



Marina Yannakoudakis

Conservative MEP for London



LATEST NEWS

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5% EU BUDGET BOMBSHELL

At a time when national and local governments are tightening their belts and the euro is in crisis, to say nothing of the sacrifices being made by families up and down the country, the European Parliament's vote to approve a 5.2% increase in the EU's budget is nothing short of shameful. I voted against the proposal to give the EU an additional £5.7 billion next year. There is a huge amount of waste in the EU budget. The Common Agricultural Policy alone amounts to £38 billion a year with unaccountable, ineffective EU aid costing a further £9 billion. Soaring administration costs have now reached nearly £7 billion and to make things worse, quick and easy savings of more than £1.5 billion suggested by the Conservatives were rejected out-of-hand by the parliament. And where were the so-called Eurosceptics to stop this? UKIP MEP for London Gerard Batten didn't even bother to turn up to vote against this appalling increase.



MARINA AROUND LONDON



MAYOR HUG: Boris and Marina

Two by-elections this month took Marina to Ilford and Islington to stump for local council candidates. Melvyn Marks was elected for Aldborough Ward in Redbridge on 10 November, while Oriel Hutchinson narrowly lost out in Islington. Marina was also out supporting GLA Candidate for Enfield and Haringey Andy Hemsted and, of course, the mayor at a Back Boris Super Saturday in Oakwood. Marina met with Boris himself at two fundraising events in Enfield. Local MPs Nick de Bois and David Burrowes also lent their support. Marina also attended the Brentford & Isleworth association's annual dinner this month as well as an event this month organised by the Hornsey & Wood Green and Tottenham associations; Deputy Mayor Kit Malthouse was the guest speaker in Brentford



REDBRIDGE: With candidate Melvyn Marks & Lee Scott MP



ISLINGTON: With Oriel Hutchinson & GLA candidate Naomi Newstead

with Margot James MP joining in Hornsey. Marina made a presentation to the Dulwich & West Norwood association as well as attending a dinner organised by the Ealing Southall association; Attorney General Dominic Grieve QC MP was the guest of honour there. Marina will be canvassing for Boris in Beckenham at the end of November before supporting the two Conservative candidates in the dual by-election in Coombe Vale Ward, Richmond.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Marina attended the Remembrance Sunday service at St Mary-at-Finchley on 13 November. Marina and local MP Mike Freer both laid wreaths at the church's war memorial. She said; "It is important that we recognise the sacrifices of our servicemen and women both past and present."



Marina is now on Twitter.
Follow her at @MarinaMEP



Find Marina on Facebook at
<http://facebook.com/MarinaMEP>

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FIGHTING DEMENTIA

An event was held at Europe House in London, where Dr. Simon Ridley, Head of Research at Alzheimer's Research UK, made a presentation on research to beat brain diseases such as Alzheimer's. The UK boasts the world's leading dementia scientists, and with more support and investment, they can deliver the advancements in detection, treatment and prevention that are needed. Marina, who serves as Conservative Health Spokesman in the European Parliament, is committed to finding new ways to tackle Alzheimer's. Last year she worked on a parliament report on the disease where she consulted widely with Alzheimer's groups in the UK. Marina made a number of recommendations on the rights of patients, family and carers as well as the best ways to raise awareness of dementia.

A WEEK IN THE LIFE

This is a shorter version of an article written by Marina for the Public Service Europe website. It describes her week in Strasbourg and London 17-22 October



MONDAY

The Conservatives campaign to scrap Strasbourg is well-known and the wasted hours of travel time and the considerable impact on the environment are well-documented. However, for me the worst part of getting to Strasbourg from London is the marathon run between the Gare du Nord and the Gare de l'Est in Paris. This month I find myself out of puff as I canter between the two stations and I resolve to take up some exercise over and above this monthly 700-yard dash. I'm speaking in the chamber in the afternoon in a debate on people with disabilities. I use my speech as an opportunity to talk about how disabled rights deserve the same attention as women's rights. I sit on the Women's Rights and Gender Equality committee in the parliament and I have long felt that its focus is too narrow. I believe the committee needs to become a full equalities committee to combat all discrimination.

TUESDAY

I'm speaking again in the evening, this time on the Maternity Leave Directive. The directive is currently "blocked" by the Council of the European Union (the EU institution which represents the 27 EU Member States) and the Women's Rights committee has decided to table a question asking why there's a hold up. I tell them why: 20 weeks of fully-paid compulsory maternity leave, two weeks fully-paid paternity leave and breastfeeding breaks of three hours a day are totally unrealistic.

WEDNESDAY

After an Environment committee meeting in the morning, I'm back in the chamber again in the afternoon to speak on a report on child abuse. I was the author of an opinion on the report in the Women's Rights committee. The report will block access to child pornography and criminalise the sexual grooming of children. We need to do everything we can to stop people accessing illegal images of children and that includes blocking.

THURSDAY

It's a mad dash back to London (including another out-of-breath sprint through Paris) for an event at the Carlton Club with party members from Oakleigh Park in north London. I was a councillor for Oakleigh Park for four years, so it's good to catch up with friends and supporters including MEP turned MP Theresa Villiers. Theresa and I are something of an anomaly at the Carlton Club, which only admitted women as full members in 2008. Even Margaret Thatcher was only given an honorary membership when she became leader of the Conservatives in 1975!

FRIDAY

I'm attending an event near Waterloo Station to launch the European Year of Volunteering roadshow. I've spent a lot of time as a volunteer and I've always found it to be enormously fulfilling, so I'm glad to lend my support. I'm joined by campaigner and broadcaster Esther Rantzen as well as dozens of London-based volunteers. There's an "intergenerational knitting group" where I fail to impress both young and old knitters as a drop more stitches than I knit. Icing cakes and gingerbread men leaves my hands coated in goo. The only task that I'm any good at is making a bird box where I cleave the wood with the efficiency and precision of a buzzsaw.

SATURDAY

I'm out campaigning in Ilford in north-east London for a council by-election. I go canvassing with the candidate and also deliver some leaflets. I'm always amazed by the sheer variety of letterboxes. Some are just plain holes in the door, others are more complicated affairs with double sprung flaps and layers of furry draft excluder in the middle. The draft excluders are particularly difficult to overcome with the leaflets or my hand often getting mangled in the process. I also count my fingers every time I hear a dog bark.

SUNDAY

I make lunch for the family: two of the children come round and I deliver to the third who is studying for his PhD.

If you would like Marina to attend a London event email: marina.yannakoudakis@europarl.europa.eu