

Chair's report

Liberal Democrats in Europe 2025 AGM

November 2025

Dear Members,

A little over twelve months ago, ahead of our last AGM, we were celebrating an extraordinary national result: 72 Liberal Democrat MPs elected in the 2024 General Election. As I noted then, this achievement, while historic, also highlighted areas in which we fell short—particularly in boosting registration among overseas voters and converting that engagement into Liberal Democrat support.

Over the past year, we have taken those lessons seriously. Our analysis of what we could have done better has shaped our priorities and our determination to build the Liberal Democrats in Europe (LDE) into a more effective and influential local party by the time of the next elections.

While each of us will have our own views on developments in UK politics, today I want to focus on LDE—what we have done, what we are working on, and where we hope to go, remembering that many of our members will also contribute to the Party in other ways: serving on policy committees, supporting local parties in Great Britain, or working with political parties in the countries where we live. There remains a distinct role for LDE in championing the concerns of British citizens in Europe.

We recognise the need to avoid the perception of special pleading, but British citizens established outside the UK face genuine and often overlooked challenges—representation, mobility, spousal visas, and, outside Europe, frozen pensions, to name a few. We continue to ensure these issues have a clear and consistent voice within the Party.

Our long-term ambition remains to build a local party capable of supporting candidates should overseas constituencies be created. This means developing grassroots structures, strengthening our organisational base, and deepening our connections with members across Europe.

In the meantime, we have continued to work closely with our counterparts across the world through the Lib Dems Abroad (LDA) Steering Committee. Within the Party, we have focused on

ensuring that the voice of overseas members is heard—often through lengthy and occasionally frustrating engagement with Party. We have attended two Party Conferences this year and steadily raised our profile to advance the interests of overseas members.

In January we submitted our report to the Public Administration & Constitutional Affairs Committee Review of the 2024 General Election – highlighting the ongoing problems with postal voting from abroad.

We intend to continue this work when the new Elections Bill is published, working closely with the parliamentary LibDems to ensure key issues for overseas voters are not overlooked such as reducing the turnaround time for postal votes and campaigning for automatic registration not to forget those abroad.

For next year we will be:

- Re-establishing country-level local groups
- Strengthening campaigning capacity
- Building links with ALDE sister parties across Europe

and through LDA:

- Establishing structures for fundraising and spending outside the UK
- Ensuring the Party is welcoming and functional for non-UK-resident members
- Developing a system for recording overseas voters (longer term)
- Creating an effective CRM system tailored to overseas membership (longer term)
- Bringing forward policy motions relevant to overseas members at Conference

My sincere thanks go to everyone who has given their time and energy to LDE this year. I want to extend particular thanks to the outgoing Executive: Ian Franks - Vice-Chair , Tom McAdam – Membership Development, Rob Harrison - Treasurer , Andrew Burgess - Secretary and special thanks to Nick Catephores for his continued work supporting our Luxembourg branch.

Finally, this is your Party. If you live in Europe, this is your local branch. Please do get in touch and let us know what you believe we should be doing.

With best wishes,

David Sapiro

Chair, Liberal Democrats in Europe

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