



Glenis Willmott MEP Labour's Leader in Europe

Harold Wilson House, 23 Barratt Lane, Attenborough, Nottingham NG9 6AD

office@gleniswillmott.org.uk 0115 922 9717

www.gleniswillmott.org.uk

<http://gleniswillmott.blogspot.com/>

Help whistleblowers to prevent North Sea oil spills



It should be easier for offshore gas and oil workers to blow the whistle on potentially unsafe working arrangements.

That was the message from Euro MPs this month, who want action to be taken in the light of the major oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico last year and to ensure that a similar disaster does not occur in European waters.

Supporting [key amendments put forward by Labour MEPs](#), Glenis said. "To prevent lethal accidents and disastrous oil spills, workers on rigs must be able to speak out, safe from concerns that they will be put under pressure or even lose their job."

Alongside [a range of recommendations](#) agreed on safety in the offshore oil and gas sector, Labour successfully put forward amendments calling for workers in the offshore oil and gas industry to be able to elect safety reps who will be free to ask questions and speak out without fear of harassment.



All in it together?



Bad news from Europe has been a constant feature of the news for much of this year. The deepening financial crisis in Greece plus the bailouts for Ireland and Portugal, have all led to [wider concerns about the impact](#) on the rest of the Eurozone.

The implications of this turmoil for the future of the European Union are immense. How the EU and the member states respond to the present difficulties will define the fortunes of our continent for generations to come.

If the worst comes to the worst, with Greece defaulting and falling out of the euro, perhaps followed by others, the UK will not be immune to the fallout. Our economic interests are now so closely tied up with the European Union that we are bound to be affected, though the precise impact is impossible to assess.

What is increasingly clear is that austerity measures are not working. Here in the UK, the Tory-led Government is actually making things harder for the squeezed middle, by cutting too far and too fast. The Tories are making reckless choices, which protect the powerful few, but offer little hope for the futures of the many.

Solutions to the crisis, in the UK as well as more widely across the continent, will only be achieved by acting together in a concerted way so that there will at least be a chance of coming through the crisis without huge damage to our economies.

And solutions must be fair. There must be budget discipline but we cannot have a situation where hard working families are always paying and shouldering the risks while there are others who keep taking more and who shirk their responsibilities. Bankers' bonuses, for example, are already back to 2008 levels, which is totally unacceptable. Meanwhile, energy companies have been allowed to hike their prices way above inflation.

The coming months will not just be a challenge to Greece and the Eurozone. They will also test whether David Cameron really meant it when he said we were "all in it together."

Glenis

Remploy

In its 54 sites across the UK, [Remploy](#) provides employment for 4000 disabled people. All these sites are now under threat of closure as a result of the [Sayce Report](#).

The government is presently undertaking a consultation procedure which is deeply flawed. Only 60 workers are being allowed to attend each of the seven "regional roadshow" events, even though over 1,000 workers applied to attend. In our Region, with factories at Derby, Leicester, Chesterfield & Worksop, there is not a single roadshow event.

Glenis has written to the Minister for Disabled People, Maria Miller MP, to ask for an improved procedure and to recognise the valuable role which Remploy plays in the working lives of many disabled workers.

GMB, the union representing Remploy workers [continues to campaign](#) and are asking for your support.

Sponsored visits to the Parliament

As many of you will know, each MEP has a number of sponsored places for people wishing to visit the Parliament in either Brussels or Strasbourg. If anyone would like to apply to organise a group to visit the Parliament in 2012, please contact Paddy Casswell in Glenis' UK office.

European Forum

We have had to postpone the European Forum provisionally planned for October, and hope to have a new date shortly.

Labour Party Conference in Liverpool

As Leader of Labour's MEPs, Glenis will once again be addressing Labour Party conference this year. Her speech will be part of the Britain in the World debate on the Monday morning. If you are at conference, you can get in touch with Glenis by leaving a message at the EPLP Stand. We hope to produce a "Conference Special" e-bulletin as soon as possible after we return from Liverpool.

Bombardier—EU is not the problem



Earlier this year, the Tory-led Government made the decision to award the Thameslink rolling stock contract to Siemens rather than to Bombardier, a decision which could cost over 1400 jobs in the UK and have severe implications for the UK train manufacturing industry. The impact on Derby and the East Midlands is incalculable.

Under pressure from the trade unions, local residents and politicians, it has been clear that the government would like to blame Europe for the impending disaster. In short, they say it is all the fault of [EU rules on procurement](#).

Except it isn't—a point made clear by Jonathan Faull, the European Commission's Director General for Internal Market and Services, when he spoke at the Transport Select Committee in Westminster recently.

He said "*If the Secretary of State has reasons to say, "I want to look at this again and start again from the very beginning" and remains within the bounds of the EU law in doing that, then we have nothing to say about it.*"

Glenis has put down a [Written Question](#) to the Commission to clarify that the UK Government was not obliged under the 2004 Procurement Directive to reject Bombardier, and that the directive does not prevent the UK from going back to the beginning with the Thameslink procurement exercise.

Interestingly, the European Commission has recently published a [Green Paper](#) and has carried out a consultation on modernising the EU procurement rules, and we await the Parliament's own-initiative report on this issue. Labour MEPs will want a clearer commitment that social and economic considerations can be taken into account in future public procurement exercises.