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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

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