

**West Midlands**

A REGION  
OF THE



**European Union**



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**West Midlands**

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**T**he dynamic diversity of the European Union is embodied in its regions. The Union, a Community of 12 Member States where decisions are taken by Ministers responsible to national parliaments, is committed to preserving this diversity as it advances towards ever closer integration.

Each of the regions of the European Union has its own particularities. Each is affected by Community policies. The increasing recognition of this fact underlies the vast growth in cooperation between the regions, from the humblest twinning links to large cross-frontier spending programmes such as INTERREG. Cross-European links in transport, energy and telecommunications are being initiated from the smallest to the greatest. These links are the nerves of the European Union as a Community with a common purpose based on national and regional self-interest with a blossoming regional diversity.

### Development of the Regions

The removal of frontiers has brought regions in direct contact with each other. There are increasing trans-frontier exchanges and cooperation on projects. Many policies of the Union will be of special benefit to the regions. Just to mention a few, competition policy has helped create a level playing field where firms from all regions can compete on fair terms in EU markets; the deregulation of transport policy has cut the cost of moving goods between the regions. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have been among the prime beneficiaries of EU action. Measures include helping them make contacts with partners in other countries and provide them with business start-up aid.

The harmonious development of the regions can only be achieved by reducing the disparities between the economically strong and the less advanced among them. This is why the European Union is committed to re-allocate more of its resources (25% of its budget)

The term "European Union" stemming from Maastricht is preferred in this text. However, whenever funding programmes or policies/laws stemming from the original EEC or ECSC treaties are referred to the term "European Community" is used.

to the regions which are lagging behind. The Structural Funds consist of the European Regional Development Fund, the guidance section of the Agricultural Fund and the European Social Fund. Nearly two-thirds of the money goes to disadvantaged priority regions. The aim is to help regions seriously affected by industrial decline and to promote the development of rural areas.

The European Union must also promote the balanced social development of its regions. The citizens benefit from education, training and mobility programmes. These include help for technology training, vocational training for young people, as well as student exchanges under the ERASMUS programme.

### The Single Market

Community spending programmes do not by any means represent the whole picture. Much of this spending has a wider impact by the very fact that the Community is addressing common problems, such as the difficulties of frontier areas, coal and steel closures or the telecommunication needs of the outer regions. Similarly, the scientific and education programmes have a far wider impact than the amount of money involved might suggest, through the large number of cooperation networks that these programmes have helped to establish.

At the heart of the European Union lies the Single Market. Its economic impact is of a different order of magnitude. Here lie the freedoms leading to Europe's competitive edge in the rest of the world: free movement of goods, people, services and capital. Its counterpart is the Community external trade policy. Here the economic benefits of the Union acting together, for example, in the recent Uruguay round of the GATT negotiations, dwarfed any impact of the funds in the regions. The regions and the Union itself are indivisible.

## Section 1 The West Midlands

Of all the English regions the West Midlands probably presents the most complex and varied picture in terms of social and economic structures.

The region comprises the counties of Staffordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire and Hereford and Worcester together with the metropolitan areas of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Solihull and Coventry as well as the major city of Birmingham. The region as a whole has a GDP estimated at 89% of the European Union average.

Historically, the economy of the shire counties has been rural-based, while the metropolitan districts had a variety of industries which, from the early 19th century onwards earned the western part of the area the title “The Black Country” and in Birmingham’s case “the city of a thousand trades”.

There were momentous accidents of nature which helped elevate the West Midlands to a position of global importance. In particular, the presence of coal and iron ore in Shropshire and Staffordshire led to the birth of the modern Industrial Revolution at Ironbridge.

Similarly, the availability of coal and clay brought about the development of the ceramics industry at Stoke-on-Trent, coal and iron ore encouraged chain making at Dudley, the presence of coal and sand, glass production at Stourbridge and the water at Burton-on-Trent made that town the beer brewing capital of the UK.

Fruit became the prime crop of Hereford and Worcester, with cider a by-product. Hereford beef set standards worldwide, sheep grazed on the Shropshire and Staffordshire hills, and the lowland areas close to the urban developments were fertile corn production centres.

It all meant that the West Midlands established trading and cultural links with the rest of the world almost as soon as modern international trading began. Those ties were reinforced by the immigrant craftsmen who came from Europe to add their skills to native ingenuity.

