

Greening Europe

News from Molly Scott Cato,
the first Green MEP for the South West of England and Gibraltar

Autumn 2015

Refugees welcome!



Molly is putting pressure on EU leaders to work together to help refugees.

By a large majority, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the refugee crisis, calling for the creation of a permanent binding scheme for distributing asylum seekers across the EU. This resolution was steered through parliament by Green MEP Ska Keller. The UK has refused to be involved in such a scheme. Molly has been highly vocal on the refugee crisis, rounding on the government for its ineffectual and inhumane response. She says:

"The wave of compassion that has swept through our country in response to this crisis is something that has impressed and moved me. The response by David Cameron and his government on the other hand has been inhumane and has failed to live up to our historically high standards. We are one of the richest and largest countries in the EU yet we are failing to play our part. We should follow Germany's

Keeping up with Molly

There are lots of ways to follow Molly's work:

- Molly's website contains further details on all the stories featured in this newsletter, plus lots more! www.mollymep.org.uk where you can also sign up to fortnightly e-news
- You can follow her parliamentary activities: http://bit.ly/MSC_EP; Twitter: @MollyMEP; Facebook: [Molly Scott Cato MEP](#)

lead by taking a much larger number of refugees and securing safe routes for them to travel. This would also help end the deadly business of refugee smugglers."

Molly's corner

It's more than a year now since I took to the podium after a stressful night at the European Election Count in Poole, Dorset. I was thrilled and proud to have been chosen to represent the people of the South West.

During the past year I have worked and been quoted on issues as wide-ranging as cider and conflict minerals to the impact of the TTIP trade deal on agriculture and EU policy on refugees. The election of a Green MEP has provided a platform for Green thinking and policy in a range of regional and local print media as well as on local and even a few national TV and radio programmes. I have also had the chance to take Green policy into areas where it has never before been represented. I have been able to question the President of the European Central Bank about the possibility of creating money for green investment, and to challenge the Competition Commissioner about the UK government's attack on renewable energy. This has all greatly increased both the influence of and attention being paid to green politics.

My experience of European politics has made clearer than ever that the blockage to further progress both for Green politics and democracy itself in this country, is the absence of a fair voting system. As more and more people reject the narrowness of two-party politics I look forward to keeping up the pressure for a revitalised, pluralist politics. I also look forward to playing a leading role in the campaign to keep us in the European Union.



The Greens | European Free Alliance
in the European Parliament

 **Green Party**
for the common good

Working for social, economic and environmental justice in Europe

Challenging the assault on renewables



Molly has challenged the European Commission over whether recent government changes to wind and solar subsidies and planning regulations breach EU competition law. Molly believes that a decision to impose the Climate Change Levy – an energy tax on non-domestic users – on renewable generators is ‘illogical and punitive’. She also says that greater powers to challenge planning for windfarms is not matched by similar powers to challenge fracking. She questions why subsidies for renewables are being reviewed while huge subsidies for nuclear power continue. She says:

“The government’s misinformed and ideological opposition to renewable technologies is destroying thousands of potential jobs. Member states have the right to choose their energy mix, but Treaty law suggests this must be done within a framework of fair competition. I believe that a deliberate policy of pandering to the fossil fuel and nuclear dinosaur industries is distorting the market and undermining the renewables industry.”

Making it a taxing time for corporations

As a member of the European Parliament’s Special Tax Committee, Molly was part of a delegation of MEPs who visited London in the summer to explore the role played by The City in tax avoidance by corporations. The committee is tasked with making recommendations on clamping down on corporations avoiding taxation.

Molly says:

“Corporations are dodging billions worth in taxes. Meanwhile the government continues to inflict savage cuts to welfare and public services. We should remember that tax, when used strategically, is vital in moving our society towards the sort of future we imagine for our children, a future of sustainability as well as justice. By using tax avoidance strategies and therefore denying governments’ legitimate revenue, corporations are both denying us a better future and helping to fuel the ideology of austerity.”

Parliament vote to end conflict minerals



Molly shows her support for binding rules to cover the whole of the supply chain of minerals

Green MEPS were able to secure a vote for mandatory rules covering the whole of the supply chain of minerals used in electronic devices such as smartphones and tablets. In places like the Congo, armed groups and Congolese military use profits from trading in minerals to finance campaigns of violence against civilians. Molly says:

“The support for the Green proposals should hopefully mean in future people can be reassured that their phones, tablets and other electronic devices will not be helping to finance armed groups and conflicts. Only full transparency on the source of all minerals will end the terror inflicted on so many, which is why support for rules covering the whole supply chain is so welcome.”

