

Green MEP challenges Gove over climate targets



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As MEPs today vote on important legislation that sets binding annual greenhouse gas emission targets for EU member countries, Molly Scott Cato MEP has challenged the new Environment Secretary, Michael Gove, to match or better these targets for tackling climate change once the UK leaves the EU.

MEPs will vote on the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR), the EU's largest climate instrument regulating emissions of sectors not covered by the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS), namely transport, agriculture, buildings and waste [1]. The legislation sets climate targets for each country for the period 2021 to 2030. But with the UK set to leave the EU before this time, Dr Scott Cato is demanding Mr Gove set targets at least as ambitious as those of the EU. She said:

"I can think of few people less fit for the role of environment secretary. He has consistently voted against measures to tackle climate change and infamously tried to remove the issue from the national curriculum when he was education secretary.

"However, I welcome the fact he has hit out at Donald Trump over his decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement [2]. Let's now see if action matches words and whether this apparent new-found commitment to tackling climate change means anything in practice. Let's see him pledge the UK to match or even better the rather unambitious targets on reducing emissions being discussed and voted on in Europe. Here is his first real test. Will he take a lead on tackling climate change or follow a climate denying US president wishing to drag us back to a bygone dirty fossil era?"

Notes:

1. https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/effort/proposal_en
2. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/06/13/michael-gove-says-donald-trump-wrong-withdraw-parisclimateaccord/>

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