The Romans settled the area bisecting the region with Watling Street and Ermine Street, the Saxons and Angles left their mark as did the Danes, but it was the later “invaders” who had the longest lasting impact on the West Midlands.

The Normans built castles and cathedrals which attract visitors today, immigrants from Lorraine settled on Cannock Chase and made glass before moving on to Stourbridge and developing that industry into a world leader.

Coventry's wool merchants were selling in the Low Countries in the 14th century and Birmingham's jewellery trade was the envy of France 200 years ago.

At about the same time huge quantities of beer from Burton-on-Trent were being shipped to the Continent of Europe from Hull - and the fine ceramic products of the Potteries were not far behind. It was not just exports from the region which boosted the region's economy. The world came to see the cities, towns and villages associated with Shakespeare, Elgar, Eliot, Bennett, Wedgwood, Johnson, Clive and the engineering genius of Priestley, Watt, Faraday and Telford.

It was from the mid-1970s that the traditional economies of the region went into sharp decline as agricultural practices and demands changed, the engineering and manufacturing sectors struggled to survive and the ceramic and coal mining undertakings ran into difficulties.

In 1977 more than three quarters of a million people were employed in the region's major industries of manufacturing and engineering. Within a decade that number had fallen to under 490,000, at a time when only 42,000 new jobs had been created regionally in the service sector. The decline continued through the rest of the 1980s and into the early part of the 1990s.

Unemployment rates in some inner city and coalfield areas reached levels of 50% despite the wide manufacturing base and craft and technical abilities of the workforce. Across the region jobless levels were consistently above both the UK and EC average as were the numbers of long term unemployed.

In all, the region lost an aggregate of over 300,000 jobs between 1979 and 1992, a fact that disguises the disappearance of 430,000 jobs in manufacturing alone because of the creation of employment in the service sector.

Of those other job losses, 72,000 were in motor vehicle and component activities, 14,000 in ceramics, 30,000 in textiles and clothing, 13,000 in coal mining, 26,000 in defence and 4,500 in agriculture.

Inner city decline, changes in agricultural labour demand and a population move away from the urban areas has created the need for a diversification of industries on to newer sites with enhanced training provision.

It was against such a background that the European Commission recognised that the region required assistance, and in 1988 large parts of the West Midlands were granted Objective 2 status. This triggers assistance from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and allowed funding to become available to help revitalise the communities affected.

Since that time over £300 million has been allocated to the West Midlands through Objective 2 as well as in aid through the European Social Fund. This has two main aims: Objective 3 - to combat long term unemployment and Objective 4 - to integrate young people into the job market. The latest reform of the Structural Funds, as they are called, combines these two objectives and creates a new Objective 4 which is to help the workforce adapt to technological change.

EC assistance is also available through Objective 5b

for the rural areas of the region where agricultural incomes are low and social and economic developments are below average.

Objective 2 had four main programme areas; Birmingham, the Black Country, Coventry & Warwickshire and Shropshire & Staffordshire. The support provided under the initiative has enabled a wide range of schemes to be undertaken involving both physical and human resources.

The latest reform of the Structural Funds gives Objective 2 status to the West Midlands region, parts of the travel-to-work areas of Birmingham, Dudley and Sandwell, Walsall, Coventry and Hinckley, and Wolverhampton.

Overall, by bringing together many agencies from the public, private and voluntary sectors European Community funding and policies have managed to help achieve an increased level of investment in economic activities, a diversification and strengthening of the economy and the creation of conditions for regeneration of the region.



Since the UK joined the Community in 1973, the pattern of its trade has shifted towards Europe; a pattern being reinforced by the completion of the Single Market and very evident in the West Midlands, a region accounting for nearly a third of all UK exports.

Agriculture, as varied across the region as any other industry, has taken advantage of some of the opportunities offered by the setting up of the Single Market. Exports from the West Midlands of cider, lamb and beef have increased. This extra trade, added to the sustained profitability of the dairy herds, has helped produce an overall improvement in average farm incomes during 1993.

There are, however, still some sectors, notably pigs, poultry and cereals, which have struggled to compete and their difficulties account for the continuing decline in the total number of people actively involved in agriculture across the West Midlands.

The Single Market itself is well suited to the needs of the West Midlands. The region in general and Birmingham in particular enjoy excellent transport links by road, rail and air. This, together with its industrial base and the skills of the workforce, makes it most attractive for investment from the rest of the European Union, invigorating the economy and bringing new jobs.