Standing up for local communities in the South West

New local currency



Molly with 10,000m champion Jo Pavey at the launch of the Exeter Pound

Molly was a key speaker at the launch of Exeter's own local currency, the Exeter Pound, on the 1st of September. The launch was also attended by European 10,000m champion Jo Pavey, who appears on the £20 note. The Exeter Pound joins other local currencies in the South West, including the Totnes Pound and Bristol Pound. Molly says:

"Every time you spend a local currency you are changing the way the economy works and making a statement against what's wrong with our global economy. It's not a radical, weirdy green thing – it's an eminently sensible and practical way to keep money circulating locally and strengthen the local economy."

Defending a local pint



Molly has been supporting the many small scale producers of cider in the South West. She has challenged the European Commission to continue its excise duty exemption

for such producers. This follows an order from the Commission that the UK government must amend its excise duty scheme which currently exempts small scale cider producers. Molly says:

"Cider production is a key local industry in the South West and such a move threatens the viability of many small scale producers. It's quite clear that small businesses and producers will take the greatest hit from this ruling and it will allow the large corporate producers to further dominate and monopolise the cider market. Ultimately it means threats to jobs and livelihoods and threats to consumers through less variety, choice and lower quality."

Dairy crisis



Molly attending a protest in Brussels organised by the European Milk Board

Molly is deeply alarmed at the scale of the problems facing dairy farmers in the South West and has warned that the rise of mega-dairies will be the inevitable consequence of falling milk prices. She also warned back in April that the industry would face problems following the ending the EU milk quota system. Molly says:

"It was inevitable that we would be again facing a crisis in the dairy industry. In the absence of a more permanent and sustainable solution for the sector, the vicious circle of sinking prices and overproduction was bound to continue. This puts particular strain on the smaller, more sustainable dairy farmers. The sector needs to be reoriented towards sustainable production, rather than continued industrialisation."

Navitus Bay: another renewables victim

Molly has said the decision by the government to block the Navitus Bay wind farm off the coast near Bournemouth is another example of the government's 'ideological obsession against renewable energy'. The scheme would have involved 121 turbines 10 miles off the Dorset coast and generated enough renewable electricity to power 700,000 homes. Molly says:

"Opponents have argued that Navitus Bay would threaten the Jurassic Coast but rising sea levels and storm surges associated with climate change are a far greater threat to this wonderful coastline. This government seems hell-bent on wrecking clean, green, renewable energy projects that can create thousands of new jobs, help us transition quickly to energy security and address our climate emergency."

Green reports

Over the past few months Molly has published two important reports, one looking at the potential for Green energy in the South West, the other looking at the potential for Green money.

The power to transform the South West



The South West can produce in excess of 100% of its energy needs from renewables alone, without the need for dirty fossil fuels or dangerous nuclear. That is the conclusion of a study Molly commissioned through the Resilience Centre, based in Gloucestershire. The report says a renewable energy revolution in the region could create 122, 000 jobs and add over £4bn a year to the South West economy.

A mix of renewable energy resources are identified which could, in combination with energy saving, better-quality homes and improved methods of storage, address concerns about baseload and peaks in demand. The report identifies the potential to exploit as yet untapped resources in the region, particularly tidal power, off-shore wind and geothermal. The report has been launched at several events around the South West including Bristol, Glastonbury, the Forest of Dean and is due to be launched in Exeter and other places soon. Molly says:

“The South West has the best renewable resources in Europe. We can give power back to the people in our region and create our own Western Powerhouse. All that stands in our way, as we have all too clearly witnessed in recent months, is the political will. It is really the only thing that blocks the path to a renewable energy revolution, energy security and a prosperous green future.”

The full report and summary is available on the website: <http://mollymep.org.uk/2015/04/17/power-to-transform/>

Money creation for the common good



A report on ‘Green Quantitative Easing’ concluded that creating ‘Green Money’ can help Europe transition to a sustainable economy. Green QE works in a similar way to conventional QE. It is a mechanism whereby a central bank creates new money to pump into the economy. The difference is that the money created in Green QE is used specifically to boost the green sectors of the economy with the aim of building a more stable, secure, and prosperous Europe. Molly said:

“QE is just a technique to create money and we need to reclaim it for the common good. We need the money we create to be invested in a future we want to see. This public investment will create jobs for the thousands of unemployed across our continent while simultaneously building up our green infrastructure.”

Full report can be downloaded from the website: <http://mollymep.org.uk/2015/06/15/green-money/>

Contact details for Molly’s team:

Grace Murray, Parliamentary Assistant
molly.scottcato-office@europarl.europa.eu
For enquiries regarding Molly’s work in the European Parliament.

Andrew Bell, