

# Brexit bill: Green MEPs blast MPs for failing to stand up for Parliamentary democracy



# Green Party

9 February 2017

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UK Green MEPs, Molly Scott Cato, Jean Lambert, and Keith Taylor have issued a stinging condemnation of British MPs after Theresa May's Brexit bill denying Parliament any real say in the process [sailed through the Commons](#).

The Prime Minister rejected calls for MPs to have a meaningful role in shaping the proposed divorce deal. The government, instead, confirmed that the parliamentarians elected to represent the British and Northern Irish people will only be offered a 'take it or leave it' vote on the final deal.

UK Green MEPs, who will get an opportunity to play a part in the EU's negotiating process and cast a significant vote on the final terms of the deal, hit out at the Government for undermining the sovereignty of the UK Parliament.

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

"I am delighted that 122 MPs voted against the Brexit bill. With Labour, Lib Dem, SNP, and Plaid Cymru MPs joining Green MP Caroline Lucas to reject the Bill unamended, we have seen a progressive alliance against the government's plans for an extreme Brexit.

However, while the government is moving us towards the hard Brexit cliff edge, it is Labour that seems willing to push us off. The Party has shown

itself hopelessly divided and the failure to oppose the government on this the most critical of issues has played straight into the hands of the Tory Right.

Greens have been clear throughout: we cannot support triggering a process that will see the UK leave the single market and customs union and threatens to turn us into Europe's biggest tax haven. We need clear guarantees on worker and consumer rights and assurances there will be no weakening of environmental protections."

Jean Lambert, the Green MEP for London, said:

"It's outrageous that MPs appear grateful to be offered a vote on the final deal, rather than demanding this as a Parliamentary right. How bizarre that, as an MEP, I am guaranteed a right to vote on this but my MP has to plead for the privilege. And if my elected representative in UK Parliament has to plead, what say will the public get? The sidelining of Parliament and the British people is unacceptable.

The UK Parliament has chosen to set out little clear guidance for the Government on content or process: on what basis will MPs judge the final deal?"

Keith Taylor, the Green MEP for the South East and a plaintiff in so-called '[Dublin Case](#)', said:

"Theresa May has justified her riding roughshod over Parliamentary democracy by claiming the British people have united to back Brexit. They haven't. Far from it. The mandate for an extreme Brexit is non-existent. According to the [latest polls](#), just 39% of the British public support the Prime Minister's vision of an extreme Brexit. Meanwhile, 48% of people want Britain to either remain a member of the EU or, at least, maintain a close relationship with our European neighbours.

Yet the Government has confirmed that it will only offer MPs a Hobson's choice: the UK either leaves the single market and negotiates a new deal with the EU or ends up with no deal at all, in which case the Government promises to make the country a tax haven outside Europe.

I know we can do better than this. Which is why I am fighting in the courts for the British people to be given the choice they are being denied. The EU referendum should have been the start of a democratic process, not the end of one. As Greens, we believe the British people should have the final say on the Brexit deal, once it is clear what the outcome of the negotiations are."

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## **Statement to Parliament: Commercial spaceflight**

We intend to publish a draft spaceflight bill later this month, dedicated to commercial spaceflight in the UK. This legislation will be fundamental to enabling small-satellite launches and sub-orbital flights from the UK, ensuring the UK is well placed to take advantage of a growing global market. The government's intention is to introduce this Bill formally early in the next session, following a period of scrutiny and engagement with industry and other interest groups.

The space sector is vital to the future of the UK economy, with a strong record of creating high-value jobs and generating wealth across the country. To help the creation of the space launch market in the UK, the [UK Space Agency](#) is inviting commercial space consortia to apply for grant funding to take the action that will make our ambitions a reality.

Together, the proposed legislation and grant funding announced today will have the potential to enable [commercial spaceflight](#) from a UK spaceport by 2020.

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## **Press release: Training for the Energy Sector discussed during college visit**

The minister will be updated by Dafydd Evans, CEO Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and Dr Ian Rees, Grŵp Executive Director Business Development on how the college is progressing in its mission to ensure local people are equipped with the skills to benefit from opportunities in the Energy Sector.

