

Know TTIP

EU-US TRADE DEAL 'threatens public services'

Uncertainty about the impact on Scotland's public services of a new trade agreement between the EU and the US is growing. Charities, civil groups and campaigners opposed to the **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)** fear it could open public services to competition from US companies. Doing so, they say, would hurt consumer and employment rights, damage jobs and oblige taxpayers to compensate private companies if their profits fall.

Supporters of the deal say it will benefit Europe and the US by increasing the size of both economies, boosting exports and jobs, and raising wages. However, jobs in agriculture, forestry and fisheries in Scotland could be lost, and the potential impact on public services is of grave concern to opponents.

Trade unions and professional bodies

For further information about the newsletter, the group, to add your name to our electronic mail-out (never miss a thing!), links, extended versions of the articles and what you can do to help or get involved, visit our website: www.stirlingalliance.org (in development) or email us at: stirlingalliance@gmail.com

Contributors are all members of **The Stirling Alliance** and welcome those from all parties and no parties to join.

oppose the deal fearing it would hand power to multinational companies to sue elected Governments and democratic institutions under the Investor State Dispute Settlement mechanism (ISDS) where public interest legislation curtails their profits. France & Germany oppose the inclusion of ISDS in a potential TTIP agreement.

Campaign groups are pressing the Westminster Government to exclude the NHS from the agreement and the Scottish Parliament is shortly to hold a series of public discussions on the implications for devolved areas like health, education, agriculture and the environment.

Cecilia Malmström, the EU Commissioner-designate for Trade, has said that public services need not automatically form part of **TTIP** but any member state may negotiate directly with the US for their inclusion. Westminster has so far failed to offer any guarantee that public services will be excluded.

"There is no passion to be found playing small – in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living."
Nelson Mandela

PLEASE PASS THIS INFO ON TO SOMEONE ELSE OR LEAVE IN A PUBLIC AREA FOR OTHERS TO ENJOY. LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU WITH ISSUE 2! THANK YOU

FREE



HOWL!

Stirling's FREE regular newsletter



Issue 1

Hello reader and welcome to issue one of HOWL!



The campaign to achieve significant powers for Scotland, enabling us to take charge of our own affairs, is alive and kicking in Stirling. Former campaigners are maintaining the momentum of the

referendum campaign through a new group motivated to create a better Scotland. The non-party group aims to keep people in the Stirling area informed about how increased self-determination could improve all our lives.

The group will produce a regular newsletter and hopes a future central hub will act as a meeting point and resource centre.

The Smith Commission's recommendations have

just been published and draft proposals from the Westminster Government are due in late January. We plan a public meeting following this to explore the implications for Stirling and Scotland, and discuss the way ahead. There will be more on this and the different elements in the next issue.



LOCAL DEMOCRACY

In May 2012 you voted in the **local council election**. You voted to increase the number of SNP councillors **from 7** to **9**. You voted to keep the Labour Party and the Conservative party councillors to **8 and 4 respectively**. You voted for **one Green Party** councillor and for **no Liberal Democrat Party** councillor at all.

You would think, therefore, that Stirling Council would be led by the SNP. After all you democratically voted for that. Not so! As with the 3 Union parties get-

ting into bed together over the referendum, so too Stirling Council, albeit with only 2 Union parties involved. Labour and the Tories have got into bed together to form the administration of Stirling Council. The result is that the majority SNP councillors are unable to influence decisions taken by Stirling Council which affect you, the voter. Your vote didn't count.

This newsletter will keep you updated on the decisions this Labour/Tory administration has made and is making.

An open letter to Anne McGuire MP

Dear Anne,

Thank you for your newsletter. Your claim that **The Vow** has been delivered is entirely untrue. Admittedly, it wasn't much to go on. There was no mention of a single, specific new power. Yes, the **Smith Commission** has proposed new powers. No, they are **not guaranteed**. No, they do not fulfil the promise made by your own party colleagues **Gordon Brown, Ed Miliband and Alistair Darling** of 'near federalism', 'home rule' and 'devo-max' respectively.

I am not as politically astute as some, but your claims insult me. A modest amount of online research exposes the gulf between your assessment of the commission's recommendations and reality.

Firstly, you mistake the **bare minimum** for a "massive" transfer of power. You say more powers are "guaranteed". No, these are proposals, nothing more. To suggest otherwise is not only disingenuous, but untrue. You concede as much when you end your article, "Now we await agreement on this report."

Secondly, you say, "The Barnett Formula...will be written into the deal" without explaining it will be cut by an amount equivalent to any tax raised by the Scottish Government. The Commission's report makes this point clearly.

Thirdly, your suggestion that devolution of The Work Programme is a "job creation" power is laughable. The Work Programme is about finding existing jobs for unemployed people. Job creation powers are about new jobs.

Finally, I must assume that the memo from head office hasn't reached you yet because you claim that devolution of air passenger duty could "slash the cost of holidays", you appear to be unaware that the Shadow Chancellor, **Ed Balls**, has already written to the Westminster Government asking for that power to be nullified.

This Anne, is not a 'devolution revolution', it's a 'Westminster Half-Incher', not unlike you and the Labour party's version of events.

Space has limited my reply but I urge you and everyone else to seek the truth elsewhere and definitely NOT within the pages of the Daily Record (or the Sun!).

Kind Regards Greg Drysdale
(Stirling Alliance)



Miliband: Catching up on policy

SCOTLAND'S NEWSPAPER IS LAUNCHED

Scotland finally has a daily newspaper supporting independence. **The National**, launched on Monday 24th November with **50,000** copies and, after selling out that day, published **100,000** daily for the rest of the week. We now know the trial period has been an overwhelming success and you'll be able to pick up your copy from Monday.



Even if you aren't a supporter of independence, it's worth a look for a different take on the stories you see in the other papers, or to get the stories they leave out. **Wouldn't you like to know what nobody's telling you?** Pick one up at your **newsagent's**, **at the Co-op, Sainsbury's or Waitrose**. (Tesco and Morrisons have refused to stock it so far). You can also take out a digital subscription at: **www.thenational.scot**

FOOD BANKS: Papering over the cracks?

The use of food aid is not a new phenomenon; the soup kitchens of the 18th century, the workhouses of the 19th century and the food banks of the 20th and 21st century, provide the same aid, just with different nameplates.

A Parliamentary inquiry into hunger and food poverty is underway. Why? **Michael Gove** says the cause of hunger and food poverty is 'poor financial management skills'. **Lord Freud** states: 'Demand for food banks has risen because it's free.' Do the people

using food banks think these statements reflect their need? No, of course not. The causes are public spending cuts, zero hour contracts, low incomes, rising utility and food bills. The root cause however is the disparity between rich and poor and that divide is getting wider, especially in Stirling.

Since opening in 2012, Start up Stirling Crisis Food Bank has provided over **51,145** meals, supported **751** adults and **297** children, and provided **1,274** crisis food packs. The **756** people referred between October 2012 and April 2014 would much prefer de-

cent jobs and a reasonable standard of living (DEFRA report, New Statesman 2014).

What can **you** do? Please donate but don't stop there. Hold the Westminster party politicians to account by voting for a pro-independence party to ensure that Scottish voices are heard loud and clear. Promote the case for a fairer, equal, socially-just Scotland. End austerity, end the use of food banks. Do it now!



www.startupstirling.org.