the UK, Jean joined a demonstration outside Downing Street calling for an end to the siege on Gaza.

Jean was also a co-signatory to the Stop the War Coalition letter in the Guardian, supporting the national demonstration to bring the troops back from Iraq.

Jean demonstrating for peace in central London with fellow Green MEP Caroline Lucas



Opposing airport expansion in London

Jean responded to the Department for Transport consultation on adding capacity at Heathrow, making the point that any airport expansion is entirely incompatible with an effective climate emissions reduction strategy. This is as true for Stansted airport as it is for Heathrow.

It is clear that a third runway would further reduce air quality in and around Heathrow to below EU standards and this is unacceptable. Londoners suffer poor air quality and further airport expansion will simply exacerbate an already serious health problem.

Jean was particularly disappointed that the consultation failed to offer a clear opportunity for people to register their opposition to the expansion of Heathrow Airport. The approach demonstrates the Government's clear presumption in favour of proceeding with a third runway.

The Government is now intending to seek a derogation from the Air Quality Directive to avoid meeting new targets. Jean thinks this is disgraceful.

Jean also believes that the Government should consider reducing the need for short haul flights by increasing affordable rail links in the UK.

Speaking up for human rights

Jean has been in contact with the UK Burma Campaign and gave her full support to those who demonstrated against the Burmese junta.

Jean has raised the issue of Burma with the UK Government, and is calling for tougher economic sanctions at UK and EU levels, as well as emphasising the responsibility of India and China to play their role.

Jean continues to speak up for London's Kurdish community, including highlighting

Turkey's incursions into Iraq's Kurdish region. Jean recently met with Kurdish members of Turkey's Parliament to discuss the dangerous situation at Iraq's border.

Jean also met with NGOs over the human rights situations in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan, as well as meeting with Pakistan's President Musharraf, in her role as a member of the European Parliament's delegations for relations with South Asia and India.

Charge or release Guantanamo detainees



Jean marked the sixth anniversary of the opening of the Guantanamo Bay detention facility by participating in a number of demonstrations in London.

She co-signed a letter to Gordon Brown calling for the closure of Guantanamo, with the release of its prisoners to safe locations, and delivered it to Downing Street along with campaigners and a former detainee. Later she spoke at a demonstration in Parliament Square.

Jean has formally raised the return of the remaining Londoner, Binyam Mohamed, with the UK Government.

Jean with the East London Peace and Justice Group in Whitechapel on the sixth anniversary of the opening of Guantanamo Bay

Resisting far-right politics

Jean has been involved in resisting the rise of the far-right across Europe.

She addressed a **Hope Not Hate** meeting in Ilford, where she shared the platform with Bob Crow, General Secretary of the RMT, and representatives from the National Union of Teachers and the local Racial Equality Council.

She also joined other Green Party activists at the **Love Music Hate Racism** event in Victoria Park in East London.

The rise of far-right groups is not only a concern in the UK. Jean believes it is important to forge links with progressive groups across Europe to form a strong resistance against the politics of ignorance and intolerance.



Jean at the Love Music Hate Racism event in Victoria Park, East London



Jean speaking at a demonstration against forced deportations to Iraq

Stopping the deportation of a young gay Iranian

Mehdi Kazemi is a 20 year old gay Iranian. He came to the UK to study and soon found out that his partner in Iran had been hanged for committing sodomy – a capital offence.

His father told him he was going to be killed on his return. Mehdi then applied for asylum in the UK but was refused and so fled to the Netherlands. Jean spoke about his case in the European Parliament and wrote to the Home Office to reconsider his case for asylum. Under pressure from the European Parliament and the House of Lords, the Home Office decided to reopen his case and has now granted him leave to remain.

Remembering women in conflict

Following a meeting with the 'Comfort Women' who were tortured and sexually enslaved by the Japanese army during the Second World War, Jean initiated a resolution calling for their ordeal to be recognised by the Japanese government. It was adopted by the European Parliament and the Commission is now considering further action.

Jean was also a co-signatory to a Green motion for a resolution on violence against women in the Congo, which formed the basis of a European Parliament resolution.



International Women's Day: Jean with the Waltham Forest Asian Women's Network

Health service privatisation

Jean spoke out against the decision for three London GP surgeries to be run by a US company – a move which will lead to further privatisation of the health service.

Jean said: “We must be vigilant about the encroachment of private businesses into the public health sector. This represents a significant step towards the total disintegration of our free, universally-accessible service.”

Protecting animal rights

Jean called on the UK Government to implement a complete ban on the imports of seal products.

Hundreds of thousands of seal pups are slaughtered in Canada during the annual hunt. The UK is opposed to the hunt, but has so far refused to introduce a ban on seal products and is instead waiting for an EU-wide ban. Jean is also demanding an end to the practice through the European Parliament.



Jean and Ann Garrett in Southmere Park, Bexley

Fighting the closure of public space

Tilfen Ltd, the organisation entrusted with managing Southmere Park in Bexley, has closed around half of it to the public.

The public is now denied the right to use this open space for lawful recreation, which it has done for over 30 years.

With the local Green Party, Jean has called for council action, saying “The land was inherited from the Greater London Council as a ‘District Park’ along with playing fields and a nature trail. Tilfen claim the right to manage the land as they wish, but access to public open space is non-negotiable. It is in the interests of the residents of Thamesmead that this land remains public.”



Jean and Bernard Rickman, a Help the Aged campaigner, at an event celebrating equal opportunities for all

Demanding equality for all

Jean has been fighting to extend legislation to protect individuals across Europe from discrimination.

The European Treaty contains a commitment to protecting people from discrimination on grounds of age, disability, gender, race and ethnic origin, sexual orientation and religion and belief. But the legislation does not match this.

Jean believes anti-discrimination laws

should be brought into line with the highest standards of protection which currently exist on gender, race and ethnic origin, however the European Commission has indicated that it may only proceed with legislation covering disability.

Jean believes that this would represent a huge missed opportunity and she is pushing for legislation to tackle discrimination across the board.

Backing 20mph limits for safer roads

Jean has joined her Green colleagues on the London Assembly in calling for a 20mph speed limit for most roads across London, to make our city safer for walkers and cyclists.

Organisations including the **London Cycling Campaign** believe the lower speed limit would help to encourage cycling. “Not only must we reduce road danger; we must reclaim our streets by reducing the fear of road danger”, said Jean.



To request Jean’s email newsletter or for other information please email:

jeanlambert@greenmeps.org.uk

Tel: 020 7407 6269

Fax: 020 7234 0183

The Office of Jean Lambert MEP, Suite 58, The Hop Exchange, 24 Southwark Street, London SE1 1TY

www.jeanlambertmep.org.uk

Contact the above for a copy of these articles in large print.

Green Party 

 The Greens | European Free Alliance
in the European Parliament

Printed on recycled paper

Designed and produced by www.lifework.biz