

Ian Parsley, Alliance Party candidate, sets out what he would do to make life easier for Northern Ireland's small businesses

You have watched in bewilderment as a global economic crisis was met by your money being used to bail out the big banks whose very irresponsibility had caused the problem in the first place. You have seen small businesses, who were trying to do the right thing, having to lay off workers while big businesses receive state funding. You have seen charities and voluntary sector bodies lose out on funding worth thousands, while banks are bailed out with funding worth billions. You have watched politicians promote households getting into more and more debt as a means to save the economy, and then do nothing to help those caught up in it.

My commitments

- I will oppose any regulations which inhibit economic competitiveness – cross-border competition and knowledge sharing, and free trade in goods and services, are essential for increasing Northern Ireland's competitiveness within the EU, and the EU's competitiveness internationally;
- I will join my Liberal colleagues in pushing for the EU to ensure it meets its target of reducing regulation by 25%, prioritising for removal those regulations which impact negatively on business without providing any benefit to employees; and
- I will advocate regulations abolishing fees for transferring money between sterling and the euro and, on the assumption that the UK will not join the euro for the foreseeable future, support any moves making it easier for Northern Ireland-based small businesses to trade with the euro-zone.