



Step Forward in Europe

The Alliance Party Manifesto
for Europe

allianceparty.org

Contents

In Europe: For Everyone Page 3

Our Vision for a Modern European Union

Shared Future Page 4

Supporting the Peace Process

Promoting our Experience Abroad

More Support for a Shared Future

Economic Growth Page 6

Funding an Economic Revolution

Science and Research

The biggest possible market for Northern Ireland businesses

The Single Currency

A Sustainable Future Page 10

Energy and Climate Change

Agriculture and Fishing

Crime, Justice Page 13

and Global Security

Crime and Security

Security and Justice Abroad

Leading Change: Page 14

Reform of the European Union

A PDF of this Manifesto can be downloaded from
www.allianceparty.org

Step forward in Europe with Anna Lo

- » Awarded an MBE in 1999 for services to ethnic minorities, Anna is a former Director of the Chinese Welfare Association.
- » Strong advocate for equality and community relations, a former Commissioner for the Equality Commission and previous Vice-Chair of the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities.
- » Well-known environmental supporter, fighting for sustainable development as Environment Committee Chair.
- » Champion of women's issues, promoting women's participation in public life and tackling human trafficking.
- » Focussed on strengthening our economy, promoting business growth through skills and research.
- » South Belfast MLA since 2007, topping the poll in 2011.

How Northern Ireland benefits from Europe

90,000 jobs

Nearly **50%** of our trade

Pollution cut by **one-fifth** since 1990

New targets to reduce pollution by **20%**

500 million customers

An economy worth **£730 billion**

500 criminals returned to the UK
and over **4,000** deported elsewhere

£150 million in PEACE funding
in the last six years

Anna will
offer a
positive role
for Northern
Ireland within
Europe,
working for:

Improved community relations
funding peace, prosperity and diversity

A stronger local economy
attracting increased investment in skills and research

A sustainable environment
promoting renewable energy and environmental standards

A safer Northern Ireland
tackling international crimes like human trafficking and drug-dealing

Increased openness and transparency
leading by example by publicly publishing expenses

In Europe: For Everyone

Our Vision for a Modern European Union

Our vision for Europe is one which is Free, Fair and For Everyone.

As a liberal internationalist party, Alliance remains whole-heartedly pro-European. We are ambitious and positive for the role that the European Union (EU) can play in Northern Ireland and the role that an Alliance MEP can play in the EU.



Alliance supports the European Union because it has broken down barriers between people. Just as Alliance supports overcoming divisions in Northern Ireland, it also supports overcoming divisions between states, regions, nation and communities across Europe.

This means an EU that works hard to improve the economy. This means an EU that works hard to tackle crime and promote security. This means an EU that works hard to protect our environment.

And it means an EU which makes a positive contribution to promoting a shared future in Northern Ireland.

Constructive engagement with the EU has brought massive benefits to Northern Ireland – financial, economic and environmental. It has also benefited our neighbours in Ireland and in Britain. Continued positive engagement with the EU will help Northern Ireland to succeed, as a region in the modern world.

But we know that the European Union has to undergo reform if it is to be the modern and outward looking institution that we want it to be – promoting peace, prosperity and sustainability across Europe and beyond European borders.

Being a member of the EU also allows us to overcome our “small wee country” attitude and turn Northern Ireland into an outward and open-minded place, ready to play a bigger role in world affairs.

But our vision of the EU also means reform – creating a new version of the EU that is transparent, flexible and agile. Democracy and accountability must be central to a European Union which is, in turn, outward-looking and delivering real benefits for citizens in Northern Ireland and across Europe.

This manifesto contains our proposals for reform of the EU and its institutions in order to ensure that it contributes to a future that is For Everyone.

And it contains our proposals to make sure that the European Union delivers for the people of Northern Ireland – just as it has for the last four decades.



