

Greens respond to Cambridge Analytica scandal, question EU ref legitimacy and highlight new EU privacy directive



22 March 2018

“The more we learn about the highly dubious and possibly downright illegal ways in which the Leave campaign manipulated voters, the less and less robust the result of the EU referendum appears” – Molly Scott Cato MEP

“People can take some comfort from the EU’s new GDPR legislation which will give internet users back control of their data and allow them to make properly informed choices about who they give it to and how it is used” - Keith Taylor MEP

“The new GDPR legislation is a great example of how we can work with our neighbours to help rebalance and democratise our online experiences by giving us back control of our data” – Jean Lambert MEP

The UK’s Green MEPs have condemned Facebook for being “actively complicit” in the harvesting of millions of users’ data subsequently used by Cambridge Analytica to launch a “propaganda campaign” to “hijack democracy” in the [US Presidential election](#) and the [UK referendum on EU membership](#).

Keith Taylor, Jean Lambert, and Molly Scott Cato added that the scandal both “calls into question” the legitimacy of the EU referendum and highlights the “vital importance” of the [EU’s General Data Protection Regulation](#) (GDPR) which offers consumers greater control over their privacy online and comes into force in the UK in May 2018.

Molly Scott Cato, MEP for the South West and the Green Party’s Brexit Spokesperson, said:

“The more we learn about the highly dubious and possibly downright illegal ways in which the Leave campaign manipulated voters, the less and less robust

the result of the EU referendum appears. Unlike in the US, the investigations into electoral tampering in the UK are taking place behind closed doors so I am asking the Electoral Commission to tell us what they know. I am also questioning at what point interference in an election or referendum makes a result illegitimate.”

Keith Taylor, Green MEP for the South East, added:

“The Cambridge Analytica scandal begs an important question about the ease with which democratic processes can be hijacked in a social media age where a handful of firms control the entire virtual public sphere.”

“Following [Carole Cadwalladr’s explosive exposé](#), there will be millions of Facebook users in the UK rightly concerned about their online privacy. [The silence from Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg](#) will hardly put their minds at rest. But they can take some comfort from the [new GDPR legislation](#) being introduced by the EU which will give users back control of their data allow them to make properly informed choices about who they give it to and how those firms can use it.”

Jean Lambert, the Green MEP for London, added:

“Ultimately, this scandal serves to reinforce the dangers of a vast internet being under the control of just a few giant corporate gatekeepers. The most effective way to protect online privacy and break up the internet giants’ iron grip on users’ data is to work collaboratively and across borders. The new GDPR legislation is a great example of how we can work with our neighbours to help rebalance and democratise our online experiences by giving us back control of our data.”

“It’s a small but significant step towards preventing future data harvesting scandals. The vital EU legislation will also bring with it stronger enforcement powers to clamp down on firms misusing users’ data. The fact that complaints about the astonishingly broad access to user data Facebook offered app developers, made [as early as 2010](#), were not properly follow-up by the authorities reveals the need for data protection bodies to be better resourced. The new EU enhanced privacy law obliges countries to do just that.”

Molly Scott Cato, who has [written to the Electoral Commission](#) questioning the legitimacy of the EU referendum following the revelations of the Cambridge Analytica expose, concluded:

“Leaving the EU represents the greatest political, social and economic upheaval this country has faced in my lifetime. If it is found that there was significant manipulation during the referendum campaign we must raise questions about whether such a radical step should be taken.

“All this further underlines the need for a people’s poll on the final Brexit deal, and this time, such a referendum must be based on accurate facts, not deliberate misinformation peddled by specialists in voter manipulation. This poll must, of course, include the option of remaining in the EU.”

ENDS

Notes:

Eight facts about the enhanced rights offered by the GDPR legislation:

1. Transparency

When a firm or organisation processes your data, it will be forced to give you a clear explanation of how they will use it, how long they will keep it for and who they will share it with.

2. Right to know

You will soon have the right to be able to ask organisations for a copy of the information they hold on you, free of charge and they will generally have to respond within 30 days.

3. Setting the record straight

You will also have the right to ask for your personal data to be corrected if it is inaccurate or incomplete.

