

January 2009

Thank you for your letter regarding the prevention of a total ban on incandescent light bulbs. I would like to draw your attention to the below text which I have sent to local press in the South West;

"A friend of mine on a visit to his local shop was told to stock up on 100 watt light bulbs because the EU had banned them. This is not true. The European Commission has not banned our traditional incandescent light bulbs. They are only now considering a proposal under the EU Ecodesign Directive to phase out their use by 2012 – but before this happens, it has to be agreed by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers.

Environmental research has shown that energy saving fluorescent light bulbs do not have such a detrimental effect on the environment as incandescent bulbs. However, there are a number of medical conditions such as migraine, autism and epilepsy which can be adversely affected by the flicker rate of these fluorescent bulbs. Also, many of my constituents who suffer poor sight have complained to me that they give insufficient light for reading. They are also unhappy that the bulbs are expensive to buy and difficult to recycle.

Obviously, our Government and the European Commission must carefully consider any adverse effects on health and the economy that could occur through the introduction of energy saving bulbs.

Although we welcome all efforts to improve our environment, we must not throw the baby out with the bath water. We should not be forced by the arbitrary deadline of 2012 to ban traditional incandescent light bulbs until we have a well researched, adequate alternative."

We Conservatives in Europe recognise that there can be many adverse affects of fluorescent lighting and as such a total ban on incandescent bulbs cannot, at this time, be considered.

I hope this goes some way in addressing your concerns.

Giles Chichester MEP