



***Get the Vote Out!***

**October 2003 – June 2004**

**A report of the *Get the Vote Out!* campaign**

## Aims of the Project

- To raise awareness of the European Parliament elections
- To raise awareness of the work of the European Parliament
- To establish networks of interested individuals and organisations across the UK.
- To encourage interested individuals and organisations to campaign to raise awareness of the elections and the importance of voting in them.
- To make it easier for them to campaign by providing resources, guidelines and ideas.
- To generate new partnerships, plans and enthusiasm.
- To create a sense of a national campaign. To reassure those who are interested that they are not alone.

## Structure

- A launch event in London - September 2003
- 12 regional conferences taking place between October 2003 and April 2004.
- Production of campaigning material, including a Get the Vote Out! resources pack and a pamphlet of ideas and templates.
- 4 receptions in April - May 2004, to launch the resource packs and enthuse participants before the election campaign began in earnest.

## What we achieved

- We held a launch event, 12 regional conferences and 4 receptions. There were 17 events in total, in all regions of the UK. Events took place in Bath, Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Norwich and York.
- These events were attended by more than 700 people and involved more than 100 speakers.
- We contacted in the region of 15,000 people directly – telling them about the project and inviting them to take part in the campaign.
- We also contacted an estimated additional 10,000 people through email networks and by including news of GTVO events in newsletters and on websites.
- We have involved: trade unions, the media, students, voluntary and community groups, European networks, business representatives, local councillors, MPs, MEPs, regional politicians, political party organisers and many more....
- Representatives from all of these groups took part in the conferences and have campaigned amongst their networks and the wider population.
- We produced a resource pack, having listened to the participants who asked for resources to help them campaign effectively. The resource packs included:
  - Pamphlets containing templates for articles and press releases, ideas for innovative ways to publicise the elections, recommendations for how to run a successful Hustings event.
  - Postcards, posters, bookmarks, beer-mats and other publicity material
  - Leaflets giving information about the way the European Parliament, and the voting system work.
  - A video to raise awareness of the European Parliament and the importance of voting.
- Anyone is able to order the resources in bulk, or to download materials from the [www.europecounts.org.uk](http://www.europecounts.org.uk) website.
- We have distributed resource packs to more than 1500 individuals and organisations.
- There has been a huge demand for the resources. These have reached a wide cross-section of society including:
  - job seekers, through a network of job centres
  - residents of Newham, in a campaign to raise voter turn out to counter the BNP threat.
  - Students. Beer mats have been distributed amongst student bars.
  - and many more.

- The resources have enabled a range of people to campaign easily and effectively. Many of those who have contacted us may not otherwise have got involved in campaigning to increase voter turn-out.
- The project has been covered widely in the local and national media, including the Guardian newspaper and BBC2's Daily Politics television programme with Andrew Neil.

## **A summary of Media Coverage**

Article in London Elects 'Upturn in turnout?': September edition 2003

Article in Bath Chronicle 'Play a part in elections': October 23 2003 (report on South West event)

Radio interview on Bath FM: October 24 2003 (report on South West event)

Article on Epolitix.com: October 17 2003 (report on launch event)

Article in Progress magazine 'Doorstep challenge': November/December edition 2003

News piece on Metro FM: October 31 2003 (report on apathy/turnout/North East event)

TV interview with BBC North West: November 2003 (report on North West event) (will also be used in the run-up to elections)

Radio interview with BBC Radio Essex: November 25 2003 (report on East event)

Article in LGA First magazine: November edition 2003

Radio interview on BBC Radio Norfolk: November 28 2003 (report on event / EP elections)

Radio interview on Choice FM: December 10 2003 (report on London event / EP elections)

Radio interview on Passion for the Planet: December 11 2003 (report on London event / EP elections)

Article on Guardian Unlimited: December 12 2003 (report on London event / apathy / elections)

Article on BBC World Service (radio and website): December 12 2003 (report on London event / EP elections)

Article on EU Observer: December 12 2003 (report on the London event / EP elections)

Radio interview with BBC Radio York: January 9 2004 (report on Yorkshire and the Humber event / EP elections)

