



New Direction

# Geoffrey Van Orden's eDispatch



**Brussels**  
Christmas 2013



*"I didn't become an MEP in order to promote the EU - I want us to govern our own country. I go to Brussels to speak up for British interests and for the people of the East of England. My priorities are the prosperity and security of the United Kingdom."* **Geoffrey Van Orden MEP**



**Happy Christmas!**

**Fanny and I, and Caroline and Michael in the Brussels office, would like to send you our very best wishes for a Happy Christmas and a healthy and successful New Year!**

**2013**

It's been a momentous year when we have mourned the deaths of Margaret Thatcher and Nelson Mandela and celebrated the birth of Prince George. The Syrian tragedy has continued with great loss of life and millions displaced in misery. Islamists have brought instability to Egypt and a swathe of central Africa. The consequences of Edward Snowden's treachery continue to redound. Andy Murray won the Men's Singles at Wimbledon. And the year began and ended with the EU in our headlines - David Cameron's great speech in January on Britain and Europe, offering an In/Out referendum; the new measures being put in place in December to restrict EU migration. The European Parliament is now in recess until 6 January when we will be gearing up for our election campaign. Please give us every possible support in this.

## **BULGARIA AND ROMANIA**

Most immigration to Britain comes from outside Europe - three times the number (I keep pointing this out - I regularly publish the statistics). But there is concern about a wave of migration from Bulgaria and Romania.

### **CONSERVATIVE ACTION ON EU MIGRATION**

*Labour did nothing but leave the door open;  
UKIP have no power to do anything*

#### **Conservatives are turning off the benefits magnet**

For EU migrants:

- ◆ Restriction on out-of-work benefits
- ◆ Restriction on Housing Benefit
- ◆ Restriction on Jobseeker's Allowance
- ◆ Minimum earnings threshold before Income Support can be claimed
- ◆ Migrants begging or sleeping rough will be removed and barred from re-entry

And as part of our EU reform package, we will change "free movement" provisions:

- ◆ make free movement a "qualified right"
- ◆ end the export of child benefit payments

Conservatives are taking action. Home Secretary Theresa May has announced measures to limit the influx of European migrants. In June 2005, the previous Labour Government signed accession treaties giving all Romanians and Bulgarians the right to come to Britain from 1 January 2014. We have already been implementing tough transitional controls - something Labour didn't see as necessary when Poland and Hungary gained free access to Britain in 2004.

#### **I have campaigned on immigration for over a decade.**

Most recently, my Conservative colleagues and I have been working in public and behind the scenes to tighten up the immigration rules from Europe. There will now be big changes. We met Home Office officials and regional Police and Crime Commissioners a few weeks ago, to focus our efforts on tackling unwanted migration from Europe, and to explore what options are available to deport Europeans from Britain when they commit serious crimes.

## UKIP HYPOCRISY EXPOSED OVER ITS BULGARIA SLURS

Typically, I found myself under direct attack from Mr Farage last week. Because I was the Parliament's "rapporteur" for Bulgaria he seemed to think that I was singlehandedly responsible for Bulgaria joining the EU and therefore the potential migration problems that flow from this. This reveals more about UKIP than about me - its lack of understanding of the Parliament and the role of a rapporteur; its ignorance about the realities of immigration policy; and gross hypocrisy.

To take the last point first, while shrieking about migration to Britain by people from Bulgaria and other poorer countries Mr Farage and his followers in Brussels do the opposite. **Apparently UKIP object to Bulgaria but want the Ukraine!** The EFD political group, which Mr Farage leads in the European Parliament "strongly supports the EU membership aspirations of Ukrainian society and implementation of a visa-free regime for Ukrainians travelling to the EU". That was on 9 December. The Ukraine is far poorer than Bulgaria or Romania!

As the European Parliament's "rapporteur" (that's "reporter" not "sponsor", by the way) it was a privilege to get to know Bulgaria and to be able to shine **a spotlight on many of its problems**. These included the appalling situation in many 'orphanages' and children's homes; the prevalence of organised crime; and the need to properly integrate the Roma into everyday society through better housing, welfare, education and family planning – my aim was for happier Roma inside Bulgaria. Astonishingly powerful as I may be, **the decision to admit a new country to the EU is taken by unanimous agreement of the governments of all the EU countries**. Before this, these governments have to agree on the conditions for accession.

My 2006 Report on Bulgaria pointed out: "it is a matter for national governments, through the transitional arrangements in the Accession Treaty and other powers, to take decisions relating to migration issues such as restrictions on the freedom of movement for workers, recognising that this issue has become a matter of concern as a result of chaotic asylum and immigration policies unrelated to EU enlargement in a number of Member States". Regrettably, for all the years that it was in a position to act, the **Labour government failed to make changes to the accession agreement. Most importantly, it failed to reform our own immigration and welfare policies**.

UKIP is basically a very spiteful anti-Tory party (you should see some of the very nasty emails I have received following the latest Farage outburst). Instead of UKIP attacking the federalists and socialists it tries to undermine those, such as myself, who have fought long and hard for tight immigration policy and for radical change in our relationship with the EU. It is time people see them for what they are - Labour's secret weapon.

## MARGARET THATCHER AND NELSON MANDELA

Over the past week there has been an outpouring of tributes to Nelson Mandela, not least for his powerful message of reconciliation. Instead of South Africa descending into a bloody race war, he laid the foundations of a stable democracy, shared by black and white. Many have tried to associate themselves with Mandela and his anti-Apartheid struggle and have sought to use the opportunity to score party-political points. Margaret Thatcher has been criticised for not supporting stronger sanctions against the Apartheid regime. In fact, she acted with great wisdom and effectiveness. At the height of the Cold War struggle against communism, she did not want to see a strategically positioned, nuclear-armed South Africa falling into the Soviet camp. But she worked behind the scenes to bring about change and Mandela's release was in large measure due to her. South African former President FW de Klerk, and the British Ambassador at the time, Robin Renwick, have both testified to Thatcher's crucial role.

## MALALA WINS THE 2013 SARKHAROV PRIZE

We all remember the courage shown by Malala Yousafzai, the young Pakistani campaigner for education and women's rights, shot by the Taliban. That same courage was on display again as she addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg after being named the 2013 Sarkharov Prize winner, an acknowledgement of her commitment to freedom of thought. I think we can all agree that Malala, nominated for the prize by our Conservative group, has been a very worthy recipient.

**Please do not hesitate to ask for more information on any of the many topics on which I am engaged.**

**I welcome invitations to speak throughout the East of England**

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