

**EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
MEMBERS OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT REPORT
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The Berlin Declaration

The EU presented its "Berlin Declaration" on March 25th, the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome (and spent £1 million of your money on a Berlin street party -- sorry if you missed out on that one!). The Declaration contained a coded call for implementation of the failed EU Constitution. Meantime "Parliament Magazine" in Brussels invited MEPs to contribute their own personal Berlin Declaration to mark the occasion. Mine was as follows:

ALTERNATIVE BERLIN DECLARATION

1 We recognise that the European project has failed. The EU is making us poorer, and less democratic, and less free. Europe is in long-term relative economic decline compared to other advanced economic regions.

2 We know that the European social model is failing. It is a prime cause of poor economic performance, and has led to historically high levels of unemployment.

3 The CFSP is undermining NATO and the Transatlantic Alliance, so reducing our security in a dangerous and unpredictable world.

4 The EU is anti-democratic: it is an élitist project which rides roughshod over the identities and aspirations of citizens

5 Accordingly, we agree to dismantle the existing treaty structure and to replace it with a new vision of a Europe of free, independent, democratic nations based solely on free trade and voluntary intergovernmental cooperation

On March 14th we had a plenary debate in Strasbourg on the Declaration, which was a little surreal as we hadn't seen even a draft at that stage. The document was drafted in secret by the German Presidency. This was one of those debates where only group leaders get to speak, but I managed to get two minutes on behalf the Unattached members.

We now expect Tony Blair to sign some sort of Constitutional declaration of intent on June 22nd.

Climate Change Conference

I organised and hosted a major Conference in Brussels on April 18th, which was widely regarded as a great success. It attracted between 60 and 100 people through the day. Former Conservative Chancellor Lord Lawson of Blaby gave the key-note speech, and other speakers included economist Roger Bootle; Chris Horner, author of "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Global Warming"; Professor David Henderson of the Westminster Business School; Neil O'Brien of Open Europe; Dr. Benny Peiser of Liverpool John Moores University; Julian Morris of the International Policy Network; and my MEP colleague Giles Chichester, who spoke on nuclear energy.

At the end of the day we screened the Channel 4 Film "The Great Global Warming Swindle". Those who had seen nothing but alarmist propaganda were amazed to hear the other side of the story.

New Committee Responsibilities

I have secured a place on the parliament's new temporary committee on climate change. I have also secured a membership of the EU/Croatia inter-parliamentary committee. Croatia is an EU accession state. In May I visited Croatia (Zagreb & Split) and met the Prime Minister, parliamentarians, local entrepreneurs and foreign investors, academics and lawyers, as well as the press. The visit was organised by the Adriatic Institute, which campaigns for economic freedom, and by my political adviser Emma McClarkin. A report and pictures appear on my web-site at www.rogerhelmer.com.

Plenary speeches

As an unattached member of the EP, I get much more speaking time, on a wider range of subjects, than is normally available to members of larger groups. In the last few months I have spoken on:

- Alcohol duty and tax competition
- Transatlantic relations
- EU Common Foreign and Security Policy
- The Berlin Declaration
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Climate change and nuclear power
- The European Social Model

Work in the East Midlands region

In the last quarter I have visited Leicester University; St Paul's Catholic School, Evington; Leicester Grammar School; and a "Question Time" event at

Sherwood Hall School in Mansfield. I have visited several commercial companies, including the Microsoft computer games studio in Ashby-de-la-Zouche, and addressed two Rotary Clubs. I made an extended visit to the Regional office of The Samaritans in Leicester, and saw at first-hand the excellent work they are doing. I have attended numerous Conservative Party events and was extensively engaged in campaigning, in all six counties in the region, ahead of the recent local elections.

In addition, I have made a number of media appearances and published press articles, and campaigned on issues including a Constitutional referendum, help for duty-free purchasers harassed by HM Customs; the Crown mark on pint glasses, and British Weights and Measures; climate change issues (the EP's monthly commute from Brussels to Strasbourg produces 190,000 tons of CO₂ a year, quite unnecessarily); and against Post Office closures.

The Freedom Association

On Saint George's Day I was elected as the new Honorary Chairman of The Freedom Association, which campaigns for liberty, free markets, low taxes, limited government, and strong national defence. These are the principles I have followed throughout my political career, and this appointment enables me to promote them on a wider front.

Washington, March 5th/7th

I went with Chris Heaton-Harris MEP and Syed Kamall MEP (London) to renew contacts in Washington. We conducted a panel on EU issues at the Heritage Foundation, visited the Cato Institute, met senior members of the Administration, spent an evening with the American Legislative Exchange Council and a morning with Americans for Tax Reform (Grover Norquist's celebrated Wednesday Meeting). I met various Congressmen and business contacts, and we visited the Vice-President's Ceremonial Office in the Old Executive Building next to the White House.