

Green MEP challenges government to eradicate money laundering following 'laundromat' revelations



Green Party

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Green economist and MEP, Molly Scott Cato, has said that revelations of the Eastern European 'laundromat' operating through the City of London emphasize the importance of current revisions to the EU anti-money-laundering directive. She was responding to an investigation into fictitious companies registered in London that had processed millions of pounds worth of laundered money from operations run by Russian criminals with links to the Russian government [1]. She says the revelations show the need for national governments to assume their responsibility in eradicating existing money laundering routes. Molly Scott Cato said:

"The European Parliament has been clear in its proposal to change the rules governing financial transactions and crack down on such blatant money laundering. The proposals are currently being negotiated between the Parliament, the Commission and the Council and we must ensure that the Parliament's proposal to create a public register of beneficial ownership in each member state is not watered down by national governments in the Council. Our proposal would force banks to make additional checks for suspicious clients and would have helped to prevent the 'global laundromat'.

"We see again just how important binding rules are for all sectors. This kind of corrupt activity is only made possible by the existence of shell companies and phantom firms. The public register we are proposing would make it impossible for the clients of these companies to stay anonymous. They are the ultimate beneficial owner and their identity must be made public."

The UK government has so far resisted public registers of trusts, arguing that individuals and companies deserve to have personal or confidential privacy. Dr Scott Cato concluded:

"The fact that the money laundering was focused on London should ring alarm bells in the context of threats from the Chancellor that Brexit may lead to a race to the bottom on tax standards. Arguments about privacy cannot be used to defend the laundering of money by criminals and we must ensure that the UK

meets the highest EU standards following its exit from the bloc.”

Notes

[1]

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/20/british-banks-handled-vast-sums-of-laundered-russian-money?>

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[Press release: Ruthless fly-tipper jailed](#)

A fly-tipper who left a trail of waste across the Devon countryside was finally brought to justice today when he was sentenced to 20 months in prison.

Martin McDonagh, 23, failed to turn up at Plymouth Crown Court and was made the subject of a European Arrest Warrant following the sentencing hearing. Judge Ian Lawrie described him as a ‘persistent offender who showed a ruthless determination to dump waste wherever it suited.’

McDonagh, who is believed to have fled to the Republic of Ireland, was also ordered to pay a total of £7,000 costs for illegally depositing commercial and household waste at numerous sites in South and West Devon. The court also issued a Criminal Behaviour Order that prohibits McDonagh from being involved in any business enterprise involving the collection, carrying or transport of waste.

The van used during his crime spree was seized and destroyed by the Environment Agency. It is the first time, in the South West, that the agency has ordered the destruction of a vehicle used to commit waste crimes.

The defendant was caught following a joint investigation led by the Environment Agency, with support from Teignbridge District Council, Plymouth City Council, West Devon District Council, South Hams District Council and Devon and Cornwall Police.

Adrian Evans, senior environment crime officer for the Devon and Cornwall area, said:

This case serves as a reminder for people to be vigilant when

transferring waste for disposal. Any person who collects and disposes of commercial or household waste must be a registered waste carrier, authorised by the Environment Agency.

Everyone has a duty of care to ensure their waste is disposed of safely and doesn't harm the environment. You should ask to see an operator's waste carrier licence and whether your waste is being taken to an authorised site. Do not let your waste be removed if you are in any doubt. These simple steps can stop rogue fly-tippers in their tracks.

The illegal disposal of waste in the countryside and local beauty spots causes annoyance and upset to local people and visitors. The serial fly-tipper in this case was caught as a result of agencies working closely together, sharing intelligence and resources to protect our environment.

McDonagh cold-called people across Devon offering to take waste away for cash. He told them the waste would be taken to a local tip, but instead he dumped it in the surrounding countryside, including local beauty spots.

Several witnesses said they felt pressured into giving him their waste. One woman, who was at home with a sick child, described the defendant as 'extremely pushy' and said she felt 'increasingly uneasy'. She only agreed to pay for him to take her waste to 'get rid of him'.

