

Greens warn Brexit is no escape from toxic trade deals as CETA gets the green-light



Green Party

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Keith Taylor MEP: 'CETA is a bad deal for the people of Britain, Europe, and even Canada, but a great deal for multinational corporations keen to escape the democratic oversight of national parliaments.'

Jean Lambert MEP: 'To believe that CETA will bring more and better jobs to those who need them is pure wishful thinking.'

Molly Scott Cato MEP: 'Conservatives in the European and UK Parliaments have been the biggest cheerleaders for CETA, and they are hoping the deal will still apply to Britain post-Brexit, and, most concerningly, the Minister for Trade, Liam Fox, has even put CETA forward as a model for future UK trade deals.'

Green MEPs are warning that Brexit will not free the UK from toxic trade deals as the European Parliament votes to [green-light CETA](#), the controversial EU-Canada trade deal.

The deal, which has been long opposed by trade justice campaigners, trade unions, European Green Parties and millions of citizens in the EU and Canada, was voted through by a majority of MEPs during a plenary session in Strasbourg today.

Greens/EFA MEPs were among the only UK representatives to vote against the deal. Conservative and Lib Dem MEPs are expected to have voted to support CETA* with a number of Labour MEPs expected to have joined them* despite pressure from [trade unions](#), the [Shadow Minister for International Trade](#), and even the Party's own [Head of Trade Policy](#).

Opposition to CETA has focused primarily on the provision to allow multinational corporations to sue democratically elected governments in ['extrajudicial' and 'secretive' courts](#) if they feel their financial interests are threatened by any policies enacted by those governments.

Greens have also argued that the trade deal will be bad for workers' rights, climate action, animal welfare, and chemical and product safety.

Keith Taylor, Green MEP for the South East and a member of the European Parliament's Environment committee, said:

"CETA is a bad deal for the people of Britain, Europe, and even Canada, but a great deal for multinational corporations keen to escape the democratic oversight of national parliaments. It is little wonder that it is citizens across Europe and in North America that are the loudest and more determined opponents of this toxic trade deal."

"Canada has a long track record of taking legal action against European countries' environmental laws and is fundamentally opposed to high chemical and pesticide safety legislation. Canada is also home to more than half of the world's mining companies and pursues an active policy of exporting fuels derived from highly polluting tar sands. In that context, it is extremely worrying that CETA's 'commitments' on environmental standards remain unenforceable. Greens will continue to oppose any agreements that lock us into fossil fuel dependence and damage our climate goals."

Jean Lambert, Green MEP for London and a member of the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs committee, said:

"To believe that CETA will bring more and better jobs to those who need them is pure wishful thinking. Research shows this proposed trade agreement is more likely to continue widening the gap between low and high-paid workers and offers no safeguards for existing labour standards. Many trade unions oppose CETA and so did the European Parliament's Employment Committee, of which I'm a member. We need to invest in quality jobs, not widening the gaps."

"There are many other problems too, which is why Green MEPs highlighted [12 Reasons to oppose CETA](#), and why we voted against it today in the European Parliament. It's extremely regrettable that a majority of MEPs didn't heed our concerns, and have instead today voted for CETA to go ahead. It's now up to national parliaments across Europe to take action to block this damaging deal."

Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West and the Green Party's Brexit Spokesperson, drew attention to divisions within Labour, an issue she highlighted in a News Statesman [article today](#). She said

"With trade, as with Brexit, Labour are exposing how weak they are as an opposition. The Party is hopelessly split between backing the citizens of Europe and caving into corporate power."

"Their long-time Trade coordinator in the European Parliament, David Martin, has been a forceful supporter of CETA and has strenuously opposed the Greens for their opposition to the anti-democratic aspects of this treaty. No wonder their shadow trade minister can only persuade half his MPs to vote against

this toxic deal.”

“The weakness of socialists across Europe to protect citizens against the worst aspects of corporate globalisation is driving people towards the forces of the Right, thereby fanning the flames of fascism.”

Conservative MEP Charles Tannock reiterated during the debate in Strasbourg that the UK Government sees CETA as a model for future UK trade deals. Molly continued:

“Conservatives in the European and UK Parliaments have been the biggest cheerleaders for CETA, and they are hoping the deal will still apply to Britain post-Brexit, and, most concerningly, the Minister for Trade, Liam Fox, has even put CETA forward as a model for future UK trade deals. It is clear that Brexit will not free Britain from toxic trade deals.”

Notes

* Roll call vote results are yet to be published.

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