



THE RT. HON. SIR ROBERT ATKINS MEP  
Representing the NORTH WEST of ENGLAND

Contact Nos: 01995-602225 (H)  
07770254444(M)

01995-605690 (Fax) 0032-228-45373 (Brussels)

E-Mail: [ratsmep@sir-robertatkins.org](mailto:ratsmep@sir-robertatkins.org)

[www.sir-robertatkins.org](http://www.sir-robertatkins.org)



Conservatives  
in the European Parliament

Newsletter Edition 67

November 2009

Two big decisions on European issues have been made since my last newsletter, both of which have implications for Britain.

### Lisbon Treaty

Firstly, the final ratification of the Lisbon Treaty was completed when President Klaus of the Czech Republic signed for his country. The whole "process" was a disgraceful, undemocratic charade throughout Europe but our particular venom must be directed at Gordon Brown and his shambolic Government for breaking a solemn promise of a referendum for the British people. However, we are where we are and it would be folly to keep harking back to an issue that, though no fault of the Conservative Party, has passed us by. We fought the cause hard but we lost. We must come to terms with that and move on.



And that is the nub of David Cameron's recent announcement about Europe and a future Conservative Government. His "cast-iron guarantee of a referendum" related to a situation where the Lisbon Treaty's ratification process had not been completed and where there might be a possibility of stopping it in its tracks. So now we have to ensure that other options for an improvement in EU-British membership are considered. These can only become clear on assuming Government but one aspect is certain. We must never allow a situation like the Ratification debacle to happen again without consulting the British people first.

### **... Of Mice and Men!**

Secondly, and following upon the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, we have just witnessed the sorry spectacle of EU Leaders stitching up a deal behind closed doors to appoint two of the most inconsequential nonentities to positions of authority. If it was not so pathetic it would be risible. To think that we have gone through all the controversy and angst of the Lisbon Treaty debates, that we have witnessed the political earthquake of a new "European constitution", that Ministers, MPs and MEPs have spent wearying years arguing the toss about this bureaucratic "heffalump" and then we have ended up with a virtually unknown, insignificant, inoffensive Belgian President and a High Representative for Foreign Affairs who is a perfectly nice and decent woman but with absolutely no elected experience, no knowledge of foreign policy and a reputation for being a pro-CND Labour toady. They are both fourth-rate and not up to the jobs in question. What they do represent is the determination by leaders such as Merkel and Sarkozy that no one outside their respective countries will upstage them. Mountains and mice!

### **Cumbria Floods**

Much more serious than this euro-kerfuffle has been the recent terrible flooding in parts of Cumbria. The pictures on the television can only give part of the story but it is enough to make me realise the utter devastation that has been caused, together with the misery and loss endured by so many local residents. I thought it inappropriate to visit and get in the way of emergency services and other helpers but I have been in regular touch with various Council Leaders and offered them what assistance I can. There is a so-called Solidarity Fund within the EU, designed for just such emergencies as this, but it can only be accessed by the Government. And during the Foot & Mouth crisis a year or two back, the then Chancellor, one Gordon Brown, refused to claim the full amount on offer for "technical financial reasons". That must not happen again. The money is there and Cumbria needs it - as soon as possible.



### **New Job**

We have just had our annual Conservative Delegation elections this week - except that, for the first time in living memory, there were none as every position was unopposed. Our Chairman, Timothy Kirkhope, remains as such but I have decided to relinquish my post as Chief Whip. I had said I would do the job up to and through the Parliamentary Elections and that is just what I have done. It was fun and I do now

know where the bodies are buried! However, Tim has asked me to take on a new, and I think, essential task. David Cameron wants "One Party" to be fighting the General Election and beyond, ensuring that our Members in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the House of Lords and the European Parliament are all facing in the same direction at the same time. In other words, that liaison between the respective legislatures and the Shadow Cabinet is in excellent working order in preparation for Government. This is an entirely laudable objective and I will be the link between Tory MEPs and our Front-Bench Spokesmen. Assuming, of course, that I am allowed to enter the House of Commons now that MEPs' passes have been withdrawn!

### **Iceland**

I have just been asked to be the Shadow Rapporteur (opposition Spokesman) on Iceland's application to join the European Union, should they so decide in due course. Once their banking problems are resolved, I do not imagine there will be any real difficulties and I might just get to visit that beautiful and unusual country. My idea of heaven during a hot summer at home!

### **Aerospace**

The Royal Aeronautical Society (under the direction of Keith Mans, former MP for Wyre) had its Annual Conference in Manchester last month and he invited me to the Conference Reception. The RAeS acts as a focal point for the aerospace industry - so important in our region - and it was instructive to meet and talk with representatives of many companies and organisations in the field.



With RAeS President, Mike Steeden

### **Ford**

I had dinner last week with some executives of the Ford Motor Company who were in Brussels to lobby MEPs on the Environment and Transport Committees. The company used to have substantial involvement in our region at Halewood, of course,

but the real reason for their presence was to tell us of technical changes and environmental designs of the cars of the future. Exciting stuff.

### **Palestine**

I am about to go to Palestine on a Parliamentary Delegation, travelling to the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Ramulla and Jerusalem. This is definitely not a Christmas visit but an attempt to see the problems at first hand. I will report back upon my return.

Robert Atkins  
→