## **Section 2**

### **New Industries - New Jobs**

Since 1988 major investment by our partners in the European Community in the economic regeneration of the West Midlands has led to the creation of new industrial sites and business parks offering the potential for the creation or protection of over 30,000 jobs as a stage towards fulfilling the vision of the area as an advanced industrial region.

Other funding has gone towards the cost of training, education, research and development, business support, environmental and infrastructure improvements.

Local authorities, Training and Enterprise Councils, UK government departments and the private sector have all been involved in working partnerships for the development and delivery of a regional development strategy based firmly on the conviction that the survival and enhancement of manufacturing is essential to economic recovery.

To carry out the programme, the partners have six main priorities - productive activities, transport and communications, business development, improving the image of the region, tourism and research and development coupled with vocational training.

The provision of quality industrial sites and premises for new and expanding businesses is a key element in promoting economic growth. A few examples of the schemes involved are:

in the Birmingham Heartlands area, 11 hectares of derelict industrial land was reclaimed generating space for an estimated 15,000 jobs on the Waterlinks development;

in Coventry and Warwickshire, demand for industrial workspace has been met by the development of business parks at Westwood, Binley and Middlemarch. The Binley scheme alone involved reclamation of almost 29 hectares of former industrial land and the creation of 3,000 jobs;

managed starter units in Lye and Oldbury, and business park developments at Pendeford in the Black Country, have complemented private investment in factory space. Many of the Black Country developments have been on the 87 hectares of industrial sites reclaimed from dereliction;

between 3,000 and 5,000 new jobs will be created as a result of sites in the Foleshill and Hillfields districts of Coventry being opened up by the building of a north-south road through the city;

rejuvenation of the Gladstone St James inner city area of Stoke-on-Trent has attracted investment, tourism and brought new jobs and businesses;

redundant factory space in Walsall has been converted for use as workshops, training and conference facilities;

the Horton Court development at Telford, has 28 starter units;

sites at Telford, Alverley and Donnington in Shropshire and in Codsall, Four Ashes and Wombourne in Staffordshire have provided the opportunity for 840 new jobs in a former coal mining area;

ex-miners in the Coventry and north Warwickshire area are also being helped.

Establishing the Single Market has increased the region's trade.

One firm in the consumer market, LG Harris from Worcester, makes paint and paint brushes. A decade ago, only a few per cent of the company's export trade was with Europe: today sales to countries in the European Union are between 35-40% of an expanding export sector of the Harris business. Now the firm is looking to use that base to develop into Eastern Europe.

The West Midlands traditional skills in automotive engineering has led to firms in the region winning contracts to produce major components for companies like Mercedes Benz and Volkswagen as well as being the base on which successful producers, such as Rover and Jaguar, have built.

One large engineering group, with £100 million worth of export business annually reports that 75% of these goods go to European Community countries - despite the recessions in Germany and Spain.

### **Section 3 Regenerating the Infrastructure**

Part of the regional regeneration strategy involves the encouragement of business diversification with projects such as the expansion of the National Exhibition Centre, the development of tourism and the construction of the International Convention Centre in the heart of Birmingham. With a contribution of £50 million towards its cost this is the largest EU supported project in England.

Further ERDF assistance has gone into the development of Paradise Forum, Paradise Circus and the Arcadian shopping, office and leisure scheme.

Without top class transport and communications joining the West Midlands to the rest of the world any economic regeneration of the region would be difficult, if not impossible. Strategic road, rail and air routes have been opened with EC funding enabling suppliers and markets to be in speedy and reliable contact.

Major schemes will liberate important industrial development sites - the Coventry north/south road, the Black Country route, the Telford Eastern district road and the Heartlands spine road.

Completion of the Birmingham Middle Ring network will improve movement to and from industrial sites and encourage visitor access to city centre attractions such as the International Convention Centre. Improved facilities at Coventry's Pool Meadow bus terminus will stimulate shopping and tourism in that city.

British Rail has taken an active role as a partner in schemes to improve the Snow Hill-Moor Street-Smethwick west line, to upgrade facilities at New Street station, Birmingham and the establishment of a rail-freight terminal to improve access to markets both within the UK and Europe.

