

Keith Taylor MEP: 'We've been here before with the Tories, they must deliver on their promises this time'



Green Party

6 October 2017

Keith Taylor MEP, the Green Party's Animals Spokesperson, has given a cautious welcome to the announcement that the UK government is [considering restricting the ivory trade](#).

Mr. Taylor was one of the driving forces behind the [European Parliament's resolution](#), passed in March, calling for an EU-wide ban on the ivory and rhinoceros horn trade.

The senior Green politician was also one of the most [vocal critics](#) of the Conservative Party's decision to drop a commitment to an ivory ban from its June manifesto.

The UK is currently the [world's leading exporter of ivory carvings and 'antiques'](#). The former Environment Secretary, Andrea Leadsom, [previously promised](#) a limited ban on the sales of ivory produced after 1947 but a neither follow-up consultation or policy ever materialised.

The proposals announced by the Environment Secretary, Michael Gove, include a ban on the sale of ivory produced before 1947 but still include a series of exemptions.

Responding to the announcement, Keith Taylor MEP, a member of the European Parliament's Environment Committee and Vice President of the Animal Welfare Intergroup, said:

"Any moves to restrict the squalid ivory trade should be welcomed; that Britain is the world's largest exporter is a stain on our national conscience. The trade in so-called legal ivory is stimulating the demand for the product and fuelling the mindless and brutal killing of elephants and rhinos across Africa."

"Animal welfare advocates aren't holding our breath though; we've been here before with the Tories. It was only last year that Gove's predecessor announced, more limited, restrictions on the ivory trade that failed to

materialise – and it has long been an unfulfilled Conservative Party manifesto promise. It has appeared in most Tory manifestos apart from the last – from which it was quietly dropped after lobbying from the antiques trade.”

“This latest announcement thankfully goes further than the previous plan – which never materialised – by promising to ban the trade in pre-1947 ivory. However, the proposals still include a number of loopholes and exemptions that will, undoubtedly, be exploited.”

“Should Gove’s plans actually make it to the consultation stage this time around, and I hope they do, Greens will be fighting for a complete and comprehensive ban. The brutal and needless slaughter of upwards of 35,000 elephants and 1,000 rhinos every year must be stopped.”

Britain is set to host a [major conference on the illegal wildlife trade in 2018](#).

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[Green MEPs respond to overwhelming vote of support for resolution on Brexit](#)



Green Party

3 October 2017

The UK's Green MEPs have responded to today's overwhelming vote in favour of a resolution on Brexit in the European Parliament [1]. Of 678 MEPs present, 82% voted for the resolution, with only 14% voting against and 4% abstaining. A number of amendments tabled by UKIP were all rejected.

Jean Lambert, Green MEP for London, [said](#):

“This level of unity in the European Parliament both between political groups and also with the other EU institutions is unprecedented. MEPs have sent a clear message that in all the three key areas of citizens’ rights, a financial settlement and the question of the Irish border there has been insufficient progress for talks to move on to the next phase.”

Keith Taylor, Green MEP for the South East, said:

“The European Union is a family founded on the principle of peace and solidarity and in that vein, we’ve seen the European Parliament come together today to show unshakeable unity on Brexit – yet again.

“MEPs are in wide agreement about the Tory government’s lack of progress in the Brexit negotiations. The split cabinet might have just about agreed to kick the Brexit can down the road, with a two-year transition, but there’s still no coherent plan and the ‘cake and eat it’ approach is very much in evidence – they’re in la-la land while the EU27 are in the real world.”

Speaking in a debate ahead of today’s vote [2], Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West, said:

“Theresa May said that the United Kingdom has never felt totally at home in the European Union. Personally, I have never felt less at home in the UK since the vote to leave the EU.

“Such a sentiment is echoed by many people: by the majority of young people who still consider themselves European; by people living in our diverse and multicultural cities; and, of course, by those European citizens who have chosen, for reasons of love, work or study, to make the UK their home.

“If Brexit is a divorce then we are the children of the divorce and the process is a painful and troubling one.”

Ends

Notes

[1]

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/brexit-negotiations-talks-latest-sufficient-progress-not-made-european-parliament-eu-leaders-theresa-a7980351.html>

[2] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5tlZlvQ4s0>

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Green Party: Universal credit an assault on Britain's most vulnerable



Green Party

2 October 2017

The Green Party has criticised the Government's decision to press ahead with the roll out of Universal Credit, which it branded an "ill-conceived, counter-productive assault on Britain's most vulnerable".

