

[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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[UN warns of civilian casualties in](#)

'face to face' fighting in eastern Ukraine

14 February 2017 – Intensified fighting between Government and non-Government forces near densely populated areas in eastern Ukraine is endangering civilians, the senior United Nations humanitarian representative in the country told reporters in Geneva today.

“The situation in eastern Ukraine is actually quite serious, you will be aware that between 21 January and 3 February the fighting intensity increased,” said Neal Walker, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine, citing frequent violations of the ceasefire and fighting near the towns of Avdiivka, Yasynuvata, Makiivka and Donetsk.

“There was extremely intense fighting from the 29th until the 3rd of February,” Mr. Walker recalled, noting that that the number of ceasefire violations exceeded 30,000 in a week or so, compared to less than 30,000 over the course of a month.

The conflict in eastern Ukraine erupted in March 2014. A ceasefire was eventually negotiated in Minsk, Belarus, in February 2015 but there have been frequent violations. The latest truce began on 23 December last year.

“The approximation of fighting forces, armed separatists in the east and Government troops, the distance separating them has narrowed, has narrowed incredibly,” Mr. Walker said. “And they are now face to face. You also have an increased presence of heavy weapons directly in violation of the Minsk accord.”

Mr. Walker also mentioned that the humanitarian situation is quite critical. “Let’s not forget temperatures in the past weeks have been between 10 and 20 below zero centigrade,” he said.

The UN Resident Coordinator also warned about environmental damage to critical civilian infrastructure due to shelling. “We have for instance a phenol chemical plant which has enormous potential to do severe environmental damage if the shelling is continued and it is damaged further,” he said.

“There are probably between 800,000 and one million IDPs (internally displaced persons) in government controlled areas of Ukraine,” Mr. Walker estimated. “We estimate another 200,000 have actually returned to non-government controlled areas from government controlled areas,” he added.

Since the beginning of the conflict, around 10,000 people have been killed in the violence, with civilian deaths on the rise.

Workers and investors need confidence that automotive industry will be robustly supported by Government – Long-Bailey

Rebecca

Long-Bailey, Labour's Shadow Business Secretary, commenting on reports that General Motors is in talks to sell its European arm Opel, which includes the UK's Vauxhall, said:

"In light of plans by General Motors to explore the option of selling Vauxhall and Opel, the Government should be pushing protection of our automotive sector right to the top of their agenda.

"Workers and investors need confidence that this industry will be robustly supported by Government for many years to come so that jobs are secure and investors are able to make long term decisions.

"I would also urge General Motors to work very closely with trade unions in progressing any deal to ensure that jobs are protected."

Ends

Press release: PM call with US President Trump: 14 February 2017

From:

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Part of:

Prime Minister Theresa May spoke with US President Trump.

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister spoke to President Trump this afternoon, as part of their regular engagement. They discussed a range of issues, including trade and security and also discussed the President's upcoming state visit to the UK. The Prime Minister said she looks forward to welcoming him later this year.

[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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