



**Plaid**  
PLAID CYMRU

# On Your Side

Plaid Cymru European Manifesto 2009





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**Plaid Cymru European Candidates: Eurig Wyn, Jill Evans MEP, Ioan Bellin & Natasha Asghar**

## Foreword

We have a clear choice at this European election. It's a choice between Plaid, a party on your side and a strong voice for Wales in Europe; or an out of touch Labour party that puts the interests of London government before the interests of the people of Wales.

Plaid is on your side, campaigning for fairness for everyone during these difficult economic times. We have worked hard to get the best deal for Wales from the European Union, and we will continue working over the next five years to make sure that Wales benefits fully from European policies.

We believe in an open and democratic Europe of peoples and nations, with decisions made as close to the citizen as possible. We believe that European Union membership has been good for Wales, but it must reform to reflect the wishes of its people.

We will fight to give Wales a stronger voice in the European Union. We need direct access for Welsh Ministers at the EU's Council of Ministers. A strong and effective working relationship between Wales and Europe will be vital over the next five years to secure the best deal on key policies such as future EU Structural Funds and reforms in agriculture.

Plaid Cymru has years of experience representing Wales in Europe. In the European Parliament we work in partnership with the Scottish National Party and MEPs from Catalonia, the Basque Country, Flanders and elsewhere. This strengthens our hand to fight for Wales and gives us more influence in the European Parliament. We have successfully defended and furthered Welsh interests on countless occasions – on European funding, workers' rights, support for agriculture, promoting local food, equality for women and young people and the status of the Welsh language.

We are an internationalist party and we work with our European partners to promote peaceful conflict resolution and oppose aggressive military action. In the European Parliament we opposed the Iraq war, supported the closure of Guantanamo and an end to torture, a ban on land mines and cluster bombs, nuclear disarmament and a peaceful resolution of the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

**We will defend the interests of all the people of Wales in the European Parliament.**

**We are on your side.**

**Jill Evans MEP**





# On Your Side

## Weathering the Storm

**Plaid Cymru understands that these are uncertain times.** The rising cost of living is having a massive impact not only on hardworking families but on young people and the elderly too. Plaid Cymru believes in a fair society, one in which politics works for the many, not for the few. **Plaid Cymru will always put the needs of the people of Wales first in campaigning for every penny of European Structural Funds.** Over the next five years, these Structural Funds will account for £1 billion of investment in the Welsh economy, regenerating our economy, providing vital support for over 28,000 businesses and 240,000 individuals, improving the environment and ensuring sustainable transport.

The global financial crisis has now begun to hurt both rural and urban areas of Wales; we recognise and understand the pain caused by growing unemployment, rising fuel costs and increasing uncertainty about the future. **The Plaid-driven Welsh government is taking decisive action to support individuals and businesses through the recession** with a huge investment in skills, training and apprenticeship programmes, an EU-supported £1 million scheme to help businesses develop ideas which will contribute both jobs and cutting edge new products to the Welsh economy and a commitment to community regeneration so that Wales is in the best possible position to benefit from the economic upturn when it comes.

Plaid Cymru believes that Wales can develop an innovative, world class, thriving economy. Yet Labour in Westminster has consistently ignored the distinctive Welsh voice in Europe; **our communities, our businesses and our employees deserve to be the top priority of Welsh MEPs – but we cannot trust the London parties to put us first.**

We believe that the Westminster government's refusal to adopt the euro was not in the interests of the Welsh economy. We believe that the manufacturing and agriculture industries have suffered most as a result of this policy and **that the euro should be adopted on the right terms, at the right time.**

The steady loss of manufacturing jobs has caused serious economic and social damage to many Welsh communities. The Welsh GVA is still 25.5% less than that of the UK and the gap between rich and poor continues to widen. We believe that independence will give us the strong voice we need in Europe and the legislative ability to implement **a truly integrated and sustainable approach to the development of Wales, incorporating economic, environmental and social concerns.**

Plaid Cymru MEPs will always speak up for Wales in Europe. **We will campaign for European funding to go towards building a modern public transport system for Wales,** with cheaper and faster rail links between the south and the north, mid and west, as well as the removal of hidden subsidies for air travel and the introduction of tax on aviation fuel, dedicated bus lanes and trolley buses in cities and congestion charging where appropriate. We will support the improvement of commuter services from the valleys and major transport improvements throughout Wales.



This green transport strategy must be at the forefront of a general changing attitude across the European continent. Plaid Cymru believes that connecting a twenty first century Wales to the European continent must be a priority in the coming months and years, not only in the provision of improved, modern high speed and electric train services across all of Wales, but also in new measures to help Welsh hauliers survive the economic downturn.