Shared Future

Supporting the Peace Process

The European Union has contributed to creating a shared future in Northern Ireland through its PEACE programmes, which have funded projects in Northern Ireland and the border regions of the Republic of Ireland. In the last six years, the PEACE III has seen £150 million spent on projects to develop a shared future in Northern Ireland. These projects have included:

- Good relations programmes that reduce tensions within our community.
- Replacing sectarian murals and other symbols of division.
- Challenging hate crime.

Alliance support is pleased that a PEACE IV fund has been secured and will make sure that it supports the projects that will do the best to promote a shared future in Northern Ireland.

An Alliance MEP will work to ensure that projects demonstrate value for money and that funding is fairly spread between larger and smaller groups and across the region. Alliance will also monitor how the funds are spent; ensuring that money is focussed on building a shared future, especially reconciliation programmes, developing shared spaces and promoting integrated education.

We will continue to work to ensure that there is development on the former Maze/Long Kesh site so that we can stimulate economic growth and develop this land in a prime location. It now seems unlikely that the proposed Peace Centre and shared stadium will go ahead, but we will continue to propose using European money to develop the site in a way that substantially improves Northern Ireland's economic performance.

Because an Alliance MEP will be able to work with governments in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland equally, only he/she will be able to achieve these results.

Promoting our Experience Abroad

Northern Ireland can also play a role in promoting international development. In particular, as the peace process is regarded internationally as a significant success story, there remain on-going opportunities and indeed obligations to share such experiences.

Furthermore, as a result of such success, Northern Ireland retains considerable political capital and goodwill within and across the European Union.

We also believe that an EU Peace Centre should be established in order for the EU to support reconciliation, peace and democracy in the rest of the EU and across the world. Given our experience, such a Centre should be based in Northern Ireland. Progress in this issue is especially important given that the proposed Centre at the Maze/Long Kesh has been cancelled.



More Support for a Shared Future

In addition to the key areas outlined above, an Alliance MEP will be central in using our position in the European Union to pursue a shared future for Northern Ireland. Because only an Alliance MEP will be able to work with both the Irish and the UK governments, only they can best provide this support. Other areas where the EU can support a shared future in Northern Ireland include:

- Requiring all EU-funded physical regeneration projects to demonstrate a commitment to increasing shared space and improving interaction between all of Northern Ireland's residents. This would include making shared housing a precondition of any funding for home building in Northern Ireland.
- Considering if the EU can play a co-ordinating role in any programme to deal with the past, alongside the Northern Ireland Executive and the UK and Irish governments, especially if the experience of other EU countries can be used.
- Ensuring that all funding from the EU is proofed for its impact on creating a shared future in Northern Ireland.
- Using Europe-wide expertise to secure advice on how to improve the status of Irish and Ulster-Scots.
- Promoting Northern Ireland's culture and sporting experience within Europe.
- Using our international profile to build links with other nations, rather than simply seeing the world through a Britain-or-Ireland viewpoint.



Economic Growth

The EU has played, and can continue to play, a significant role in allowing Northern Ireland to grow. A single market, with well-structured support for innovation, infrastructure and skills, helps support the economy to grow. And the bigger the market, the better the opportunity for Northern Ireland to trade. Being a central player in the EU has helped the economy to grow; not being in the EU would seriously harm our economy.

Funding an Economic Revolution

The European Union also provides significant funding for economic growth here in Northern Ireland. In fact, Northern Ireland does well out of European funding, even though the UK as a whole is a net contributor to the EU.

It will have spent more than £200 million to help Northern Ireland increase its economic competitiveness in the last six years. This is through Regional Competitiveness and Employment funding. This has included expenditure on:

- Next Generation Broadband.
- Local Economic Development.
- Research and Technology Development Centres of Excellence.

Future access to this funding will continue to benefit the Northern Ireland economy. However, we believe that this money should be spent to tackle the root causes of an underperforming economy. Alliance support:

- Using the next round of European funding to promote research, technology and skills development in order to take the maximum advantage of this money.
- Campaigning for the NI Executive to benchmark its spending of this money to see how well it compares to other European nations.
- A partnership approach between the European Union, the NI Executive, district Councils, universities and businesses when spending EU structural funds.

