

Jean Lambert MEP: EU moving forward on whistleblower safeguards, as UK moves backwards



14 February 2017

Jean Lambert MEP: “While the European Parliament is moving forward on whistleblower safeguards, the UK appears determined to move backwards”

The European Parliament has today (Tuesday, 14 February) [voted in favour](#) of a report calling for the protection of whistleblowers across the EU.

At the same time, the Conservative government is desperately attempting to defending its proposals to launch a ‘[full frontal attack](#)’ on whistleblowers in the UK.

Commenting after today’s vote, Jean Lambert, Green MEP for London and a member of the European Parliament’s Civil Liberties committee, said:

“At a time when Theresa May is failing to convincingly defend her government’s proposals for a damaging and chilling attack on whistleblowers, the European Parliament has once again called for the EU to implement new protections for whistleblowers across the EU.”

“Green MEPs have long been pushing for EU-wide legislation that would protect whistleblowers in all areas of EU competence. This way, citizens across Europe will be able to speak up about environmental crimes, human rights violations, and other wrongdoing without fear of reprisal.”

“While the European Parliament is moving forward on whistleblower safeguards, the UK appears determined to move backwards; undermining freedom of the press and the fundamental principles of democracy along the way.”

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House of Lords Committee report echoes Green concerns on protecting environment post-Brexit



14 February 2017

Greens have reasserted demands for an Environmental Protection Act in the wake of a new House of Lords Select Committee report on the impact of Brexit on the environment and tackling climate change [1].

The report says the importance of the role of EU institutions in ensuring effective enforcement of environmental protection and standards 'cannot be over-stated' and warns the government that it faces 'a considerable challenge in maintaining environmental legislation through the Great Repeal Bill [2].'

The report also raises concerns about the watering down of the UK's international commitments on, for example, climate change. The committee calls on the government to clarify whether and how EU funding for environmental measures will be replaced by domestic funds post-Brexit.

The concerns and recommendations from the House of Lords committee echo the 'cocktail of risks' to the environment highlighted by Green Party MP, Caroline Lucas, in a report she launched earlier this week [3]. In the report, she calls for a new 'Environmental Protection Act' to ensure that environmental protections will not be lost, watered-down, or ignored.

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

"This report reaffirms what we have long suspected: the government is largely unprepared for and, worse still, uninterested in dealing with the peril

Theresa May's plan to pursue an extreme Brexit would leave Britain's environment in.

"Ministers confirmed just this week that since the EU referendum almost eight months ago, there has been no research into the environmental impacts of Brexit nor has there been any research commissioned to help develop environmental policy post-Brexit. Yet the Conservatives made a manifesto promise to be "the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it". We must hold them to account and start work immediately on ensuring vital EU environmental protections are made legally binding and enforceable in the UK post-Brexit."

Jean Lambert, Green MEP for London, said:

"It's no accident that environmental standards and legislation are some of the most important features of the European Union. The impacts of climate change, pollution and resource depletion don't stop at national borders. When it comes to the environment countries need to work together. But the UK Government's go-it-alone Brexit mantra risks throwing away important environmental protections. If the Government truly wants to protect the UK's environment it will act to enshrine EU environmental laws in an Environmental Protection Act for the UK."

Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West, said:

"It is clear how much British environmentalists rely both on EU law and EU courts to prevent damage to our special places, wildlife, water and beaches. Outside the EU we need to strengthen our domestic protections which is why we need a specific law and a court to enforce it."

Notes

[1]
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/eu-energy-environment-subcommittee/news-parliament-2015/brexit-env-cc-rpt/>

[2] <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7793>

[3]
<https://www.carolinelucas.com/sites/carolinelucas.com/files/Safe%20Guarding%20Environment%20after%20Brexit.pdf>

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Green Party responds to Trump state visit announcement



14 February 2017

The Green Party has responded to news the Government has said it will press ahead with plans to give President Trump a state visit despite public opposition. [1]

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“It is deeply disappointing that in its desperation to pander to the new US President the Government has ignored almost 2 million British people who made it clear they do not want to give a racist misogynist the highest honour our country has to offer.

“Donald Trump’s presidency has already been marked by an utterly disgraceful travel ban, while his apparent intent to withdraw from the Paris Agreement highlights his contempt for environmental protection.

“We should be showing backbone and leadership by taking a stand against the President’s damaging policies – not rolling out a red carpet.”

ENDS.

For more information contact: press@greenparty.org.uk / 0203 691 9401

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/feb/14/government-says-trump-receive-full-courtesy-state-visit-petition>

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Green Party: Government failure to get a grip on gig economy hurts everyone



14 February 2017

The Green Party has responded to news this morning that the gig-economy is thought to cost the Government £4billion in lost taxes. [1]

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“The news that insecure work is hurting public finances reinforces what we already knew – insecure work is bad for everyone.

