

SDLP for
Europe



Best record

Best agenda



Morgan means more for all of us

more jobs

more for business

more for the community

more for farmers



Foreword



This European Parliament election occurs in a time of decisive development in Europe. It comes on the back of the historic enlargement of the EU with 25 Member States and just ahead of the Inter-Governmental Conference, which could reach agreement on the proposed EU constitution. Anticipating referendums on the EU constitution and the Euro, this election is a key opportunity to choose a positive, progressive commitment to the European ideal as well as first class representation on all the causes that matter to people here.

Of course there are complex issues involved in all of this. People need leadership which has both clear, basic principles and a comprehensive grasp of all the socio-economic, legal and political dynamics to be contended with. This is what the SDLP offers. Both as our own regional party and as an integral part of the Party of European Socialists (PES). We have the best record and the best agenda.

In an election for Europe, the people of Northern Ireland need a party for Europe and a party of Europe. The SDLP, with Martin Morgan as our candidate, is the only party in this election with those

credentials. Martin has a lifelong passion for social justice and a strong track record in local politics. He can emulate the John Hume example by inheriting the John Hume strength: in terms of both the mandate from the people here and the solidarity of the PES.

While we look at decisive shift at European level, closer to home we see evasive drift in relation to the Good Friday Agreement. This stalemate frustrates the democratic will as expressed in the 1998 referendum. As some parties fixate on their own mandates they negate the Agreement's. As they play off each other and pump each other up in a rhetorical race about topping the poll, they show that their commitment is only to their own aggrandisement not wider agreement.

This sort of mandate-abuse does not just have implications for the Agreement itself. It has ramifications for the social, economic, environmental and cultural agendas which we should all be taking forward together under the Agreement. These are neglected in suspension and dangerously distorted by a deepening Direct Rule which shows ever-increasing Treasury direction. This creates very real and present dangers to the North's position and our prospects for EU funding and policy treatment.

The SDLP's proposals for "Ending Suspension" and "Getting the Agreement Moving Again" are not just about shouting "Stop!" to suspension. They are also about allowing us all to shout "Stop!" to a negative Treasury agenda which will reduce and undermine our access to various EU programmes.

The SDLP is the only party that is serious about Europe. We are also proving that we are the party that is most serious about the Agreement. Not the European Union or the Agreement just as worthy enterprises in themselves but for the opportunities they give us to tackle what needs to be tackled, improve what must be improved and deliver what can be delivered.

Other parties treat this election as all about themselves. For the SDLP, as this manifesto explains, it is about all our futures as:

- **Communities not just enjoying the benefits of EU funding but epitomising European Social Democratic ethics of partnership, solidarity and equality.**
- **A region enjoying the shared self-respect of our own stable democratic arrangements addressing as many of our own problems as progressively as we can.**
- **An Ireland at home in Europe, working not just for peace, betterment and prosperity for Europe's peoples but for all humanity.**
- **People who belong to a Europe of Values upholding social justice, enterprise, shared prosperity, human rights, cultural respect and environmental responsibility.**

Mark Durkan MLA
SDLP Leader

A positive vision of the European Union

The SDLP is the only major and consistent supporter of EU membership in Northern Ireland. We have also been the most effective in representing the North in Europe.

Our support for the European Union is both principled and pragmatic. The material and political benefits of EU membership are beyond doubt. Agriculture has greatly benefited, our industries have access to wider and more open markets, transport and infrastructure greatly improved through EU investment, new education and training opportunities made widely available.

By ending the international isolation of Northern Ireland, the EU has widened our horizons, and nationalists and unionists have discovered many common socio-economic interests. Relations between North and South have improved as the two parts of the island have also discovered common interests, bringing the two parts of our island closer

beyond all expectation as our two islands work together within the European Union.

The European Union has been of great importance to our peace process. It provided the inspiration for the Good Friday Agreement by showing that long-running conflicts can be resolved. It has also made a massive financial investment in peace on this island.

But most of all, the European Union has shown what a voluntary association of peoples can do when they work together. European economies have been transformed beyond recognition. The European Union operates through agreement, through law and through consent. Coercion has no place.

British eurosceptics and their Irish counterparts deliberately misrepresent the EU. It is not a superstate; it is not ruled by Brussels bureaucrats. It represents the rule of law freely consented to by the elected representatives of the peoples of

Europe can pursue their desire for peace, freedom, prosperity and dignity. The SDLP remains committed to the view that the EU provides the best framework in which to resolve the socio-economic problems of our society - many of which are shared by other EU regions.

