

Greens respond to Cambridge Analytica scandal, question EU ref legitimacy and highlight new EU privacy directive



Green Party

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“The new GDPR legislation is a great example of how we can work with our neighbours to help rebalance and democratise our online experiences by giving us back control of our data” – Jean Lambert MEP

The UK’s Green MEPs have condemned Facebook for being “actively complicit” in the harvesting of millions of users’ data subsequently used by Cambridge Analytica to launch a “propaganda campaign” to “hijack democracy” in the [US Presidential election](#) and the [UK referendum on EU membership](#).

Keith Taylor, Jean Lambert, and Molly Scott Cato added that the scandal both “calls into question” the legitimacy of the EU referendum and highlights the “vital importance” of the [EU’s General Data Protection Regulation](#) (GDPR) which offers consumers greater control over their privacy online and comes into force in the UK in May 2018.

Molly Scott Cato, MEP for the South West and the Green Party’s Brexit Spokesperson, said:

“The more we learn about the highly dubious and possibly downright illegal ways in which the Leave campaign manipulated voters, the less and less robust the result of the EU referendum appears. Unlike in the US, the investigations into electoral tampering in the UK are taking place behind closed doors so I am asking the Electoral Commission to tell us what they know. I am also questioning at what point interference in an election or referendum makes a result illegitimate.”

Keith Taylor, Green MEP for the South East, added:

“The Cambridge Analytica scandal begs an important question about the ease with which democratic processes can be hijacked in a social media age where a handful of firms control the entire virtual public sphere.”

“Following [Carole Cadwalladr’s explosive exposé](#), there will be millions of Facebook users in the UK rightly concerned about their online privacy. [The silence from Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg](#) will hardly put their minds at rest. But they can take some comfort from the [new GDPR legislation](#) being introduced by the EU which will give users back control of their data allow them to make properly informed choices about who they give it to and how those firms can use it.”

Jean Lambert, the Green MEP for London, added:

“Ultimately, this scandal serves to reinforce the dangers of a vast internet being under the control of just a few giant corporate gatekeepers. The most effective way to protect online privacy and break up the internet giants’ iron grip on users’ data is to work collaboratively and across borders. The new GDPR legislation is a great example of how we can work with our neighbours to help rebalance and democratise our online experiences by giving us back control of our data.”

“It’s a small but significant step towards preventing future data harvesting scandals. The vital EU legislation will also bring with it stronger enforcement powers to clamp down on firms misusing users’ data. The fact that complaints about the astonishingly broad access to user data Facebook offered app developers, made [as early as 2010](#), were not properly follow-up by the authorities reveals the need for data protection bodies to be better resourced. The new EU enhanced privacy law obliges countries to do just that.”

Molly Scott Cato, who has [written to the Electoral Commission](#) questioning the legitimacy of the EU referendum following the revelations of the Cambridge Analytica expose, concluded:

“Leaving the EU represents the greatest political, social and economic upheaval this country has faced in my lifetime. If it is found that there was significant manipulation during the referendum campaign we must raise questions about whether such a radical step should be taken.

“All this further underlines the need for a people’s poll on the final Brexit deal, and this time, such a referendum must be based on accurate facts, not deliberate misinformation peddled by specialists in voter manipulation. This poll must, of course, include the option of remaining in the EU.”

ENDS

Notes:

Eight facts about the enhanced rights offered by the GDPR legislation:

1. Transparency

When a firm or organisation processes your data, it will be forced to give you a clear explanation of how they will use it, how long they will keep it for and who they will share it with.

2. Right to know

You will soon have the right to be able to ask organisations for a copy of the information they hold on you, free of charge and they will generally have to respond within 30 days.

3. Setting the record straight

You will also have the right to ask for your personal data to be corrected if it is inaccurate or incomplete.

4. Press **pause**

You will be able to stop your data from being used by an organisation if you believe it is inaccurate or that they don't have a good enough reason to use it.

5. Being forgettable

With a few exceptions, you will be able to ask an organisation to delete all the information they have about you if they don't have a legitimate reason to hold it.

6. Sharing

If you want, you will be able to have your personal data transferred to another organisation.

7. Say no to marketing

You will be able to object to your personal data being processed if it's not in your interests.

8. Human touch

You will have the right to know if organisations use your personal data to make decisions about you using automated processes. They can only do this in limited circumstances and you will be able to challenge these decisions or request human intervention.

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