

Green Party politicians join Irish Brexit court case



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- * **Jonathan Bartley:** "This is about putting power in Britain's hands."
- * **Keith Taylor:** "The Government plans to force an extreme Brexit on the public without a mandate to do so."
- * **Steven Agnew:** "This case should be welcomed by all UK citizens whether they voted leave or remain."

UK Green Party politicians are among the politicians named today as plaintiffs in the 'Dublin Case' which seeks legal clarity on revocability of Article 50.

Jonathan Bartley, Co-leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, Northern Irish Green Party leader, Steven Agnew MLA, and the Green Party MEP for the South East of England, Keith Taylor, will join Jolyon Maugham QC, Director of the Good Law Project, as litigants in the case.

The proceedings seek a referral to the Court of Justice of the European Union on the question of whether Article 50, once triggered, can be unilaterally revoked by the UK government without requiring consent from all other 27 EU Member States.

The Green Party campaigned passionately for Remain in the EU referendum, but Bartley is clear that this case is about giving all of the British and Northern Irish public a 'legal safety net'.

He said:

"Any deal that will be negotiated around leaving the European Union would have consequences for the country for decades to come. The British people must not be kept in the dark. They must know what control and what options the country really has. This is about putting power in Britain's hands. We're

asking the courts to give everyone clarity on the legal question of whether, in the event of things going badly wrong, or the country being driven over a cliff edge, the Government would be able to revoke Article 50."

"The Government claims that it can't revoke Article 50. But if it is wrong, the British people would have a safety net that could allow them a real choice in a referendum on the terms of the Brexit deal. They would be able to choose between accepting Theresa May's vision of extreme Brexit or rejecting it."

Keith Taylor, who represents the South East of England in the European Parliament, added:

"This case is particularly important as we learn more about the Conservative government's plan to force an extreme Brexit on the public without a mandate to do so."

"I believe Theresa May and Philip Hammond's proposals to send the country hurtling towards an extreme Brexit will see Britain as the ultimate loser in a global race to the bottom on everything from environmental regulations to workers' rights. The plan looks bad for Britain, the environment, jobs, and, ultimately, the British people. If the electorate reaches the same conclusion when the details become clearer, they must have the choice of putting a stop to the process."

Steven Agnew MLA believes the case is all the more important following the Supreme Court's ruling this week that the devolved administration has no legal right to have a say in Theresa May's negotiations with the EU.

Northern Ireland voted 56% to 44% to Remain in the EU in the June referendum.

Agnew said:

"The unique status of Northern Ireland is being ignored with our traditional parties involved in local squabbles. Any deal on the Irish border will have massive implications across the island and it is vital that the people of Northern Ireland have a say on the final proposal."

"For that to be meaningful the option to Remain must still be on the table. Otherwise, the UK has no leverage in Article 50 negotiations, as the current assumption is that if we like the Brexit deal, we leave, and if we don't like it, we leave anyway."

"Only if this case is successful will the UK have a choice, which is why I believe that this case should be welcomed by all UK citizens whether they voted leave or remain."

The £70,000 costs of the litigation were crowd-funded by Jolyon Maugham QC largely from small donations. There were almost 1,300 donations of £25 or less and over 1,700 donations of £50 or less.

Jolyon Maugham QC said:

“In 2016 the Country looked at the evidence and decided to leave the EU. I respect that decision: Article 50 should be triggered. But no one knows what lies around the corner. And it’s in our interests that we have the option of remaining if new evidence shows that leaving is damaging people’s job security or rights at work or our ability to fund the NHS or national security.”

“Establishing that the Article 50 notification can be revoked gives us a free option in an uncertain world. Whether to exercise that option is for the electorate. But no one can deny that our national interest is served by us having it.”

The plenary summons will be filed with the Irish High Court on Friday. The Plaintiffs are targeting a hearing date of the application for a reference of March or April.

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