Likewise, the EU's European Social Fund will have spent more than £135 million in Northern Ireland in the past six years. We will continue to use the European Social Fund for the best interests of Northern Ireland by:

- Increasing funding to support skills and training, including the expansion of apprenticeships.
- Focussing on encouraging and supporting greater social inclusion by enhancing labour market participation and employability.
- Concentrate more on improving outcomes and making the process simpler.



Alliance supports better use of the Interreg Funding, which Europe uses to develop closer co-operation between European countries. This would be especially useful in Northern Ireland where closer North-South links can help us to develop our economy and infrastructure.

Alliance is the only party who can work with both the Irish and UK governments in order to maximise use of this funding. Alliance will:

- Campaign for Interreg Funding to be continued in future rounds of EU funding. This funding is essential in building a European economy, and it can help boost Northern Ireland's links with the Republic of Ireland and with Britain.
- Work with the NI Executive, and the UK, Irish and other devolved governments to bring forward innovative ideas for cross-border funding including improved transport and telecommunications links.



An Alliance MEP will be able to work with all the necessary governments to draw together proposals for innovative cross-border funding.

Finally, we would like to see the EU at the forefront in developing a Europe-wide reform of the financial system, to make sure that banks work fully for the economy and to ensure that tax loopholes are closed. We will do this by:

- Using the EU's international position to clamp-down on overseas tax havens and to close tax loopholes between EU member states, as well as their overseas territories.
- Assess whether a Financial Transactions Tax would be effective on an EU level and, if we assess that it is, move to implement one.
- Establish a regulatory regime for banking that reduces the risk to governments of future banking crises. For example, we will support attempts to ring-fence retail banking operations, increase capital requirements for banks and tackle the problems caused by collateralised debt obligations and credit default swaps.



Science and Research

The European Union spends considerable sums of money on promoting science and research across the European Union and helps scientists and researchers to collaborate. This is

important for smaller economies like Northern Ireland's, because we cannot compete with larger economies for research spending. Extra spending from the European Union will help research and science in Northern Ireland to develop and, as a result, will help to develop a high-tech economy in Northern Ireland.

With its links to both Ireland and the rest of Britain, Northern Ireland is in a strong position to develop strong research links between universities. These links can then be used to develop innovative research opportunities to benefit the Northern Ireland economy.

The Alliance Party want to promote science and research in the European Union and will campaign to:

- Protect the science and research budget from any cuts in the European budget. As science and research stimulate economic growth, we believe any cuts would be counter-productive.
- Support a major bid to increase EU research funds awarded to Northern Ireland, that began with the appointment of a series of NI Contact Points in universities, Invest NI and CAFRE, with the aim of co-ordinating and focusing efforts to make successful applications.
- Forge links between Northern Ireland's universities and those elsewhere in the EU so that Northern Ireland can partake in the most cutting-edge scientific research.
- Use the EU's Horizon 2020 programme to develop strong links between Northern Ireland's Universities and those elsewhere to ensure that we can apply for the most valuable and innovative research opportunities.
- Develop links between the European Union and the NI Executive to establish a government agency to encourage business spin-outs from cutting-edge research. This will mean the Northern Ireland economy will benefit from this scientific investment.

The biggest possible market for Northern Ireland businesses

Membership of the EU is essential to Northern Ireland's future economic growth because it allows us to access the biggest market in the world. Around 40% of Northern Ireland's exports are to the rest of the European Union and if it is easier to move goods and labour around within the European Union then it will be easier for Northern Ireland businesses to sell their products. Close co-operation between Northern Ireland and government all across the EU benefits the economy by allowing us to easily access markets elsewhere.

