

## Joint Statement by Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos and Prime Minister of Kosovo Isa Mustafa

Today European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** and Prime Minister of Kosovo Isa Mustafa met in Brussels to discuss the final steps needed to fulfil the remaining requirements of the visa liberalisation dialogue with Kosovo.

Commissioner Avramopoulos commended the progress made by the government of Kosovo so far, including on the track record of high-level organised crime and corruption cases. Both sides agreed that this progress needs to be sustained, and in particular that the number of actual convictions is increased.

Commissioner Avramopoulos also recognised the efforts Kosovo has made to ratify the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro, and encouraged Prime Minister Mustafa, his government and the political parties to proceed with the vote in the Assembly soon. Commissioner Avramopoulos expressed his support to Kosovo in the last stages towards visa liberalisation, and offered to visit Kosovo before the summer.

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## It is clear the Tories want the rest of us to pay for their mistakes – McDonnell

**John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor**, responding to the ONS Public Sector Finances figures which show that the national debt has gone up by £123.5 billion since March 2016 under the Tories, said:

"After seven wasted years of Tory economic failure, supported by both Philip Hammond and Theresa May, the deficit has not been cleared as they promised, and the national debt continues to rise.

"The Tories promised when they were first elected that they would have balanced the books by 2015, but now they cannot promise to do it by 2020, and instead the past year has seen both borrowing and debt has increased.

"Today's figures reveal that the national debt has gone up by £123 billion since March last year, and with a Tory Chancellor who won't rule out raising taxes on low and middle earners, and has no plan to deal with inflation

rising ahead of earnings, it is clear the Tories want the rest of us to pay for their mistakes.

"Yet despite their broken promises on the public finances they continue to hand out tens of billions in tax giveaways to the super-rich and big corporations, while enforcing spending cuts on everyone else; underfunding our NHS and leaving our care system in crisis for the most vulnerable.

"Only a Labour government will have a serious plan for the public finances with strategic investment underpinned by our Fiscal Credibility Rule, so that we stand up for the many, not the few."

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## [Postings to this site](#)

Some people are sending in far too many posts each day, and some are still sending in very long posts. This is an exceptionally busy time with Parliament trying to complete necessary business and people preparing for the election to come, so my time for moderating is reduced. I will have to delete more.

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## [Lamont announces resignation from Scottish Parliament to fight General Election](#)

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- Lamont announces resignation from Scottish Parliament to fight General Election

25 Apr 2017



John Lamont, the MSP for Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire, has announced his intention to resign from the Scottish Parliament.

The move will allow him to focus on the campaign to win Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk from the SNP at the forthcoming General Election.

John Lamont notified the Presiding Officer today that he will step down from

Holyrood, with effect from May 4.

The Presiding Officer will set the date for the by-election shortly.

**John Lamont said:**

“It has been a great privilege to serve the people of the Borders in the Scottish Parliament for the last 10 years.

“During that time, I have worked as hard as I could to represent every community, no matter how small.

“I have held over 1000 local advice surgeries and assisted tens of thousands of local residents with problems and cases. I have always put local people before party politics.

“I want to continue that service to the Borders as a Member of Parliament and my approach to this important job will be exactly the same as it has been.

“This is one of the most important General Elections Scotland has ever had.

“In the Borders, it will be straight fight between myself and the SNP.

“I have decided to stand down as an MSP to allow me to focus all of my energy on this important contest and to ensure that the electorate have a clear choice between the two contenders.

“I’ve taken this decision because I believe that I am best placed to help increase the number of Scottish Conservative and Unionist MPs at Westminster so we can stop the SNP bandwagon in its tracks.

“With this decision, no one can doubt my commitment to representing the Borders to the best of my ability.”

**Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:**

“During his 10 years in the Scottish Parliament, John has built up a formidable reputation as a dedicated community campaigner for the Borders and someone who will always put his constituents first.

“Voters in the Borders can either pick John Lamont, one of Scotland’s hardest working local campaigners, who will put the Borders first and who will oppose Nicola Sturgeon’s damaging plans for a second referendum or they can pick another nationalist who will continue to pursue the obsession with taking Scotland out of the United Kingdom.”

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# Green Party EU spokesperson responds to Labour's position on Brexit



25 April 2017

Responding to a speech by Keir Starmer, outlining Labour's approach to Brexit negotiations if the Party wins the general election in June, Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West and the Party's speaker on EU relations, said:

"A softer and more distinctive approach from Labour is welcome; to date Labour have danced to the Tories extreme and reckless Brexit tune, voting to trigger Article 50 without fighting for any conditions and effectively handing Theresa May a blank cheque.

"Greens would go much further than Labour and offer guarantees in areas not even mentioned by Keir Starmer.

"We would not only guarantee existing rights for all EU nationals but defend free movement, especially for the young. We want young people to continue to enjoy the rights enjoyed by their parents and grandparents – the right to travel, study and work across Europe.

"Like Labour, we would ditch the great repeal bill, but replace it with more than just an EU rights and protections bill. We will push for a Great Reform Bill, to deliver a fair and proportional election system, reform of the House of Lords and a written constitution. Greens believe that the best way to protect jobs and workers' rights is by remaining in the single market.

"Of course jobs and the economy are critically important in the negotiations with the EU, but by prioritising these above all else, there is a danger the environment gets side-lined. With the Tories plotting a bonfire of regulations that protect our air and water quality, safeguard valuable wildlife habitats and help tackle climate change, we need a new Environmental Protection Act and a new Clean Air Act to ensure environmental protections are maintained and enhanced.

"Labour's call for parliament to be given a truly meaningful vote on the final Brexit deal is welcome, but their reluctance to give British people the same right shows a disregard for democracy. Greens believe that the people of the UK must be given an opportunity to accept or reject the future that is on offer at the end of the two-year Article 50 process through a ratification referendum."

## **Notes:**

1. [http://mollymep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Green\\_guarentees-2.pdf](http://mollymep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Green_guarentees-2.pdf)

**Molly Scott Cato** is Green MEP for the South West of England and Gibraltar and

is one of 50 Green/EFA MEPs in the European Parliament. She sits on the Economics and Monetary Affairs Committee, PANA committee investigating tax evasion and the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee. Molly is parliamentary candidate for Bristol West in the June 8th general election.

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