Article in Yorkshire Evening Post: January 10 2004 (report on Yorkshire and Humber event and Denis MacShane's speech)

Radio coverage on Red Dragon FM: February 6 2004 (report on Wales event and Rhodri Morgan's speech)

Report on Epolitix.com website: February 6 2004 (see above)

TV report on BBC Wales evening news: February 6 2004 (see above)

TV report on BBC Wales Politics Show: February 8 2004 (see above)

Article in The Birmingham Post. March 2004

Interview on GMTV Belfast. 23 April 2004

Mention in The Guardian Diary. 7 May 2004

Interview on BBC 2 The Daily Politics. 5 May 2004

Interview on BBC Southern Counties Radio. 26 May 2004

Interview on Radio Kent. 26 May 2004

## **Strengths and weaknesses**

### **Strengths**

- The number of people and organisations contacted and who became actively involved in the campaign
- Creating the opportunity for new contacts and networks to be made, across the UK
- The calibre of speakers and participants
- Levels of enthusiasm and ideas generated
- Response to the resource packs
- The diversity of those reached by the campaign

### **Weaknesses**

- Having to change the structure and give up on the idea of Hustings events
- Administrative errors
- Low take-up from the business community
- Low turn-out at some of the events

## **Lessons learnt**

### **• Timing**

Looking back it was agreed that it would have been better to hold all of the events within a shorter period of time – ideally around March. This would have allowed the campaign to build up greater momentum, as it travelled from one town to another, around the country (a little like the political party battle buses).

Some of the events were held in September / October 2003. This is too far ahead of the June elections. There was a sense of panic about getting started on the project, when in retrospect it would have been better to spend longer planning what would work best and not hold events until nearer the elections.

### **• Learn lessons**

Not enough lessons seemed to have been learnt from the previous campaign. Eg. no business representatives had attended in 1999, so why did we try to hold a business session again this time round? (Although it was admitted that it is incredibly hard to get businesses involved in this kind of event).

### **• Clear purpose**

These kind of events succeed or fall flat depending on the audience. There needed to be a clearer sense of purpose - some participants weren't really sure of why they were there. We were not intending to use the 'Vote, it's your duty' argument, but there was a tendency for the events to feel a little paternalistic in attitude. The events could seem to be an uneasy mixture between an active workshop and a listening conference, because of the mix of panel discussion and break-out groups.

### **• Professionalism**

Some of the events appeared amateurish. This did not give over the right impression. The aim was for participants to feel part of a national campaign.

### **• Resources**

There was a suggestion that we should have produced the resources earlier, as it sometimes felt as if we were asking participants to do all the hard work. The resources are useful in

prompting ideas. However, most of the group agreed that they were much more use nearer election day.

The take up of the resources has emphasised the great need that there was for them.

- **Separate the audiences**

There was a suggestion that the events could have worked better if we had separated the audience into interest groups. For example, we could have held 3 events only for young people, two for the business community etc. Sometimes the range of participants was too broad – although this was partly remedied by the use of break out groups separating participants into different interest groups.

- **Local government**

At first, we were dubious about the relevance of local government representatives, to a European election campaign. However, we realised that in fact they could be very helpful because they were often willing to include European publicity with materials they were putting out for the local elections. They also had relevant campaign experiences to share.

- **Work together**

Initially, the project partners did not spend enough time discussing the project together. There was also scope for greater co-ordination between the project and the national campaigns of the Electoral Commission and the European Parliament.

- **Think differently**

It may be that a series of regional events is not the most effective way to campaign. Perhaps it would have been more effective to go into individual organisations and run workshops, or invite charities or other organisations with experience of innovative marketing campaigns. Charities such as Age Concern now make their own election manifestos.

## **Conclusion**

The project is challenging by its very nature. Creating enthusiasm around the European Parliament elections was always going to be tough. However, the project had a successful strategy in that it chose to involve those who were already interested in the issues, and then to ask them to reach out to people within their networks and communities who were less engaged. In this way the campaign worked as a catalyst to get others campaigning rather than as a direct campaigning organisation itself. We were aiming to preach to those who were at least semi-converted and we reached a much wider eventual audience through this pyramid strategy.