Strong links must be forged between Wales and Europe, not only in transport, but also in technology. We support recent recommendations to make broadband access a universal service obligation and **we want to see every community in Wales able to access high broadband speeds of at least 8Mbps**. Connecting Wales to the world in this way will encourage productivity, innovation and job creation, and will revitalise our rural communities by giving people a real choice in where and how they work. In addition **we want to see compulsory network sharing between mobile phone companies in Wales**.

**We will continue to support adult learning and workforce skills**, a strategy which will increase the employability and earnings' capacity of the Welsh workforce. In a changing economy, we must encourage enterprise and innovation as well as high-level IT and technology skills. **We support the digitisation of the National Library in Aberystwyth as a fantastic democratic and educational tool which benefits all the people of Wales.**

The economy of Wales is largely based around small-medium sized enterprises, often family firms or small businesses in a close-knit community. These companies will face turbulent times in the coming months: **Plaid Cymru is committed to working with Convergence Funding areas** to increase GDP, provide additional support for small-medium sized companies and give incentives to open new businesses in these areas.

Plaid Cymru recognises that the changing world demands changing industries and will continue to support the emerging Welsh alternative energy industry. The One Wales government is committed to a sustainable economy and an All Wales Green Jobs Strategy. There is no better way to create new business opportunities and meet environmental targets. A huge programme of investment to fight climate change is part of the solution to the current financial crisis. **We believe that European funding should be channelled into a substantial investment programme to fight climate change, which will create sustainable jobs and sustainable economic growth.** This green new deal should invest in infrastructure, energy efficiency, micro-generation and the development of renewable energy to ensure that the environmental benefits will be felt for the rest of the century as a legacy of the current economic downturn.



Plaid Cymru is on your side. We understand that not only are the people of Wales worried about their jobs and the economy, but also about the rising cost of food, petrol and heating prices. We know this because we are the only party based in Wales, working solely for the people of Wales. In 2008, the Wales Plaid-driven government took swift action to help those struggling with mortgage payments by investing millions in the mortgage rescue scheme. **Plaid Cymru has called for a windfall tax on energy companies' profits and for all EU member states to agree to make a concerted Europe-wide effort to tax the profits of these multi-billion pound businesses** so that help can be given to people struggling with high gas and electricity bills. **We also call for a Europe-wide suspension of VAT on domestic gas and electricity for the next two years** to alleviate the problems of those affected by fuel poverty.

## People Before Profit

For Plaid Cymru, people always come first. We believe in a Europe which offers everyone the opportunity to travel and work in other countries as long as their rights are protected and respected. **We will continue to work to end discrimination and worker exploitation through the adoption of stricter laws and improved workers' rights throughout Europe.** If it's easier and cheaper for companies to sack workers in Wales than in other countries, that's exactly what will happen. We are committed to stronger European legislation to prevent this.

**We supported the European directive on temporary workers' rights** which the Labour government blocked for so long and we are committed to protecting workers rights when companies are taken over – unlike Labour, who voted against this. We have fought hard for the right to proper information and consultation of workers by companies, which could have prevented so many major redundancies. **We supported the Working Time Directive which protects people from having to work excessive hours.**

In 2009, UK trades union members have fewer rights to take industrial action than in 1906. **We will support better protection against the dismissal or victimisation of workers taking part in lawful action; we will also support action to prevent the use of agency workers replacing striking workers.**



**Plaid Cymru believes in equal working conditions for economic migrants:** we are committed to an increase in the minimum wage and improved support, guidance and resources for local authorities working with immigrant communities. At present the Gangmasters Licensing Authority has no real presence in Wales: **we call for both a widened remit and a permanent Welsh office to ensure that the exploitation of workers is tackled on the ground.**

We believe in a Europe where wages and jobs are protected; a Europe where conditions are equal all over the continent. We believe in a Europe of harmonised working conditions, where employers cannot drive down pay by exploiting cheap labour in another country. To ensure that companies are prevented from undercutting local pay rates and exploiting workers, we support an urgent revision of the Posted Workers Directive.

**We do not believe in a market-run Europe which values profit over people.** The current global financial crisis proves that a Europe which promotes privatisation and deregulation is a Europe in which our banking services collapse in a flurry of irresponsible lending, our post offices close and our communities wither. **We want a European-wide minimum state guarantee on savings of €150,000.** If the banks are going to gamble with our money, there must be safety measures in place to ensure that we, the ordinary savers, do not suffer from their recklessness.