The update will be followed by a tour of the college's Construction and Energy Centres and an energy sector round table involving Bangor University, Snowdonia Enterprise Zone and Orthios Eco Parks before the minister moves on to the Wylfa Newydd Site.

A myriad of opportunities are expected to come to Anglesey in wake of the anticipated Wylfa Newydd Nuclear Power station and other energy based projects, such as wave power and a biomass plant at the former Anglesey Aluminium site.

A likely topic of conversation during the visit is the work already undertaken with Horizon Nuclear Power.

Just this week in a launch event at Coleg Menai (06/02/2017) Horizon Nuclear Power announced that they would recruit another 12 Apprentices to join their training scheme, bringing the number of Horizon Nuclear Apprentices already in training to 22.

The college has also submitted a planning application for the development of its Llangefni campus that would see college's Engineering provision relocated to a new £15m Engineering Training Centre in Llangefni.

We look forward to a constructive meeting this morning at Llangefni with Guto. It is essential we update our representatives in Westminster on the work that's being done here in North West Wales to develop Engineering and other Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths skills. With Brexit looming large it's essential that we have these talks now so that we can prepare for the future.

**Guto Bebb, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Wales, said:**

I'm delighted to visit Coleg Menai and Wylfa today to see the innovative technology that is set to make a positive impact to Anglesey's economy. It's important to hear from Welsh institutions and businesses about the issues and opportunities that they face following Brexit, and continue the conversations that we've been holding throughout the summer.

The UK's Industrial Strategy provides a joined up approach to policy, aiming to deliver a highly skilled and competitive economy that benefits people right across the country. Coleg Menai is a fantastic example of an institution in the North West of Wales working to ensure that young people have the essential employability skills for the global market and to work in an industry that is being developed within their local area.

**Greg Evans, Safety & Generation Director at Horizon said:**

Coleg Menai and Horizon have already shown how we will work together through paving the way for the new Engineering Training Centre and providing Horizon apprenticeship opportunities for local young people. We will continue to move forward in partnership, with the active support of both the UK and Welsh Governments, to deliver the huge benefits Wylfa Newydd will bring for Anglesey and North Wales for many decades.

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# Press release: The Foreign Secretary congratulates President Farmajo on his victory in the Somali presidential elections

From:

First published:

8 February 2017

Part of:

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson looks forward to meeting newly elected Somali President and working with him on shared priorities.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

I congratulate Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo on his election as President of the Federal Republic of Somalia. Somalia has made huge progress in its recovery from two decades of civil war, but significant challenges remain that President Farmajo will need to address.

Immediate attention is needed to reduce the risk of famine and improve security, including reforming the Somali security sector, and I look forward to meeting President Farmajo and working with him on these issues.

The UK remains committed to supporting the Somali people – that is why we are hosting a major international conference on Somalia in London this year. The conference will set out our shared objectives and commitments on key issues such as security, constitutional reform, elections and economic recovery. With President Farmajo and the UN, I look forward to agreeing a new partnership between Somalia and the international community.

This is a crucial opportunity to accelerate progress and agree priorities that will help secure a brighter future for Somalia and

its people.

## Further information

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# [Press release: UK Minister condemns Russia's Domestic Violence law](#)

From:

First published:

8 February 2017

Russia's new legislation sends the wrong message about tackling violence against women and children

On 7 February the Russian Government passed into law an amendment which decriminalises domestic violence in Russia. It reduces 'battery within the family' from a criminal to an administrative offence, with weaker sanctions for offenders.

Baroness Anelay, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Human Rights and the Prime Minister's Special Representative for Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict said:

It is deeply disappointing that Russia has introduced new legislation decriminalising domestic violence. This sends the wrong message about the Russian authorities' commitment to tackling violence in the home. Victims of domestic violence, which are most often women and children, need more protection, not less.

The UK is committed to addressing domestic violence, and particularly violence against women and girls at home and overseas. Globally, one in three women will experience physical or sexual violence at some point in her lifetime. A 2008 report issued by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggest 14,000 women die annually at the hands of husbands or other relatives' and that domestic violence occurs in one in four Russian families.

Tackling violence; promoting gender equality; and empowering all women and girls are essential to defending human rights. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is supporting women's rights projects across 28 countries with a total projected spend of more than £3.5 million between 2016 and 2018.

## Further information