

MEP UPDATE

Mid-term Report

West Midlands Conservative MEP Team

Conservatives in the European Parliament

MEP UPDATE

As your local MEPs, Philip Bradbourn and Malcolm Harbour are reporting back on their work halfway through the 5-year Parliament.

Philip is the Conservative delegation spokesman on regional development and local government; Chairman of the Canada inter parliamentary delegation and the longest serving member of the Transport Committee of the European Parliament.

Malcolm has represented the West Midlands in the European Parliament since 1999, and on his re-election in 2009 was elected Chairman of the influential Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee.

As well as effectively representing the residents of the West Midlands in the European Parliament on a wide range of issues, Malcolm spends a great deal of his time in Parliament working with Committee members ensuring the effective implementation of the Single Market across the EU, but always with local needs at the forefront.

SUPPORTING MANUFACTURING

Linking in with key ministers in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Malcolm has been at the forefront of government policy to ensure manufacturing gets the support it really needs. Recent news has been welcome - in cars, aerospace and ceramics, new jobs are being created in the Midlands. But there is no room for complacency, and Malcolm will continue to campaign for manufacturing friendly policies.



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

With the increased size of the EU to 27 member states and the austerity measures in place throughout Europe there will be a substantially reduced budget for regional development projects in coming years.

Negotiations are ongoing about the exact amount of funding which will be available and Philip believes that although the EU needs to set sensible budgets it is important the region continues to receive

its fair share of any reduced funding and he has been working with local authorities to help them maximise their chances of success most recently producing a pamphlet on available funding from the EU for local councillors.

Copies of this pamphlet are available from the MEP Team Office, just call **01676 530297** or email **info@torymeps.com**

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SEAT

Philip has also been working to end the ridiculous practice of having two Parliamentary seats, one in Strasbourg and one in Brussels. This practice costs £200m a year as staff and MEPs move from Brussels to Strasbourg once a month. He has been working with the campaign group to end the monthly trek to the Strasbourg Parliament by raising awareness. Unfortunately the Parliament does not have the power itself to decide where it meets as the member states included Strasbourg in the original

treaties and it is only a change in the Treaties that could bring this about. However, he is determined that British taxpayers should not have to continue paying for the European 'flying circus'.



TIME TO BE SINGLE-MINDED ABOUT THE SINGLE MARKET

Malcolm has been one of the prime movers of proposals that aim to revitalise the Single Market, making it more accessible to businesses of all sizes and take advantage of the digital age. He was the prime mover in a major political initiative, The Single Market Act, recently endorsed by EU Prime Ministers.

Malcolm knows that the Single Market has a key role to play in delivering growth and employment. He will be working to ensure that the reform proposals set out in the Single Market Act are implemented as soon as possible.

The Services Directive must be the start of a

process of strengthening the internal market rather than the end of it. Small businesses need to be given confidence to offer their products and services to 500 million people in a competitive environment.



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AVIATION SECURITY

Philip's most recent success has been his campaign to have common rules for aviation security throughout the EU. This culminated in the European Commission adopting measures on the use of body scanners at airports. The new rules would ban the use of ionising radiation in these machines and also provide for the option of a 'pat down' for those who have concerns on privacy and health due to the increasing use of these scanners.

EU TRANSPORT PLAN

As part of Philip's role he is shadowing the new EU transport white paper on behalf of the European Conservatives and Reformists group and has submitted 15 amendments. The report calls for the EU to 'grow out of oil' and intends to ban petrol and diesel cars from city centres by 2050. It is estimated that it would cost up to €2.5 trillion to fund the new infrastructure and vehicle costs set out by the report.

Philip is highly critical of these proposals and thinks it is wholly unrealistic to think that the motor car can be replaced entirely by public transport. He also believes that the costs envisaged by the report are staggering and transport congestion and bottlenecks are the key issues which need to be tackled.

IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY

For many years Malcolm has been chipping away on the issue of overcharging by mobile phone service providers for calls made by travellers across Europe. Earlier this year Malcolm welcomed plans for a major market shake up to drive down prices for both voice and data services.

The issue of faster broadband in rural areas is also high on Malcolm's agenda as he recognises that rural businesses are being hampered by slow broadband connectivity.

Malcolm has held meetings with UK Ministers asking for Government funding to be accelerated to close the gap between urban and rural broadband speeds. He is also working within the EU parliament for EU support for investment in our rural communities.

CONSUMER RIGHTS DIRECTIVE ADOPTED

A new Consumer Rights Directive was adopted by the European Parliament in June. The new rules provide EU-wide rights for consumers shopping online and specify rules on delivery and digital downloads whilst cutting red tape for small and medium-sized businesses.

Malcolm steered this new Directive through the EU Parliament to replace rules which predate the digital era. Thanks to the work carried out by

Malcolm's Committee, online shoppers will now have new rights and businesses will have greater certainty when selling online to consumers across the EU.



PUBLIC PROCUREMENT BROUGHT INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Public authorities have enormous buying power which needs to be harnessed to promote economic growth and reduce costs to the taxpayer. Malcolm has worked extensively on this issue, aiming for simpler rules and less burdensome compliance procedures for tendering, with an increased use of ICT.

As a result, a reformed procedure is being launched. It will open contracts to new firms, encourage competition, and support suppliers delivering the best overall bid. This will lead to more growth, more innovation and better value for taxpayers.

ENHANCING TIES WITH CANADA



In his role as Chairman of the Canada inter parliamentary delegation at the European Parliament he has been working to enhance relations with Canada, the EU's oldest partner, particularly in relation to trade and security matters. As a growing economic power, and an energy superpower, it is crucial that the EU maximises its opportunities for trade and enterprise with Canada. The delegation is particularly valuable at this time with the EU and Canada negotiating the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), which has the potential to deliver enormous economic benefits to us all.

EU ROAD SAFETY

Philip has also been extremely critical of EU proposals to appoint a chief bureaucrat to co-ordinate safety on Europe's roads as part of a plan to reduce European road deaths to half of current levels by 2020. The proposals would remove the power of national governments to set their own speed limits and harmonise requirements for winter tyres across Europe.

The same report imposes a mandatory requirement on rural road users to wear high visibility clothing at night and would require new drivers to continue taking lessons for a period of time after passing their driving test. There are also plans to introduce a new harmonised EU blood alcohol level for drivers. Philip believes that a one size fits all policy is not the way to reduce road deaths and in any case believes that such policies are outwith the EU's competence.



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