

Brexit bill: Green MEPs blast MPs for failing to stand up for Parliamentary democracy



9 February 2017

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UK Green MEPs, Molly Scott Cato, Jean Lambert, and Keith Taylor have issued a stinging condemnation of British MPs after Theresa May's Brexit bill denying Parliament any real say in the process [sailed through the Commons](#).

The Prime Minister rejected calls for MPs to have a meaningful role in shaping the proposed divorce deal. The government, instead, confirmed that the parliamentarians elected to represent the British and Northern Irish people will only be offered a 'take it or leave it' vote on the final deal.

UK Green MEPs, who will get an opportunity to play a part in the EU's negotiating process and cast a significant vote on the final terms of the deal, hit out at the Government for undermining the sovereignty of the UK Parliament.

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

"I am delighted that 122 MPs voted against the Brexit bill. With Labour, Lib Dem, SNP, and Plaid Cymru MPs joining Green MP Caroline Lucas to reject the Bill unamended, we have seen a progressive alliance against the government's plans for an extreme Brexit.

However, while the government is moving us towards the hard Brexit cliff edge, it is Labour that seems willing to push us off. The Party has shown itself hopelessly divided and the failure to oppose the government on this the most critical of issues has played straight into the hands of the Tory Right.

Greens have been clear throughout: we cannot support triggering a process that will see the UK leave the single market and customs union and threatens to turn us into Europe's biggest tax haven. We need clear guarantees on worker and consumer rights and assurances there will be no weakening of

environmental protections.”

Jean Lambert, the Green MEP for London, said:

“It’s outrageous that MPs appear grateful to be offered a vote on the final deal, rather than demanding this as a Parliamentary right. How bizarre that, as an MEP, I am guaranteed a right to vote on this but my MP has to plead for the privilege. And if my elected representative in UK Parliament has to plead, what say will the public get? The sidelining of Parliament and the British people is unacceptable.

The UK Parliament has chosen to set out little clear guidance for the Government on content or process: on what basis will MPs judge the final deal?”

Keith Taylor, the Green MEP for the South East and a plaintiff in so-called ‘[Dublin Case](#)’, said:

“Theresa May has justified her riding roughshod over Parliamentary democracy by claiming the British people have united to back Brexit. They haven’t. Far from it. The mandate for an extreme Brexit is non-existent. According to the [latest polls](#), just 39% of the British public support the Prime Minister’s vision of an extreme Brexit. Meanwhile, 48% of people want Britain to either remain a member of the EU or, at least, maintain a close relationship with our European neighbours.

Yet the Government has confirmed that it will only offer MPs a Hobson’s choice: the UK either leaves the single market and negotiates a new deal with the EU or ends up with no deal at all, in which case the Government promises to make the country a tax haven outside Europe.

I know we can do better than this. Which is why I am fighting in the courts for the British people to be given the choice they are being denied. The EU referendum should have been the start of a democratic process, not the end of one. As Greens, we believe the British people should have the final say on the Brexit deal, once it is clear what the outcome of the negotiations are.”

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[Green Party: Government decision to](#)

take only 350 child refugees is an 'absolute disgrace'



8 February 2017

The Green Party has responded to the Government's announcement it will take only 350 lone child refugees instead of a proposed 3000 [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

"This announcement, which the Tories have tried to sneak out just before recess, is an absolute disgrace. This is nowhere near the 3000 originally proposed by Lord Dubs and it equates to less than one per local authority in the UK. Any claim by the Prime Minister to be a compassionate Conservative is utterly undermined by the dereliction of duty to some of the most vulnerable people in the world. The Government should have been doing far more to support local authorities. I have visited Calais and seen firsthand the horrifying daily risks the children there faced and how desperate for safety they were. This is a national scandal, which disgraces us all. The Government should hang its head in shame."

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/08/dubs-scheme-lone-child-refugees-uk-closed-down>

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Green Party: Better Care Fund is the latest on a long list of the Government's NHS failures



8 February 2017

The Green Party has responded to a report showing Government plans to join up the social care and health sectors to save money and work for hospitals are failing [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“The Government appears to be in total denial about its consistent and repeated failures around our NHS, and what is at their heart. So far the Better Care Fund looks to have been a waste of time, money and effort. It simply hasn’t achieved its stated goals of savings and reducing emergency admissions, with emergency visits soaring and hospital workloads bigger than ever.