Developing relations with those regions which share our interests has always been a priority for the SDLP and is greatly facilitated by our membership of the Party of European Socialists, which includes all social democratic & labour parties in the EU.

To be effective in the EU is to be constructive. The SDLP is seeking a mandate for the European Parliament not to export grievances but to bring home solutions.

To be effective in the EU is to fully engage in its institutions and processes. The SDLP does not believe in sniping from the sidelines.

We seek a mandate to continue the work of John Hume in keeping the North at the top of the European agenda and in ensuring the EU continues to engage in furthering the socio-economic development of our society

"As members of the Party of European Socialists, only the SDLP has the influence to keep delivering for the North."

together. In fact, EU membership has led to the erosion of the border as an economic frontier, and its disappearance as a physical reality. Relations between Ireland and Britain have improved

Europe in the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament.

The European Union provides a framework in which the peoples of

SDLP - the best track record in Europe

The SDLP has an unparalleled record of success in the European Union. Few parties in Europe (and no other party of comparable size) have been so successful in delivering results for their regions. Indeed, nationalist and regionalist parties from other parts of Europe have been inspired by, but never been able to equal, the achievements of the SDLP.

Since the first election to the European Parliament in 1979, the SDLP has focussed on obtaining the most favourable treatment possible for Northern Ireland.

The PEACE programmes resulted from SDLP influence and pressure in the European Union, delivering over £500 million to date. SDLP success in designating and maintaining the North as an Objective 1 area brought billions of EU expenditure to our region, a real boost to our economy – despite the fact that we failed to meet the economic criteria! Among SDLP achievements also, is more favourable treatment for smaller family farms that predominate in Ireland. In fact, one of John's earliest successes was in extending the less favoured areas and securing the special programmes for LFAs.

These advantages were won largely by the force of SDLP arguments and skill in negotiating with our European partners. After all, Northern Ireland has only three votes in the European Parliament and no Ministerial or Commission representation. Our success stems from our ability to form alliances with other political parties across Europe, allowing us access to and influence upon the decision-makers in the European institutions.

Through our network of sister parties in the PES represented in all the member states, we have been able to mobilise support for our policies across Europe. Through John Hume's persistent and tireless advocacy of a positive approach to the problems of the North, we have obtained sympathy and support across the European political spectrum.

No other party has obtained such results in Europe, and none of our rivals in this election is capable of maintaining this performance. Just as in Ireland, the SDLP is the party of delivery, not of empty promises.

The SDLP is seeking a mandate to continue this work in the new Europe of 25 member states, where our positive and outward-looking approach will be even more important.

"I will continue to build on what John Hume has delivered for our community - for workers, for women, for farmers.... And I will deliver".



The New Europe

Opportunities & challenges in the Europe of 25

2004 is a landmark year for the European Union. Since May 1st, the EU consists of 25 member states. The SDLP supports enlargement. Most of the new member states have only emerged from Soviet domination since 1989. Most have only just over a decade of democracy behind them. Consolidating these young democracies is in the interests of all Europeans. Moreover, it is in our interests to secure democracy and stability in the whole of Europe.

Just as the EU invested in our future in some of the darkest days of the conflict in Ireland, we have a practical and moral interest in supporting our new fellow European citizens today. We in Ireland are the last people who should object to the opportunities given to us being offered to the new members who have suffered so much from decades of oppression.

We recognise the problems entailed in enlargement, but it is equally important to highlight the opportunities.

Enlargement obviously involves the adaptation of EU regional development policy but it also offers the long-awaited opportunity to put the EU budget on a solid, equitable, sustainable and realistic footing. The EU is in urgent need of a budgetary system that will permit policy commitments to be backed up by the necessary resources.

Northern Ireland's relative position in the league table of EU prosperity changed overnight on May 1st. We are no longer one of the most impoverished regions of

the EU and will have to work harder to attract EU regional funding. We must therefore improve the quality of our regional planning and our applications for EU funding. At the same time, we must exploit the opportunity that an additional 75 million consumers offer for new markets in goods, services and expertise.

Enlargement confers a right on new EU citizens to live and work in any member state. While this creates potential opportunities to address recruitment shortages locally, it presents a practical challenge to our society also. The SDLP priority is to help our workers compete for high wage jobs, while addressing practical issues such as housing to prevent community tensions arising in areas attracting migrant workers. It should be noted however, that the anticipated mass migration when Greece and Spain joined the EEC never materialised. Evidence shows that migrant workers make a net contribution to the economy as we see clearly in our health service. While others may fan the flames of racism, the SDLP will stand firm for equality and diversity.

has served us well but it is in need of an overhaul. With 25 members, decision-making is more complicated and change is needed.

