

# Electoral Reform at Home

The big next challenge is the referendum on 5 May next year to introduce the Alternative Vote. I will be working hard to ensure a convincing Yes vote. The argument for AV is this:

- **AV** maintains the direct link between an MP and his or her constituency;
- **AV** reduces the need for tactical voting as electors can vote for their first choice without fear of wasting their vote;
- **AV** is more inclusive, letting more voters influence the outcome;
- **AV** will encourage political parties to campaign more positively in order to attract the lower preferences of voters whose top choice is another party;
- **AV** will also go some way to restoring the credibility of the House of Commons: each MP will enjoy an equal and responsible democratic mandate.

Name:  
Email:  
Mobile:  
Address:

I would like to know more about AV and the referendum campaign

I would like to be kept informed of Andrew Duff's activities

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# Andrew Duff MEP Annual Report 2010



Welcome to my annual report- actually for the period since my re-election to the European Parliament in June 2009



Andrew campaigning for a 'Yes' for the Lisbon Treaty with Guy Verhofstadt in Dublin

# Shaping the Agenda

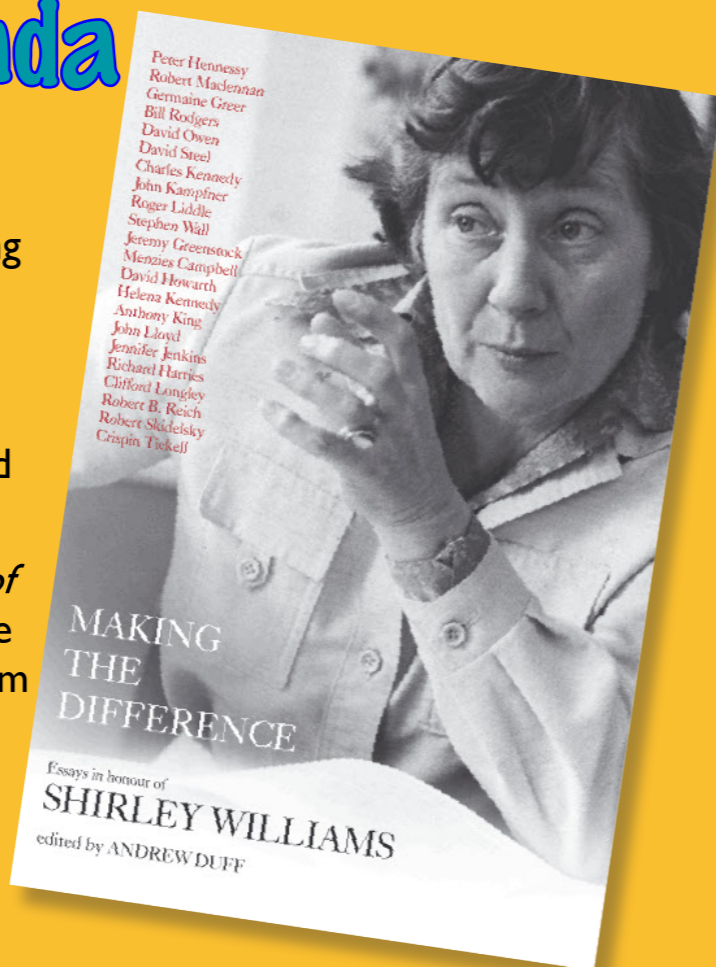
As President of the Union of European Federalists I campaign across Europe for building European unity and for strengthening post-national democracy.

I have two new publications this year.

*Making the Difference: Essays in Honour of Shirley Williams*, is published by Biteback, and celebrates Shirley's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

*Post-National Democracy and the Reform of the European Parliament*, published by Notre Europe, expands the case for electoral reform at the EU level.

For more information about my work as an MEP see: [www.andrewduff.eu](http://www.andrewduff.eu) and [www.federaleurope.org](http://www.federaleurope.org) and find me on [facebook](#) as Andrew Duff Mep



In July 2009 the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) re-elected me their spokesman on constitutional affairs.