Even greater access to the rest of the Community regions is now available through the Euro-hub at Birmingham International airport where £1.6 million of Community funding went towards the cost of runway resurfacing.

Community funding has been used in the building of further halls at the National Exhibition Centre, where an estimated 1,600 jobs have been created, and where visitors and exhibitors enhance the local economy.

If business tourism is a key factor in Birmingham's plans, then visitor numbers are just as important to other areas of the region, such as Shropshire where the Ironbridge Gorge, the very birthplace of modern industry, has attracted £7.23 million worth of European Community investment since 1989.

Work at Ironbridge has been carried out as a partnership between Shropshire County and Wrekin and Bridgnorth District Councils, the Ironbridge Museum Trust and the Greenwood Trust. History is also the attraction at the Black Country world Museum and in Birmingham's jewellery quarter where today's craftsmen reflect yesterday's skills in a discovery centre the development of which was assisted by European funding.

Warwickshire's most famous tourist centre is Stratford-upon-Avon but the County Council is keen to persuade visitors to go to other areas too.

William Shakespeare grew up in the Forest of Arden, and European funding is now helping restore the ancient woodlands which vanished years ago.

Efforts are also being made to entice visitors to the county's countryside parks with the setting up of a rare breeds farm at Kingsbury and an "electricity from methane" project at the former landfill site at Ryton Pool, now a countryside park.

Visitors to the rural areas help offset some of the impact of the changes in agriculture which have badly affected communities in the countryside where more than 6,000 jobs have disappeared from farm-related activities in the region in a decade. The projection is that twice that number will go in addition by the end of the century.

Designation of the marches area of Shropshire and Hereford-Worcester, on the border with Wales, as Objective 5b will assist in the worst affected area in the region, while the remote corners of North Staffordshire have been included in a revised Objective 2 area.

The Community's RECHAR programme assists with the regeneration of coal closure areas, and in north Warwickshire grants have helped take training programmes out into rural areas which were not previously eligible for such a service.

RECHAR funding has also gone into the biggest industrial development site in the Coventry and Warwickshire area, at Bermuda near Nuneaton, providing access roads, services and environmental landscaping on a site which is expected to attract many new firms and hundreds of jobs.

In Staffordshire, in addition to the support of schemes making jobs available to former miners, RECHAR money is helping out of work graduates and managers with career training.

The ceramics industry has also gone through a lengthy period of change bringing about employment and social problems in the Stoke-on-Trent area. Recognition of those problems led to the setting up of an urban pilot programme in the Gladstone St James inner area of the city. Jobs have been created and tourism interest aroused following environmental improvements that saw the establishment of a centre of excellence for ceramic design and studio facilities for multi-arts activity.

Cutbacks in defence spending following the end of the Cold War have brought about other job losses in the region and the Community's KONVER programme offers help to communities where these employment reductions are most felt.

In the West Midlands, Shropshire and Warwickshire have both had KONVER funding, with a business training centre for small and medium sized firms affected by the reduction in defence spending being built at Nuneaton and a package of vocational training measures being organised by Shropshire Training and Enterprise Council.

## **Section 4**

### **A Cleaner Environment**

A clean and attractive environment is an essential element in helping persuade vital industrial inward investment and tourist visitors to the West Midlands, as well as improving the quality of life for the local population.

Reclamation of disused and/or industrially contaminated land has been a top priority in the provision of new workspace sites, but other measures have also been taken with the assistance of Community funding.

Both Birmingham and Coventry, as well as historic centres such as Bridgnorth, Lichfield and Tamworth, now have wide-scale pedestrianisation schemes through their main shopping areas.

In Shropshire Community funding is being used to support a demonstration project at Walford Agricultural College whereby farm waste is recycled to produce heat and energy.

Many of the centres of the Black Country and Potteries towns have been improved by tidy-up schemes backed by Community funding which has also gone into the renovation of the canal system as a tourism and recreation features.

## **Section 5**

### **Education and Technology**

The European Community has programmes in the fields of scientific R&D and in education. Projects supported under these programmes are invariably joint, between participants in two or more Member States.

The Scientific Research programme has 15 sections embracing for example Information Technology, Telecommunications, Telematics and Industrial Technologies, Advanced Materials, Food Technologies, Energy and the Environment.

West Midlands inventiveness and the region's long experience of manufacturing and engineering, is now being used in these national and transnational projects as firms and educational institutions exchange ideas and knowledge. All of the universities in the region are involved in Commission aided projects and with students from other EU Member States.

