



Emma Nicholson MEP

# Update



News for South East Liberal Democrats from Emma Nicholson MEP - Winter/Spring 2004

## Emma Nicholson first MEP to visit scene of Bam earthquake

The earthquake in Bam, Iran, cost over 40,000 people their lives.

Emma visited Bam in early January, shortly after the disaster to oversee the work of AMAR, the charity of which she is the President.

As part of Emma's on-going work in Iraq and Iran she has established strong contacts within the region, which ensured the swift delivery of aid to the victims of the disaster.

In addition to the human suffering, the earthquake also caused other damage: it destroyed Bam's citadel - the world's oldest mud brick building and a World Heritage site.

The reconstruction of Bam will take many years and Emma has pledged she will help with this enormous task.



Emma discussing the relief operation with survivors of the Bam earthquake

To see a diary of Emma's visit to Bam or to donate for the earthquake appeal please go to:

[www.bamdiary.blogspot.com](http://www.bamdiary.blogspot.com)



### Emma welcomes Kofi Annan to the European Parliament

Emma and other leading members of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee welcomed the UN Secretary General to the Parliament to present the Sakharov prize for Human Rights.

Emma is pictured here with Mr Annan and Pat Cox MEP, Liberal Democrat President of the European Parliament, following a meeting during which they discussed the UN and EU's approach to human rights.



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For more information please contact Emma on +32 (2)284 7625.



# Emma's work in the South East

## Visit to Oxford

Emma visited the British Legion and the Refugee Resource of Oxford to say "Happy Christmas" in December last year. She had just returned from southern Iraq, where she had a chance to talk to the British troops in the area. Emma was pleased to be able to share her fresh news from Iraq with the Oxford British Legion branch. The Legion's members gave Emma a Christmas copy of their newsletter for her to deliver to the troops on the ground in Iraq.

During her visit Emma also had a chance to meet members of the RAF. They had a lot to talk about, as Emma's father served in the parachute regiment in the 1940s.



Emma with fellow European candidate Catherine Bearder (first on the right), Dr Evan Harris MP, staff and a client of the organization Refugee Resource

## Local environmental campaigning



Voting on the marina in Hungerford on 30 January 2004 - result: pretty much unanimously against

While many of us were still having our Christmas break Emma was working hard. She was campaigning in Hungerford, Berkshire, to stop the plans to build a marina and a hotel complex on Freeman's Marsh. The marsh is a precious habitat for countless species of animals and flowers that would be endangered by the plans.

Emma joined the local campaigners on 27 December 2003 to demonstrate against the proposed marina. She stressed that the prospect of building a marina on Freeman's Marsh would be a disaster for the local environment: "Freeman's Marsh is

recognised as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a marina would destroy this precious natural resource."

The Kennet and Dun rivers are popular with people living in Hungerford, who enjoy the unique peace and tranquillity of the wetland area. Local wildlife such as water voles and other species would also be affected by the construction plans. The organisation Friends of Freeman's Marsh pointed to these issues as the most important reasons for local people being against the development.



# Emma's work in the European Parliament

## Vice-Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee

Emma has been the Vice Chair of the European Parliament's (EP) Foreign Affairs Committee since 1999 and she has played a key role in a large number of debates on EP reports. The advantage of being a full member of the Foreign Affairs Committee is that she has the right to submit amendments to all Foreign Affairs Reports. Some of the recent ones have included amendments to EP reports on human rights in Romania, Turkey and Russia. Emma also has the important role of being the draftsman (rapporteur) for a number of EP Reports on Romania and Iraq, which means that her expert advice will often provide the basis for these reports.

## High-level exchange

Emma is involved in EU's external relations on many levels. She regularly exchanges views with foreign ministers of third countries, the EU Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten and



Humanitarian work in Iraq

Günter Verheugen, the Commissioner for Enlargement. She also keeps in contact with the foreign minister of the country holding the rotating EU Presidency at the time, and of course votes on Foreign Affairs Reports. Emma's position on EU enlargement is fully in favour, provided that the aspiring member states comply with the strict criteria for accession on all levels. Emma has brought this up especially in connection with Romania and Turkey.

## Acting as a link between the WHO and the EP

Thanks to her links with the World Health Organisation (WHO) Emma was able to organise the first visit of the newly-elected WHO Director General Dr Lee to the EP in October 2003. Emma is known to be a strong campaigner on health issues, both at home and outside the EU's borders.

## Working in committees and on the ground

In addition to world health issues Emma works for women's rights, especially in the Islamic world. She is a member of the Committee for Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities. However, Emma does not merely sit at committee meetings but also does significant fieldwork. She was part of the ad-hoc delegation travelling to Ankara to monitor the retrial of Mrs Leyla Zana, 1995 winner of the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought. Leyla Zana, a Kurdish MP in Turkey, was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment in December 1994 with three other Kurdish colleagues. The trial fell deplorably short of international standards.

## Defending human rights in Romania

Emma called for the Romanian government to tackle corruption and to safeguard the rights of children in her recent statement on the human rights situation in Romania. She also stressed the importance of a genuinely independent and impartial judicial system in the country. Emma is the European Parliament's rapporteur on Romania.

"The European Union should suspend accession negotiations with Romania unless the country's reform process is put back on track", she stated after submitting a series of amendments to her draft report on Romania for the EP's Foreign Affairs Committee.

The European Parliament wants Romania to play a full and positive role in the EU, but to rush the process now will put unbearable strain on the country. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament will discuss the report and the amendments next on 18 February.



Emma being interviewed in Timisoara, Romania





## Emma's Responsibilities

**Vice President** of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Defence & Security Policy

**Rapporteur** for Iraq

**Rapporteur** for Romania

**Member**, Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities

**Member**, Interparliamentary delegation to Mashreq countries and the Gulf States

**Member**, European Parliament delegation to Euro-Mediterranean Forum

**Member**, Stability Pact for South East Europe Parliamentary group

**Substitute Member**, Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

**Substitute Member**, Joint Parliamentary Committee for Romania

## NGO work

Emma's NGO work includes the chairmanship of The AMAR International Charitable Foundation; Presidency of the Caine Prize for African Writing; Trusteeship of the Booker Prize for English fiction and of the Booker Prize for Russian Fiction.

She has been appointed as first Special Envoy for the World Health Organization to work on peace, health and development (18 January, 2002); Doctor Honoris Causa: North London University for work in the field of the disabled; the "Victor Babes" University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Timisoara and the Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest, both for services to the enlargement of the European Union.

## Would you like to get involved?

If you would like to help or are interested in an internship, email Emma your CV and tell her why you'd like to join the team! The email address is [enicholson@europarl.eu.int](mailto:enicholson@europarl.eu.int).

## Contact Emma

If you have a comment on Emma's work or an issue to bring to her attention she would love to hear from you. Please fill in this form and return it to: Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne MEP, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW, or call on +32 (2)284 7625.

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Phone/e-mail address:

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Address:

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Comment:

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