Plaid Cymru also believes that it is high time that the banks give something back to the people for whom they work. To this end, **we call for a Europe-wide tax on international banking transactions** which would raise billions for meeting global challenges such as international development and climate change. Every time currency is traded across European borders by bankers, this Tobin tax would help to stabilise the volatile money markets, encourage accountability and promote responsibility in the banking sector.

**Plaid Cymru is the party for Wales in Europe and will always stand up for workers' rights and the economic needs of the people of Wales.**

**We are on your side.**





# Standing Up For Our Communities

## Protecting our Future

**Plaid Cymru believes that climate change is the defining issue of contemporary politics and the greatest threat we face.** As the Party of Wales, we have a unique responsibility to meet this challenge and to offer clear and positive leadership to the people of Wales. We put the issues of climate change and sustainability at the heart of our policy-making.

The future of our planet depends on urgent action to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and adopting a different, sustainable way of living. The world's economy has been driven by oil which is running out. The earth's temperature is rising and we have to act to prevent catastrophe. We can't fight climate change by continuing with the policies that caused it. **A sustainable lifestyle means sustainable energy, agriculture, transport, homes and communities.**

The One Wales government took a major step forward with its commitment to annual carbon reduction-equivalent emissions of 3% per year by 2011 in areas of devolved competence. It has since become obvious that climate change is happening more quickly and is having far worse results than originally thought. **We now call for an EU commitment to an annual 9% carbon emissions reduction target.**

**A long-term plan to expand research and development, invest in new skills and training and provide government support for Welsh businesses would encourage a pioneering home-grown Welsh alternative energy industry.**

We believe that Wales could lead the world in the implementation of climate technology which will give all people in Wales a more fulfilling and secure lifestyle, within a lively and responsible society.

To take full advantage of these opportunities, we need powers for the National Assembly over energy policies. And we need the political will to give priority to investment in renewable energy. While we are still dependent on coal and gas and have reserves in Wales, we will support the use of indigenous supplies rather than imports. We support research into technologies such as carbon capture and storage, but it is not a green light for continuing on our present course. To ensure that, we support emissions performance standards for all new power stations and **we reaffirm our total opposition to the construction of any new nuclear power stations in Wales.**

Plaid Cymru is committed to an energy strategy which will create jobs and take full advantage of our natural resources. The energy sector in Wales currently accounts for almost 40% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. **European funding can be used to help restructure the Welsh energy sector** to fully embrace microgeneration, tidal lagoons, small scale hydro electric schemes, sea bed turbines and other sustainable power generation schemes. It could **support poorer regions in making the transition to a low carbon economy and society.** We have abundant sources of renewable energy such as tidal, wave-power, wind, hydro and biomass which could bring significant business and employment opportunities. That is why Plaid Cymru calls for feed-in tariffs to encourage such small scale renewable energy sources.





**We are fully committed to ensuring Welsh control of our energy resources and to creating a Sovereign Wealth Fund** – we believe that Wales has been exploited in the past and we must prevent that happening again. Our natural resources must be used to create real social benefits.

Plaid Cymru recognises that the environmental consequences of a Cardiff-Weston Barrage would be enormous. **We call for European support for Severn Estuary tidal power schemes that minimise environmental damage while maximising zero-carbon electricity generation at a cost affordable to consumers.** We believe that the tidal energy potential of the Severn Estuary can be developed more efficiently, cheaply and with less negative effect on the environment and shipping movements by a combination of lagoons and tidal-stream turbines.

Plaid Cymru will continue to oppose the use of waste incinerators which can be a disincentive to recycling and can be polluting. **We believe in the waste hierarchy of ‘prevention, reuse, recycling, recovery and disposal’** and in binding targets for waste prevention. In the European Parliament we supported the target for the recycling of 50% of municipal waste and 70% construction and demolition waste by 2020, as well as a higher landfill tax to act as a disincentive, increase revenue and help make alternative methods of waste management viable and competitive. **We will work to change public procurement legislation in the European Parliament** so that local authorities can favour materials from recycled and local sources and thus safeguard the market and jobs created in this sector. **In addition we support the removal of VAT on energy saving materials and equipment.**

## A Strong Local Vision

Plaid Cymru is committed to protecting the future of all our communities. Wales is a multicultural nation with strong rural and urban identities and we are proud of our longstanding commitment to strong local values. Our policies will help develop Welsh regional economies, protect and develop community public services, and provide affordable housing in rural areas.

The economy and services of a modern Wales must be re-localised as far as possible and we believe that this approach can re-establish regional distinctiveness. **Our communities are vitally important.** Supporting local communities and protecting public services can help Wales in the fight against climate change by reducing carbon emissions and preparing people for a more sustainable world.

