

This is a significant victory for Parliament, and follows months of concerted pressure from Labour – Starmer

Commenting

on the Government's concession regarding a meaningful vote in Parliament on a final deal to leave the EU, **Keir Starmer, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union** said:

"This is a significant victory for Parliament, and follows months of concerted pressure from Labour.

"Labour has repeatedly said that Parliament must have a meaningful vote on any final Brexit deal – that means MPs are able to vote on the final deal before it is concluded; that the Commons has a debate and vote before the European Parliament does; and that the vote will cover withdrawal from the EU as well as our future relationship with the EU.

"This eleventh hour concession is therefore welcome, but it needs to be firmed up as the Bill progresses through both Houses."

News story: Civil news: delivery of family mediation work from 2018

From:

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Headline intentions document covering mediation work from 2018 published on 7 February 2017.

Our approach to family mediation work from 1 April 2018 is set out in a headline intentions document which is now available – see link below.

The previously published headline intentions document for all other areas of civil legal aid work confirmed that existing family mediation contracts will end on 31 March 2018. This was made available on 20 January 2017 – see link below.

We also explained on 20 January that we would separately publish information giving further details about the way ahead for family mediation work.

The intention is for the delivery of family mediation services to operate under the new 2018 Standard Civil Contract from 1 April 2018.

When will the tender open?

A tender process for these contracts will open in April 2017. All organisations must successfully tender for a contract if they wish to deliver legally aided mediation services from 1 April 2018.

Service delivery remains similar

The government remains committed to family mediation as a key route to helping family disputes avoid court proceedings. So, we will not be making significant changes to the delivery of family mediation services when compared with current contracts.

Quality assurance

We will maintain the quality of mediation services under current contracts but will no longer require family mediation providers to hold the Mediation Quality Mark (MQM).

Instead, the contract will include the key quality standards set out in MQM and will require that mediators and mediation organisations meet the standards set out by the:

- Family Mediation Council
- Family Mediation Standards Board

Further details are provided in the mediation headline intentions document.

Further information

[Civil 2018 contracts tender](#) – to download mediation-specific headline intentions document and headline intentions document for all other areas of civil work

“Brexit and independence are two sides of the same coin”

7 February 2017

Speaking in a debate in the Scottish Parliament today, Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale said that Brexit and independence are two sides of the same coin. Here is the full text of Kez’s speech:

I welcome the chance to speak in today’s debate.

It’s important that this chamber makes its voice heard, although we must accept that ultimately it is for the UK Parliament to have the final say.

Those on the SNP’s benches may not like that, but people in Scotland voted to remain part of the UK and that should be respected.

Labour’s amendment accepts that the UK is leaving the European Union.

There was a UK-wide vote and those of us who backed remain lost.

The strength of our democracy rests on our respect for the will of the people.

Now I am not happy about the result.

I fear what will happen to our nation.

I fear what will happen to EU nationals who have made Britain their home, but who have yet to receive any reassurances about their future.

I fear the impact Brexit will have on our economy, on jobs and on our public finances.

So while I accept that the UK is leaving the European Union, I do not accept the terms Theresa May has set out.

And that’s why I don’t believe article 50 should be triggered right now.

Not when the Tories seem determined to deliver a settlement that will do incalculable damage to the country.

I cannot and will not sign up to Theresa May’s vision of Brexit.

Leave voters didn’t back Brexit to make themselves poorer.

But that is exactly what will happen under the current plans.

Presiding Officer, I want to address another part of our amendment.

That’s the section on SNP plans for another independence referendum.

The only thing worse than Brexit for Scottish jobs and the economy would be independence.

The SNP government's own figures show that being part of the UK is even more important to Scotland than remaining in the EU.

The economic links built up during our 300 year Union are deep and of great benefit to Scotland.

On trade, currency, jobs and so much more – together we are stronger.

As our amendment makes clear, Labour will not support any SNP plan to impose another independence referendum on the people of Scotland.

Our nation is divided enough.

Another referendum would do irreparable damage to the very fabric of communities across Scotland.

The message from a clear majority in September 2014 was that we should remain in the UK.

And the SNP should respect that.

But the reality is that the SNP has only been given the excuse to seek another referendum because of the mess the Conservatives have made of this whole process.

Ruth Davidson never fails to try and tell us that the Union is safe in Conservative hands.

She spends her days straddling tanks and waving a Union flag just to emphasise the security of the realm.

Meanwhile the actions of her own government have exploited the insecurities people feel in their own lives and reopened the divides of the last referendum, despite their apparent willingness to move on from it.

Yet let's look at how the Conservatives have behaved since the independence referendum in 2014.

We had David Cameron's half-baked English votes for English laws plans.

Playing straight into the hands of the Nationalists.

Then there was the 2015 General Election campaign, fully signed up to by Ruth Davidson, which sought to divide our country further by setting Scotland against England.