In total during the 1992/93 academic year, 1,548 students from the West Midlands were able to spend part of their study time outside the UK as part of the Erasmus scheme. The region hosted 1,803 students, mostly from France and Germany.

Under the COMETT programme for university-business cooperation to improve training in the new technologies, 41 West Midland students were able to gain work experience in other Community countries during the same period.

Both the PETRA young persons vocational training programme, with 150 participants from the West Midlands, and the Youth for Europe short term exchange scheme which involved 400 youngsters from the region were well supported.

Trans-European exchanges take place based on the ceramics courses held at Stoke College, while a flexible learning in electronics project at Shrewsbury College has led to a partnership with Naples Chamber of Commerce.

In Shropshire, Community funding is being made available for the setting up of a technical training initiative for the British Polymer Training Association.

Westwood Science Park, Coventry, is now regarded as a European Centre of Excellence. The firms based there have joined with Warwick and Coventry universities and with Coventry City Council in a Community-funded STRIDE programme (part of the Regional development Fund) to develop regional research and development linking firms with higher education establishments.

There is also a regular exchange of information with the adjoining Warwick University Advanced Technology Centre which draws on the university's strength in engineering.

The joint project is concentrating on upgrading production techniques in the automotive and aerospace industries. Aston Science Park, Birmingham, developed in association with

Lloyds Bank, is the base for 45 hi-tech companies who carry out projects jointly with Aston University, while Staffordshire University has a language centre where firms can make use of translation and interpretation services and a Community project at Keele University offers facilities to businesses in need of briefings on European matters.

## **Section 6**

### **A Region for Investment**

Birmingham, the UK's second city, is the gateway to the West Midlands and increasingly the major point of entry to the region for visitors from Europe.

The city's airport has a Euro-hub which allows for swift passenger transfers to and between airlines linking all the major European locations.

Birmingham International station was built alongside the airport and the National Exhibition Centre, while the city's main rail terminus, New Street, has regular services to London, the North, Scotland and the South West, and connecting services with all the other main communities of the West Midlands.

The UK national motorway network crossing the region at its heart, especially with the world renowned Spaghetti Junction. Road links mean that Birmingham, Coventry, Wolverhampton, Stoke and Worcester are all within a two-hour drive of 90% of the rest of the UK's population.

With this infrastructure, and the opportunities of the Single Market, business developments in the West Midlands are setting new standards, not only for the UK, but for the rest of Europe as well.

Under the Community's Euroform programme, which promotes training to meet the needs of the single market and technological developments, the centre of the European "telecottage" network is in Staffordshire. Based in a school near Leek, the pioneering moorlands telecottage project is the first scheme of its kind to offer formalised training for people who work from home or remote bases using modern telecommunication equipment and computer technology.



The two-year training course offers the opportunity to obtain nationally recognised qualifications in IT, business administration and small business techniques. Other telecottage centres in the UK are looking to use the training programme - as are schemes in Spain, Portugal, Greece and Eire.

Development of the strategy which will enable small and medium sized businesses in particular to maximise the skills of their workforce, is being carried out under the EC Force programme designed to promote and improve continuing education. This involves Walsall Chamber of Commerce, Stafford College, the Department for Education and several local firms.

Interest from Greece, Portugal and Italy is being shown in a Force project, also being co-ordinated by Staffordshire Training and Enterprise Council, aimed at developing a European standard for skilled workers/trainers.

Shropshire based Rapra Technology, using the Community's SPRINT programme which encourages cross-border exchange of technology and innovation, is working with partners in Portugal on a plastic and rubber injection moulding project which will help Rapra Technology increase sales.

An agreement between ETA Process Plant of Rugby and a Spanish company helps the sale of the British-made products in the Spanish oil and petrochemicals market.

The West Midlands is an attractive location for firms to relocate. German companies have been the most active in taking advantage of the region's location and readily available workforce skills. The region attracted 20% of the total investment in the UK regions by overseas companies locating to this country since 1988.

Of the 900 new firms who have set up operations in the region in that time, more than half are from European Union Member States as they seek to take advantage of the West Midlands' ideal location - 90% of the UK consumer market is within one day's truck drive of the region.