We will continue to support creating the biggest market possible for Northern Ireland's products and we will:

- Support the expansion of the Single Market, for example creating an EU-wide single market for knowledge with an EU-wide intellectual property market. This will enable greater mobility for students, academics and researchers and will encourage collaboration on new discoveries and inventions.
- Promote a single market for telecommunications so that costs will be lower and roaming fees abolished. This will make it much easier for businesses and tourists to travel abroad. We would want to see this accompanied by a telecommunications plan which would assist member states in improving mobile phone and internet coverage and speed.



- Support appropriate EU-wide regulation, which means that Northern Irish products can always be sold anywhere in the EU as they will already meet the regulatory requirements. However, we want to see these regulations reformed to make them simpler for businesses and government to adhere to. Much of this problem lies with governments gold-plating the regulations rather than applying them flexibly, so we will support an EU Unit that assists national governments in making regulations as simple as possible. We will also support sensible measures, such as one-in-one-out rules and sunset clauses, to ensure regulations are fit for purpose.
- Support the proposed EU-US Trade Agreement, as a means of expanding the market for Northern Ireland's businesses.
- Campaign for both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland to join the Schengen Area, which allows free movement of EU citizens across Europe. Under the current arrangements, there is no free travel between Britain and Ireland and the rest of the Union for non-EU tourists and investors.
- Research the additional cost of travel to and from Northern Ireland, such as APD and ferry costs, and examine how EU support can be used to reduce this.



The Single Currency

In the long-term, Alliance continues to support UK membership of the Eurozone when the circumstances are right. Clearly, that is not the case now and we cannot see the conditions being right in the immediate future. However, eventual membership of a reformed Euro will benefit Northern Ireland by making it easier for businesses in Northern Ireland to trade with businesses elsewhere in the Eurozone.

We would only support this if the following strict conditions have been met:

- The current sovereign debt crisis has ended.
- Structural reforms have been made to the Eurozone's governance to ensure that similar debt crises will not occur again.
- Stronger governance arrangements are in place for managing fiscal problems that may arise in the future.
- The economic conditions make UK membership worthwhile.
- The public has approved membership in a referendum.

We do not believe that this will happen in the next European Parliamentary term and will make no effort to pursue it during the lifetime of this European mandate.

A Sustainable Future

Pollution does not respect national borders. That is why Northern Ireland needs to work not just with Britain and Ireland, but with the rest of Europe to tackle pollution and climate change. Membership of the European Union has helped us to tackle environmental issues and this has helped to make Northern Ireland a cleaner and more sustainable place.

One of the primary aims of the European Union over the next few decades must be to set ambitious plans for tackling and mitigating climate change and then develop constructive policies to ensure that these are met. The EU has a target of reducing its carbon emission by 85-90% of 1990 levels by 2050. This will be a big challenge and will require action by the EU as well as by all member states and regions of Europe.

Energy and Climate Change

We will tackle carbon emissions across the EU and here in Northern Ireland. We will work to:

- Develop the EU as a renewable energy hub, reducing its reliance on fossil fuels and turning the EU into an exporter of energy by establishing a Green Energy Taskforce. Northern Ireland has the perfect climate for developing wind and hydro energy and has the potential to create thousands of new jobs in this area.
- Use EU resources and influence to further develop the all-island energy market, including support for the North-South interconnector.
- Ensure robust Europe-wide environmental standards for houses, cars and electronic goods, to ensure the EU goods and services are both energy efficient and resilient to climate change impacts.
- Reform the EU Emissions Trading Scheme to ensure that it is effective in tackling climate change. We will argue for a significant reduction in the current oversupply of credits.
- Advocate a single-market for energy to build on the experience we have in Northern Ireland of cross-border energy provision. This will allow for; lower bills, greater diversity in energy sources, less wasted energy produced when it is not needed, improved infrastructure and will make it easier for a Europe-wide approach to reducing carbon emissions.
- Secure investment in public transport by creating links between the European Commission and the Northern Ireland Executive to create investment. We would particularly prioritise mass-transit systems where EU funding can help, alongside much smaller investment in walking and cycling.
- Push for greater development of zero-carbon homes to reduce household carbon emissions.
- Re-examine the EU's approach to climate change prevention and mitigation to ensure a consistent approach across policy areas. This will include focussing on developing the cleanest technologies.