There were some missed opportunities where we could have tapped into existing networks more effectively. However, in the majority we were effective in creating a momentum around the campaign and in making contacts with interested organisations across Britain. Requests from the media for interviews confirm that the campaign was recognised and respected.

We produced resources that were useful and fulfilled a need, as has been demonstrated by the sheer number of requests for the materials. They were also flexible, as has been demonstrated by the range of organisations that have made use of them.

Overall, the project has been successful in highlighting the European Parliament elections and in energising campaigners to help get the vote out.

## **Appendix**

### **Details of individual events**

#### **London**

Attlee Suite, Portcullis House, Westminster, **Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2003**

Speakers:

Polly Toynbee, Columnist, *The Guardian*

Rt Hon Peter Hain MP, Leader of the House of Commons (*Labour*)

Lord Tim Razzall, Chair, Liberal Democrats Election Campaign Committee (*Liberal Democrats*)  
Jean Lambert MEP (*Green*)  
Cllr Eric Ollerenshaw, Leader of the Conservative Group, Greater London Assembly (*Conservative*)

## **Bath**

The Guildhall, High Street, Bath, BA1 5AW, **Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2003**

### Speakers:

Nigel Crossley, South West TUC  
Paul Crossley, Leader, Bath and North East Somerset Council  
Gil Streets, Chair, South West LGA  
Alex Foulkes, Press and Campaigns Officer, Electoral Reform Society  
Laura Willoughby, London Borough of Islington  
Peter Clarke, South West Regional Assembly  
Isabel Owen, Director, South West in Europe  
Glyn Ford MEP  
Graham Booth MEP  
Simon Whitmore, Business for Sterling South West  
Can Okar, University of Bristol Union  
David Taylor, No Campaign South West  
Blossom Young, Chair, British Youth Council  
David Roberts, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate

### Delegates:

36 delegates (13 from local councils, 6 from political parties, 4 from NGOs, 4 from unions, 2 from student unions, 1 from central government, 6 individuals)

### Key commitments:

Radstock Council – starting a daisy chain email  
Gloucester City Council – university debate, schools activities, promotions in libraries and newsletters.

## **Newcastle**

Civic Centre, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 - **Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2003**

### Speakers:

Matthew McGregor, No Campaign  
Cllr Greg Stone, Executive Member North East in Europe  
Stephen Hughes MEP (*Labour*)  
Kevin Rowan, Regional Secretary, Northern TUC  
Cllr Tony Flynn, Leader, Newcastle City Council (*Labour*)  
Mr George Cowcher, Chair, North East Chambers of Commerce  
Dr Keith Shaw, Northumbria University  
Fiona Hall, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate (*Liberal Democrat*)  
Craig Jones, President, Durham Students' Union  
Chris Fabby, National Officer, Unison  
Mr Martin Callanan MEP (*Conservative*)  
Nic Best, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate (*Green*)  
Nick Wallis, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate (*Labour*)  
Richard Moss, Political Correspondent, BBC Look North

### Delegates:

32 delegates (7 from local councils, 3 from students' unions, 11 from political parties, 3 from unions, 6 from NGOs, 2 individuals)

Key commitments:

Alan Campbell MP  
99 Howard Street  
North Shields  
NE30 1NA

'Cooperation- particularly to encourage spreading the word about the elections throughout different groups in society. Eg Students working with councillors and then with school children.'

Helen Tung  
Western Bank  
Sheffield  
S10 2TG

'Lingua Club- through discussion and language group to discuss issue.'  
'Contact six Eastern European countries and form link for media coverage.'  
'Meals for children- bring in variation.'  
'Competition essays on Europe.'

Tom Blenkinsop  
77 The Willows  
Marton  
Middlesborough  
TS7 8BP

'Lobby council for advertising on bus tickets and beer mats in pubs.'

Oliver Wood  
162 Rothbury Terrace  
Heaton  
Newcastle  
NE6 5DD

(Representative from Newcastle collage's student union.)