Plaid Cymru believes government at all levels must support and encourage communities in their development of local food and energy sources and support the Transition Towns movement. **We have a great deal of potential in Wales to localise our food systems and also to promote our fresh, good quality produce.** Plaid councillors have encouraged buying local food for public sector use and we will seek changes in current legislation to facilitate this. In the climate change era, food security will become ever important. **We want to see locally-sourced products grown or produced in an environmentally friendly manner sold by supermarkets and other retailers as part of a holistic approach to the environment and food.**



Plaid Cymru will work to regenerate Wales and make it possible and attractive for young people to remain in their communities. **We call for reform of the eligibility criteria for Convergence funding so that the rules take into consideration social deprivation and geographical and environmental circumstances.** Young people need jobs and affordable housing – we will make sure that they get all the help they need to live in the place they choose.

Plaid Cymru believes that Post Offices provide an invaluable community service and are essential to building sustainable communities in Wales. **We will continue to campaign against the proposed Post Office closures.** The Westminster governments of the 1990s liberalised the postal services, sacrificing a community service in the name of market forces. **We will support the revision of competition rules,** allowing our valued local services to survive.

The Common Agricultural Policy helps to sustain farming in many parts of rural Wales. The shift in emphasis from production towards measures to help the environment and combat climate change is welcome and will help provide a sustainable future for Welsh farming. **We will support modern long-term CAP reform which recognises food production under good environmental management, the maintenance of sustainable rural communities, and high standards of animal welfare and quality control.** At present large land-owners are able to take advantage of huge public subsidies. This discriminates against many small Welsh farms, so we welcome the European CAP Health Check and we support the cap of £250,000 on agricultural aid.

Plaid Cymru will always fight to protect small farms in Wales. The interests of Welsh farmers differ markedly from those of the powerful UK agriculture lobby. Welsh farming needs a Welsh perspective. **We will continue to oppose the new EU rules on electronic sheep tagging.** We believe that EID legislation should be made voluntary rather than compulsory as the current rules are unworkable and cost prohibitive. **We will also pursue derogation from the Fallen Stock Directive** which has caused many problems for Welsh farmers.

**We will continue to campaign hard to keep Wales GM-free** and will work with other GM-free nations and regions to ensure that we have the right to decide on national GM bans. We will support the strictest labelling of GM food, feed, and produce from animals fed on GM feed.

**Plaid Cymru is the voice of all Welsh communities in Europe.**

**We are on your side.**



# Campaigning for Wales in Europe

## Our National Future

**We want Wales to fulfil its potential as an independent member of the European Union.** The decision on our national future is the key to Wales's future as a European nation. It's not just a constitutional question. Without a full voice at Europe's top table our people have to put up with second best. Plaid Cymru supports an honest and open debate on the future of Europe, which is why we supported a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. Gordon Brown and New Labour first promised a referendum and then went back on that promise.

The fact that Wales is a small nation is not a problem – in fact it's the opposite. Many small countries out-perform larger ones. Six of the twenty seven member states in Europe are smaller than Wales. **Wales loses out because it is not an independent member.** We do not have a European Commissioner; we have only four members of the European Parliament in comparison with Latvia which is the same size as Wales and has nine members; and most importantly we do not have a vote in the Council of Ministers where European legislation is agreed. It is not effective or acceptable that a London government minister speaks for Wales.

As an interim measure, **we will propose that the First Minister has the right to attend Council of Ministers meetings as an Observer with speaking rights.** Furthermore, the UK at present nominates a single Commissioner for a five year period. **Plaid Cymru calls for this to be rotated between Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and England,** each of which would elect a representative for 15 months.

To strengthen the relationship between the people of Wales and the European Parliament, **we will continue to press for a European Parliament office to be established in Wales.**

**In 2008, Plaid Cymru achieved co-official status for the Welsh language in the European Union,** a historic milestone in the campaign to become a full member state. People and organisations can now correspond and communicate with EU institutions in both Welsh and English. Welsh has been spoken for the first time in the Council of Ministers and the Committee of the Regions.

But there is much left to do. **We will continue to fight for the rights of minority language speakers in Europe. We support the .cym campaign to gain domain status for Wales on the Internet.** We built alliances with other European stateless nations and minority communities to advance the cause of minority and language rights.

**Plaid Cymru is committed to communicating and campaigning using innovative new media;** our social networking sites are increasingly popular and reach a growing number of voters. In 2007, Jill Evans MEP was the only Welsh MEP to be nominated for a prestigious New Statesman new media award.