Another householder, in Exeter, became suspicious and told McDonagh she didn't want him to fly-tip her waste. McDonagh laughed and replied, 'of course not.'

Sometimes the defendant would ask for more cash after he'd loaded waste onto his van. One woman paid him £75. He returned after she had done some more clearing and tidying of her property and asked for £125 to take the rest of the waste claiming he was 'out of pocket' for the first lot he'd taken to the tip.

Victims of his scam were traced using documents and paperwork found in the fly-tipped waste. Most said they'd been approached by a man driving a 'tatty' blue van.

Up to 40 bags of mixed household waste were deposited at a time at numerous locations. Teignbridge sites included a car park on Little Haldon, a council gravel store off Greenway Lane in Ashcombe, a compound at Teignmouth Golf Club, a bus stop on the A381 near Ware Farm, an unclassified road near Shaldon and beside a road junction in Newton Abbot.

McDonagh also dumped waste at Cold Harbour Cross in the South Hams, a car park on the A386 near Clearbrook and at Calisham Cross in West Devon. The offences were committed over a 12-month period from July 2015.

The defendant was paid between £50 and £400 to remove waste – always in cash. He also offered other services including roofing, decking and power washing.

In August 2015, McDonagh was seen transferring concrete rubble from his Ford Transit van to a similar van parked nearby in Lower Brimley Road, Teignmouth. Teignbridge District Council decided to remove the second vehicle after it was found to have been abandoned.

However, a contractor hired to remove the van was unable to take the vehicle away after he saw what he believed to be asbestos in the back, along with other waste. Police closed Lower Brimley Road for a day while specialist contractors decontaminated the abandoned van. Subsequent analysis of the waste confirmed the presence of asbestos. The vehicle was later destroyed.

Councillor Roger Croad, Devon County Council's Cabinet Member for the Environment, said:

The high level of co-operation between the different agencies and councils involved in this investigation was critical in bringing this offender to justice. The Devon and Somerset Trading Standards Service will continue to do all it can to protect residents and legitimate local businesses from such illegal trading activities.

Councillor Sylvia Russell, Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing at Teignbridge District Council, said:

This is a great outcome for taxpayers and involved a tremendous amount of effort by investigating officers. Tackling the scourge of fly-tipping is a top priority for Teignbridge Council, which works hard to protect the environment. Dealing with fly-tipping is costly, time consuming, frustrating for law-abiding citizens and wholly avoidable. We will continue to work with the Environment Agency and our partners to find out who is responsible so we can prosecute.

Councillor Rufus Gilbert, South Hams District Council's Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services, said:

We are taking a very robust line on fly-tipping in the South Hams and have issued 13 fixed penalty notices against offenders. We are delighted that these cases are now coming to court. I assure you, we will continue whenever possible to prosecute future offenders.

Councillor Robert Sampson, West Devon Borough Council's Lead Member for Commercial Services, said:

It is crucial fly-tippers are traced and prosecuted for the damage they do to our countryside. This case shows what can be achieved by working closely with our partners.

At an earlier hearing, McDonagh, of Pemros Road, St Budeaux, Plymouth, pleaded guilty to 2 offences under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, of illegally depositing controlled waste at various sites across Devon. He also pleaded guilty to an offence under the Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989, of transporting controlled waste without being registered as a waste carrier.

The second offence under the Environmental Protection Act was for depositing building waste (including asbestos) at Lower Brimley Road, Teignmouth on 9 July, 2016 in a manner likely to cause pollution or harm to human health.

Judge Lawrie said McDonagh would have faced a 2-year prison sentence had he not submitted a guilty plea. Upon issuing the arrest warrant Judge Lawrie said, 'bring him back before the court.'

Members of the public can report waste crime by calling the Environment Agency's free 24-hour hotline 0800 80 70 60 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. [Find further information on waste collection.](#)

Press release: Government Ministers visiting Wales as part of Industrial Strategy engagement programme

- Ministers visiting sites across Wales to explain how plans for a modern Industrial Strategy will benefit Wales.
- Business Secretary Greg Clark to be joined by Wales Secretary Alun Cairns at General Electric (GE) Aviation to tour production line and meet staff.
- Engagement will be followed by an evening reception with leading Welsh businesses and organisations in Cardiff.