We believe further Europe-wide action is required on a wide range of environmental issues and will campaign for the EU to:

- Gradually raise and enforce high standards that ensure water, beaches and air all remain clean in Northern Ireland.
- Scrutinise the new local Councils and the NI Executive on their progress towards meeting European recycling targets.
- Promote the development and funding of cross-border programmes to restore wildlife and biodiversity across Europe. Where appropriate, this would include all-island approaches to wildlife management on the island of Ireland.

- Ensure that governments across Europe to fully implement and enforce directives that protect biodiversity, such as the Birds and Habitats directive. The upcoming mid-term review of the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy provides a strong opportunity to do this.
- Make the best use of the various EU policies, such as Natura 2000, to ensure a productive and healthy sea and coastal environment.
- Adopt a Europe-wide Bee Strategy to address the drop-off in bee numbers. This will include retaining the current ban on neoneotinoids.
- Ensure the rigorous implementation of legislation on battery-farmed hens across the EU.
- Encourage the UK Government and the NI Executive to take advantage of EU-wide disaster funding for events such as flooding.

Alliance also support a Climate Change Act for Northern Ireland, which would help make sure Northern Ireland has the appropriate legal framework to meet our European targets on tackling climate change.

Agriculture and Fishing

Agriculture and the food industry is one of the biggest contributors to the economy of Northern Ireland and when it is doing well it is creating jobs for all sorts of other ancillary industries. At its best, agriculture and food can drive the Northern Irish economy, particularly in rural areas. We also believe that there should be a link between CAP payments and conservation methods.

Agriculture support, through the Common Agricultural Policy, is one of the biggest beneficiaries of financial support from the European Union. However, we believe that there is need to reform the CAP so that it ensures that farmers are rewarded for promoting sustainability. We acknowledge that this has happened, in part, over previous reforms of the CAP. However, further reform must ensure that this is placed at the heart of the CAP.

There will always be a conflict between the competing priorities of protecting a rural lifestyle, a liberal free market and ensuring that food produce is affordable for European citizens. This is a complex conflict to manage but it is right that the EU should try and do so.

Alliance will work to negotiate gradual changes to CAP that:

- Limits CAP payments to the wealthiest farms so that farming support is prioritised for smaller farms rather than the largest producers. This must be based on farm size, not labour units. This will ensure that funding is spent in the fairest way possible, supporting smaller producers to develop. Freed-up funding would be used to support the agri-food industry to be innovative and modern.
- Campaign for the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure that a small proportion of Northern Ireland's Common Agriculture Policy funding is used for rural development projects to support schemes including; agri-food support, improve farm safety, tackle disease control, support innovation and research in rural businesses, promote sustainability and support rural communities.
- Directs greater resources to farmers who operate environmentally sustainable farming methods.
- Continues to use resources to discourage over-farming of areas, especially upland areas.
- Promotes high standards of animal welfare.
- Discourages land abandonment.

As well as this, we want to ensure that any farming subsidy helps farmers to develop their businesses further. Additional EU resources should be targeted at helping farmers to ensure that their businesses are able to compete in the new global economy. This will include ensuring that a Future Farming Programme will:

- Provide support for innovation in the agri-food sector, especially in research and development and in innovative new farming techniques.
- Allow farmers to be flexible in growing or rearing produce that is best suited for their business.
- Encourage diversification for farmers to ensure more profitable businesses.
- Invest in rural communities.
- Work with the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure prompt payment to farmers.