4. Press **pause**

You will be able to stop your data from being used by an organisation if you believe it is inaccurate or that they don't have a good enough reason to use it.

5. Being forgettable

With a few exceptions, you will be able to ask an organisation to delete all the information they have about you if they don't have a legitimate reason to hold it.

6. Sharing

If you want, you will be able to have your personal data transferred to another organisation.

7. Say no to marketing

You will be able to object to your personal data being processed if it's not in your interests.

8. Human touch

You will have the right to know if organisations use your personal data to make decisions about you using automated processes. They can only do this in limited circumstances and you will be able to challenge these decisions or request human intervention.

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[Green MEP secures animal protections in European Brexit resolution](#)



14 March 2018

“As the Green Party’s animals spokesperson, I am delighted to have helped secure protections in the resolution for the environment, climate change, food safety and animal health and welfare safeguards” – Keith Taylor MEP

The European Parliament has today overwhelmingly approved a Resolution on the framework of the future relationship between the EU and UK, post-Brexit (544-110-51). This comes ahead of the negotiations on the long-term relationship, where the Parliament will have a final say.

The Resolution [1] clearly sets out the conditions that the Parliament needs to see in any final deal in order for MEPs to grant their approval. Crucially, thanks to the efforts of Keith Taylor MEP, Members of the European Parliament’s Animal Welfare Intergroup, and the Eurogroup for Animals, the Resolution contains strong provisions on animal welfare, namely:

- A requirement for the UK to adhere to animal health and welfare rules (as a minimum) in order to create a level playing field;
- that access to the EU market on agricultural products will be conditional on compliance with EU animal welfare standards, and;
- that there should be adequate preparedness for agricultural products – ensuring that even in the event of ‘no deal’, there will be sufficient plans in place to ensure tractability and guarantee the origin of

animal-based products to ensure compliance with animal welfare rules.

Welcoming the measures contained in the European Parliament's Resolution today, Keith Taylor MEP, Vice President of the Animal Welfare Intergroup and the Green Party's animals spokesperson, said:

"The resolution supported by the overwhelming majority of MEPs today will ensure that any future EU-UK relationship will provide a level playing field on issues such as workers' rights, consumer protection, public health, the fight against tax evasion and avoidance, data protection and privacy and animal welfare standards."

"As the Green Party's animals spokesperson, I am delighted to have helped secure protections in the resolution for the environment, climate change, food safety, and animal health and welfare safeguards."

The senior Green politician, who published an ['Animals and Brexit' impact assessment report](#) earlier this month [2], added:

"The health and welfare of farmed animals in the UK is under threat, as my new 'Animals and Brexit' report makes crystal clear. Shockingly, Ministers have indicated a [readiness to sacrifice farmed animals on the altar of free trade](#) post-Brexit. A move which is [opposed by farmers, animal welfare advocates](#) and the [93% of UK consumers](#) who want to see vital EU safeguards maintained."

"The clamour for the maintenance and strengthening of EU welfare protections in UK, however, appears to have had little effect on a Tory Government. The International Trade Secretary Liam Fox, in particular, has been keen to brandish its willingness to make trade agreements with countries around the world that have [far lower standards of animal welfare](#), and that threaten to undercut higher welfare producers in the UK."

"At the same time, EU citizens, who support higher animal welfare protections across the board, are clear they do not want European standards to be endangered or undermined in any way post-Brexit. This is why animal advocates from across Europe should welcome today's resolution, which at the very least seeks to ensure that the EU standards will act as a basis for the future relationship'."

Mr Taylor concluded:

"Compassion for animals is deep within the Green Party's DNA. As an MEP, I have fought hard to include protecting animal welfare standards in today's Brexit resolution. As the Greens animals spokesperson, I pledge to continue standing side by side with animal advocates and campaigners in the fight to protect animals post-Brexit."

[1] www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=B8-2018-0135&language=EN

[2] <https://www.scribd.com/document/372830758/Animals-and-Brexit-Keith-Taylor-MEP>

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[Green Party responds to Kirby Misperton fracking delay](#)



8 March 2018

The Green Party has responded to news that fracking in Kirby Misperton has been delayed until the Autumn [1].