“While we welcome a joined up approach between social and health care this project simply isn’t delivering and it won’t as long as cash flow worries mount. The Government should urgently review the specific problems around the fund. But it must also face up to the wider issue of chronic under investment in health and social care.

“This is just the latest on a growing list of failures within the NHS, contributing to a growing crisis. The Government must commit to easing the pressure on both healthcare professionals and patients who are all suffering under the current mismanagement of what should be, and could be a flagship health service.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-38894593>

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MEP warns of ‘toxic’ legacy for UK if government signs EU-Canada trade deal



7 February 2017

As MEPs prepare to vote on whether or not to ratify a controversial trade deal next week, Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West, has warned the UK could find itself in the ‘worst of all possible worlds’ if the UK sign up to the deal.

The Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) [1] between Canada and the EU has always been opposed by Greens as it seeks to give more power to corporations while putting public services and workers’ and consumer rights at risk and threaten environmental regulations.

But now Dr Scott Cato says that a new House of Commons briefing [2] confirms that when the UK leaves the EU, it could be forced to renegotiate its trade agreements with Canada yet still be bound by the treaty for 20 years. She said:

“One of the key reasons Greens have opposed CETA is because of the power this treaty gives to corporations to sue governments over legislation that threatens their profits. If CETA is ratified before the UK exits the EU, we will need to renegotiate our trade agreements with Canada but still be bound by the investor protection provision aspect of this treaty for 20 years. This would mean foreign investors would still have the right to sue the UK government if they feel their businesses have been impacted by new laws or regulations.

“Signing up to CETA is the worst of all possible worlds for the UK. It will take us back to square one on trade negotiations with Canada but trap us in a most toxic element of this treaty. With Brexit looming it is even more critical that all British MEPs vote this dodgy deal down next week in the European Parliament.”

[1]

<http://ttip2017.eu/blog/id-12-reasons-the-greenefa-group-are-opposed-to-ceta.html>

[2] <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7492>

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[Greens slam Government as EU prepares to take UK to court over air pollution failures](#)



7 February 2017

*** Keith Taylor MEP: “The government has been exposed, yet again, as failing in its duty to take even the most basic action to combat an air pollution crisis that needlessly claims the lives of more than 50,000 people in Britain every year.”**

Keith Taylor, Green MEP for the South East, has slammed the Conservative government for its consistent failure to tackle the air pollution crisis, as

the EU prepares to [escalate action against the UK](#) for breaching air quality laws.

The latest EU review has revealed multiple failings by the UK Government in applying environmental law, with Britain being in breach of vital EU nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) limits since 2010 and London overshooting its whole 2017 limit in the first five days of the year.

It is understood that the results of the review will be sent on 15 February to the UK. A court case at the European Court of Justice could follow if the UK Government fails to send a satisfactory response to the findings.

Keith Taylor MEP, a vocal air quality campaigner, is urging the UK government to finally take seriously its responsibility for the health of British citizens.

“The government has been exposed, yet again, as failing in its duty to take even the most basic action to combat an air pollution crisis that needlessly claims the lives of more than [50,000 people in Britain every year](#).”

“The failure highlighted by the European Commission review is as much moral as it is legal; Ministers have displayed an extremely concerning attitude of indifference towards their duty to safeguard the health of British citizens.”

“That the European Commission is having to hold to account this government for a public health crisis that costs the British public [more than £20bn a year](#) is a shameful indictment of the Conservatives’ irresponsible and deadly apathy.”

“Theresa May’s administration is failing to do even the bare minimum, as required by EU laws the UK itself helped to set, to improve the quality of the air we all breathe. The bare minimum.”

“Where embraced and enforced, EU air pollution limits are helping to [prevent thousands of deaths every year](#) and saving [billions of pounds](#) in direct health costs. In fact, this government [readily acknowledges](#) that it is EU law that has been the driver of any positive air quality action in the UK. For the sake of the health and prosperity of the British people, we cannot risk scrapping these safeguards.”

“The government must finally face up to its moral and legal responsibility for tackling Britain’s air quality crisis. Ministers must now be forced to make a firm commitment to abiding by and fully implementing EU air quality laws. Theresa May must also make maintaining and strengthening these vital protections a priority as Britain prepares to leave the EU.”

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