

## **Sharon Bowles MEP**

Sharon Bowles has been an MEP since May 2005 and became Chair of the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee at the start of the new Parliamentary mandate in July 2009.

Born in Oxford, Sharon graduated from Reading University with an honours degree in Chemical Physics with Mathematics, specialising in quantum mechanics, spectroscopy and crystallography. She moved on to research on semiconductors at Oxford University using electron microscopy to study electrical and luminescent properties of laser materials.



In 1978 she commenced training to be a Chartered and European Patent Attorney, qualifying in 1981 and setting up her own practice the same year. Her husband Andrew Horton joined her to form the Bowles Horton partnership in 1986. Sharon worked in the practice until 2005 covering leading edge technology for both multinational companies and individual clients. Her main specialities were semiconductor fabrication and integrated circuits, telecommunications, computer architecture, oil extraction and wingsail design.

Sharon became active in politics in the mid 1980s. During the period from 1997 to 2005 she served on the Federal Executive (board) of the Liberal Democrats, its Finance and Administration Committee and chaired their International Relations Committee, was a Vice President of Liberal International, and became (and remains) Vice President of the ELDR aisbl (European Liberal Democrat and Reform party).

Sharon was a UK parliamentary candidate for the Liberal Democrats in 1992 and 1997, and also a European parliamentary candidate in 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009. She entered the European Parliament in 2005, replacing Chris Huhne on his election to the UK parliament and took over his place on the ECON committee.

During the last Parliament she was the shadow rapporteur, *inter alia*, for the directives on Payment Services, Solvency II, Capital Requirements, Deposit Guarantees and Level 3 Committee funding, for reports on Hedge Funds and Private Equity and Transparency of Institutional Investors, as well as being rapporteur on tax fraud and for the setting up of the Statistical Governance Advisory Board. As a substitute on the legal Affairs Committee she covered Company Law and Intellectual Property and from time to time has intervened on the Industry and International Trade committees.

Re-elected in 2009, Sharon now Chairs the ECON committee and remains a substitute member of the Legal Affairs (JURI) committee.