

Green Party EU spokesperson responds to Labour's position on Brexit



Green Party

25 April 2017

Responding to a speech by Keir Starmer, outlining Labour's approach to Brexit negotiations if the Party wins the general election in June, Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West and the Party's speaker on EU relations, said:

"A softer and more distinctive approach from Labour is welcome; to date Labour have danced to the Tories extreme and reckless Brexit tune, voting to trigger Article 50 without fighting for any conditions and effectively handing Theresa May a blank cheque.

"Greens would go much further than Labour and offer guarantees in areas not even mentioned by Keir Starmer.

"We would not only guarantee existing rights for all EU nationals but defend free movement, especially for the young. We want young people to continue to enjoy the rights enjoyed by their parents and grandparents – the right to travel, study and work across Europe.

"Like Labour, we would ditch the great repeal bill, but replace it with more than just an EU rights and protections bill. We will push for a Great Reform Bill, to deliver a fair and proportional election system, reform of the House of Lords and a written constitution. Greens believe that the best way to protect jobs and workers' rights is by remaining in the single market.

"Of course jobs and the economy are critically important in the negotiations with the EU, but by prioritising these above all else, there is a danger the environment gets side-lined. With the Tories plotting a bonfire of regulations that protect our air and water quality, safeguard valuable wildlife habitats and help tackle climate change, we need a new Environmental Protection Act and a new Clean Air Act to ensure environmental protections are maintained and enhanced.

"Labour's call for parliament to be given a truly meaningful vote on the final Brexit deal is welcome, but their reluctance to give British people the same right shows a disregard for democracy. Greens believe that the people of the UK must be given an opportunity to accept or reject the future that is on

offer at the end of the two-year Article 50 process through a ratification referendum.”

Notes:

1. http://mollymep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Green_guarentees-2.pdf

Molly Scott Cato is Green MEP for the South West of England and Gibraltar and is one of 50 Green/EFA MEPs in the European Parliament. She sits on the Economics and Monetary Affairs Committee, PANA committee investigating tax evasion and the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee. Molly is parliamentary candidate for Bristol West in the June 8th general election.

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[EU strengthens control of the acquisition and possession of firearms](#)

The amendments address risks for public safety and security, and focus on:

Enhanced traceability of firearms

The revision strengthens the rules on the marking of firearms, by including, among other things, a new obligation to mark also all their essential components. Harmonizing the rules for the marking of firearms and establishing the mutual recognition of marks between member states will improve the traceability of firearms used in criminal activities, including those which have been assembled from components acquired separately.

This information also has to be recorded in national data-filing systems. For this to happen, member states will now have to ensure that dealers and brokers register any transaction of firearms electronically and without any undue delay.

Measures on deactivation and reactivation or conversion of firearms

The rules on the deactivation of firearms have been strengthened, not least through a provision requiring the classification of deactivated firearms under category C (firearms subject to declaration). Until now, deactivated firearms have not been subject to the requirements set by the directive.

The revision also includes a new category of salute and acoustic weapons, which were not covered by the original directive. These are live firearms that have been converted to blank firing ones, for example, for use in theatres or television. In the absence of more stringent national provisions, such firearms could be purchased freely. This posed a risk, given that their reconversion to live ones was often possible with limited efforts (they were for example used in the Paris terrorist attacks). The new wording of the directive ensures that these weapons remain registered under the same category as the firearm from which they have been converted.

Stricter rules for the acquisition and possession of the most dangerous firearms

The most dangerous firearms, classified in category A, can only be acquired and possessed on the basis of an exemption granted by the relevant member state. The rules for granting such exemptions have now been significantly strengthened. Possible grounds for exemption, such as national defence or the protection of critical infrastructure, are now set out in a limited list and exemptions may only be granted where there is no risk to public security or public order.

When a firearm of category A is required for sport-shooting, it can only be acquired according to strict rules which include proven practice recognised by an official shooting sport federation.

Article 7 para 4a provides the possibility of confirming authorisations for semi-automatic firearms (new point 6, 7 or 8 of category A) legally acquired and registered before the directive comes into force.

Banning civilian use of the most dangerous semi-automatic firearms

Some dangerous semi-automatic firearms have now been added to category A and are therefore prohibited for civilian use. This is the case for short semi-automatic firearms with loading devices over 20 rounds and long semi-automatic firearms with loading devices over 10 rounds. Similarly, long firearms that can be easily concealed, for example by means of a folding or telescopic stock, are also now prohibited.

Improving the exchange of relevant information between member states

The new rules enable the Commission to propose the establishment of a system for the exchange of information electronically between member states. The information would cover cases where the transfer of a firearm to another member state has been authorised as well as where the acquisition and possession of a firearm has been refused.

The directive sets out minimum rules and does not prevent member states from

adopting and applying stricter rules.

Next steps

The Council and the European Parliament now need to sign the adopted directive. The signed text will be published in the EU Official Journal and will enter into force 20 days later.

Background

Council directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons was originally designed as a measure to balance internal market objectives and security imperatives regarding “civil” firearms.

The amending proposal was submitted by the European Commission on 18 November 2015 against the backdrop of a series of terrorist acts that took place in Europe and which revealed gaps in the implementation of the directive. The current review is a continuation of the 2008 revision and also aligns EU legislation with the provisions on the UN Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms.

[Antitrust: Commission confirms inspections in the mobile telecommunications sector in Sweden](#)

The Commission has concerns that Swedish mobile network operators may have engaged in anti-competitive conduct preventing entry into the consumer segment of the Swedish mobile telecommunications market, in breach of EU antitrust rules (Articles 101 and 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

The Commission officials were accompanied by their counterparts from the Swedish Competition Authority (Konkurrensverket).

Unannounced inspections are a preliminary step in investigating suspected anti-competitive practices. The fact that the Commission carries out such inspections does not mean that the companies are guilty of anti-competitive behaviour nor does it prejudice the outcome of the investigation. The Commission respects the rights of defence, in particular the right of companies to be heard in antitrust proceedings.

There is no legal deadline to complete inquiries into anti-competitive conduct. Their duration depends on a number of factors, including the complexity of each case, the extent to which the companies concerned co-

operate and the exercise of the rights of defence.

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