



# News Report

## from Philip Bradbourn MEP

*For the  
West Midlands*

Release: Immediate  
Date: 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009  
Brussels: 00 322 283 6136  
UK: 01676 530 621

### **Euro MP condemns new immigration queue-jump cost as “stealth tax”**

Conservative MEP for the West Midlands, Philip Bradbourn, condemned the proposed introduction of a scheme imposing additional costs for air-travellers, describing the plans as “ludicrous”. The initiative, which will be introduced next year at London Heathrow and other leading UK airports will charge travellers an additional £50 to use a “Fast Track” gate, meaning that they are able to progress through UK Border Force immigration control faster.

Mr Bradbourn, who is a leading member of the Transport Committee in the European Parliament said:

**“This initiative is, yet again, an example of the Labour Government’s obsession with stealth taxes. It is explicitly stated that the initiative is designed to contribute towards the £7 million needed to pay for extra gates at Heathrow that are capable of scanning the new biometric passports: it is little more than a fund-raising exercise.**

**At a time of economic downturn and mass unemployment, we should be encouraging both leisure travel and international business and not imposing further costs on the travelling taxpayer. The consumer rightly expects that the UK Border Service operate efficiently, quickly, and safely in a manner which minimizes delays. There should be no need for a new “Fast Track” programme: the existing system should be efficient and fit for purpose and if it is not, it should be improved to maximise efficiency.**

**If this bureaucratic and unnecessary initiative is introduced at Birmingham International Airport, it will mean further costs for my constituents in the West Midlands, something which I am determined to fight.”**

**ENDS**

For more information please contact Paul Brannon in the UK on 01676 530 621.