We therefore welcome the commitment of the European Council to secure agreement on a Draft Constitution for Europe by the end of the Irish Presidency. We wish the Presidency well in this complex and difficult task.

The Draft Constitution drawn up by the Convention on the Future of Europe is a major step towards such an agreement. The SDLP believes, however, that a number of amendments to the draft are necessary to preserve the principle of equal representation of all members in all the institutions, and to preserve the civilian character of the European Union.

"I will work to help our small businesses and farmers to seize all the opportunities of the new larger EU market-place."

New Members, New Rules

The expansion to 25 member states requires the reform of EU decision-making procedures. The existing system

Economic and monetary union, industrial development and employment

Ultimately, the success of the European Union is judged by its record in advancing its own objective, laid down in the Treaty of Rome: "the constant improvement of the living and working conditions of their peoples".

Recognising progress

The SDLP is convinced that membership of the European Union over the last 30 years has been enormously beneficial to the North. It is hard to imagine the economic devastation that would have occurred if the opponents of EU membership had had their way.

Agriculture has benefited greatly from the Common Agricultural Policy, particularly when contrasted with the treatment that could have been expected under traditional British policy. 90,000 jobs are dependent on trade within the single European market. Inward investment is only realistic because Northern Ireland is part of a single market of 455 million consumers.

Membership of the EU is also an effective way of dealing with the challenges of globalisation and world financial markets. No country nowadays can stand alone. Together as Europeans we can control our destinies.

The single market has broken down the barriers to trade between its members. This is a huge achievement, especially in Ireland, where the single market has boosted trade between the two parts of the island.

Realising potential

The SDLP firmly believes that European economic integration is in the interests of the people of Northern Ireland. It provides markets: it makes the North attractive for inward investment. Indeed a hostile or lukewarm attitude to the EU effectively costs jobs as inward investment is deterred.

Most member states of the EU now use the single European currency - the euro. Unfortunately the monetary frontier runs across our island. We will campaign vigorously in favour of the euro and promote dual currency usage until the UK decides to join.

The SDLP believes that Northern Ireland can thrive in the new enlarged Europe, provided we put in place the correct policies. Creating and sustaining full employment must be the most important objective.

However, we must recognise that past economic failures and three decades of conflict mean that we have a great deal of ground to recover. We do not yet have the infrastructure needed for a dynamic economy, and we must address our over-dependence on traditional industries that find it difficult to survive in world markets.

In order to survive in a global economy, and in an enlarged Europe, our economic competitiveness must improve. No western European country can compete nowadays on price alone. Quality,

efficiency and innovation are crucial. The European Union has begun a process - "the Lisbon agenda" - to address these issues. The Lisbon agenda sets the EU a target to become "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy by 2010". The aim is to achieve this by a combination of further integration of the European economy, the exploitation of the possibilities of Information and Communications Technology, and above all by a massive investment in raising the skills of European citizens.

"I will work to bring home jobs, not to export grievances."

We must avail of EU resources and develop our own policies to ensure future prosperity. In particular, a high-quality industrial strategy is necessary. All parts of the region require a modern transport and telecommunications infrastructure. We must recognise the overriding importance of human resources - our people are our best asset.

We have a specific problem to deal with in terms of rocketing insurance costs. The SDLP believes this must be addressed by concerted action at European as well as

local level. Starting with getting a report from the European Parliament, we will work to secure a Commission investigation into competition in the insurance market. We will further work to attract more European players into our local market.

Supporting small business growth is key to our strategy of creating a high-wage, high-skill economy in the North and integrating it into ever-growing North-South opportunities. It must also form a central part of the local and EU approaches to globalisation, to maintain healthy competition and counter-balance the increasing dominance of the world's

developing key clusters to build up procurement capacity. It would involve pooling entrepreneurship responsibilities in Directorate General for Enterprise with other responsibilities affecting small business such as Trade, IT, E-business & Competition. SDLP's concept of Inter-Trade Ireland is already working well for small business within Ireland and we believe our concept can deliver for small business in Europe.

This Commissioner should have a particular regard for the circumstances and requirements of SME's in the EU's different regions. We want to see enhanced regional fiscal discretion to



economies by an ever-smaller number of mega multi-nationals.