'Running awareness campaign in collage'

Colin Hayton  
44 Attleee Estate  
Tow Law  
Bishop Auckland  
Co. Durham  
DL13 4LG

'Initiatives on market days pointing out origins of fruit etc and how much of these items we export to Europe'

## **Manchester**

Mechanics Institute, Princess Street, Manchester - **Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2003**

Speakers:

**Hazel Blears MP**, Minister of State, Home Office  
Gary Arthurs, North West in Europe

Terry Wynn MEP (*Labour*)  
Cllr Derek Boden, Leader, North West Regional Assembly (*Labour - Bury  
MBC*)  
Sir Bill Connor, General Secretary, USDAW

Delegates:

50 delegates (17 from local councils, 6 from students' unions, 9 from political parties, 3 from unions, 4 from NGOs, 1 from business and 11 individuals)

Key commitments:

Alex Black  
171 Hoole lane  
Chester  
CH2 3EQ

'Going to press for European Accession Celebration Day 01/05/04'  
'Euro Evening 16/01/04 for party members'

P. Scott  
28 Whitelow Road  
Stockport  
SK4 4BY

'Get council to (organise) accession celebration on 1<sup>st</sup> May'

Derek Boden  
C/O Bury MBC  
Leaders Office  
Town Hall  
Bury  
BL9 0SW

'Competition in schools for Euro Accession Picture'  
'Event involving residents originally from accession states celebrating accession, 1<sup>st</sup> May'

Kate Robinson  
Electoral Registration Office  
Town Hall  
Wallasey  
CH44 8ED

'Issue birthday card instructing how/why to vote.'  
'Tie in advertising campaign with Euro 2004'  
'Send calendars to voters'

Joanne Peel  
29<sup>th</sup> June Ave.  
Blackpool  
Lancs.  
FY44IQ

'Letters to 18 year olds with FAQ sheet regarding voting issues'  
'Tie in with Euro 2004 football with Euro Election'

Methodist Church Burnley Circuit – in church magazine article on the importance of voting.



Chester Councillor – election date on all council correspondence, including franking and banners.

Macclesfield Council – to have election date on franking stamp.

## **Norwich**

City Hall, Norwich - **Friday 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2003**

### Speakers:

**Andrew Duff MEP** (*Liberal Democrat*)

Richard Normington, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate  
(*Conservative*)

Margaret Wright, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate (*Green*)

Clive Needle, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate (*Labour*)

Helen Abraham, Public Policy Director Accenture eDemocracy Services

Deborah McGurran, BBC Politics Show East

Ned Glasier, Communications Officer, Union of University of East Anglia

Students / Kate Willett, Chair, Norwich Young Greens

Susan Warr, Vice Chair, Norfolk Federation of Women's Institutes

### Delegates:

37 delegates (7 from local councils, 10 from NGOs, 11 from political parties, 3 from unions, 2 from students' unions, 1 from the media, 1 business and 2 individuals)

### Key commitments:

Simon Wright  
152 Newmarket Road  
Norwich  
Norfolk  
NR4 6SB

'LDYS have produced European Mock Election pack for schools that include information briefings on EU and party policies.'

'Will produce tabloid newspaper including Europe snippets aimed at youth and students.'

Suffolk Inter-faith resource centre

Will be disseminating information among their networks to raise awareness of the elections.

East of England Faiths Agency

Will use their email database to remind people to vote.

Downing College JCR

Advertise date of the election and have a meeting about how to raise turnout.

Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum

Arrange an event for community groups about the elections, will monitor the translation of official information and attempt to set up Question Time meetings.

## **London**

CBI Conference Centre, Centrepont, London, WC1A 1DU - **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2003**

### Speakers:

**Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean**, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
Mary Honeyball (*Labour*)  
Theresa Villiers MEP (*Conservative*)(*tbc*)  
Baroness Sarah Ludford MEP (*Liberal Democrat*)(*tbc*)  
Jean Lambert MEP (*Green*)  
Mark Platt, Senior Policy Adviser, EU Affairs, CBI  
Polly Toynbee, Columnist, *The Guardian*  
Jules Mason, Development Officer, British Youth Council  
Sophie Livingstone, Public Affairs Director, Groundwork UK

Delegates:

99 delegates (24 from NGOs, 19 from local councils, 9 from students' unions, 16 from the media, 11 from political parties, 5 from a Bulgarian delegation, 14 from central government, 4 from unions, 3 from businesses, 4 individuals)

Key commitments:

Muhammad Ruhani (MD)  
London Metropolitan University  
Students Union  
Joy Gardner House  
2 Goutson Street  
London  
E1 7TP

'Run Micro-Campaign with S.U. and students union'  
Disseminating information about the work of the EU and its MEPs

Jane Doogan  
[jane.doogan@ulu.lon.ac.uk](mailto:jane.doogan@ulu.lon.ac.uk), or tel: 020 7664 2006

Organising a Hustings event, University of London, 11<sup>th</sup> May

Lucy Watt  
[lucy.watt@workinglinks.co.uk](mailto:lucy.watt@workinglinks.co.uk)

Giving out postcards promoting voting to all job seekers that pass through their job centres, nationally.

Age Concern  
Running a campaign to mobilise older voters.

CBI  
Considering ways to campaign through member businesses.

**York**

Guildhall, York – **Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> January 2004**

Speakers:

**Dr Denis MacShane MP**, Minister for Europe, Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
Linda McAvan MEP (*Labour*)  
Timothy Kirkhope MEP (*Conservative*)  
Julia Gash, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate (*Liberal Democrat*)  
Mark Hill, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate (*Green*)

Len Tingle, Political Editor, BBC Yorkshire  
Helen Tung, International Students' Officer, Sheffield Union of Students  
Colin Stroud, Chief Executive, York CVS

Delegates:

103 delegates (33 from local councils, 38 from NGOs, 22 from political parties, 2 from unions, 3 from businesses, 2 from students' unions, 3 individuals)

Key commitments:

C. Stroud  
15 Priory Street  
York  
YA 6ET

'Organise hustings event at Priory Street Lake.'

Kari Mawhood  
15 Heptonstall Road  
Hebden Bridge  
HX7 6AW

'Including election date in 18<sup>th</sup> birthday letters with postal vote application forms.'

Emma Jones  
[jhm1emj@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:jhm1emj@leeds.ac.uk)

Candidates' Question Time on Friday, 7th May - Leeds University.  
Also canvassing in Halls of Residence, putting posters up, encouraging students to apply for postal votes etc.

Doncaster MBC

Working with parish councils to disseminate information about the elections.

World Development Movement York Group

Information about the elections available on their street stalls in the city centre and also via networks such as the Fair Trade Forum and Trade Justice Forum.

GMB Union  
Sponsoring a 'Love Music Hate Racism' festival, which will include reference to the importance of voting in the European elections.

## Edinburgh

Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh - **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2004**

Speakers:

**Douglas Alexander, MP**, Minister of State  
Elsbeth Attwooll MEP (*Liberal Democrats*)  
Ian Hudghton MEP (*SNP*)  
David Martin MEP (*Labour*)  
Struan Stevenson MEP (*Conservative*)  
Roland Diggins, Government Affairs Manager, SCDI

Brian Taylor, BBC Scotland  
Maureen Rooney, Senior Development Officer, YouthLink Scotland  
Jackie Petitqueux, SCVO

Delegates:

76 Delegates (18 from local authorities, 11 from NGO's, 12 from political parties, 2 from unions, 16 from youth groups and student unions, four from the media, 2 from the Scottish Parliament, 4 from businesses, 4 from other government agencies and four individuals).

Key commitments:

Derek MacLeod  
St Mary's Place  
St Andrews  
Fife  
KY16 9UZ

'Hold a pub quiz based on Europe.'

Stefanie Kosinski  
15 Melville Terrace  
Edinburgh  
EH9 1LY

Organising a multi-society event.