My first job was to continue the effort to bring the Lisbon treaty into force – which it duly did on 1 December. The completion of the long and controversial effort to reform and strengthen the European Union – often in the teeth of British government obstruction – is a huge satisfaction.

I was appointed to oversee Parliament's election of the new European Commission, and was then much involved in the setting

up of the new EU diplomatic service. We are working flat out to implement the Lisbon treaty fully, quickly and effectively. It is right that Parliament is flexing its muscles.

The continuing financial and economic crisis has forced the pace of change: a new regulatory framework at the EU level for the supervision of the financial sector will shortly be in place. The ALDE Group, now under the highly motivated leadership of former Belgian prime minister **Guy Verhofstadt**, plays a key part in all decisions.

I have continued to take an active part in foreign, security and

defence issues, focussing in particular on EU relations with Turkey and the possible settlement of the Cyprus problem. My main parliamentary job is as rapporteur, or draftsman, on electoral reform. I have proposed a large package of measures designed to improve the popular legitimacy of the Parliament – an increasingly important challenge as MEPs assume their new budgetary, legislative and constitutional powers. The key reform is the introduction, at the next elections in 2014, of a transnational list of candidates for an EU-wide constituency in addition to the current national and regional systems.



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# Electoral Success



**Andrew with Mayor Dave Hodgson (Left) endorsing our Bedford Borough parliamentary candidates in the General Election**

In the European elections we beat Labour in the East of England for the first time. With 14% of the vote, I was the fourth elected in the list of seven – up from fifth in 2004 and sixth in 1999. But there are still too many Tory MEPs in the region (three) and UKIP MEPs (two).  
In Brussels, the Lib Dem delegation of 11 MEPs has since grown by the addition of Edward

McMillan-Scott, who left the Conservative Party in disgust at their anti-European policies and unsavoury partners.  
At the general election in May 2010, we repeated our success over Labour – with 24% against their 19%. Simon Wright won Norwich South from Labour's Charles Clarke, so the Lib Dems now have four MPs in the region

to Labour's two and the Tories' 52.  
In local elections, we held our own. There are 529 Lib Dem Councillors across the East of England, and we control five councils (Cambridge, North Norfolk, St Albans, Three Rivers, Watford). **Dorothy Thornhill** was directly re-elected Mayor of Watford, and **Dave Hodgson** won the Bedford Mayoralty.



# Delivering Change in Government

The big news, of course, is the formation of the coalition government with the Conservatives. The party has taken to the startling new arrangement with remarkable calm. This is not the place for a full-blooded critique of coalition politics, not least because the impact of the new economic policy will not be known for some time.  
Immediate coalition prizes for the East of England, however, include

the cancellation of the second runway at Stansted and the closure of the family unit at Yarl's Wood immigration detention centre in Bedfordshire. More contentious will be the likely siting of a new nuclear power plant at Sizewell in Suffolk. The future of regional road widening schemes, such as the A11 and A14, is being closely watched. Happily, improvements to the East-West railway from Felixstowe to

Nuneaton, backed by EU money, look set to go ahead.  
Changes to governance structures are controversial. Despite the government's commitment to decentralisation, I find the abolition of the East of England Development Agency and the nascent Regional Assembly to be a backward step. And the new school system weakens local government.

# Representing the East of England

The complexity of constituency case-work continues to grow as the scope of EU activity itself spreads from mainly social, economic and environmental issues into justice and home affairs, as well as the international dimension.  
The region's science base continues to expand with the help of EU R&D funding. I have been active in introducing scientists to the way Brussels works, and helping local small and medium sized enterprises survive in the tough competitive environment of



Europe's single market. Animal welfare and food health issues continue to fill the postbag. And the battle to slow global warming connects business, farming, science and NGOs in their efforts to influence the formation of EU policy and to implement EU law efficiently.  
I have been campaigning to save the East of England Brussels office from the effect of the cuts. It plays an important part in linking local government to EU affairs, and has hosted hundreds of my visitors from the region.

# Andrew makes the case for fairer votes on page 4