The opportunities available to us as European citizens are invaluable. There is no other region in the world in which half a billion people can move freely between states to work and live. We support European schemes which enable **young people to live and study or work abroad**. This improves language skills and widens the horizons of our young people. Plaid Cymru has offered work experience in Brussels and Strasbourg to countless young people from Wales over the past ten years and we will continue and expand our internship programme in the next parliament. The skills and experience of young people from Wales are indispensable in today's European economy.

Yet while we are entirely committed to the ideals for which the countries of Europe came together to create a Union – peace and economic partnership – **Plaid Cymru also believes that it is time to reform the EU** so that it is able to protect the people of Europe against the threats of the climate crisis, globalisation and the credit crunch. Things must change: the EU must stand up for you, for your community and for the future of Wales. We want to see a democratic Europe in which the voice of Wales and of ordinary citizens can be heard. **We continue to call for the abolition of the 'travelling circus' between Brussels and Strasbourg.** The monthly trip to Strasbourg costs €200 million a year and produces 20,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year. Plaid MEPs will continue to work with the Campaign for Parliamentary Reform.

We must not forget that it is our responsibility to make sure that Wales does not remain a bystander in Europe – we must also contribute to the European process. To do this effectively, we need a persuasive and informed voice in Europe. **Plaid Cymru will campaign for a stronger role for the Assembly's European Committee** in scrutinising European proposals and legislation in order to predict their effect on Wales and ensure early and effective action is taken to argue Wales' case in the EU decision-making process. We will also work towards strengthening the role and visibility of Welsh representation in Brussels.





## A Better World

**Plaid Cymru believes that there is no excuse for continued global inequality and injustice.** We are deeply committed to tackling the huge debt in the developing world, attaining UN targets of foreign aid and helping the poorest nations in the world to meet the Millennium Development goals. We recognise that our failure to make a difference in the developing world will only fuel bitter resentment, violence and division.

**We recognise the invaluable contribution that migration has made to Europe, socially, culturally and economically over many years, and believe that this positive contribution will continue in future.** Migration is a natural process in human life and it is in all our interests for the EU to deal with this as effectively and efficiently as possible. Equally, we recognise the potential shared benefits of greater co-operation in asylum and immigration at EU level, and the important role that Europe could play in assisting the integration of new migrants including in the languages of the stateless nations. **We believe that we share a duty to uphold and defend people's right to seek asylum and we will work to ensure Europe's proud tradition of offering refuge to the persecuted continues.**

As the world's first Fair Trade Nation, **Wales must lead the call for a Fair Trade Europe**, pushing the principles of fairness, social justice and high environmental standards. The people of Europe are becoming more aware of the injustices of the international trade system and are consciously choosing to use Fair Trade products.

Plaid Cymru is proud of our commitment to the equal rights of all individuals. We condemn the growing trade in human trafficking, especially from regions such as south-eastern Europe which, in the aftermath of war and steep economic decline, have developed into a hub for trafficking in women and children. We have successfully campaigned for greater resources to help victims of trafficking escape their captors and find a place of safety. We call for further, Europe-wide action to stop this modern day slavery.

**International peace and justice is, and always has been, central to Plaid Cymru philosophy.** We believe that war is abhorrent and we condemn the Westminster government for dragging Wales into illegal wars. We believe that the European Union, through its High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, can and should play a greater role in conflict prevention and resolution, including joint peace keeping missions. **We also call for effective European action on the international arms trade**, including a new treaty and binding code of conduct restricting arms exports, as well as a complete ban on land mines, cluster bombs and white phosphorous. The arms industry causes misery and death to millions of people throughout the world, not just by means of its destructive force but by diverting resources from socially beneficial activities such as food production, education and health. We also call for an immediate and universal European ban on the military use of uranium. **We will continue to work for a nuclear free Wales and a nuclear free world.** We oppose the Labour government's plans to commission new nuclear weapons and the US plans for missile defence in Europe.



**Plaid**  
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# Plaid – On Your Side

**We support the role of the European Union in promoting peace and economic development in Middle East.**

We also support European Union initiatives to promote inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue and would support further EU funded inter-cultural exchange programmes as a way of encouraging greater trust and understanding between peoples. **Plaid Cymru has long campaigned for a peaceful resolution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict** that achieves a negotiated two state solution and we are proud of the work for peace of Jill Evans MEP as a member of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council.

Plaid Cymru calls for a Wales Peace Institute to advise the Welsh Government on policies to promote peace, conflict prevention and reconciliation.

**Plaid Cymru believes in a modern, multicultural and progressive future for Europe. We promise that we will always campaign for Wales – and all of Wales's people – in Europe.**

**We are on your side.**