“The gig-economy offers flexibility but in reality leaves workers without basic rights and vulnerable to exploitation. Add to this the lost tax revenue which could be supporting greater social security or the NHS, and it’s clear that the Government has been left standing by a rapidly changing world. It needs to get a grip on the gig-economy.”

The news comes just days after pressure from the Green Party saw the Government finally publish (on February 10) a report into employment status law which was completed more than a year ago. [2]

Bartley added:

“The extent of the Government’s apathy and inertia was revealed last week when it finally published the Coalition’s shelved review into employment status law, which warned back in 2015 that gig-economy workers were at risk.

“While Tory ministers shamefully sat on the findings of the report workers everywhere have been living with increasing insecurity. People need jobs they can build a life on, and they need them now.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/feb/14/insecure-work-bad-uk-economy-tuc-zero-hours-contracts>
2. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/02/10/green-pressure-sees-government-finally-publish-shelved-employment-status-law-review/>

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[Report: Environment faces 'cocktails of threats' from Brexit](#)



13 February 2017

UK Environment faces a 'cocktail of threats' from Brexit, says report by MP

- Key environmental rules could become 'unenforceable'
- Desperation for trade deal with the US risks 'chlorine chickens' and 'hormone beef' coming to UK market
- Lucas: we urgently need a 'green guarantee' from the Government to ensure our environment is protected
- Over 1100 EU environmental laws need to be transposed in UK law

A new [report](#) [1] by the Green Party MP, Caroline Lucas, has highlighted what she calls a 'cocktail of risks' to the UK's environment from Brexit.

The report, which has been released just days after the House of Commons voted to trigger Article 50, notes that the EU has been an effective driver of environmental action, and that Britain is now entering a period of 'profound uncertainty' which could lead to the downgrading of many key protections.

As well as detailing the impacts of Brexit on the environment the report calls for a 'Green Guarantee' to ensure that current levels of environmental protection and funding are maintained and strengthened. It also called for a new 'Environment Act' to be put in place ahead of Britain's exit from the EU and for Britain to retain membership of key European agencies.

As part of her report Caroline Lucas revealed House of Commons Library research which finds that over 1100 EU environmental laws will need to be transposed into UK law and that 'the Government has yet to identify all of the EU environment legislation'.

The report spells out ten distinct ways in which Brexit threatens environmental policy in the UK including:

- A lack of oversight of compliance with environmental rules. At present the European Commission and ECJ monitor and act upon breaches of legislation – there is no similar system in place in the UK and laws could become unenforceable.
- Britain exiting key agencies like the European Environment Agency and the Chemicals Agency – which support implementation and development of environmental policies.
- Regulatory equivalencing in new trade deals leading to reduction in environmental protection.
- Potentially exiting from key schemes such as the Emissions Trading Scheme – where the UK has been a key player.
- Reduction in funding for the environment as EU spending on the UK stops. Examples include ending CAP Pillar II payments and the LIFE+ fund. Currently the EU is the major funder for agri-environmental schemes.

Caroline Lucas, a member of the Environmental Audit Committee and a former member of the International of the European Parliament's Trade Committee, said:

"Though we've hardly heard it mentioned by the Government it's clear that British environmental policy faces a cocktail of threats from Brexit. Just days after the Brexit vote in the Commons we can clearly see the huge risks of downgrading environmental protections as part of the post-referendum process. Key laws could become unenforceable, spending on crucial schemes could be cut and new trade deals could undermine existing regulations.

"Outside the EU, there will be much greater probability of legislative change in the UK, more exposure to the political cycle and a danger that investors will be wary of potentially higher risks. The relative attractiveness of the UK as a place for green investment is in danger of being further reduced.

"Theresa May's courting of the United States in pursuit of a new Free Trade Agreement, poses an even greater risk that Ministers may be tempted to water down regulations – such as those on GMOs, pesticides, and animal hormones. We could see chlorinated chickens and hormone beef on UK markets.

"As well as outlining many of the dangers we currently face, this report seeks to present solutions. We need a Green Guarantee that will deliver on

Government's commitment to ensuring that "we become the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it. We also need to immediately begin work on introducing an Environment act to ensure that Britain crucial rules and enforcement don't drop off as Britain exits the EU."

Notes:

[1] A copy of the report is
here: <https://www.carolinelucas.com/sites/carolinelucas.com/files/Safe%20Guarding%20Environment%20after%20Brexit.pdf>

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