

City of San Miguel, Texas

Mayor Patricia L. SMITH

1. Current Professional Responsibilities

I am currently serving as Mayor (Republican Party) of San Miguel, Texas, a city that provides an important link in international trade. San Miguel is an ethnically and culturally diverse community (population 94,554). San Miguel is the center of a 15-county region that has a diversified economy based largely on agriculture (e.g. cotton, livestock, etc.) in addition to petroleum, wind energy, medical, communications, education, federal, military, retail, retirement and tourism activities.

As Mayor, I conduct oversight of municipal administration that includes operation functions of various units of government. I possess a thorough knowledge of regulations, ordinances and laws governing municipalities.

Analysing a variety of administrative problems and making sound policy and procedural recommendations are my main duties. As an elected official, I work to develop and maintain effective working relationships with city officials, employees and representatives of private and public sector organizations.

2. Themes of the Trip

A strong EU and its relationship with the U.S.A. are central to world affairs. As an elected official, I am interested to gain a first-hand appreciation of the EU's goals, policies and peoples, and to increase mutual understanding and cross-cultural communication between the EU and the U.S.A.

The success of a region or city is mostly due to a combination of different factors and policies decided at different levels of governance. Of greatest interest to me is how local authorities throughout Europe interface with the overall goals and policies of the EU. The following topics are of interest to me:

A. Solidarity Policies

- **Regional aid.** How is money used to boost development in regions lagging behind? What is being done to help young people and the long-term unemployed find work? Taking into consideration the overall crisis, does it still make sense for the EU to invest money in regions that are lagging behind? What is the stance of the more developed regions in this matter?

City of San Miguel, District 6 73 W., College Avenue, San Miguel 72903, Texas

City of San Miguel, Texas

Mayor Patricia L. SMITH

- **Convergence.** How successful are efforts to help less developed regions catch up more quickly with the wealthier regions? What are the best practices for investing in physical and human capital?
- **Tourism.** How is tourism being developed in less developed or touristic regions and how successful is this policy?

B. Innovation Policies

- **Energy.** What kind of partnerships exist between local authorities, businesses and the EU regarding the use and development of alternative energy (e.g. wind, solar, etc.)?
- **Waste management.** What innovative strategies are local authorities implementing regarding waste management (e.g. recycling, waste-to-energy, etc.)?

C. Illegal Immigration

Like many Texan cities, San Miguel is faced with illegal immigration. How does EU immigration policy work? What is done to fight illegal immigration?

D. Multicultural and Minorities Challenges, Social Plans

- **Government housing.** What challenges do local authorities contend with regarding immigration (both legal and illegal)? What strategies are used to help integrate these immigrants into mainstream Europe? How does the EU interface with local authorities with regard to multicultural issues?
- **Social inclusion.** How is social inclusion promoted in the EU? Are there any successful examples of social inclusion that the U.S. could learn from?
- **Gay and lesbian rights.** How have civil rights for these groups evolved in the EU? How are these issues dealt with by countries seeking to join the EU?
- **Education and employment policy.** How does the EU boost education and prospects for unemployed/uneducated citizens?
- **Social plans for health and pensions.** What is the EU currently doing for its ageing population in terms of health security and pension plans?

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3. Some Desired Appointments

I would like to meet officials of the European Commission and the European Parliament, as well as MEPs during my study-tour. Also meetings with other EU bodies would be of interest to me. Some meetings I would like to have:

- U.S. Desk for a general introduction to its work
- Regional and Urban Policy Desk
- Committee of the Regions
- Eurocities and related organizations
- Mayor of Brussels
- I would also like to discuss problems of and solutions to cultural and religious mix issues with people working in the field, and representatives of the city council of Brussels
- EU tourism policy
- Economic and Social Committee
- Education and employment policy
- Youth policy
- EU immigration policy
- Representatives from the EU wind and renewable energy associations
- EU city waste management
- GLTB representatives and MEPs defending their rights
- Minorities and ageing population policy, including health policy and social inclusion
- Any other person interested in one of the above-mentioned topics.

Mayor Patricia L. Smith
San Miguel, Texas, March 2013

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