The Government's engagement programme for its Industrial Strategy continues today, with Ministers set to meet with universities, companies, and workers in Wales to hear their views on how to get the economy firing all cylinders.

Business Secretary Greg Clark and Wales Secretary Alun Cairns will visit General Electric (GE) Aviation in Cardiff to meet with production staff and management, before touring the plant to see the world-class services GE offers to airlines around the world.

Greg Clark, Alun Cairns and Business Ministers will then host an evening reception at Tramshed Tech in Cardiff with Welsh businesses, trade groups and local leaders, discussing the views of the Welsh business community on the priorities for a modern Industrial Strategy.

Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark said:

We recognise no two places in the UK are the same with each place having its own unique identity and strengths.

Through our modern Industrial Strategy we plan to build on these strengths in fields such as aerospace, technology and life sciences, to make Wales one of the most competitive areas in the UK to start and grow a business.

We launched our strategy as a Green Paper because we want this to be a conversation with businesses and employees. Today my ministerial team and I are visiting Wales to discuss how the Government can work with business and academia to deliver a high-skill economy, prepared for the future.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

The UK Government's modern industrial strategy is a plan for everyone. Wales has a strong competitive economy and by pulling together we can build on our strength to grow key sectors and business in Wales.

We need to ensure people throughout Wales benefit from the creation of a highly skilled and strong workforce; this is what the industrial strategy sets out to do.

Universities and Science Minister Jo Johnson is visiting world-leading engineering and scientific technology company, Renishaw Plc, while Lord Prior of Brampton is visiting a Tata Steel plant in Shotton and the military aerospace facility, Raytheon.

Climate Change and Industry Minister Nick Hurd is going to the Liberty Steel plant in Newport and sustainable cement manufacturer Cenin Cement in Bridgend.

Small Business and Consumer Minister Margot James will be visiting a leading microbrewery, Tiny Rebels Brewery, to find out more about its recent export successes, before visiting the largest animation production company in Wales, Cloth Cat Animation. Margot will then be part of a creative industries roundtable on the Industrial Strategy, with representatives from the creative industry in Wales.

In its Green Paper, Building our Industrial Strategy, the Government has outlined ten key pillars of focus to be discussed as part of a 12 week consultation period, inviting contributions from industries, businesses, local groups and workers across Wales.

With a clear ambition of creating an economy that works for everyone, the

Green Paper contains a number of proposed announcements set to benefit the Welsh regions such as:

- The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund and foundation of UKRI, creating new opportunities for Wales' world class universities to bid for UK Government funding.
- Recognising the excellence in research and innovation that exists across the UK, and investing an additional £4.7 billion by 2020-21.
- Investing in digital infrastructure, which has for too long been a barrier to economic growth across Wales.
- Finding a sustainable way to support energy intensive industries such as steel with energy costs.

The Government has issued an open invitation to industries, businesses and local groups across Wales to visit the GOV.UK website and help set the priorities for a modern Industrial Strategy. The consultation period runs for 12 weeks after which the Government will consider responses before publishing a White Paper later in the year.

Notes to Editors

Industrial Strategy pillars

The Green Paper seeks views from Wales on how the Government can refine its vision to help the UK economy meet future challenges and opportunities. The 10 pillars which the Green Paper seeks feedback on are:

- Investing in science, research and innovation – we must become a more innovative economy and do more to commercialise our world-leading science base to drive growth across the UK.
- Developing skills – we must help people and businesses to thrive by: ensuring everyone has the basic skills needed in a modern economy; building a new system of technical education to benefit the half of young people who do not go to university; boosting STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) skills, digital skills and numeracy; and raising skill levels in lagging areas.
- Upgrading infrastructure – we must upgrade our standards of performance on digital, energy, transport, water and flood defence infrastructure, and better align central government infrastructure investment with local growth priorities.
- Supporting businesses to start and grow – we must ensure that businesses across the UK can access the finance and management skills they need to grow; and we must create the right conditions for companies to invest for the long term.
- Improving procurement – we must use strategic government procurement to drive innovation and enable the development of UK supply chains.
- Encouraging trade and inward investment – government policy can help boost productivity and growth across our economy, including by increasing competition and helping to bring new ways of doing things to the UK.
- Delivering affordable energy and clean growth – we need to keep costs down for businesses, and secure the economic benefits of the transition

to a low carbon economy.

