

[Greens issue stinging rebuke to Princess Anne after GM intervention](#)



22 March 2017

Keith Taylor MEP: 'This is a right royal stitch up; Princess Anne holds no elected public office and is supposed to remain politically neutral. Yet she is using her considerable unearned status to push a nakedly political agenda.'

Molly Scott Cato MEP: 'The opinions expressed by Princess Anne are not helpful in terms of the public debate, which is often dominated by misunderstanding and agribusiness hype.'

Green MEPs are condemning Princess Anne's 'historically ill-informed' suggestions that Britain should embrace GM crops post-Brexit.

Princess Anne, who is supposed to remain politically neutral, was speaking to the Farming Today programme on Radio 4 when she echoed the suggestion of some Conservative Ministers that Britain should [water down EU GM crop safeguards](#) following the UK's exit from the European Union.

The royal intervention comes just days after MEPs in the European Parliament's Environment Committee voted against the import of a range of genetically modified maize varieties for use in feed and food.

The majority of MEPs [voted against proposals](#) to authorise several genetically modified maize varieties from Syngenta.

Keith Taylor, Green MEP for the South East and a member of the European Parliament's Environment Committee, said:

"This is a right royal stitch up; Princess Anne holds no elected public office and is supposed to remain politically neutral. Yet she is using her considerable unearned status to push a nakedly political agenda and doing so with a flimsy grasp of agricultural history and science. It's fair to say that she doesn't speak for the average UK farmer, let alone the average British citizen."

"In stark contrast, just this week, I joined elected MEPs from across Europe to vote against the import and use of untested GM maize in the EU. It is the sixth time in just over a year that the European Parliament has signalled it's opposition to the approval of new GM foods. EU GM safeguards are vitally important."

Dr Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West and a member of the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee, said:

"The opinions expressed by Princess Anne are not helpful in terms of the

public debate, which is often dominated by misunderstanding and agribusiness hype. Genetic modification has failed to live up to its promised benefits particularly in terms of yield.”

“Perhaps the Princess should have a word with her brother, who has a deep understanding of ecological and systemic risks from GM crops, which are intended for intensively farmed monocultures which threaten biodiversity and soil fertility.”

“There is also the issue of corporate power. The planned merger between German pharmaceutical giant Bayer and American seed-maker Monsanto would strengthen the arm of the GM seed lobby. If this takeover is ever allowed to take place it would create one giant corporation controlling 30% of the world market for seeds and 24% of the pesticide market.”

“Agri-business argues we need GM to feed the world, but the world already produces enough food for 10bn people. Our focus should not be on increasing production, but rather on reducing food waste and radically reorganising our wasteful and inefficient food distribution system.”

Mr Taylor concluded:

“Worryingly, Princess Anne appears to be [supporting Tory Ministers](#) who have suggested Brexit could be ‘an opportunity’ to water down GM crop regulations in Britain. As Greens, we will be fighting to make sure this doesn’t happen; it is vital we maintain and strengthen EU GM safeguards post-Brexit. For the health of British people, the environment and farmers, the UK must not be flooded with untested genetically modified crops.”

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[Green MEP challenges government to eradicate money laundering following ‘laundromat’ revelations](#)



21 March 2017

Green economist and MEP, Molly Scott Cato, has said that revelations of the Eastern European ‘laundromat’ operating through the City of London emphasize the importance of current revisions to the EU anti-money-laundering directive. She was responding to an investigation into fictitious companies

registered in London that had processed millions of pounds worth of laundered money from operations run by Russian criminals with links to the Russian government [1]. She says the revelations show the need for national governments to assume their responsibility in eradicating existing money laundering routes. Molly Scott Cato said:

“The European Parliament has been clear in its proposal to change the rules governing financial transactions and crack down on such blatant money laundering. The proposals are currently being negotiated between the Parliament, the Commission and the Council and we must ensure that the Parliament’s proposal to create a public register of beneficial ownership in each member state is not watered down by national governments in the Council. Our proposal would force banks to make additional checks for suspicious clients and would have helped to prevent the ‘global laundromat’.

“We see again just how important binding rules are for all sectors. This kind of corrupt activity is only made possible by the existence of shell companies and phantom firms. The public register we are proposing would make it impossible for the clients of these companies to stay anonymous. They are the ultimate beneficial owner and their identity must be made public.”