Among those businesses is HAF (UK) who have made the most of the inherent lock-making skills available in Willenhall, Wolverhampton, to open a £5 million factory that will provide 150 jobs making locking systems for the car industry.

There will be 300 new jobs when VDO Instrumentation completes the expansion of its Birmingham factory where electronics and instrumentation for automotive vehicles are produced.

Brink UK were the 31st Dutch company to find a base in the West Midlands when they moved into premises at Nuneaton, while Spanish firms, Ficosa and Hofesa UK, have operations at Tamworth and Tipton respectively.

## **Section 7**

### **THE QUALITY OF LIFE**

The quality of life in the West Midlands has been enhanced through schemes which have attracted European Community funding and which may not have come about without that help.

Apart from the International Convention Centre (ICC) development, the Gas Hall exhibition facilities enhance the city's museum and art gallery, while there has been European support for the Repertory, Alexandra and Hippodrome theatres.

West Midlands' history is being preserved in numerous schemes, not the least those involving the preservation of Lichfield Cathedral and Tamworth Castle, the restoration and improvement of the canal networks and the re-opening of Southorns clay pipe works at Broseley, once one of the major production centres of such items in the world.

Euroform is a Community project to promote new training needs arising from completion of the single market and technological development. The St Thomas Network in Dudley is a Euroform Project which not only has very close ties with many sections of its own community, but readily exchanges information and views with similar organisations in Dublin, Berlin and Potsdam. Trainees from St Thomas's have set up businesses, taken courses in IT, literacy and numeracy, hairdressing and beauty and even dental care. The Network has projects involving the under-fives as well as retired groups, the arts and provides guidance and counselling on many subjects.

European Community funding especially through the Social Fund, is partly geared to help those with special needs and especially to provide employment opportunities for them. In Solihull the Express Signs business co-operative provides opportunities for

people with mental health problems to work, making, writing and selling signs and notices for firms all over the country. In Stoke-on-Trent homeless youngsters are encouraged to play a role in the community as part of the innovative Horizons Project run by a consortium of organisations and which is attracting interest from groups in Leipzig and Southern Ireland.

There is interest from both sides of the Irish border in the Kings vocational training scheme being run by the Stone Foundation Trust in association with central and local government departments and aimed at integrating the long-term unemployed into the labour force. The project particularly concentrates on the needs of ex-offenders, drug abusers and people with mental and physical handicaps, and so was able to attract support from the EC "Horizon". Distance learning methods are used, and the effectiveness of the scheme is also being watched by bodies in Portugal, Greece, Belgium, Spain, France and Italy.

Health authorities are partners in a project based on Staffordshire Agricultural College and aimed at providing training in horticulture for adults who have suffered mental or physical illness or been unemployed for more than a year.

Help can also be available for those from outside the European Union. Community funding is allowing North Warwickshire College to run cultural reorientation and vocational and language courses for refugees from the former Yugoslavia who have settled in North Yorkshire as well as helping transfer qualifications for use in UK industry.

Some of those trainees could make use of the business and IT training facilities available in the telecottage run by the Warwickshire Rural Enterprise Network which also provides a mobile careers advisory service to remote parts of the county.

## **Section 8**

### **LINKS ACROSS EUROPE**

West Midlanders have become increasingly European-minded in recent years, with a growing number of twinning agreements being entered into with communities on the continent. Hundreds of schools across the region have formal and informal ties with educational establishments in Europe with exchanges taking place frequently.

Birmingham's town twinning efforts, with Frankfurt, Lyons and Milan, won national recognition for the extent to which people from so many different walks of life were involved. Coventry, with twinning agreements with Cork, Caen, St Etienne, Frankfurt, Kiel, Dresden, Bologna and Arnhem, has the most number of ties. Twinning can also take place on a much more modest scale - the tiny north Staffordshire hamlet of Betley has a warm association with Agny in France.

Other French connections include Redditch and Auxerre, Evesham and Dreux, Rugby with Evreux, Leominster with Saverne and Bridgnorth with Thiers. Droitwich is twinned with the German town of Bad Ems, Ross on Wye with Betzdorf, Stoke on Trent with Erlangen and Ellesmere with Reutlingen.

Other links up include Ludlow and San Pietro, Italy, Leamington Spa with the Dutch town of Heemstede, Nuneaton and Bedworth with Guadalajara in Spain and Stafford with Tarragona also in Spain.