Therefore the SDLP is proposing the creation of an EU Commissioner for Small & Medium-Sized Enterprises. Key objectives would include promoting innovation, avoiding unnecessary red-tape, facilitating technology transfer and

take account of local realities or where Members can show that EU objectives can be met by alternative approaches such as on the Climate Change Levy. The Commission's White Paper on Governance mooted possible tri-partite agreements between the EU, member states and regional governments. The SDLP wants to build on this model.

SDLP Goals:

- The introduction of the Euro.
- The development of an industrial strategy to promote competitiveness, innovation and employment.
- The promotion of cross-border trade.
- The establishment of all-Ireland road and rail networks linking Derry, Belfast, Dublin and Cork, with efficient links to Britain and continental Europe through the EU Motorways of the Sea programme.
- The promotion of inward investment and the consequent need to ensure that EU competition and state aid policy takes into account the interests of regions such as Northern Ireland.
- The development of EU policies for the regeneration of areas affected by the decline of older industries.
- The modernisation of telecommunications so that all areas have affordable broadband access, including implementation of the recently agreed contract to extend access to all parts of the North.
- Securing a Parliamentary Report and EU Commission investigation into competition in the insurance market.
- The establishment of an EU Commissioner for Small & Medium Sized Businesses.
- Enhanced regional fiscal variation to take account of local circumstances.

Environment

As a lesser-developed region of Europe, we have an advantage in learning from the experience of others. The SDLP believes that high levels of environmental protection and economic growth are compatible. Indeed a sensible environmental policy creates rather than destroys jobs. The SDLP has a strong record on environmental protection within Europe and on a local level. Research conducted recently by Friends of the Earth illustrated that John Hume was the "greenest" MEP. We are committed to preserving our distinctive countryside and will continue to campaign for the creation of an independent environmental protection agency to protect our natural assets.

Keeping Europe Clean & Green

The European Union has adopted a comprehensive range of laws for the protection of the environment. The task for the next few years is to ensure that

is also necessary. Efficient public transport and intelligent design and construction of homes, public buildings and workplaces can all help to prevent wasteful energy consumption. Recent scandals in the waste industry show the necessity of an all-Ireland waste strategy that respects EU standards and that preserves the attractiveness of our towns, villages and countryside.

An effective policy on water quality, supply and use is also needed. The SDLP will work to ensure that water is neither contaminated nor wasted, and to ensure that households have a high-quality water supply. We will continue to oppose privatisation, domestic metering and the introduction of new charges.

The recent reforms of the CAP will encourage and facilitate the role of farmers in nurturing, protecting and enhancing the rural environment. The

the meantime, ensure that the European Commission faces up to its responsibilities under the Treaty to monitor the activities of the British nuclear industry.



SDLP Goals:

- Implementation of EU & international environmental standards.
- Increased investment in energy conservation.
- Closure of Sellafield.
- Monitoring of British nuclear industry by European Commission.
- Protection of the Irish Sea from pollution.

"I will work for a cleaner, greener Ireland and Europe."

both parts of Ireland live up to their environmental commitments and to European standards.

We believe in exploiting technological advances to provide a cleaner and safer environment. More efficient and cleaner industrial technology is available, and new methods of energy generation can help us to meet Kyoto Treaty targets. More investment in energy conservation

SDLP welcomes the fact that farmers have finally been recognised as the guardians of the landscape. We will work to ensure that farmers can get on with this task that benefits us all without being drowned in bureaucracy.

The SDLP will continue to press for the protection of the Irish Sea from nuclear and other pollution. We will continue to work for the closure of Sellafield, and in

Regional policy

Regional development policy is one of the cornerstones of the European Union. It accounts for the second largest share of EU expenditure and is widely recognised as one of the great success stories. It has brought great benefits to Northern Ireland.

The SDLP has been extremely successful in maximising EU funding. Our success in securing and maintaining Objective 1 status has allowed major improvements in transport, energy, water, economic regeneration and rural development. Other successes include successive

INTERREG, URBAN and LEADER programmes. The SDLP has also secured EU funding for the International Fund for Ireland, and for the PEACE and PEACE II programmes. Indeed the PEACE programmes are unique and were originally proposed by the SDLP, delivering over £500 million and creating over 8000 jobs, not just to the North but to border regions also.

Meeting the Challenge - in Brussels and London

2004 marks a major turning point for EU regional policy. The enlargement of May

1st 2004 entails radical changes. The next 18 months will be critical in determining the shape and scope of our funding. In the new larger Europe, the North needs a pro-European MEP to engage effectively on our behalf. The budget line for PEACE created by the European Parliament at the SDLP's request still exists, for example. What is needed is the political will to avail of it. The SDLP is best placed to build the necessary support to maximise this and other funding in the 2007-2013 expenditure round.

