

Green MEP welcomes Gove pledge on 'Green Brexit' but says Environment Secretary still in 'special measures'



Green Party

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Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West, who sits on the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee, has welcomed Michael Gove's pledge to deliver a "Green Brexit" [1]. Dr Scott Cato said:

"It's a moment to celebrate the extraordinary: Greens agree with Michael Gove. I'm left wondering if he has been reading the reports I commissioned on how we can create a more sustainable farming system [2]. However, it doesn't take a farmer to tell you that word's butter no parsnips and we will need to keep the new Environment Secretary in special measures until he delivers on his promises."

Speaking this morning on BBC Radio 4 Today [3], Molly Scott Cato said:

"As long as we make sure that he doesn't consider grouse moors and other things his wealthy friends do with their land to be of environmental benefit, I think we can be in agreement."

She went on to argue that the most pressing environmental priority was tackling climate change. She said:

"In order to stay within the 2-degree safety limit we have to recapture a lot of the carbon that is already in the atmosphere which is very much about how we use our land. We should be rewarding the type of farming that captures and stores carbon such as restoring wetlands, greater use of agri-forestry and tree planting."

Dr Scott Cato concluded:

"Where Michael Gove and I part company is over our membership of the EU. I continue to believe that the best place for UK farmers and food producers is inside the EU, and in particular inside the single market; around 65% of total UK agricultural exports go to the EU. None-the-less, I am pleased to see one of the key architects of Brexit pledging that in future he wants subsidies paid on the basis of social and environmental benefits rather than

just going to rich landowners. This is a policy long championed by Greens across Europe.”

Notes

[1]

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/michael-gove-green-brexit-environment-secretary-climate-change-theresa-may-cabinet-conservative-a7851466.html>

[2] <http://mollymep.org.uk/2017/02/20/agri-reports/>

[3] Interview can be heard on Molly's SoundCloud:

<https://soundcloud.com/molly-scott-cato/response-to-michael-goves-plans-for-greenbrexit>

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