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

“Fracking is dying and being kept on life support but the reality is that it is on its way out. The companies pursuing it are plagued by desperation and incompetence as with every day that passes fracking shows fewer and fewer signs that it can resurrect itself from its deathbed ever deliver what the country needs.

“For this Government to keep throwing money at this corpse of an industry when there are cheaper, cleaner, more effective alternatives defies common sense. Instead we should be investing in making Britain a world leader in the renewable energy of the future.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/mar/07/fracking-delayed-north-yorkshire-site-autumn-third-energy>

regularly

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[Green Party calls on Government to ring fence funding for women's refuges](#)



4 March 2018

*** Amelia Womack, Green deputy leader, makes after first speaking out about her own experience of domestic abuse last year**

*** Womack: "The Government is removing women's final safety net in their hour of greatest need"**

The Green Party has criticised the Government for "placing women's lives in danger" with its plans to change funding for refuges [1].

Amelia Womack, deputy leader of the Green Party, will call on the Government to ring-fence funding for refuges and other forms of short-term supported housing in the welfare system.

Womack will make the call in her speech to Green Party Spring Conference in Bournemouth today [2], after first speaking out about her own experiences of domestic abuse in June last year [3].

Amelia Womack, deputy leader of the Green Party, is expected to say:

"This Government claims to care about women – yet it's placing their lives in danger with plans to remove refuges from the welfare system. Removing women's final safety net when they are in their hour of greatest need.

"This is a matter of life and death. The Government must prove it is serious about women's safety and ring-fence funding for refuges."

At Autumn Conference in October last year Womack launched the Green Party's campaign to make misogyny a hate crime, which has since gathered cross-party support [4].

Womack is expected to say:

"When I shared my experience of domestic violence for the first time last year, I never imagined I'd be part of starting what quickly became such a defining and extraordinary moment in the story of women.

"From MeToo to TimesUp, it feels like we're hitting a tipping point that none of us saw coming this time last year. I'm so proud to have played a small part in giving other women the confidence to come forward and speak out about their experiences of misogyny.

"From the sweeping red walkways of Hollywood premieres to the corridors of the House of Commons, the carpets things have been swept under are now well and truly being shaken out."

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/nov/26/womens-lives-at-risk-funding-changes-refuges-charities>
2. Green Party Spring Conference
The Green Party Spring Conference will see members from across the country come together to hear from the party's leaders, vote on policy and take part in discussion and debate on topics from Brexit to climate change.
* Leaders' speech by Jonathan Bartley and Caroline Lucas: Saturday 3 March, 2pm
* Deputy Leaders speech by Amelia Womack: Sunday 4th March, 3pm, via Facebook Live from March4Women in London
* Location: Bournemouth International Centre, Exeter Rd, Bournemouth, BH2 5BH
3. <https://www.stylist.co.uk/people/amelia-womack-green-party-manifesto-domestic-violence-abuse-interview/34153>
4. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/amber-rudd-misogyny-hate-crime-change-law-prejudice-women-home-secretary-greens-mps-charities-a8196786.html>

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Amelia Womack speech to Spring Conference



4 March 2018

Hello Conference!

Well, we made it. From the Arctic blizzards we battled through to get here, to what looks like the Costa Del Bournemouth today, it's great to be with you all.

When I shared my experience of domestic violence for the first time last year, I never imagined I'd be part of what quickly became such a defining and extraordinary moment in the story of women.

The months since I last addressed Green Party conference have been incredible.

Since my last speech, misogyny has been dragged into the open like never before. More and more women are speaking up about their own experiences of abuse, harassment and discrimination.

From #MeToo to #TimesUp, it feels like we're hitting a tipping point that none of us saw coming this time last year. Least of all the men that have been getting away with their various crimes for far too long.

Open secrets have been exposed.

Silences have been shattered.

From the sweeping red walkways of Hollywood premieres, to the corridors of the House of Commons, the carpets things have been swept under are now well

and truly being shaken out.

I'm so proud to have played a small part in giving other women the confidence to come forward and speak out about their experiences of misogyny.

This has been an inspirational moment for women. Now it's up to us to turn this into a transformational one.

