



Conservatives in the European Parliament

Press Release

Release: Immediate

Date: 11/2/10

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Local MEP Driving Ideas at European Automotive Debate

Influential figures from the European automotive industry recently gathered in Birmingham, under the Chairmanship of Malcolm Harbour MEP. Members of the Automotive Strategy Network gathered to debate future trends and challenges in the global industry. The Network is creating a business environment that encourages collaboration in the pursuit of excellence. It aims to encourage smaller component suppliers to collaborate with one another to keep up to date with the enormous changes that the industry must embrace. It also brings together local and regional authorities who are supporting their work. Malcolm Harbour has championed the EASN and held support meetings in Brussels. He is determined to shape EU policies and regional funding to encourage the development and adoption of new technology to ensure the West Midlands region's position at the forefront of high quality automotive manufacturing

The MEP, an auto industry expert and committed free trade advocate considers that, despite the recent welcome boost to the automotive economy that the car scrappage scheme had provided, the recent crisis is far from being over. He pointed out that there is a world-wide over capacity in car making and that demand has continued to fall.

The Solihull based MEP is far from pessimistic about the longer term future of car making in the West Midlands. He said, "Vehicles will change and there will be new opportunities, especially for electric power in urban areas. Smaller, cleaner running cars will still need to be maintained and eventually recycled. There are opportunities to be grasped. The West Midlands has always thrived when it used skills and innovation to seek constant improvements. We have done it before and we must do it again."

ENDS

Editors Note: Malcolm Harbour is a member of the Conservative Business team, shadowing Lord Mandelson's department

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