The EU is also responsible for the Common Fisheries Policy, which exists to ensure that fish stocks around Europe are managed in a way that ensures both competition and sustainability. However, in recent years it has become clear that the current system is not operating effectively. Alliance would reform the CFP to:

- Ensure the elimination of the wasteful practice of “discards” which means that dead fish are put back into the sea.
- Support fishermen in moving to more sustainable methods of catching fish.
- Move from a top-down method of deciding fish quotas to one where member-states have a strong role, meaning that quotas can be flexible and efficient rather than centralised.
- Incorporate long-term, regional stock management plans to ensure that fish stocks remain at sustainable levels.
- Provide investment and support to fishing communities, ensuring that skills and infrastructure are upgraded.



Crime, Justice and Global Security

For the related issues of crime, justice and security, international boundaries are immaterial. International co-operation to deter criminal activity and deliver peace and security is one of the most compelling reasons to co-operate with our friends and neighbours on the European continent. Being fully engaged with the European Union makes it easier for us to tackle these problems and to help other countries to tackle theirs.

Crime and Security

Crime takes place across borders. As a result we must co-operate across borders in order to tackle crime. The European Union gives us a significant opportunity to tackle this crime – providing an international platform to fight international crime. If we are isolated from our European neighbours we will be less able to use their support in tackling crime, promoting justice and ensuring global security.

Alliance believes that we should engage constructively with Europe in order to tackle crime. The UK government has decided to exercise its opt-out over a series of crime and justice proposals, which means that the UK will cease to be a part of over 130 specific justice and crime measures that have helped make Northern Ireland a more secure place. The UK government will now try to opt back in to some of these measures.

In order to make Northern Ireland a safer place, we will:

- Work pro-actively to ensure that the UK opts-in to as many of the measures as possible. It is absolutely essential we retain membership of the most important, such as the European Arrest Warrant and Europol. But we should seek the best possible relationship with other bodies within the EU to ensure that security and law and order can be maximised. We will therefore argue for the strongest links possible between Northern Ireland, the UK and other European nations.
- Use our position in the EU to facilitate more cross-border co-operation between the UK and the Republic of Ireland.
- Tackle human trafficking and child abduction on a Europe-wide basis. This will involve supporting Europol to catch offenders, establishing a Europe-wide missing child alert system and making sure the UK offers refuge to trafficked women in order to provide them with security and the chance to bring traffickers to justice.
- Support streamlined mechanisms to ensure EU co-operation on asset recovery to make sure that criminals cannot hide the proceeds of their crimes overseas.

We also support efforts to ensure that human rights are at the heart of the EU settlement. Alliance believes that human rights protect us all and are an essential part of a modern and fair society. Protecting these on a Europe-wide level ensures that EU citizens have access to the same rights and civil liberties that they would have at home. As a consequence, Alliance would:

- Use the European Union to champion human rights elsewhere, particularly in eastern Europe and Turkey as potential membership for countries in those areas progresses.
- Support the establishment of an EU Commissioner for Human Rights.
- React to the PRISM mass surveillance programme by re-writing our data protection regulations. The rules should ensure that people's right to secure data is strengthened and that national governments have greater oversight of security agencies' use of data-mining software.
- Support continued membership of the European Court of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act.

Security and Justice Abroad

As one of the global community's most important organisations, the EU also has a duty to ensure that global development and global security are promoted. Alliance believes that international development and global security go hand-in-hand. By investing in the economies of the developing world, we are also reducing the circumstances which lead to instability and civil war. Alliance will use the European Union to make a positive contribution to world peace by:

- Advocating a wider role for the EU in international affairs, adding to the work of national governments by making greater use of foreign policy powers that the EU already has, to ensure maximum influence in promoting peace, trade and development.
- Monitor the EU's foreign policy to ensure that it promotes the related aims of human rights, development, and security. We believe that development means promoting democracy and human rights as well as tackling poverty.
- Push for the EU to engage pro-actively with peace-building initiatives across the world, offering a new perspective on global conflicts and seeking compromise over continued conflict. We will seek an active role in the middle East and in Africa.
- Prioritise international aid on tackling poverty and disease and ensure it is allocated on the basis of need.
- Support all EU member states meeting the UN overseas aid target of 0.7% of GNP.
- Strengthen the role the EU plays in overseeing elections abroad, so that we can continue to promote fair and free elections.
- Promote Northern Ireland's experience in replacing conflict with democracy to those regions of the world where this might be applied.

