

GT/RF/CT-01000e/07

29 November 2007

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to let you know that I have today written to the Regional Director of Labour North West to inform her of my intention not to seek reselection as a candidate for the next European Elections.

By 2009 I will have served as an MEP for twenty years. It has been an immense privilege to have represented the people of firstly, Greater Manchester West, and then, more recently, the whole of the North West. In that time, I have been fortunate to make many good friends and meet many others who work tirelessly for the party and for their local communities.

During my time in the European Parliament, the world has changed dramatically. I have had a ring-side seat as historic events have unfolded. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The release of Nelson Mandela and the end of apartheid in South Africa. The growth of the EU from 12 to 27 member countries. And, above all, I have seen Labour transform itself from a party that seemed to revel in the wilderness of opposition to one that is now enjoying its third consecutive term in government.

Over the years, I have been out on the campaign trail in nearly every corner of the UK and indeed, most parts of Europe. There have been many memorable moments, but one of the most unusual was addressing Guarani Indians in a jungle clearing in Paraguay. Personal experiences have been many and varied, from being mugged in Chile, becoming a sauna connoisseur in Finland to meeting some of the greatest figures of modern history (and David Beckham too!).

I feel that I can look back on my time in the Parliament with satisfaction at the things I have managed to achieve. There were all the many battles I fought to win EU funding for major flagship projects like the Lowry, the Imperial War Museum of the North and the Middlebrook complex in Bolton. There were the countless committees and delegations I have served on, chairing some, acting as a humble backbencher on others. Arguably though, my most important parliamentary achievement was paving the way for Austria, Finland and Sweden to join the EU in 1995 and a decade, later, the former Soviet-bloc countries. We now live in a peaceful and prosperous Europe that is reunited after decades of division, a Europe where war is now unthinkable, but where new threats have emerged.

Within the party, it was a great honour to serve as European Parliamentary Private Secretary to the remarkable Robin Cook, after he became Foreign Secretary in 1997. The ultimate accolade, though, was being elected three times by my colleagues as EPLP Leader and being made a member of the National Executive Committee. Not bad for a working-class lad from Salford!

Proud as I am of all those achievements, politicians are ultimately judged on what they do for their constituents. Shortly after I was first elected, I opened a fully staffed constituency office to provide an advice and information service to those who elected me. From there, I have dealt with thousands of cases. Some people I could do little to help. And other cases were quite bizarre, like the man who complained about the stray dog that ran into his kitchen and ate the dinner off his plate because the back fence was down. I did manage to get that replaced and for many more constituents as well, contacting their local 'Voice in Europe' proved to be very worthwhile.

**Gary Titley MEP**

Labour Member of the European  
Parliament for the North West

Euro Office: 16 Spring Lane, Radcliffe,  
Manchester M26 2TQ

Telephone 0161 724 4008  
Fax 0161 724 4009

There have been all the many hundreds of cross-border consumer issues I have dealt with, not least those where Britons have purchased properties abroad and then run into major problems. I have helped to re-unite families after decades of separation and assisted those with loved ones wrongly imprisoned abroad. And I have advised local trades unionists on how to forge better links with their continental counterparts.

Then there were the local firms who approached me about unfair competition in other EU countries. There were the groups who came along seeking recompense for the victims of Nazi oppression during the Second World War. There were the scores of enthusiastic young people, desperate for advice on how to make the most of all the exciting opportunities now available to them in the New Europe. And there were many more besides who came through my door, but they are far too numerous to mention here.

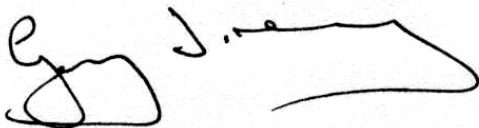
Despite having had an amazing twenty years, I have decided that 2009 will be the time to step down. The constant travelling inevitably takes its toll, particularly because of all the extra commitments that come from being leader. Furthermore, I can no longer tolerate shifting the Parliament lock, stock and barrel to Strasbourg one week a month. This is not only a colossal waste of time and money, but also seriously undermines the standing and effectiveness of the Parliament. It has also long been no secret that I am immensely frustrated by the electoral system for European Elections, which I believe undermines the relationship between MEPs and their communities.

I have always said that I would never outstay my welcome and I think that 2009 is the time to make way for new blood and enthusiasm. I also hope that at the age of 59, I will be able to take on new challenges and explore new ways of working with the community, although I have to confess that, at this stage, I have not got the slightest idea what form this will take.

I will of course be giving my all in the job until the curtain finally comes down. And then I will be able to look back on what has been an amazing journey since 1988 and that spring Saturday morning in Bury, when I faced nearly two hundred party members in that nerve-racking ordeal called a final selection conference. To those of you who voted for me then – thank you. To the many of you who have since then supported me, advised me, offered the hand of friendship – thank you. To my very loyal staff and the Labour Party staff – thank you.

Among the many adventures, thrills and sometimes mind boggling boredom I have been through, one thing that has always stayed with me is what the late John Smith once said - "*The opportunity to serve our country - that is all we ask*". The greatest privilege of them all is to have been given that opportunity. I have been a very lucky man – thank you.

With the very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Titley', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Gary Titley MEP**