

Deal reached to protect whistleblowers a victory for the truth



Green Party

12 March 2019

Green MEP Molly Scott Cato has hailed the agreement of the EU Whistleblower Protection Directive [1], which was agreed late last night in trilogue negotiations between the European Parliament, EU Commission and Council, as a victory for the truth. This will give legal guarantees and protection to those individuals who want to speak out when they encounter wrong-doing in the work place.

The Directive obliges all EU countries to adopt measures such as clear reporting channels, confidentiality, legal protections and sanctions for those who attempt to persecute whistleblowers.

Molly Scott Cato said:

“While Theresa May was involved in Brexit theatrics in Strasbourg, another late-night meeting actually achieved a result. There was real agreement on legal guarantees, offering protection to whistleblowers who shine a light into the darkness of corruption or criminality in the workplace.

“For too long whistleblowers have faced the fear of revenge, reprisals or legal action if they step forward. Now those who wish to speak out will be given the support they deserve with protection from criminal and civil liability, as well as sanctions for those who attempt to persecute whistleblowers.

“This is a huge victory for Greens who have been the driving force behind the campaign for whistleblower protection for many years. But most importantly it is a big win for the brave people who are willing to speak out in defence of truth, the law and our democratic principles, and holding their employers to account.”

Notes

[1] Greens/EFA [Briefing on the EU Whistleblower Protection Directive](#)

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[Green member of House of Lords seeks to 'abolish' herself](#)



Green Party

5 March 2019

*** Green peer seeks to transform House of Lords from within**

*** Jenny Jones: Lords reform is essential for proper scrutiny of Brexit process**

Jenny Jones, Green member of the House of Lords, will today (March 5) continue her fight to transform the unelected chamber, as she resubmits her House of Lords Reform Bill.

This comes after the government has rejected the incremental reforms put forward by the Burns committee, who recommended that the government slowly reduce the number of peers and only appoint new peers in a way that is proportional with the vote in the last general election and the number of MPs each party has.

Baroness Jones hopes to gather support from within the Lords for her plans to replace the House of Lords with a democratic and effective second chamber. This would use proportional representation to elect a new house, but keep many existing peers as non-voting experts.

Her Bill is the first with this mix of proposals to come from within the Lords.

Jenny Jones said:

“I’m not the only member of the House of Lords who wants to abolish their right to vote in the second chamber, but I’m aiming to be one of the most

energetic peers in making it happen. I'm relatively new to the Lords and I hope my fresh approach will help fast track the various discussions about Lords reform.

"The government's awful approach to Brexit makes Lords reform both urgent and inevitable. The government is trying to push through all kinds of bad ideas on the back of the Brexit negotiations. We need an effective and democratic chamber to help scrutinise the secondary legislation and the international deals."

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[Greens slam Prime Minister's Brexit bribe](#)



Green Party

4 March 2019

Green MEP, Molly Scott Cato, has slammed the government for offering a 'bribe' to Brexit voting Labour constituencies while constituencies of loyal Tory MPs will lose out. The South West MEP says Theresa May's £1.6bn funding boost – aimed at Labour's Midlands and Northern England heartlands – is also a drop in the ocean compared with around £12bn the country's poorest areas currently receive through EU funding. Areas of northern England are being offered over half a billion pounds through the Stronger Towns Fund, but the South West region which includes one of the UK's most deprived areas, Cornwall, is being offered just £33 million.

Molly Scott Cato, Brexit spokesperson for the Green Party of England and Wales, said:

"This new fund is a cynical attempt by Theresa May to bribe Labour MPs to support her dodgy Brexit deal. I hope Labour MPs in the constituencies being targeted by the government will recognise the money being offered is

politically motivated, will not make up for years of crushing austerity and are loose change compared to funds that will be lost if we leave the European Union. EU funds are worth around £6bn to England and around £12bn to the whole of the UK, with Wales and the South West the two regions receiving the highest allocations between 2014-2020.

“Furthermore, those areas such as the South West that suffer from an over representation of loyal Tory MPs will miss out as they don’t need a bung to be persuaded to back Brexit. So not only will my South West constituents miss out on this pot of money, more significantly they are set to lose millions in EU funding that has been awarded to projects which boost industrial innovation and support rural infrastructure.

“Cornwall in particular has received almost half a billion euros from the EU in the current funding round. The government promised to replace this with a Shared Prosperity Fund but more than two years on and with just four weeks until we are due to leave the EU we have no more detail than those three words.