We face challenges, however, from London as well as in Brussels! The Treasury want to "re-nationalise" regional policy which would end our favourable European structural funds experience, re-routing us from the sympathy of Brussels to the antipathy of the Treasury. Martin Morgan, with support from the Party of European Socialists, will oppose this shift but we also need our own regional institutions back soon to challenge it effectively at local level.

Similarly, the Treasury are cold on the case for extending PEACE II and seeking PEACE III. The Treasury is content to reflect the scepticism of other governments, which is reinforced by the absence of the Agreement's functioning institutions. On this too, Martin Morgan, with the support of the PES – not just in the Parliament, but in the Commission and Council of Ministers - will mobilise the key support to overcome the negativity. In addition to securing ongoing EU funding, we want to deliver more of our own public expenditure to community and voluntary groups to support local delivery of vital services in partnership with government. Here



again the challenge will be greater if the Agreement is allowed to languish indefinitely.

Regional policy in Europe has been the driving force of economic development, building cohesion, supporting growth across all member states. During devolution locally, only SDLP Ministers showed the necessary grasp of the importance of this issue, inspiring the innovative 'Reinvestment & Reform Initiative' but also creating the 'Executive Programme Funds'. The former was designed to enable unprecedented capital spending to make up the infrastructural deficit in the North. The EPFs are a new departure also, building on the European funding model to encourage innovation and enterprise in projects submitted for support.

SDLP Goals

- To secure approval by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers of the two-year extension of PEACE II proposed by the European Commission.
- To build support for a PEACE III Programme.
- To ensure that the next long-term EU budget is based on adequate resources to deliver effective regional, agricultural and social policies.
- To maintain the principle that all areas of the EU are eligible for regional support, as proposed by the European Commission but resisted by certain governments, especially the British.
- To secure agreement on a European initiative on cross-border infrastructure co-operation that will greatly facilitate the operation of North-South bodies in Ireland.
- To negotiate the best possible deal for Northern Ireland. This will involve the development of a high-quality, coherent and balanced regional plan capable of securing support from the European Commission. A shopping list strategy will not succeed.

"My priority is clear - to ensure that the North continues to get its fair share from the EU."

Agricultural and fishing industries

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is the largest item of expenditure in the EU budget, attracting almost 50% of the total resources available.

Local farmers have benefited greatly from the CAP to date, particularly when contrasted with the treatment that could have been expected under the traditional British policy of securing a supply of cheap food through low cost, low quality production.

The SDLP has the best record of delivery for local farmers. John Hume ensured that the interests of small farmers were protected within the former CAP, delivering an extension of the Less Favoured Areas, the Special Programmes for the LFAs, and laying down the blueprint for rural development.

As reform of the CAP progresses, the SDLP will continue to be the strongest voice in Europe for local farmers. Our membership of the 'Party of European Socialists' places us in a unique position of strength. No other MEP will have the extensive network of contacts and influence to keep delivering for the North.

Supporting a modern, profitable farming sector

The SDLP wants to support the farming industry in the ongoing development of a modern, profitable sector, producing quality goods while keeping Ireland clean and green.

A major priority will be to insist on reasonable compliance measures in the implementation of the Farm Waste Management Strategy (encompassing the Nitrates Directive).

We will further be working to ensure that new measures under CAP reform take account of the needs of small farmers and that cross-compliance does not result in excessive bureaucracy.

Continued support is required to support diversification, business development,

environmental protection & rural development. Lifelong learning opportunities will be vital in modernising the agriculture industries, adding value and increasing profitability.

We need specific protection for smaller farmers - for environmental as well as economic reasons it is in all our interests to remain able to buy local produce.

Meanwhile we must also take advantage of EU expansion to sell our more advanced agriculture technologies and our superior breeding stocks to the new member states.

The SDLP will continue working to secure removal of remaining restrictions on our beef trade because of BSE.

Investing in the Fishing Industry

The Fishing industry requires investment to deliver sustainable employment for trawler owners, shore fishermen and fishing communities.

Bureaucracy must not stand in the way of funding being made available to

individuals or groupings within our fishing communities that have viable business projects that will benefit the industry and the local economy.

Support should be aimed at adding value to quality produce through land-based processing and enhancing lifelong learning opportunities.

The ongoing fight to protect our fishing industry from ill-advised thinking in Brussels must not be relaxed.

“Only an SDLP MEP will have the contacts and influence to keep delivering for farming, fishing & rural communities.”