

Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Conservatives in Europe: Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Over the past year, in addition to leading the Conservative Delegation in Brussels and Strasbourg, Martin Callanan MEP has continued his role of Conservative Spokesman on Environment. He is joined on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee by Julie Girling MEP and Marina Yannakoudakis MEP as full members, and Struan Stevenson MEP, Jacqueline Foster MEP and Jim Nicholson MEP as substitute members. Together, the Conservative Environment team have continued to pursue their manifesto commitments to:

- Ensure that tackling climate change and moving to a low carbon economy are central EU priorities
- Strive for a comprehensive global deal on cutting carbon emissions and support EU action to promote greener forms of energy.
- Ensure legislation to control the pollution of air, soil and water and the management of waste is drawn up in a balanced way and implemented evenly across the EU.



Environment Committee members (l – r) Julie Girling MEP, Martin Callanan MEP (Environment Spokesman) and Marina Yannakoudakis MEP

Current Work and Achievements

Climate Action

Earlier this year, Martin Callanan MEP, acting as the Parliament's draftsman, oversaw the process of driving through legislation regulating the amount of CO₂ emissions from newly-produced light commercial vehicles (i.e. vans) in the EU. After much tough negotiating, Martin was able to secure a first reading agreement between the Parliament and the European Council on legislation that requires significant and workable emission limits for light commercial vehicles, the cost of which will not be passed on to consumers and SMEs.

In addition, Martin has been working on legislation to improve the engine quality of trains, locomotives, construction vehicles and tractors, with a view to reducing the level of pollutants these vehicles emit.



Martin Callanan MEP

Martin has continued his efforts to ensure that all EU legislation concerning climate change is practical and achievable. Conservatives in Europe will continue to fight for legislation which is unquestionably ecologically sound, and yet which does not provoke an exodus of businesses and jobs from the EU.

Food Information to Consumers

The Provision of Food Information to Consumers Regulation aims to prevent the increasing proliferation of misleading food labels whilst updating and simplifying labelling in order to ensure that consumers can make healthy, informed decisions about what they eat and where it comes from.

Struan Stevenson MEP has been working on the dossier on behalf of the Conservatives in Europe to help establish a labelling framework that puts consumers first. This Regulation covers a wide range of complex and often controversial issues including nutritional, allergen and alcohol labelling.

Pharmaceutical package

The pharmaceutical package consists of three proposals: Pharmacovigilance, Counterfeit Medicines and Information to Patients. Whilst negotiating this report, Marina Yannakoudakis MEP sought to crack down on counterfeit medicines bought from the high street and online pharmacies by implementing safeguards that can help protect vulnerable consumers. Marina worked with other political groups in Parliament to ensure that



Marina Yannakoudakis MEP

consumers have access to information on medical products as and when they require it and that the system processing adverse drug reactions was updated and enhanced to help better inform healthcare professionals, pharmaceutical companies, and patients.

Cross-Border Healthcare

The Cross-Border Healthcare Directive, which Marina has also worked on, allows UK patients to seek planned medical care across all 27 EU Member States. The revised legislation enhances patients' mobility rights, access to e-health technologies, and clears up procedures surrounding prior authorisation services and reimbursement. Vital British interests were upheld during the negotiations.

Phosphates

On behalf of the Conservatives, Julie Girling MEP has been following a proposal to ban the use of phosphates in laundry detergents to help improve water quality and conditions for aquatic life. Seemingly straightforward, the regulation was

intended to allow legislation to catch up with industrial innovation, as most laundry detergents on the market are already phosphates free.

However, the Liberals, Greens and Socialists in the Parliament felt that the scope of the ban did not go far enough, urging that it also include dishwasher detergents.

This was despite legitimate concerns about the progress made in formulating a high-performance and fully biodegradable phosphate-free equivalent. Conservatives did not support this in Committee and Julie is leading the fight against this hasty extension of the phosphates ban. It is a clear example of where "one-size-fits-all" is not appropriate. The quality of water varies considerably across Europe, particularly hardness levels, which affects the cleaning ability of detergents. Regulation should be agreed locally to fit local conditions.

Genetically Modified Organisms

On behalf of the Conservatives, Julie Girling MEP has also been working on a complex and controversial report concerning the right of Member States to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and crops on their territory, based on environmental, socio-economic or land use concerns.

Conservatives did not support this proposal, as much of its content was based on emotional or political agendas, instead of firm scientific evidence and market mechanisms, serving to undermine existing agricultural and trade policies. Julie believes that the European



Julie Girling MEP

Commission should look to establish a robust legal framework across the EU-27 for approvals and effective co-existence measures, in order to enable GMO and non-GMO systems to successfully operate together. 🌱