The UK government has so far resisted public registers of trusts, arguing that individuals and companies deserve to have personal or confidential privacy. Dr Scott Cato concluded:

“The fact that the money laundering was focused on London should ring alarm bells in the context of threats from the Chancellor that Brexit may lead to a race to the bottom on tax standards. Arguments about privacy cannot be used to defend the laundering of money by criminals and we must ensure that the UK meets the highest EU standards following its exit from the bloc.”

Notes

[1]

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/20/british-banks-handled-vast-sums-of-laundered-russian-money?>

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[Green Party: Galloway's a burnt out](#)

[Brexiteer – only Greens offer real alternative in Gorton](#)



21 March 2017

The Green Party has responded to news George Galloway will stand in the Manchester Gorton by-election saying he offers the constituency nothing but an “overinflated ego”.

Jonathan Bartley, whose party placed second in Gorton in the 2015 General Election [1], said only the Greens give Gorton “a real alternative to the status quo”.

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

“George Galloway is a burnt out Brexiteer who offers nothing but an overinflated ego to the people of Manchester Gorton. Of course people want a real alternative to the status quo – that’s why the Green Party polled second in Gorton last time and why we got more than five times more votes than him in the London Mayoral election.

“We are the only party who can deliver a real alternative for Gorton and we will fight to make sure this constituency is not left behind or overlooked.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/2016/london/results>

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[Green Party: Urgent investment needed to fix social care crisis](#)



20 March 2017

The Green Party has responded to a BBC investigation which revealed care firms have cancelled contracts with 95 UK councils, saying they cannot deliver services for the amount they are being paid [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“We are staring down the barrel of a social care crisis and the only way to fix it is proper investment. It is ludicrous that the Government keeps starving councils of funding and still expects them to deliver high quality social care and other vital services like libraries and youth centres.

“The £2bn over three years added in the budget for social care is simply not enough to sustain a system that is already on the verge of collapse because of the Government’s failure to act. Proper social care for the elderly should be a red line.

“The Green Party is the only party proposing that we make the right choice to invest in a secure future for our older people with free social care for everyone over 65.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-39321579>

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[Caroline Lucas: George Osborne must resign as MP](#)



17 March 2017

*** Caroline Lucas demands answers from Prime Minister over appointment of George Osborne as Evening Standard editor**

*** Lucas: “By taking this job George Osborne has shown contempt for his constituents.”**

Caroline Lucas MP has called for George Osborne to resign as an MP saying his appointment as London Evening Standard editor raises questions about his ability to serve as an MP, and the paper’s impartiality.

Lucas said Osborne should at the least be stripped of his role as Privy Councillor, and asked the Prime Minister how she intends to make sure Osborne’s appointment does not result in Ministers having undue influence on the paper – and vice versa.

Four parliamentary questions tabled by Lucas [1] also demand to know how Theresa May will ensure Osborne does not misuse his position as an MP to gain stories, or use Parliament's facilities for his editorial work.

Caroline Lucas MP, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

"Osborne's appointment as Editor of the Standard raises very serious questions about both his own ability to continue as an MP and the newspaper's impartiality. At the very least George Osborne should be stripped of his title as a Privy Councillor and barred from any secure briefings that the role gives him.

"The truth is that by taking this job George Osborne has shown contempt for his constituents. The only honourable thing would be to step down as an MP so he can concentrate on making money from City firms and learning how to do a job at the Standard that he's entirely unqualified for."

Notes:

1. Full text of Caroline Lucas' Parliamentary Questions to the Prime Minister:

- To ask the Prime Minister, what arrangements will be put in place by 10 Downing Street to ensure that the Editor of the London Evening Standard is not able to misuse his position as a member of the Privy Council to generate news stories based on confidential government briefings or advance notice of any prime ministerial decision to commit HM Armed Forces in enemy action; and if she will make a statement.
- To ask the Prime Minister, what checks and balances will be put in place by 10 Downing Street to ensure that government ministers do not exert undue influence on the editorial policy of the London Evening Standard newspaper, and that the Editor of the Evening Standard does not exert undue influence on the policy positions of government ministers; and if she will make a statement.
- To ask the Prime Minister, what arrangements will be put in place by 10 Downing Street to ensure that the Editor of the London Evening Standard newspaper is able to fully comply with three-line whips in relation to parliamentary debates and divisions; and if she will make a statement.
- To ask the Prime Minister, what arrangements will be put in place by 10 Downing Street to ensure that the Editor of the London Evening Standard newspaper does not make inappropriate use of parliamentary estate premises and facilities when undertaking his editorial duties; and if she will make a statement.

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