It's not enough to just speak out. We need to create real and lasting change.

This Government claims to care about women – yet it's placing their lives in danger with plans to remove refugees from the welfare system.

Removing women's final safety net when they are in their hour of greatest need.

Friends, this is a matter of life and death.

The Government must prove it is serious about women's safety and ring-fence funding for refugees.

It's time for real change.

Since we last met, I've been calling for misogyny to be treated as a hate crime. And it's been amazing to have thousands of extraordinary women around the country join my call.

I was inspired by women's groups in Nottingham, who successfully lobbied their local police commissioner to treat acts like street harassment and upskirting as a hate crime.

And it has really made a difference to women's lives. 94% of women asked said they were reassured after dealing with the police, and 82% said they were satisfied by the action the police took.

It shows that when women speak out, organise, and fight back, we can take real action against the misogyny which permeates our society.

And so today, I'm making a promise to women of the Green Party.

This campaign started at the grassroots, and we can win at the grassroots.

So if you want to campaign to make misogyny a hate crime, I'll be by your side.

If you want to bring together women's groups in your community to make it happen, I'll be right there with you.

If you can get a meeting with your local police commissioner, I'll join you to help make the case.

Together, we'll make misogyny a hate crime in your community.

And as more and more places across Britain take this step, the harder it will

be for Amber Rudd to look the other way.

I gave Amber Rudd a petition signed by thousands of people from across the country. She shut us out. I wrote her a letter, signed by an array of amazing women, including MPs from a range of political parties. She still shut us out.

But she can't ignore us forever.

The demand for change is growing along with a rising tide of women's voices. Misogyny is a hate crime and we demand the law recognises it as such.

A year ago, this would have been unthinkable. But today, we are unstoppable.

Speaking out is only the beginning. Together, we'll create lasting, structural change.

Change which makes this a safer and fairer country for all women.

Change which pushes misogyny to the margins of our society.

Change which is long, long overdue. But change which is coming.

And let me make one thing clear. When I talk about women – I am talking about all women.

Cis Women, trans women, women of all genders and none.

We are women, we are powerful. We are fierce and together we are dangerous. We have been fighting for far too long and we know one thing for sure – the patriarchy is going to fall.

But this isn't just about changing laws which help women here at home.

No campaign for women's equality can ignore the fact that globally [60 percent of chronically hungry people are women and girls.](#)

That in no country have women achieved economic equality with men.

Or that women are still [more likely than men to live in poverty.](#)

When we live in the 6th biggest economy in the world we have a moral duty to tackle global inequality.

A duty that's all the stronger because our colonial exploitation of people and resources has created a legacy which wreaks ongoing damage.

We must not reinforce the wrongs in which we continue to be complicit.

So in the face of recent revelations about the aid sector, we say that aid and development agencies must unequivocally uphold the rights of those they work with and the communities in which they are based.

And when aid workers fail in their moral duties, we must hold them to

account.

But we also say this: aid organisations do incredibly important work. We must protect – and increase – the UK's aid budget. These revelations can not be used as a justification for throwing our duties to the global South on a bonfire.

As Greens, we will not let this happen. And as Greens, we want to go further still.

It's time to throw out the old centralised "we know best" charity-based models of aid.

It's time to show we understand that people know what they need best.

It's time to show we understand what empowerment really looks like.

Friends, we must move away from the colonial construct of givers and takers. We can truly start to end the power imbalance between even the most well-intentioned Western aid workers and those they are trying to help.

That's why we want to see more aid money given directly to people with the knowledge, the skills and the connections to drive real change.

Friends, those people are women.

We want gender targeted cash transfers, distributed with the help of local women's organisations; underpinned by business skills training; support networks of business women, and mentoring – to name but a few.

Enabling women to take part fully in their economies.

This is the best tool for aid. And we'd be putting it in the hands of those best equipped to use it.

Because across the world, women living their daily lives are already acting as agents of transformational change through the decisions they make.

[Evidence shows](#) that when women are empowered and given more control of household resources, they spend it on food for their families, on their homes, their children, and on education.

And as they do this, whole communities are transformed.

Women are experts in their own lives, and are the backbones of their communities.

