

**EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
MEMBERS OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT REPORT
Friday 1 December 2006**

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Report from Derek Clark MEP

At a previous meeting one member asked about road development in the East Midlands, especially the badly needed dualling of the A46 from Widmerpool onwards. The roads programme is of course an EMRA matter, under Spatial Planning and Transport. Since today's agenda includes a Committee of the Regions update it may be useful to outline the connection.

The CoR produces its recommendations for road planning which is taken up by the Commission. The Commission then requires national governments to implement these recommendations. The national government can then only introduce them via Statutory Instruments which are therefore nodded through parliament and MPs can do nothing about it. To implement these decisions the government sends the detailed plan to the Regional Assembly for action.

You thus have a self sustaining circular system in which any regional assembly becomes self-justifying.

Members may wish to know of recent developments coming through the Employment Committee. This week "Corporate Social Responsibility" began its progress through the system. Without doubt this will become tied up with the *European system of integrated social protection statistics (ESSPROS)*. The coordinators of the Employment Committee were asked to consider four amendments to ESSPROS. These are about data collection and will give the unelected commission the right to decide which data will be collected, indeed to define data. The collected data will then be transmitted from one institution to another. Businessmen here and elsewhere will be fully justified at being alarmed at this, as will all those who are the subject of these undefined statistics, especially as it includes the module on pension beneficiaries. We have here state surveillance on a massive scale, which is why I opposed these amendments, albeit as a lone voice.

I am sure many members, as councillors with fingers on the pulse of local communities, will have become increasingly concerned with the run down of post offices. So two more directives in the EU pipeline, and which surfaced just this week in the Employment Coordinators meeting, should be of more than passing

interest. The first of these amends directive 97/67/EC *concerning the full accomplishment of the internal market of Community Postal Services*. The second will be, *on the application of the Postal Directive, as amended*.

Finally I wish to tell you of a press release from the Employment Committee Chairman which expresses concern by the members of the Employment Committee, *for the loss of jobs at the Volkswagen plant in Forest, and in other Volkswagen plants*. I protested at this press release but not because I do not care. I am very aware of the effect sudden job losses have upon families and of the devastating impact large numbers have upon local communities, so I would like to see that all such sudden massive job losses should receive equal expressions of concern. You will remember that in April this year 2300 jobs were lost in Coventry when Peugeot suddenly closed its Ryton plant. "Nobody in this committee," I said, "mentioned that closure or did anything about it". I therefore insisted several times that this press release should either quote both these car plant closures by name, or not at all. 'My social partners' promptly ignored me and the press release went out quoting Volkswagen only that very evening. The full committee knew nothing of this at all until the following morning.

Derek Clark MEP

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