Responding to the announcement by David Gauke [1], Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, urged the Government to reconsider – and investigate a pilot of a Universal Basic Income instead.

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

"Universal Credit is an ill-conceived, counter-productive assault on Britain's most vulnerable. The Work and Pensions secretary may think it's working, but the reality is different for the families left without food because of lost benefits and delayed payments.

"In pressing ahead with the scheme the Government has shown a complete disregard for the pain it is inflicting, and I urge it to reconsider the roll out. Instead it should pilot a Universal Basic Income, which would truly eliminate the poverty trap."

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/oct/02/heidi-allen-tory-mp-theresa-may-universal-credit>

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[Greens respond to Catalonia situation](#)



Green Party

2 October 2017

The Green Party has responded to the situation in Catalonia where police used violence against voters casting ballots in a referendum on independence.

Jonathan Bartley and Caroline Lucas, co-leaders of the Green Party, said:

“The horrifying police violence in Catalonia is a shameful stain on Rajoy’s government. The people of Catalonia must be able to peacefully assert their wishes for their future without being subjected to repression and attacks.

“Regardless of the case for or against independence, the Spanish Government must uphold the right to democracy and act to ensure people’s safety is its first priority, and the EU must work with Spain to find a peaceful and democratic solution going forwards.

“Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson’s failure to condemn the violence unequivocally is also wholly unacceptable and the UK government must use its voice to stand up against violence.”

Molly Scott Cato MEP, Green Party Europe spokesperson, said:

“The EU has a proud history of spreading democracy in the Mediterranean and Central Europe. As democratic norms come under stress in the wake of the financial crisis and the rise of nationalism it is vital that European leaders – and the EU institutions – continue to champion and defend the principles of democratic engagement and self-determination.

“We call on heads of state and the European Commission to call on both sides to step back from the brink and play a mediating role in negotiating a solution that works for the people of Catalonia and the people of Spain.”

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Green Party urges Chester University to abandon fracking research centre



Green Party

29 September 2017

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley has written to the Vice-Chancellor of Chester University urging him to drop plans to build a controversial new fracking centre at the university [1].

Warning that the university risks creating a 'white elephant', Bartley has called on the university to instead create a renewable energy centre and become the "research pioneers of the future".

Bartley's letter [2] comes before he joins demonstrators at two fracking sites next week [3]. On Monday he will join protesters at Preston New Road before travelling to Kirby Misperton on Tuesday.

Bartley said:

"The study of fracking should be consigned to the university's History and Archeology Department. The latest research suggests that it is an industry which has little future with mounting evidence that it isn't financially viable.

"Fracking is dirty, dangerous, and undemocratic – being forced upon communities against their will and against their interests. Mounting evidence suggests that it is not financially viable [4].

"With the price of renewable energy falling beyond anyone's expectations and the industry expanding rapidly, this is what research pioneers of the future should be looking at. Instead the university risks building a white elephant."

Notes:

1. <http://www.chesterchronicle.co.uk/news/chester-cheshire-news/fracking-research-centre-near-chester-13673204>

2. Dear Prof Wheeler,

I write to you in the hope that you will consider abandoning current plans to build a new fracking research centre at your university.

The study of fracking should be consigned to the university's History and Archeology Department. The latest research suggests that it is an industry which has little future with mounting evidence that it isn't financially viable.

Specifically:

1. The world has five times more fossil fuels in reserves than we can safely burn and setting up a whole new fossil fuel industry will only add to this problem.
2. Methane gas leakage from fracking threatens to be a considerable contributor to climate change.
3. Solar and wind energy are now cheaper than fossil fuels. We can continue that trend towards a greener, cleaner future but only if investment is being put into renewables, not fossil fuels and fracking. Friends of the Earth has calculated that the UK can move to generating three-quarters of its electricity from renewables by 2030.
4. The amount of reserves of shales gas in the UK remain uncertain whereas there is untapped power in our atmosphere – wind, solar, and wave – that we know exists.

With the price of renewable energy falling beyond anyone's expectations and the industry expanding rapidly, this is what research pioneers of the future should be looking at. Instead the university risks building a white elephant.

Yours,

Jonathan Bartley

Green Party co-leader

3. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-40953427>

4. Jonathan Bartley will be at Preston New Road on Monday from approximately 1.30pm to 3pm. He will be at Kirby Misperton on Tuesday from approximately 10am to 1pm.

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