So let's transform our aid budget, so that it directly empowers women and girls around the world.

Let's put the future of development in their hands.

Hands to create an equal economy.

Hands to build an equal society.

Of course, as well as looking to the future, this is a moment to remember the women who have come before us.

This year is the centenary of partial suffrage for women.

One hundred years since the first women in the UK could vote.

Was that a right easily won? Like hell it was.

It took two groups of people to bring about this change.

The suffragists, the law-abiding citizens who wanted votes for women.

But was it enough?

The suffragettes on the other hand, were the radicals who turned the heat up on the movement.

Women across the UK took their protest to the streets, the churches, the railway stations and the post offices.

They weren't afraid to break the law. They weren't afraid to take direct action. They weren't afraid to put their bodies on the line.

I sometimes think about myself and which path I would choose.

What women in the Green Party would choose.

Of course, we're committed to nonviolent direct action, but I know too that we're ready to say when the law is wrong.

In the Green Party it's women who are on the front line.

Women like Alison Teal in Sheffield, standing up for the thousands of trees the Labour council are chopping down. 5,000 trees already lost.

Women like Cleo Lake who campaigned to change the name of Colston Hall – which was originally named after a slave-trader.

Women like Aimee Challenor who successfully took on TfL over the gender messaging of their announcements.

Environmental activism is led by women globally, and today I want to take a minute for us to think about Berta Casaires.

Berta was an award winning human rights and environmental activist in Honduras. She led the protest against the construction of a hydroelectric dam which if built would have destroyed huge swathes of pristine rainforest.

Two years ago yesterday, she was assassinated. Assassinated for protecting

what she valued most, her people and the land in which they lived.

Here in the UK today, it's hard to imagine activism as a question of life or death. But make no mistake, our right to protest is being chipped away.

From the injunctions issued against HS2 protestors by the Secretary of State himself, to police spying on environmental activists, to the frackers taking campaigners to court – our right to resist is being attacked on all fronts.

Now is the time to stand up for our right to protest. Now is the time to fight for the rights of the local communities who are under threat from HS2, from fracking, from climate change.

It's said that well behaved women seldom make history. And this is true. But when I think about Tina and Cleo and Aimee and Sarah and Alison, I think there should be a second part of that phrase:

Well behaved women seldom define the future.

And I'm so glad to be in a party of women taking direct action for the world they want to win.

I am constantly inspired by movements that have come before me, from the Chartists and the Suffragettes, to the campaigners at Greenham Common to the Ford sewing machinists.

And those still campaigning today from steelworkers in Port Talbot, to the UCU lecturers.

And the 120 women on hunger strike in Yarl's Wood detention centre – striking and campaigning to ensure their rights are met.

Our solidarity is with them as they fight for their futures despite the threat of intimidation and deportation.

Women making change every day – in their work places, in their communities and on the streets.

We need women like this in our council chambers too. And that's why I now want to bring it back to the local elections which are just two months away.

I travel the country and constantly see the difference Greens make when they get elected. And let's be clear about something. When we get elected, it's not because we are parachute into safe seats or get washed in on a wave of populism.

We get elected through hard work and by representing our communities.

This is my 8th Conference speech, and I appreciate that nearly every time I have talked about the power of our councillors and canvassing. But I do it because every vote really does count.

The number of councillors I've met who have won or lost seats by a handful of

votes means that every person we talk to could be the difference that wins us a seat.

If your local party doesn't canvass, then go to a regional action day and learn the techniques. Bring them back to your community. Talk to people.

One of my favourite parts of my job is listening to people on the doorsteps across England and Wales. So many people feel like they've been ignored for decades.

We show people that politics can be done differently. We help people see that the Green Party has consistently led the way. And we transform people's lives, especially the lives of women.

Today the March4Women took place and I celebrate with my sisters in spirit.

Women who came before us, and fought for rights we now take for granted.

Women who brick by brick are slowly but surely dismantling the patriarchy.

And women of generations to come. The backbones of communities around the world. The farmers, the teachers, the mothers, the peacemakers and the wealth creators.

Sisters and friends, women have the future in their hands. And that future begins now.

Thank you.

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