

Keith Taylor MEP: 'We've been here before with the Tories, they must deliver on their promises this time'



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Keith Taylor MEP, the Green Party's Animals Spokesperson, has given a cautious welcome to the announcement that the UK government is [considering restricting the ivory trade](#).

Mr. Taylor was one of the driving forces behind the [European Parliament's resolution](#), passed in March, calling for an EU-wide ban on the ivory and rhinoceros horn trade.

The senior Green politician was also one of the most [vocal critics](#) of the Conservative Party's decision to drop a commitment to an ivory ban from its June manifesto.

The UK is currently the [world's leading exporter of ivory carvings and 'antiques'](#). The former Environment Secretary, Andrea Leadsom, [previously promised](#) a limited ban on the sales of ivory produced after 1947 but a neither follow-up consultation or policy ever materialised.

The proposals announced by the Environment Secretary, Michael Gove, include a ban on the sale of ivory produced before 1947 but still include a series of exemptions.

Responding to the announcement, Keith Taylor MEP, a member of the European Parliament's Environment Committee and Vice President of the Animal Welfare Intergroup, said:

"Any moves to restrict the squalid ivory trade should be welcomed; that Britain is the world's largest exporter is a stain on our national conscience. The trade in so-called legal ivory is stimulating the demand for the product and fuelling the mindless and brutal killing of elephants and rhinos across Africa."

"Animal welfare advocates aren't holding our breath though; we've been here before with the Tories. It was only last year that Gove's predecessor announced, more limited, restrictions on the ivory trade that failed to materialise – and it has long been an unfulfilled Conservative Party manifesto promise. It has appeared in most Tory manifestos apart from the last – from which it was quietly dropped after lobbying from the antiques trade."

"This latest announcement thankfully goes further than the previous plan – which never materialised – by promising to ban the trade in pre-1947 ivory. However, the proposals still include a number of loopholes and exemptions

that will, undoubtedly, be exploited.”

“Should Gove’s plans actually make it to the consultation stage this time around, and I hope they do, Greens will be fighting for a complete and comprehensive ban. The brutal and needless slaughter of upwards of 35,000 elephants and 1,000 rhinos every year must be stopped.”

Britain is set to host a [major conference on the illegal wildlife trade in 2018](#).

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