Dan Wynn  
13 Melville St  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7PE

'Organise training events for youth organisations'

Daniel Wynn  
[Daniel.Wynn@scotlandineurope.org.uk](mailto:Daniel.Wynn@scotlandineurope.org.uk)

Organising a street stall in the Ocean shopping centre in Edinburgh, Saturday May 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Asa Gunven  
Young Federal Union Scotland  
[asa.gunven@federalunion.org.uk](mailto:asa.gunven@federalunion.org.uk)

Europe-Day Themed Pub Quiz, **8<sup>th</sup> May**, in Edinburgh

**Cardiff**

St David's Suite, Millennium Stadium, Cardiff - **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2004**

Speakers:

**Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan**, First Minister, National Assembly for Wales  
Gareth Williams, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate, Labour  
Leanne Wood, AM, Shadow Social Justice Minister, Plaid Cymru  
Albi Fox, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate, Conservative  
John Williams, Liberal Democrats  
Ashok Ahir, Managing Editor, Political Programmes, BBC Cymru

Nick Bradley, President, University of Wales, Swansea Students' Union  
Phil Flander, Europe Director, Wales Council for Voluntary Action  
Glenys Kinnock, MEP

Delegates:

88 delegates (17 from local authorities, 15 from NGO's, 20 from political parties, 2 from unions, 8 from youth groups and student unions, 2 from the media, 1 from business, 13 from other government agencies and 10 individuals).

## **Birmingham**

Banqueting Suite, Council House, Birmingham – **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2004**

Speakers:

**Khalid Mahmood MP**

Tony Carroll, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate, Labour Party

Paul Tilsley, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate, Liberal Democrats

Chris Lennard, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate, Green Party

Adrian Goldberg, Presenter, BBC Politics Show

Kirsten Jongberg, President, University of Birmingham Guild of Students

Terry Potter, Policy Director, Birmingham Voluntary Service Council

Delegates:

68 delegates (26 from local authorities, 11 from NGO's, 12 from political parties, 2 from unions, 13 from youth groups and student unions, 1 from the media, 1 from another government agency and 2 individuals).

Key commitments:

Gerald Nebhard  
Business and Innovations Centre  
Aston Science Park  
Love Lane  
Aston  
Birmingham

'As an organisation we are convening a conference on 15<sup>th</sup> March about challenge to democracy and need to vote. We will soon join campaign/event by TUC as well.'

Karl Monsen-Elvik  
Suite C, 94 Main Street,  
Wishaw  
ML2 7LU

'We have been developing and delivering citizenship development learning programmes to groups of local people interested in being more engaged in local community and democratic life.'

'Constituency visits to Scottish Parliament, Westminster and Brussels.'

## **Brighton**

Ballroom, Sussex Arts Club, Brighton - **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2004**

Speakers:

**Rt Hon Theresa May MP**, Shadow Secretary of State for Environment and Transport  
Dr Caroline Lucas MEP (*Green*)  
Sharon Bowles, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate (*Liberal Democrats*)  
Roy Perry MEP (*Conservative*)  
Simon Burgess, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate (*Labour*)  
Peter Henley, Presenter, The Politics Show for the South

Delegates:

52 delegates (16 from local authorities, 17 from NGO's, 8 from political parties, 3 from youth groups or student unions, 1 from the media, two from other government agencies and four individuals).

## **Nottingham**

Ball Room, Council House, Old Market Square, Nottingham - **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2004**

Speakers:

**Nick Palmer, MP**

Mel Read MEP, Labour Party  
Representative, Conservative Party (tbc)  
Bill Newton Dunn MEP, Liberal Democrats  
Brian Fewster, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate, Green Party  
Marilyn Swain, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate, UKIP  
Matt Wallace, President, Nottingham Trent University Union of Students  
Katrina Bull, Director, East Midlands in Europe

Delegates:

89 delegates (21 from local authorities, 14 from NGO's, 22 from political parties, 3 from unions, 7 from youth groups or student unions, 1 from the media, 2 from other government agencies and 19 individuals).

Key commitments:

Alistair Watson  
[president@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:president@staffs.ac.uk)

Stafford University Students Union are running a stall in the week running up to the elections.

