

***Diane Dodds, DUP candidate, sets out what the DUP are doing to help small businesses in Europe and in Northern Ireland***

The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) supports reduced regulation and an end to directives which restrict small businesses and increase their costs.

We oppose sudden surprise additions to regulations which can lead to job losses and business failures. EC Treaty Article 137(2)(b) provides that Directives adopted on employment or working practices "shall avoid imposing administrative, financial and legal constraints in a way which would hold back the creation and development of small and medium-sized undertakings". The DUP will endeavour to ensure this commitment is delivered on.

In these difficult economic times, more must be done to allow businesses to access finance. Over-implementation of legislation and regulations should be avoided. The DUP would support a freeze on legislation which places any further burden on business during the economic downturn. We will maintain pressure on banks to support viable businesses.

The DUP would like to see some of the effective measures introduced by DUP Ministers at Stormont replicated in Europe. On the Northern Ireland Executive, the DUP has limited the impact of those taxes over which the devolved administration has control by freezing business rates, capping manufacturing rates and introducing a small business rates relief scheme.

The economy has been placed as the centre-piece of our Programme for Government and measures have been introduced to improve procurement practices. Political stability in the province is maximising investment opportunities.