

Green Party backs Macron's call for UK to take more child refugees



17 January 2018

*** Jonathan Bartley: "There's no excuse for the Government's continued abdication of responsibility."**

The Green Party has backed French President Emmanuel Macron's call for the UK to take in more refugees from Northern France, ahead of a meeting with Theresa May on Thursday [1].

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, called on both Macron and May to do more to help refugees. Bartley has visited the camps in Northern France three times to meet refugees and see first hand the conditions they face.

There are currently about 1,000 refugees living rough in Northern France right now, 100 of whom are children as young as ten.

Conditions are becoming increasingly desperate with three refugees losing their lives in Calais in recent weeks, including a 15-year-old boy [2]. Freezing temperatures mean hypothermia, frostbite and trench foot are commonplace.

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

"The French president is absolutely right to ask the British Government to do more to help solve the humanitarian crisis on our doorstep. There's no excuse for the Government's continued abdication of responsibility.

"Child refugees in Northern France are extremely vulnerable to abuse and trafficking. The UK Government must urgently fulfil its promise under the Dubs scheme to take in at least 480 unaccompanied child refugees, and extend the cut-off date beyond March 2016 so even more young people can be helped.

"But the Prime Minister must also have her own demands to make of Macron when they meet. As a first and immediate step, refugees in Northern France need safe and dignified accommodation to survive the freezing French winter.

"May must also demand Macron ends the French police' excessive force and violence against refugees. A portion of the millions of pounds given to France by the UK every year must be used to protect those in Calais, not harm them, through investment in anti-trafficking and anti-exploitation policing."

Notes:

1. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/emmanuel-macron-refugees-theresa-may-europe-brexit-eu-calais-camp-jungle-pay-border-a8160236.html>
2. <https://helprefugees.org/preventable-deaths-calais-border/>

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[Greens: Carillion collapse final nail in HS2 coffin](#)



15 January 2018

The Green Party has called on the Government to cancel HS2 after the collapse of Carillion, the company building the high speed rail link.

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, also urged the Government to reverse privatisation, bring contracts back in house and launch a full-scale inquiry into the decisions made about the company, and the wider “privatisation experiment”.

Bartley said:

“The collapse of Carillion should be the final nail in HS2’s coffin. Cancelling this vanity project would save tens of billions of pounds, and stop the environmental vandalism which would see miles of countryside and ancient woodland covered in concrete. Instead, Britain’s rail network has the opportunity to rise like a phoenix from Carillion’s flames. Thousands of jobs could be created by investing instead in the upgrades local rail networks desperately need.

“Carillion’s demise should be seen as an opportunity to reverse privatisation, and protect jobs and pensions by bringing contracts back in house. It should also be the trigger for a full-scale inquiry, not just into the reckless decisions this Government has made over Carillion but also the whole privatisation experiment, which has been tried and found consistently wanting.”

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Gove must deliver on green promises says Molly Scott Cato MEP



5 January 2018

Responding to statements by the newly formed Nature Friendly Farming Network that Brexit could offer a “once in a generation” opportunity to restore British wildlife [1], Green Party MEP Molly Scott Cato said:

“Farmers committed to working with nature were pleased to hear about Michael Gove’s plans to shift subsidies away from landholding to environmental benefits, but given his past record on environmental matters there is also understandable scepticism. To reassure the doubters Michael Gove could act now and use the flexibility within the CAP system to make some changes immediately I would suggest as a minimum that he introduces a maximum level of land-based payments and increases the proportion of payments that are given in return for wildlife-friendly farming. This would be a clear signal that the Environment Secretary’s commitment to a so-called Green position is more than political positioning.”

Notes

[1] https://www.farminguk.com/news/New-group-formed-to-promote-environment-friendly-farming_48278.html

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Greens respond to SMMT report on diesel cars



5 January 2018

Responding to a report from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders which shows that diesel car sales have fallen 31% and to the SMMT’s assertion that cutting diesel sales will make CO2 emissions worse [1], Co-Leader of the Green Party Jonathan Bartley said:

"It is hardly surprising to see the voice of the motor industry trying to spin a drop in diesel sales as a bad thing. The truth is that diesel vehicles produce dangerous nitrogen dioxide particles which damage our air, environment and health. Fewer dirty diesel engines on our roads is a good thing. If the SMMT really cared about the environment it would focus its efforts on promoting cleaner, cheaper and more sustainable modes of transport, like electric cars powered by renewable energy."

Notes

[1] <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/uk-car-sales-forecast-two-year-drop-motor-industry-carmakers-eu-brex-it-a8142236.html>

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Green MEP calls on Gove to look at both subsidies and 'agricultural tax havens' when developing plan for farming



4 January 2018

A Green MEP has accused Environment secretary Michael Gove of taking from wealthy landowners with one hand but giving it back with another through tax advantages. Mr Gove is set to tell agriculturists in Oxford today that "paying landowners for the amount of agricultural land they have is unjust, inefficient and drives perverse outcomes. It gives the most from the public purse to those who have the most private wealth" [1].

However, Molly Scott Cato MEP, a member of the European Parliament's agriculture committee, has said the promise is meaningless without ending the ability of landowners to use agricultural land as a tax haven and tax shelter. She said:

"This is sleight-of-hand politics from Gove. He is giving the appearance of taking from wealthy landowners with one hand while giving it back to them with the other in the form of unjust tax advantages. But taxes and subsidies must be treated as a package; in economic terms they are two sides of the same coin.

“If Gove is serious about the injustices associated with land ownership in this country he would call time on the use of agricultural land to hide and shelter wealth. Agricultural land offers generous tax breaks as it is exempt from inheritance tax after two years if it is actively farmed. The fact that the sale of a farming asset can be rolled over into a new business or acquisition offers further tax relief. That is perverse. Michael Gove needs to consider both taxes and subsidies when developing his new plan for farming.”

Dr Scott Cato also points to the fact Michael Gove is a leading advocate of a hard Brexit.

“Gove is part of the Brextremist set whose agenda has always included creating a low tax economy post-Brexit and protecting the UK’s offshore tax havens. Such an agenda would clearly benefit wealthy landowners”, she added.

Notes

[1]

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jan/04/farmland-could-be-turned-into-meadows-post-brexit-says-michael-gove>

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