“The EU is often accused of being undemocratic, but EU funding comes free of any political motive; it is arrived at through a formula which identifies where in Europe the need is greatest. By comparison, the Tories are playing politics with people’s lives, using bribery in a hugely undemocratic attempt to shore up their rotten Brexit disaster.”

References

<http://speri.dept.shef.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Brief24-UK-regions-and-European-structural-and-investment-funds.pdf>

<file:///C:/Users/Andrew/Downloads/CBP-7847.pdf>

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[**Lambeth Council accused of covering up air pollution crisis**](#)



Green Party

28 February 2019

Lambeth Labour has been accused of “covering up” the borough’s deadly air pollution crisis after it failed to monitor one of Britain’s most polluted roads.

Air pollution has gone unchecked in Brixton Road, London, for six months since the street’s monitor broke in August 2018. [1]

Lambeth Green Party has criticised the council for failing to put an interim system in place, saying it is “choking its residents” by leaving air pollution unchecked.

Brixton Road is one of Britain’s most polluted streets. Last year air pollution in Brixton Road broke annual limits by January 30, a slight improvement on the decade before when the street always broke annual limits within six days. [2]

The last air pollution reading from the Brixton Road monitor was recorded on 29 August 2018. [3] Lambeth Greens have repeatedly urged Lambeth Council to fix the monitor as a matter of urgency, and to use a temporary monitor until the permanent one is fixed.

In September 2018 Lambeth councillor Pete Elliott asked the council why the monitor had been offline. Cllr Elliott followed this up in October 2018 when he asked the council to ensure pollution continued to be measured while the monitor was broken. [4]

These questions were repeated in November 2018 and January 2019. To date, no timeline has been given for when the monitor will be repaired and monitoring can recommence.

In response to a question from Green Party London Assembly member Caroline Russell, the Mayor of London confirmed the Brixton Road monitor became water damaged in August 2018 and said it was expected to be repaired by the end of January this year. [5]

Cllr Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party and leader of the Green opposition on Lambeth Council, said:

“Lambeth Labour is covering up a deadly air pollution crisis. The council is choking its citizens and putting lives at risk by leaving air pollution in one of Britain’s dirtiest streets unchecked. It is unforgivable that

pollution levels aren't being measured, with no temporary systems in place pending repair of the permanent system.

"Greens in Lambeth have continuously raised this with the council and have been fobbed off every time. Everyone has the right to breathe clean air, but we simply can't tackle air pollution effectively if we fail to measure it. Lambeth Council must install a temporary air pollution monitor in Brixton Road immediately, and fix the permanent one as a matter of urgency.

"There are basic steps Lambeth Council can take to clean up our air and make the borough a healthier place to live and work. As a start we need to see tougher measures on vehicle engine idling, an end to waste incineration, incentives for businesses to use environmentally friendly methods, and proper no-drop off zones around schools. Nationally we desperately need the Government to back a new Clean Air Act fit for the 21st century."

Green peer Jenny Jones introduced the bill to the House of Lords in July last year – the 70th anniversary of the first Clean Air Act. [6]

Notes:

1. <https://www.london.gov.uk/questions/2019/0251>

2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jan/30/london-reaches-legal-air-pollution-limit-just-one-month-into-the-new-year>

3. https://www.londonair.org.uk/london/asp/publicbulletin.asp?region=0&site=LB4&bulletin=daily&bulletindate=29/08/2018&la_id=&postcode=&level=All&MapType=Google&VenueCode=

<https://www.london.gov.uk/questions/2019/0251>

4. <https://lambeth.greenparty.org.uk/news/2019/01/18/lambeth-council-slammed-over-failure-to-act-on-air-pollution/>

5. <https://www.london.gov.uk/questions/2019/0251>

6. <https://jennyjones.org/2018/07/04/clean-air-human-rights-bill-launch/>

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Green Party responds to record breaking February temperatures



Green Party

25 February 2019

Responding to reports from the Met Office that temperatures today surpassed 20 degrees for the first time on record, Green Party MP Caroline Lucas said:

“I like spending an afternoon in the sunshine as much as anyone, but it’s impossible to shake the feeling that this isn’t right. After last year’s unprecedented global heatwave and last month’s deadly temperatures in Australia, our baseline perception of what’s normal is shifting.

“We are living through climate breakdown – and instead of taking urgent action, ministers carry on as if nothing has changed. The Government must wake up to this crisis, urgently declare a climate emergency and introduce a Green New Deal to provide a green job to everyone who wants one and transform our economy to prevent climate catastrophe.”

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