

# eu matters



European  
Conservatives  
and Reformists  
Group



Conservatives  
in the European Parliament

News and comment from Conservative  
East Midlands MEP Andrew Lewer MBE

## Remain or leave?

### Chance to make your views known at roadshows



**REMAIN OR LEAVE? That is the question. And it's a big one.**

The EU debate is hotting up. There's no doubt people feel very strongly one way or another. But what do you think? Whether you're for staying in the EU with a better deal or you're set on us coming out - now's the chance to make your views known.

Andrew Lewer MBE MEP is taking to the road to host a series of events to hear what you've got to say and to debate the key issues.

It won't be long before you can vote in or out in the UK's EU membership referendum.

Could "Brexit" open more doors than it closes? Can we get real control of our borders back? Is a new deal the way to go and what would you want to see in it?

That's what Andrew's Referendum Roadshows are designed to do.

Whichever way you're leaning, Andrew is

keen to meet you and hear what you've got to say.

Check for the latest information at [www.andrewlewer MEP.co.uk](http://www.andrewlewer MEP.co.uk) or contact him at [info@andrewlewer MEP.co.uk](mailto:info@andrewlewer MEP.co.uk) or ring us on 01332 841165 to register your interest and we'll send you an email confirming the Referendum Roadshow nearest to you.

The first one kicks off on 9 October at Wing Village Hall, Morcott Road, Wing, Oakham LE15 8SA between 2pm and 6pm.

At the end of the tour Andrew will pass views on to Westminster and Brussels colleagues, UK EU Commissioner Lord Hill and to the Government ministers leading the EU negotiations.

**Look forward to seeing you there.**

## Prosperity and fairness are key

MY first year in office was a whirlwind of activity - my second year promises to be equally so.

As well as getting to grips with the EU parliamentary system, I have been keen to identify issues that will impact on the UK and especially upon people and businesses in the East Midlands.

I have focused on key priorities to secure economic prosperity, value for money and fairness across Europe. That includes making sure the East Midlands gets its share of EU funding.

My lead roles in the ECR Group mean I am making my presence felt in the EU. And my new regional office allows me to keep an eye on what is happening closer to home.

Over the last year, I have taken time to visit businesses, schools and universities and to meet many Conservative colleagues across the region. This all helps to ensure I am better informed about the impact the EU is having on local life and to tackle the concerns they may have.

I am keen to continue to meet and respond to as many local people, organisations and businesses as I can across the East Midlands. My Referendum Roadshows are part of that, but I would also welcome more opportunities to attend Conservative Party meetings across the region.

This parliamentary year will be busy. There is much to negotiate and some huge issues to resolve. I promise I will continue to do my best to make your voices heard.

Please contact my office if you would like me to visit your business or attend your region party meeting.

**ANDREW**  
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September 2015



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## Pledge to keep fighting for farmers



EU rules on the use of pesticides is causing concern among East Midlands farmers.

Andrew has met the NFU to discuss concerns over:

- the EU's use of limited scientific evidence to justify the banning of some critically important pesticides
- potential implications for cost effective food production
- increased use of less effective pesticides to replace better - but now - banned ones
- the greater threat to food

safety and wildlife

- less research and development by pesticide companies into effective new products.

Andrew is supporting the NFU's call for measures based on quality scientific research and risk, rather than the current precautionary approach.

Andrew has agreed to fight the corner for East Midlands' farmers wherever possible in Europe.

## New deal is crucial

ANDREW is not wedded to the EU at any price. He wants change.

"There is no doubt the EU is far from perfect," he said. "It needs to fundamentally reform to cut out waste, unnecessary bureaucracy and interference. That is why I am backing David Cameron's bid to secure a new deal for Britain in Europe."

Andrew supports the Government's aims to:

- give Britain an opt-out from forging an ever closer union
- free businesses from red tape while still benefiting from the strength of the EU market
- rule out benefits for EU migrants
- hand back powers to national parliaments to block EU legislation.

"We need change that benefits all 28 member states. Change that attracts economically successful countries to join such as Norway and Switzerland.

"If the EU is incapable of changing, Britain needs to come out," he added.

"It will be interesting to watch how the negotiations turn out. In the meantime, I will do all I can to support the renegotiation team around the Prime Minister and encourage colleagues across the EU to support fundamental changes to the way it operates."

## 'Give local government more EU funding say'

IN his keynote speech at the annual Local Government Association (LGA) Conference in Harrogate, Andrew used the opportunity to call for greater local decision making in the allocation of EU funds.

A former county council leader himself, he argued it was vital local authorities continue to bring their local knowledge and experience to the table when it comes to deciding how, where

and when EU regional development money is spent.