Leading Change: Reform of the European Union

Northern Ireland's membership of the European Union is an important boost to our economy and status in the world. We absolutely reject calls that Northern Ireland would be better if the UK abruptly left this important organisation. This is especially true here in Northern Ireland because of our links not just to Great Britain but also to the Republic of Ireland. We do not support calls for a referendum on membership, which would make international businesses wary of investing in the EU and distract politicians at a time when constructive engagement with the European Union is most essential. It will not help our own economic problems or the economic problems of our European trading partners if we distract ourselves with a divisive and costly referendum. As a result, we will:

- Oppose a referendum on membership of the European Union.
- Support continued membership of the EU, if a referendum occurs.

However, if there were significant changes to the relationship between the UK and Europe, such as Euro membership or a major change in powers, we would consider a referendum to be appropriate.

However, Alliance believes that the European Union needs democratic reform. Just as Alliance champions openness, inclusivity and transparency in Westminster, Stormont and local Councils, so we will champion similar reform of the European Union.

In particular, we campaign for the European Union to:

- Regularly publish the voting record, attendance record and expenses claims so that MEPs are held to account, just like every other politician. Until this happens, an Alliance MEP will voluntarily publish their expenses online.
- End the ridiculous situation where the European Parliament re-locates to Strasbourg every fourth week, costing £150 million each year and emitting over 19,000 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide. This campaign has been spearheaded by our liberal colleagues across the EU.
- Enforce the Memorandum of Understanding that exists between the UK Government, the NI Executive and the other devolved governments so that when the UK government is involved in discussions on devolved areas, the relevant NI Executive Minister is involved.
- Allow the European Parliament to introduce legislation, alongside the European Commission, so that the elected MEPs have an equal say in legislation.
- Consistently reduce the number of secret votes taken in all of the EU institutions.
- Require the EU Commission to ensure the accounts are signed off every year and that erroneous spending is reduced. Automatic sanctions should apply if the accounts are not signed off each year or if the “material error” element of the accounts increases over the previous year.

There is also a need to streamline the way that the European Union is run to make it more accessible and efficient. Too often, the EU is seen as a large bureaucracy rather than as the flexible and efficient organisation that Alliance would like it to be. We would propose a more agile European Union by campaigning to:

- Initiate a comprehensive review of the bureaucracy associated with European Union funding, aiming to reduce its complexity.
- Improve public access to information about the EU through localised EU websites which provides information on EU activity in individual areas and makes it easier to access information on EU services and funding streams.
- Require the EU Commission to undertake a benchmarking exercise on its budget, comparing the effectiveness of its spending to other government bodies elsewhere.

All too often discussion about the role of the European Union is tainted by erroneous detail and misinformation. An Alliance MEP will be committed to making the positive case for the European Union’s role in Northern Ireland, but making sure the case for change is made too. This will involve making sure those businesses, farmers and the charity sector have access to the European information. An Alliance MEP will be able to work with both the UK and Irish governments, so will be able to get the support of both for projects in Northern Ireland that help achieve our aims of a shared, prosperous and sustainable society.



allianceparty.org

Party Headquarters

88 University Street, Belfast, BT7 1HE

Telephone 028 9032 4274

Email alliance@allianceparty.org



Join us on Facebook

Facebook.com/alliancepartyni



Follow us on Twitter

Twitter.com/allianceparty



Follow us on Flickr

www.flickr.com/photos/allianceparty

join Alliance



Printed and published by and on behalf of The Alliance Party, 88 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HE.

Step Forward
Alliance ▶