- Cultivating world-leading sectors – we must build on our areas of competitive advantage, and help new sectors to flourish, in many cases challenging existing institutions and incumbents.
- Driving growth across the whole country – we will create a framework to build on the particular strengths of different places and address factors that hold places back – whether it is investing in key infrastructure projects to encourage growth, increasing skill levels, or backing local innovation strengths.
- Creating the right institutions to bring together sectors and places – we will consider the best structures to support people, industries and places. In some places and sectors there may be missing institutions which we could create, or existing ones we could strengthen, be they local civic or educational institutions, trade associations or financial networks.

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy brings together the responsibilities for business, industrial strategy, science, innovation, energy, and climate change. The Department is responsible for developing and delivering the Government's vision for an ambitious industrial strategy, and continuing to ensure that the UK remains at the leading edge of science, research and innovation. The Department leads the Government's relationship with business, and is responsible for improving corporate governance and securing better outcomes for consumers. We also make sure that the UK has secure energy supplies that are reliable, affordable and clean and take action to tackle climate change, working in partnership with the business community.

Green Party: Galloway's a burnt out Brexitier – only Greens offer real alternative in Gorton



Green Party

The Green Party has responded to news George Galloway will stand in the Manchester Gorton by-election saying he offers the constituency nothing but an “overinflated ego”.

Jonathan Bartley, whose party placed second in Gorton in the 2015 General Election [1], said only the Greens give Gorton “a real alternative to the status quo”.

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

“George Galloway is a burnt out Brexiteer who offers nothing but an overinflated ego to the people of Manchester Gorton. Of course people want a real alternative to the status quo – that’s why the Green Party polled second in Gorton last time and why we got more than five times more votes than him in the London Mayoral election.

“We are the only party who can deliver a real alternative for Gorton and we will fight to make sure this constituency is not left behind or overlooked.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/2016/london/results>

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[News story: Reduced regulation of English social housing providers: registration requirements](#)

When a private registered provider (such as a housing association) applies to be registered on or after 6 April 2017, we will no longer require them to certify their status.

When a disposal made by a private registered provider on or after 6 April is lodged for registration, the provider will no longer need to comply with some restrictions in the register.

These changes come into force on 6 April 2017 when the Housing and Planning Act 2016 amends the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.

Please note we will update relevant [practice guides](#) on 6 April.

[The Housing and Planning Act 2016 \(Commencement No.4 and Transitional Provisions\) Regulations 2017](#) (the TP Regulations) brings section 92 of, and Schedule 4 to the Housing and Planning Act 2016 (the 2016 Act) into force on 6 April 2017 reducing the regulatory requirements for private registered providers (mainly housing associations) in England.

Alongside this, the [Housing and Planning Act 2016 \(Consequential Provisions\) \(England\) Regulations 2017](#) (the CP Regulations) amend section 183A and four of the standard forms of restrictions in Schedule 4 to the Land Registration Rules 2003.

Private registered providers applying to be registered as proprietor of a registered estate or charge in England on or after 6 April 2017 will no longer need to provide us with a certificate as to their status. This requirement, which will no longer appear as [paragraph \(1A\) of rule 183A of the Land Registration Rules 2003](#), was designed to help us ensure we entered the appropriate form of restriction in the register. We will no longer need this information after 6 April, because the Regulator of Social Housing's disposal consent regime in relation to private registered providers is being repealed (by section 92 of, and Schedule 4 to the 2016 Act). Rule 183A (1A) of the Land Registration Rules 2003 is being repealed by the CP Regulations.