However, complex EU funding rules mean that only the Greater London Authority can achieve so-called 'Intermediate body' status – giving it a direct role in decision-making on local projects.

To ensure investment flows to local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) as fast as

possible, the UK opted to offer them "key advisory status" - a purely advisory rather than decision-making role.

Andrew - alongside fellow LGA Vice-President and Conservative MEP Julie Girling - lobbied for and won an important commitment to a full review of that status decision by March 2016. With the deadline fast approaching Andrew is calling for the review to be both thorough and timely.



Andrew with Alex Buchanan of Thornbridge brewery in Bakewell.

## Cheers to cider tax exemptions

**RECENT Government confirmation that it will keep tax exemptions for small cider makers, was welcomed by Andrew.**

Earlier this year, Andrew signed up to and supported a campaign by CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) to reject calls from the EU to remove the exemption and appeared on BBC Midlands Today to make the case.

Under the ruling small cider and perry producers would have been landed with a bill of up to £2,700 a year - making production uneconomical and leading to widespread closures.

"This tax hike would have had a severe impact on consumer choice and caused irreparable damage to one of our most historic industries."



Andrew with newly elected LGA Chairman Councillor Gary Porter

# TTIP benefits will help British business

NEGOTIATIONS are continuing between the EU and US to strike up a new trading deal which has the potential to boost world trade as we know it.

The Transatlantic Trade Investment Partnership (TTIP) aims to join up the world's largest economies. If agreed, it could boost the UK economy by up to £10 billion a year and up to £1.2 billion for the East Midlands.

## ISDS - Investor State Dispute Settlement

**TRADE agreements often include an Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) – the right of investors to claim damages against the government where their investment is located. It's aimed at protecting investors against unfair treatment by the host state. It would allow access to independent tribunals and to possible compensation if treaty obligations were breached.**

**However, the UK Government would not support ISDS provisions that restrict its capacity to govern fairly and in the public interest in any policy area including public health, employment standards or the environment.**

**Commenting on the ISDS Andrew confirms that he and the ECR group will press for balance between investment protection, frivolous claims by companies and the rights of government to regulate.**

Andrew – along with his Conservative colleagues – firmly believes the TTIP would be good for Britain because it:

- offers a significant boost to the economy, growth and jobs
- benefits businesses of all sizes
- removes US tariffs on UK goods and services
- cuts red tape making it easier to export to the US
- means lower prices for UK shoppers.

It will also reduce regulatory differences between the EU and US while still protecting high environmental and safety standards.

In response to some critics of the potential deal, Andrew says: "I will not vote for anything that is bad for Britain, bad for the Government or bad for the NHS and other public services.

"I do not believe the TTIP will open up the UK NHS – or any other EU health services – to US multinationals. I – along with ECR colleagues – will be calling for a "utilities reservation" exemption to include public health, education and other public services.

"Overall, I believe TTIP is good for Britain."

Further debates and votes on TTIP are expected in the months ahead. You can follow its progress by signing up for news and information on Andrew's website: [www.andrewlewermep.co.uk](http://www.andrewlewermep.co.uk).

## TV network 'poor use of money'

**EURONEWS - a 24-hour TV news network - and its multi-million EU subsidy has been challenged by Andrew as "a poor use of EU taxpayers' money."**

**He has led ECR MEPs in questioning the use of public money to support a privately owned broadcasting company – now owned by billionaire Egyptian businessman Naguib Sawiris.**

**Set up in 1992, Euronews has received more than 240 million Euros from Brussels. Last year it received 25m Euros – a third of the network's budget.**

**As well as calling for assurances over editorial independence, Andrew believes the EU Commission has not done enough to scrutinise its value for money. He challenged German EU Commissioner Oettinger about this in person at a recent Parliamentary hearing and helped persuade the EU affairs newspaper Politico to run an expose on the subject recently.**

**"It is not well watched," said Andrew. "When it comes to their Arabic language broadcasts, it feels like it would almost be cheaper for the newscasters to go round to people's houses and read the news to them in person.**

**"Public subsidy for a privately-owned company is particularly objectionable now that it is controlled by a billionaire who is quite capable of funding it himself."**

## Making a stand for free speech

ANDREW was among hundreds of MEPs who attended a European Parliament rally in Brussels to protest at the horrific Charlie Hebdo murders.

Led by European Parliament President Martin Schulz, MEPs and parliamentary staff gathered to condemn the heinous attack and to defend freedom of speech.

Following the rally Andrew commented: "We are steadfastly resolved to defend freedom of speech – our greatest freedom.

