

EU deploys Election Observation Mission to Kosovo

After the municipal elections in 2013 and the parliamentary elections in 2014, this is the third time the EU deploys a fully-fledged Election Observation Mission to Kosovo, reflecting the EU's commitment to supporting credible, transparent and inclusive elections in the broader framework of Kosovo's reform process.

Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, has appointed Mr Alojz Peterle, Member of the European Parliament, as Chief Observer.

The High Representative stated: *"The upcoming early legislative elections on 11 June will be a new opportunity for the citizens of Kosovo to express their political will. Under the leadership of Chief Observer Mr Peterle, I am confident that the European Union Election Observation Mission will provide an important contribution to the further strengthening of Kosovo's democratic institutions. The deployment of this Election Observation Mission confirms the EU's support for Kosovo's democratic governance. We expect all political parties, leaders and institutions of Kosovo to ensure that these important elections, including the election campaign, are conducted in line with European democratic standards"*.

The Chief Observer, Mr Peterle, declared: *"I am deeply honoured to lead the Election Observation Mission to Kosovo. I trust all stakeholders will contribute to fully ensure that the upcoming elections will be peaceful, transparent and inclusive."*

The Election Observation Mission started its deployment on 16 May. A Core Team of seven EU election analysts is now in Kosovo and will stay in the country until the completion of the electoral process to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the electoral process. As from 26 May the Core Team will be joined by 16 long-term observers who will be deployed across Kosovo, and later on for the election week on 7 June by 32 additional short-term observers. A delegation of the European Parliament and diplomats from EU Member States accredited to Kosovo will also reinforce the mission on the Election Day.

Shortly after the Election Day, the mission will issue a preliminary statement of its findings at a press conference in Pristina. A final report, including recommendations for future electoral processes, will be presented at a later stage, after the finalisation of the entire electoral process.

Caroline Lucas environment stunt: full speech



Green Party

30 May 2017

Caroline Lucas, Green Party co-leader, today staged an emergency intervention into the General Election campaign to highlight how the environment has been ignored in the national debate so far.

Caroline's full speech to Parliament Square (check against delivery):

Good morning everyone – and thanks so much for coming down here this morning.

We're here to talk about the environment – a topic that has been sorely missing from the General Election campaign so far.

For those of us in the environment movement, the lack of attention doesn't come as much of a surprise.

Despite "the environment" actually meaning the air that we breathe, the water we drink, and the food that we eat: it's rarely talked about in British politics.

It appears that for some, the environment is a secondary concern – something to be considered once we fix (so-called) more important issues.

But nothing could be further from the truth.

Our prosperity depends on the natural world.

It is the ultimate source of everything we make and use – from food and materials, to the air we breathe.

But it is in crisis.

2016 was the hottest year on record – and the targets set in the historic Paris Agreement will be breached within years unless we act fast.

40,000 premature deaths a year are attributable to air pollution, and thousands of children breath in toxic nitrous oxide fumes on their way to school every day.

Our wildlife and nature are in crisis too: 60% of UK species are in long-term decline, whilst 15% are at risk of extinction.

These are just some of the many environmental challenges we face – and they will all be exacerbated by the ‘red tape bonfire’ that looks set to follow an extreme and dirty Brexit.

Despite these monumental challenges, there is virtually no discussion of them at all in the general election campaign.

So, today, I have written to Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn to ask them an important question:

Where is your commitment to the environment?

We need to get the natural world back to the heart of this election – not least because of the current approach to it.

Theresa May’s Conservative party have been taking donations from big oil, whilst forcing fracking on communities across the UK.

And despite it being a public health emergency, the Tory manifesto mentioned air pollution only once.

Is that really acceptable that after seven years of being dragged through the courts the Government still has no action plan on air quality?

There’s not much point in talking about a strong and stable leadership, if we don’t have a strong and stable environment.

As for the Labour Party, it has been heartening to see it adopt a more ambitious agenda on climate change.

But it is simply not possible to tackle the climate crisis whilst continuing to support the fossil fuel industry to the tune of £6bn each year.

Or handing out £37bn of taxpayers money to Hinkley Point C – in the full knowledge that wind and solar are now the cheapest way to generate electricity.

That the environment has received such scant attention from both Labour and the Tory’s in this election is a shameful and reckless dereliction of the duty they have – not only to the planet- but to future generations, to whom we leave the natural world

Over the last seven years, I’m proud that the Green Party has led the charge in Parliament for environmental protections and action on climate change – and, quite simply, a prosperous, thriving future will be green – or not at all.

From a new Green Investment and Innovation Centre to a new Environment Act, the Green Party has the ideas and policies to create a prosperous, confident and caring Britain.

We sincerely hope that Jeremy and Theresa will respond to our call today, and make sure that in these final days before June 8th: the environment gets the air-time, column inches, and, crucially, the political importance that it deserves.

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ENDS.

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[The A329M and the M4](#)

The decision of Highways England to alter the slip road access at the A329M and M4 junction has caused difficulties for those travelling on the A 329 M. I have been seeking a remedy ever since I first saw the plans, which decided to halve the road capacity on the A 329 M for through traffic in order to relieve pressure and back up on the M 4.

I was told that traffic models showed one lane was sufficient for the A 329 M , and one dedicated lane for merging M 4 traffic would help the flow off the M 4. That did not seem likely to me. It hasn't worked out like that.

They did agree to undertake a study to see why people have been unhappy about the results of their works. As I expected this study has concluded that there is increased congestion on the A329 M following the works on the junction. They then seek to blame driver behaviour and look for solutions that will guide or direct drivers to get it to work. The truth is driver behaviour has been affected by the changes made to the road layout. Drivers do cut across from the M4 slip onto the fast lane of the A 329 M which is the single through lane because they see they have to merge with other cars on the slip. Cars have to pull out of the slow lane into the fast lane on the A 329 M because their lane disappears altogether. This can cause difficulties.

There may be modest improvements to be had from clearer signs and road markings to control where cars can switch lanes, but the real need is for more capacity which I will continue to press for.

Published and promoted by Fraser Mc Farland on behalf of John Redwood both at 30 Rose Street Wokingham Rg 40 1 XU

New Project Team for Spectrum Issues

□New Project Team FM56

The Agency will host on 27-28 March the kick off meeting of the new Project Team FM56 for spectrum issues related to railway applications, following the decision of the European Communication Committee to establish this group to assess the needs of the railways in terms of Radio Spectrum.

find [here more information on agenda and registration!](#)

Announcement: 55th ETCR Summer Course 3-14 July 2017, Bruges, Belgium

□From 3-14 July 2017 the European Union Agency for Railways is co-organising with the European Training Centre for Railways (ETCR) and the College of Europe in Bruges the 55 ETCR Summer Course.

Participants will get the unique opportunity to meet the decision-makers and opinion leaders of EU rail politics and learn about the elements of the EU railway regulatory framework and its impact on rail business perspectives. They can build a network of international colleagues and confront the challenges they are working on at home with the solutions others have given to the same issues in the various European countries.

[Registration](#) is open until 19 June 2017.

All information can be found on www.etcr.eu.