



## Glenis Willmott MEP Labour's Leader in Europe

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### FOOD LABELLING AND LOCAL VISIT

A recent visit to a supermarket near Loughborough recently gave Glenis some useful ammunition in her fight for clearer food labelling.



She dropped in to the Co-operative Food Store in East Leake to meet national and local management, and to see how they were meeting the challenges of clear labelling, as well as other issues such as fair trade.



Glenis said: "The visit gave me a chance to discuss with one of the UK's major food retailers many of the issues involved in new EU legislation. It was a useful visit in its own right to see how a large store operates, but it was also extremely relevant to my legislative work in the Parliament."

### Good luck !

. to all Labour candidates standing in the elections in May.

## Baby milk health claim

In the Parliament this month, we narrowly failed to win the overall majority required to overturn a health claim made by a manufacturer concerning what are known as follow-on formulas and foods intended for infants.



PHOTO: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/randaf/1242428978/>

The claim is about DHA, a fatty acid found naturally in breast milk, which is important in the development of babies' vision. A formula milk producer Mead Johnson has applied to the EU for permission to use the health claim that DHA intake "contributes to the normal visual development of infants up to 12 months of age."

However, the synthesised DHA which is added to formula milk is different, and independent evidence shows that adding DHA to formula milk has no proven benefit.

My resolution objecting to the health claim was supported by the WHO, UNICEF and many others, and was actually won by 328 to 323 with 26 abstentions. However, the opposition of the right, including the Tories, meant we did not achieve the absolute majority for it to be adopted by Parliament.

Tory MEPs should be ashamed that they supported a multi-national company ahead of the health of our children, but I'm not letting it rest. I will be writing to the European Commission to urge them to revise the legislation. Our children's health is too important to be left in the hands of a multinational company's marketing department.

## ToryWatch

Tory MEPs have been slammed for their lack of support for Eurojust – the European crime-fighting agency – despite the fact that the UK has used the agency more than any other member state.

They have also voted against a Financial Transaction Tax at EU level 'as a first step' towards promoting an FTT at global level. The proposals were included in a Report on innovative financing which also looked at carbon taxes and financing for development funding.

And to cap it all they voted against considering access to water as a fundamental human right in a vote on the EU's priorities for the United Nations Human Rights Council.



PHOTO: [www.flickr.com/photos/gargi/48701386/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/gargi/48701386/)  
Water—not a fundamental human right say Tories

And they're not all that popular with their political group either – the European Conservatives and Reformists. The ECR held their elections for Leader of the Group recently and Tory MEP Timothy Kirkhope, who couldn't even get all the Tories to vote for him, was easily beaten by Czech MEP Jan Zahradil.

## News in brief....



### Tar Sands

As negotiations towards the new EU-Canada trade agreement continue, environmental campaigners are lobbying MEPs over the extraction of the tar or oil sands in the Canadian province of Alberta - described as the biggest environmental crime in history.

Labour MEPs are convinced we should not be encouraging the exploitation of a fuel source which creates a carbon footprint three times greater than other fuel sources during the extraction and refinement phase. [Full story here.](#)



### Peat-free compost

Glenis is calling for the compulsory labelling of compost to help gardeners to choose compost and other products which are peat-free, which will help protect peat bogs – one of Europe's rarest and most threatened habitats. [Full story here](#)

### Palm Oil

Many consumers are concerned about the impact palm oil production has on the environment and on biodiversity. Glenis is therefore supporting an amendment to the food labelling legislation to say that the specific origin of vegetable oil must be labelled.

She said: "People have a right to know what is in their food so they can choose not to buy products which they object to."

## And really finally....

**Apologies for the delay in getting more details to members about the trip to Brussels in October and the Race for Life in June. Things have been more than usually hectic in the last few weeks but we will be sending out more information very shortly.**