"Shutting down debate, risks harming free speech and democracy itself. Never have the famous words commonly attributed to Voltaire seemed quite so compelling - 'I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.'"



## On alert to save children

EARLIER this year Andrew added his voice to calls for local people to sign up to the Amber Alert campaign aimed at saving the lives of missing children.

Hoping to increase awareness of the network to make it stronger and more effective across the region, the UK and Europe, he urged local people to download the app - Child Rescue Alert UK.

Already a youngster from the East Midlands was reunited with her family after she went missing thanks to the network which uses social media to spread the word of children in danger.

The Police only activate a Child Rescue Alert when a child is known to have been abducted or their life is believed to be at immediate risk

"Amber Alert is a great idea – but it can work even better. We need more individuals, more organisations and more countries to get involved so that we can save more children's lives," said Andrew.

Download Child Rescue Alert UK app for free from the google app store or go online to: [www.childrescuealert.org.uk](http://www.childrescuealert.org.uk) or [www.conservativeeurope.com](http://www.conservativeeurope.com)

Companies or organisations can email [info@amberalert.eu](mailto:info@amberalert.eu)

# Booklets point to EU opportunities



ANDREW - and fellow East Midlands Conservative MEP Emma McClarkin - joined forces to launch updated guides to European funding opportunities and a new youth opportunities booklet.

The move is aimed at making sure groups and organisations across the East Midlands make the most of EU funds and opportunities.

Earlier editions proved popular with businesses, schools and colleges prompting the two MEPs to publish an updated version with the new EU funding cycles and a new, special edition on funding for young people.

The booklets set out the different EU funding schemes and help individuals and organisations navigate through the application process and find the right funding for them.

They also include details of East Midlands success stories, what the funding can be used for and tips on how to draft the best application.

“Our aim is to do all we can to make sure the East Midlands gets its fair share of the EU funding cake,” said Andrew.

Copies of the booklets can be downloaded free from Andrew’s website: [www.andrewlewer MEP.co.uk](http://www.andrewlewer MEP.co.uk).

## Businesses helped to go for growth

THROUGHOUT his first year in office, Andrew has made it his priority to visit East Midlands businesses – large and small.

Rolls Royce, Royal Crown Derby, Ibstock brickworks in Leicestershire and Thornbridge Brewery in Bakewell have featured – to name a few.

During his visits Andrew has used the opportunity to discuss how the EU impacts on local businesses along with issues concerning the local economic partnership (LEP),

planning and TTIP negotiations.

“Economic growth in the East Midlands is key to securing a better standard of living for everyone who lives here,” said Andrew.

“I am keen to do all I can to help businesses thrive and ensure that EU regulation does not adversely affect their ability to trade.”

If you run a business – large or small – and would like Andrew to visit please contact his regional office on 01332 841165.

## Universities matter

**EDUCATION and culture have always been close to Andrew’s heart.**

**As Leader of Derbyshire County Council he delivered the council’s arts and culture portfolio and still serves as a university governor. Now - as East Midlands MEP - he is the ECR’s spokesman and lead member on the EU Education and Culture Committee.**

**Over the last year he has maintained close ties to the work of the region’s universities making several visits to help inform his role in the EU. He was also recently invited to address the emergency meeting of the German University rectors and Derby University’s annual research conference.**

## Call to end extravagant ‘travelling circus’

**ANDREW has made no secret of his support for a Single Seat for the European Parliament to bring an end to the so-called “Travelling Circus”.**

**And he has joined a growing number of MEPs who have signed a pledge to stop the multi-million pound extravagance.**

**Provisions in the original Treaty of Rome ruled that the European Parliament moves between Brussels and Strasbourg on a monthly basis.**

**“This is one of so many examples of waste in time, money and resources that needs to end,” said Andrew. “We need to secure change that makes the EU function better and to be a more effective organisation.”**

## Concerns prompt VAT rules rethink

PROMISES by EU Commissioner Frans Timmermans to look at the impact of new EU VAT rules on micro-enterprises, have been welcomed by Andrew.

The measures – aimed at stopping big companies from abusing international tax rules – have created extra burdens for small operators.

Under the system, businesses have to collect VAT from each individual country they sell to and keep details of all their transactions for years.

In a debate with the Commission, Andrew said: “When concerns about obstacles are raised, the Commission simply blames someone else.”

But - in response to the concerns of Andrew and other Conservative MEPs - Mr Timmermans said: “We would never want this legislation to have adverse effects on small entrepreneurs who are often at the cutting edge of creating new employment.”



Pauline Latham OBE MP for Mid Derbyshire opened Andrew’s office in the East Midlands.

## Contact us, follow us, join us

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