## **Belfast**

Belfast Waterfront Hall, Belfast - **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2004**

Speakers:

**Edward McVeigh**, European Commission, Northern Ireland  
Bairbre De Brun, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate, Sinn Fein  
Martin Morgan, Prospective European Parliamentary Candidate, Social Democratic and Labour Party  
James Nicholson MEP, Ulster Unionist Party  
Jim Allister, Democratic Unionist Party  
Jim Fitzpatrick, Presenter, BBC Politics Show  
Conor McGinn, Northern Ireland Youth Forum  
Lisa McElherron, Public Affairs Manager, Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action  
Glynn Roberts, Federation of Small Businesses

Delegates:

46 delegates (7 from local authorities, 15 from NGO's, 5 from political parties, 2 from unions, 3 from youth groups or student unions, 2 from businesses, 6 from other government agencies and 6 individuals).

Key commitments:

Young Farmers Union

Organising public meetings and hopefully a hustings.

Glyn Roberts, Federation of Small Businesses

Running a European night to inform local businesses about European issues.

## **Glasgow**

Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art, **Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> April**

Introduced by Ruth Wishart, independent broadcaster and journalist

### **Summary of the event:**

The event was attended by around 50 people, including political party activists, prospective candidates, teachers and media (including the political editor of the Sunday Post). Representatives from local government, voluntary organisations, trades and student unions and local branches of the European Movement also attended. The venue was excellent and there was a good atmosphere. People stayed late. The reception was also attended by an enthusiastic group of young people. However, there were two administrative errors: the SNP was left off the Scotland key contacts list and the Northern Ireland leaflets were also distributed in the packs, mistakenly.

## **Cardiff**

Pierhead Room, **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April**

Introduced by Rhodri Morgan, First Minister of the Welsh Assembly

### **Summary of the event:**

The Cardiff event was well-attended (up to 50 attendees) and the venue (an exemplary educational resource centre about the Welsh Assembly) was very appropriate and a good talking point. More than 5 Welsh Assembly members attended the reception, as well as local government representatives and people from charities, unions, local branches of political parties and many individuals. Again the reception was attended by an enthusiastic group of young people and a very good response to the resource packs. There were many enquiries as to how to obtain more resources. The Welsh Assembly have asked for an official report on the campaign to discuss at their next European and External Affairs Committee meeting.

## **York**

Bedern Hall, Bartlegarth, St Andrewgate, York, **Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> April**

Introduced by Len Tingle, BBC Politics Show

### **Summary of the event:**

The event was fairly well-attended by around 40 delegates, including 4 sixth formers who showed other delegates the DVD they had made. This included interviews with the Prospective European candidates. The atmosphere was not as lively as at other events, partly because chairs around the edge of the room enabled attendees to sit rather than mingle. However, new contacts were made, ideas and experiences shared and participants found the resource packs useful. Linda MacAvan, the Labour MEP, attended and shared her experiences with the sixth formers and others present.

### **London**

Foreign Press Association, **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May**

Introduced by David Dimbleby and Dr Denis MacShane, MP, Minister for Europe

### **Summary of event:**

The event was attended by around 60 attendees including MPs, MEPs, media (including BBC and Guardian journalists) and was the most high profile of the receptions. This was partly due to the profile of the speakers and because of the wider networks of interested organisations in London. There was a very lively atmosphere and attendees stayed well past the official end of the event. The reception was a good culmination of the campaign.

### **Other ideas for actions – a summary**

- Leaflets/information packs in local council offices/libraries/citizens advice bureaus.
- Banner and links on council website.
- Banners on main streets.
- Word of mouth with colleagues, family and friends.
- Franking on all council mail.
- Leaflets specifically detailing what the EU has done for the local area.
- Targeting minority groups.
- Advertising in local papers and on radio.
- Stress the BNP problem (the need of coming out against racism).
- Use of celebrities to support campaign.
- Use of text messaging as a way of appealing to young people.

### **Summary of evaluation forms**

Generally very positive feedback. Mostly 4s and 5s (when asked to mark various aspects of the event out of 5 .)

Most positive feedback on: Choice of keynote speakers, Choice of panel discussion and conference format.

### **Comments:**

Politicians were often too keen to stray into party politics and away from the agenda in hand.



Some of the break-out sessions were too squashed up. There needed to be more space as it was often difficult to hear. There was some criticism of the action group format, the balance between the number of participants in different groups.

Aimed at organisations who had their own agendas, rather than at people in the street.

There wasn't enough emphasis put on raising awareness and knowledge of what the European Parliament does.