

# Update

From  
Richard  
Howitt  
MEP



July / August 2005

Your Labour Euro MP for the East of England

Please distribute at your General Committee meeting and other interested party members

## A EUROPEAN CRISIS? WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Richard was busy on the air waves representing Labour Euro MPs in television and radio interviews in response to the referenda in France and the Netherlands, and to the collapse of the EU summit on Europe's future budget. *"It is clear that there will now be no early referendum on the EU constitutional treaty at home, whilst the Dutch and French "no" votes demonstrate that Euroscepticism is not confined to Britain alone,"* says Richard. *"It is also right to insist on reform of the Common Agricultural Policy as part of any budget agreement, otherwise further change is put off to 2014. The best way to turn around current disenchantment is to switch debate away from the EU's internal rules and towards delivery on key issues of jobs, people's rights and the environment."*

## MAKING POVERTY HISTORY

Richard has joined with local campaign groups to help support Britain's drive in the G8 and EU to Make Poverty History. He met with volunteers at the Fair Trade Centres in **Bury St. Edmunds** and in **Luton**, and joined with Oxfam campaigners in **Chelmsford** to hoist their giant white banners to support the campaign.



Richard also got his runners and shorts out to launch the 11th Annual Oxfam Herts Hike in **St Albans**, (see picture above) and supported the launch of the campaign to make **Colchester** a Fair Trade town.

## SERVING YOU BETTER AS LABOUR'S SOLE EURO MP IN THE EAST.

Earlier in the year, Richard completed a comprehensive review of his work, with thanks to the many activists who assisted through an open consultation, on-line survey and away day. Endorsed by the Labour East Regional Board, Richard is committed to being:

- A leader for pro-EU, pro-internationalist campaigning.
- A campaigner in elections, flying the Labour flag.
- A campaigner on the "big" issues in the region, and for our region in Europe.
- An effective representative as Labour's European Foreign Affairs Spokesperson, utilising these responsibilities within the region.

Richard is committed to continuing public visits and initiatives across the region, accepting that he will be spread more thinly, but will have to concentrate on regional rather than local CLP events. He wants to maintain and improve his relationship with party members through a more regularly updated website, the production of a regular e-bulletin, and through **advertised telephone conference calls**. **The first call will take place on Tuesday 19th July 2005 at 6.30pm, please ring 0207 162 6021 if you would like to join.** Please e-mail Richard if you would like a full copy of the review final report.



**LIFE'S A BEACH**—Richard debated proposed EU water quality rules with Anglian Water at **St. Osyth** beach live on the BBC "Politics Show".

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## BOOST FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

People with disabilities in Thurrock received a huge boost as Richard joined with local Labour Cllr. Tony Fish to open the new purpose-built Independence Resource Centre in **Grays**, (see picture below). In the European Parliament Richard hosted an international conference focussing on the business case for increased disability access to work.



## FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

As Labour's European Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs and Human Rights, Richard has:

- Joined talks with Turkish Parliamentarians in Istanbul to ensure that Turkey can begin EU entry negotiations on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Along with fellow Labour MEPs, met privately with Prime Minister Tony Blair to discuss the UK priorities for our six month Presidency of the European Union.
- Pressed successful amendments in the European Parliament's report on United Nations reform.
- Hosted a controversial meeting to discuss issues of contention between Turkey and Armenia.
- Commented to national and international media on UK removals to Zimbabwe including the hunger strikes at an immigration detention centre in **Bedfordshire**.

## PARLIAMENT NEWS IN BRIEF

The European Parliament has:

- Signed up to stricter standards for tuna fishing which will help protect other species such as dolphins, turtles and sharks.
- Approved new open government rules to the system for MEPs' expenses.
- Voted on a measure to freeze the funds of arms dealers in the conflict areas of Darfur in the Sudan and the Congo.
- Passed measures to increase safety measures for road vehicles across Europe.

## THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL CONTINUES

Following the recent council by-election successes for Labour in **Hemel Hempstead** and **Welwyn Hatfield**, there are further by-elections now under way for council seats in a number of CLP areas including **Rayleigh** and **Cambridge**. Please do keep Richard updated on any local by-elections and canvassing. In the follow up to the elections in May, Richard has reported to County Party meetings in **Hertfordshire** and **Essex**. Also in the constituency, Richard has attended post-election socials in **Newmarket**, **Brentwood**, **Chelmsford**, **Welwyn Garden City** and **Harwich**, paying tribute to Melanie Johnson and Ivan Henderson for their work.

## PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

In the week when the European Parliament supported tough new targets for energy conservation, Richard cut the ribbon on the new Energy Saving Trust Anglia Advice Centre at their stand in the East of England Show in **Peterborough**. Richard also visited Scope shops in **Hatfield** and **Newmarket** to ask people to recycle their old 'phones and printer cartridges. Richard has also been working to balance the needs of third world producers whilst ensuring a fair deal for **Norfolk** and **Suffolk** sugar beet farmers, as this month saw EU proposals for a 13.5% cut in subsidies.

## SO-FA SO GOOD!

Furniture Link **Bedfordshire**, a charity, which collects used furniture for re-use, sat Richard down on a donated sofa to launch their new fundraising campaign, (see picture below).



## See The European Parliament in Action

Richard Howitt MEP will be running two trips this year to view the Parliament in action. The Strasbourg trip will run from 6th to 9th September and the Brussels trip will run from 31st November to 2nd December. A great opportunity to see how it works. With sightseeing and shopping thrown in! To reserve your place contact Donna Tilley on **01223 240202** for a booking form and return the form with a cheque.

**DON'T DELAY-BOOK TODAY!**

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