

Statement of Purpose, European Union Visitors Program

I am currently a member of the Council of the City of Pittsburgh and chair the Council's Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs. As such, I am extremely interested in learning more about the European Union and its trade policies. Knowledge gained from this program will enable me to craft better legislation and advocate more effectively, thereby fostering even stronger relations between Pittsburgh and the European Union.

The European Union nations have long influenced both the culture and economy of Pittsburgh and Southwestern Pennsylvania. Today, that influence is still strong. The majority of foreign-based firms in our region are European Union firms employing approximately 30,000 people and contributing vitally to the region's economy and culture. We in Southwestern Pennsylvania are eager to find new ways to enhance and grow both already existing and new partnerships with Europe. Whether in collaborative research projects and cultural exchanges or in the trade of goods and services, we can do more. The Visitors Program will provide the necessary foundation of knowledge and connections which can eventually lead to better policies and stronger advocacy.

Specifically, I am interested in learning how at the local and regional level we can help facilitate more open trade relations with Europe and how we in Pittsburgh can improve the business climate to make it more attractive and predictable for European Union firms. As Pittsburgh emerges as an even stronger banking hub, I am also interested in learning more about EU banking and what is happening in the face of the recent crisis. Finally, I hope to learn more about some of the issues, cultural or otherwise, that currently pose challenges to enhanced trade. While issues such as protection of intellectual property are not in the purview of local governments, it is something that is of great import to our region's economy and our relations with partner regions like the EU. Learning more about those kinds of issues can only help me in my role as an advocate here.

The European Union has been and continues to be Pittsburgh's strongest trade partner and will be a vital partner in these region's future growth and prosperity. The European Union Visitors Program will enable me to learn more about how to strengthen and grow this critical partnership.

Patrick Dowd
Member, Pittsburgh City Council