These twinings have led to celebrations - the Shropshire in Europe event encouraged local businesses to become aware of the opportunities of the Single Market, while the Staffordshire European Festival programme included more than 200 events in a fortnight.

## **CONCLUSION**

The West Midlands has a long history of world-class industrial and commercial excellence as befits the birthplace of the modern industrial revolution.

Global recession and changes in technology and consumer demands brought about a great shake-out of jobs across key sectors of the economy in the 1980s.

Recognition of the economic and social effects of such dramatic changes led to considerable European Community investment in the region which, it is universally acknowledged, is the workplace of the UK.

The funding has helped create new industries and jobs, preserve and enhance employment in other trades and professions. It has assisted in the improvement of skill and educational levels,

encouraged research and development, particularly the transnational exchange of information and provided opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

Community support has also aided environmental improvements and infrastructure development making for a better quality of life for both the resident population and the ever-growing number of tourists to the region.

However, it has not only been the cash investment that has helped the West Midlands overcome the worst effects of the major traumas and changes. Alongside it must be set the huge incentive given by the establishment of the Single Market and the opportunities for enterprise that this provided.

## 1. European Documentation Centres

Official publications of the EC

### Birmingham

Information Services  
Perry Barr Library  
University of Central England  
in Birmingham  
Birmingham B42 2SU

Tel: 021 331 5298  
Contact : Linda Garratt

### Birmingham

EDC Main Library  
University of Birmingham  
BIRMINGHAM B15 2TT

Tel : 021 414 5823  
Contact : Hywel Williams

### Wolverhampton

Robert Scott Library  
University of Wolverhampton  
St Peter Square  
Wolverhampton WV1 1RH

Tel: 0902 322314  
Contact: Marion Pope

### Coventry

EDC Library  
University of Warwick  
Coventry  
CV4 7AL

Tel: 0203 523523 x 2041  
Contact : Jolyon Hall

### Coventry

The Lanchester Library  
Coventry University  
Much Park Street  
COVENTRY CV1 2HF

Tel : 0203 838698 x 8295  
Contact : Jeff Stratford

## 2. European Information Centres

Provide up-to-date information on all aspects of Community affairs to small and medium-sized enterprises.

### Birmingham

Birmingham Chamber of Industry  
and Commerce  
75 Harborne Road  
PO Box 360  
Birmingham B15 3DF

Tel: 021 455 0268  
Contact: Sharon Clift

### Dudley

The Black Country European Business Centre  
Dudley Court South  
Waterfront East  
Level Street  
Brierley Hill  
West Midlands DY5 1XN

Tel: 0384 48500

### Nuneaton

Warwickshire European Business Centre  
Vicarage Street  
Nuneaton  
CV11 4AZ

Tel: 0203 375469

### Worcester

European Business Centre Hereford  
and Worcester  
Business Promotion Centre  
Taylors Lane  
Worcester WR1 1PN

Tel: 0905 765335

# United Kingdom Regions

WEST MIDLANDS  
AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

## 1 South West

Devon  
Cornwall

## 2 West

Dorset  
Wiltshire  
Somerset  
Avon  
Gloucestershire

## 3 East

Norfolk  
Cambridgeshire  
Suffolk  
Bedfordshire  
Essex  
Hertfordshire

## 4 West Midlands

Staffordshire  
Shropshire  
Birmingham  
Warwickshire  
Herefordshire  
Worcestershire

## 5 North

Newcastle  
Middlesborough  
Durham  
Tyne and Wear  
Cleveland  
Northumberland  
Cumbria

## 6 South East

Kent  
West Sussex  
East Sussex  
Surrey

## 7 South

Hampshire  
Berkshire  
Oxfordshire  
Isle of Wight  
Buckinghamshire

## 8 East Midlands

Leicestershire  
Nottinghamshire  
Northamptonshire  
Lincolnshire  
Derbyshire

## 9 South West

South Yorkshire  
West Yorkshire  
North Yorkshire  
Humberside

## 10 North West

Greater Manchester  
Merseyside  
Lancashire  
Cheshire

## 11 Greater London

## 12 Scotland

## 13 Wales

## 14 Northern Ireland

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**Author:** Bill Jones

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### **West Midlands Region**

- 1** Hereford & Worcestershire
- 2** Shropshire
- 3** Staffordshire
- 4** Warwickshire
- 5** West Midlands & Birmingham