A gift to the SNP.

And now we have Brexit.

The EU referendum was a device designed entirely to appease the right wing of

the Conservative Party.

Instead of standing his ground, David Cameron capitulated in the hope of buying off a few UKIP votes and the applause of people like David Davis and Liam Fox.

I haven't got time to do to go into the detail of Tory attacks on social security and there multiple attempts to undermine workers' rights – again pouring petrol on the fire for independence.

Time and again the Conservative and Unionist Party has put Scotland's place in the UK at risk.

And yet the Tories have the brass neck to come to this place and claim to be the party of the Union.

Ruth Davidson now finds herself voting for something she knows will damage the UK economy and Scottish job prospects – issues she claimed UK-wide plaudits for following the TV debates.

She does so without a word of regret.

And we wonder why faith in politics and politicians is so low.

I want to conclude, Presiding Officer, by saying this.

I voted to remain in the EU last year for many of the same reasons I voted to stay in the UK in 2014.

Because I reject a narrow nationalist view of the world.

The view that blames something or someone else for our country's problems – whether that's England or Westminster, immigrants or the EU.

Nationalism, an ideology on the rise the world over, is about breaking apart and creating division.

Brexit and independence are two sides of the same coin.

I believe in working together.

In solidarity with our friends and neighbours.

I believe that we can achieve more together than we ever could apart.

I believe in pooling and sharing resources.

Whether that's with the EU to tackle climate change, the refugee crisis or international terrorism.

Or whether that's with the rest of the UK to fund our public services, pay pensions or to grow our economy.

That's what Labour's amendment calls for and I urge members to back it.

MEP warns of 'toxic' legacy for UK if government signs EU-Canada trade deal



Green Party

7 February 2017

As MEPs prepare to vote on whether or not to ratify a controversial trade deal next week, Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West, has warned the UK could find itself in the 'worst of all possible worlds' if the UK sign up to the deal.

The Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) [1] between Canada and the EU has always been opposed by Greens as it seeks to give more power to corporations while putting public services and workers' and consumer rights at risk and threaten environmental regulations.

But now Dr Scott Cato says that a new House of Commons briefing [2] confirms that when the UK leaves the EU, it could be forced to renegotiate its trade agreements with Canada yet still be bound by the treaty for 20 years. She said:

"One of the key reasons Greens have opposed CETA is because of the power this treaty gives to corporations to sue governments over legislation that threatens their profits. If CETA is ratified before the UK exits the EU, we will need to renegotiate our trade agreements with Canada but still be bound by the investor protection provision aspect of this treaty for 20 years. This would mean foreign investors would still have the right to sue the UK government if they feel their businesses have been impacted by new laws or regulations.

"Signing up to CETA is the worst of all possible worlds for the UK. It will take us back to square one on trade negotiations with Canada but trap us in a most toxic element of this treaty. With Brexit looming it is even more critical that all British MEPs vote this dodgy deal down next week in the European Parliament."

[1]

<http://ttip2017.eu/blog/id-12-reasons-the-greenefa-group-are-opposed-to-ceta.html>

[2] <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7492>

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[Press release: Gloucestershire Man ordered to pay £675 for illegally fishing for elvers.](#)

Yesterday (6 February 2017) Paul Ridler, of Betjeman Close, Gloucester pleaded guilty at Gloucestershire Magistrates' Court to one charge of fishing for elvers without the appropriate authorisation.

Mr Ridler was fined £250 and ordered to pay £400 in costs, along with a £25 victim surcharge.

The charge was brought by the Environment Agency contrary to section 27B (1) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

On April 7 2016, Environment Agency officers were patrolling the River Severn at Ashleworth. Officers spoke to two males, Mr Anthony Ridler and Mr Paul Ridler. Anthony Ridler confirmed he had the required authorisation to fish for elvers but Mr Paul Ridler did not have authorisation and would not be fishing.

Later that evening officers returned to find Paul Ridler in wet, muddy waterproofs and gloves with an elver net and empty bucket. Paul Ridler stated he was looking after the net for his brother who was further downstream, and this was the only net they had with them.

Officers located Anthony Ridler who was in the river further downstream with a dip net immersed in water, and confirmed he was fishing alone and indicated he was not aware his brother was using the spare net.

Paul Ridler stated to one of the officers that he was not elvering and it was a "silly mistake, which would not happen again."

Speaking after the case, Carl Salisbury, the Environment Agency officer in charge of the investigation, said:

We will continue to target those who decide to fish illegally without a licence or the correct authorisation and will work with

other enforcement bodies to deal with the theft of fish.

Anyone witnessing illegal fishing incidents in progress can report it directly to the Environment Agency hotline, 0800 80 70 60. Information on illegal fishing and environmental crime can also be reported anonymously to Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.