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Green Party

22 March 2018

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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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Green MEP secures animal protections in European Brexit resolution



Green Party

14 March 2018

“As the Green Party’s animals spokesperson, I am delighted to have helped secure protections in the resolution for the environment, climate change, food safety and animal health and welfare safeguards” – Keith Taylor MEP

The European Parliament has today overwhelmingly approved a Resolution on the framework of the future relationship between the EU and UK, post-Brexit (544-110-51). This comes ahead of the negotiations on the long-term relationship, where the Parliament will have a final say.

The Resolution [1] clearly sets out the conditions that the Parliament needs to see in any final deal in order for MEPs to grant their approval. Crucially, thanks to the efforts of Keith Taylor MEP, Members of the European Parliament’s Animal Welfare Intergroup, and the Eurogroup for Animals, the Resolution contains strong provisions on animal welfare, namely:

- A requirement for the UK to adhere to animal health and welfare rules (as a minimum) in order to create a level playing field;
- that access to the EU market on agricultural products will be conditional on compliance with EU animal welfare standards, and;
- that there should be adequate preparedness for agricultural products – ensuring that even in the event of ‘no deal’, there will be sufficient plans in place to ensure tractability and guarantee the origin of animal-based products to ensure compliance with animal welfare rules.

Welcoming the measures contained in the European Parliament’s Resolution today, Keith Taylor MEP, Vice President of the Animal Welfare Intergroup and the Green Party’s animals spokesperson, said:

“The resolution supported by the overwhelming majority of MEPs today will ensure that any future EU-UK relationship will provide a level playing field on issues such as workers’ rights, consumer protection, public health, the fight against tax evasion and avoidance, data protection and privacy and animal welfare standards.”

“As the Green Party’s animals spokesperson, I am delighted to have helped secure protections in the resolution for the environment, climate change, food safety, and animal health and welfare safeguards.”

The senior Green politician, who published an [‘Animals and Brexit’ impact assessment report](#) earlier this month [2], added:

“The health and welfare of farmed animals in the UK is under threat, as my new ‘Animals and Brexit’ report makes crystal clear. Shockingly, Ministers have indicated a [readiness to sacrifice farmed animals on the altar of free trade](#) post-Brexit. A move which is [opposed by farmers, animal welfare advocates](#) and the [93% of UK consumers](#) who want to see vital EU safeguards maintained.”

“The clamour for the maintenance and strengthening of EU welfare protections in UK, however, appears to have had little effect on a Tory Government. The International Trade Secretary Liam Fox, in particular, has been keen to brandish its willingness to make trade agreements with countries around the world that have [far lower standards of animal welfare](#), and that threaten to undercut higher welfare producers in the UK.”

“At the same time, EU citizens, who support higher animal welfare protections across the board, are clear they do not want European standards to be endangered or undermined in any way post-Brexit. This is why animal advocates from across Europe should welcome today’s resolution, which at the very least seeks to ensure that the EU standards will act as a basis for the future relationship’.”

Mr Taylor concluded:

“Compassion for animals is deep within the Green Party’s DNA. As an MEP, I have fought hard to include protecting animal welfare standards in today’s Brexit resolution. As the Greens animals spokesperson, I pledge to continue standing side by side with animal advocates and campaigners in the fight to protect animals post-Brexit.”

[1] www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=B8-2018-0135&language=EN

[2] <https://www.scribd.com/document/372830758/Animals-and-Brexit-Keith-Taylor-MEP>

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Green Party responds to Kirby Misperton fracking delay



Green Party

8 March 2018

The Green Party has responded to news that fracking in Kirby Misperton has been delayed until the Autumn [1].

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

“Fracking is dying and being kept on life support but the reality is that it is on its way out. The companies pursuing it are plagued by desperation and incompetence as with every day that passes fracking shows fewer and fewer signs that it can resurrect itself from its deathbed ever deliver what the country needs.

“For this Government to keep throwing money at this corpse of an industry when there are cheaper, cleaner, more effective alternatives defies common sense. Instead we should be investing in making Britain a world leader in the renewable energy of the future.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/mar/07/fracking-delayed-north-yorkshire-site-autumn-third-energy>

regularly

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Green Party calls on Government to ring fence funding for women's refuges



Green Party

4 March 2018

*** Amelia Womack, Green deputy leader, makes after first speaking out about her own experience of domestic abuse last year**

*** Womack: "The Government is removing women's final safety net in their hour of greatest need"**

The Green Party has criticised the Government for "placing women's lives in danger" with its plans to change funding for refuges [1].

Amelia Womack, deputy leader of the Green Party, will call on the Government to ring-fence funding for refuges and other forms of short-term supported housing in the welfare system.

Womack will make the call in her speech to Green Party Spring Conference in Bournemouth today [2], after first speaking out about her own experiences of domestic abuse in June last year [3].

Amelia Womack, deputy leader of the Green Party, is expected to say:

"This Government claims to care about women – yet it's placing their lives in danger with plans to remove refuges from the welfare system. Removing women's final safety net when they are in their hour of greatest need.

"This is a matter of life and death. The Government must prove it is serious about women's safety and ring-fence funding for refuges."

At Autumn Conference in October last year Womack launched the Green Party's campaign to make misogyny a hate crime, which has since gathered cross-party support [4].

Womack is expected to say:

"When I shared my experience of domestic violence for the first time last year, I never imagined I'd be part of starting what quickly became such a defining and extraordinary moment in the story of women.

“From MeToo to TimesUp, it feels like we’re hitting a tipping point that none of us saw coming this time last year. I’m so proud to have played a small part in giving other women the confidence to come forward and speak out about their experiences of misogyny.

“From the sweeping red walkways of Hollywood premieres to the corridors of the House of Commons, the carpets things have been swept under are now well and truly being shaken out.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/nov/26/womens-lives-at-risk-funding-changes-refuges-charities>
2. Green Party Spring Conference
The Green Party Spring Conference will see members from across the country come together to hear from the party’s leaders, vote on policy and take part in discussion and debate on topics from Brexit to climate change.
 - * Leaders’ speech by Jonathan Bartley and Caroline Lucas: Saturday 3 March, 2pm
 - * Deputy Leaders speech by Amelia Womack: Sunday 4th March, 3pm, via Facebook Live from March4Women in London
 - * Location: Bournemouth International Centre, Exeter Rd, Bournemouth, BH2 5BH
3. <https://www.stylist.co.uk/people/amelia-womack-green-party-manifesto-domestic-violence-abuse-interview/34153>
4. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/amber-rudd-misogyny-hate-crime-change-law-prejudice-women-home-secretary-greens-mps-charities-a8196786.html>

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