



# Conservatives in the European Parliament

## Press Release

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### **A clear focus on completing a genuine single market**

The launch of the EU's 2020 strategy aimed at building Europe's competitive knowledge-based economy has been broadly welcomed today by Malcolm Harbour, a Conservative West Midlands MEP and Chairman of the Parliament's Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee.

The 2020 document emphasises the importance of creating a genuine single market, including making it fit for the digital age, strengthening intellectual property rights and promotion of greener technologies to stimulate growth. It also aims to increase access to broadband, to create an EU 'smart grid' for energy and to create new entrepreneurial skills.

Responding to the paper, Mr Harbour said: "As we try to overcome the economic crisis, it is crucial that we focus on Europe's value added. The 2020 paper contains some useful ideas for joint European strategies, by focusing on completing the single market, boosting innovation and helping us drive towards a low carbon economy.

"However, it is now important for the European Commission to turn this rhetoric into reality. The idea of making the EU the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world is not a new one but the economic crisis has shown we can no longer afford to sit back and do nothing. We must turn some of the more remote and abstract principles in the strategy into concrete objectives and targets.

"As Chairman of the Internal Market Committee in the European Parliament, I will be ensuring that MEPs play their role in this important process; making recommendations to Member States and the European Commission, but discouraging it in areas where its actions can, albeit with good intentions, hamper economic competitiveness and exacerbate unemployment.

"The strategy also has the potential to deliver real benefits for the West Midlands and taking advantage of the internal market is already accepted as an important part of the Region's economic strategy. The 2020's emphasis on jobs and growth should create new opportunities to access European markets but now it's time for the European Commission to deliver and for businesses to reap the benefits of the Single Market."

**Ends**

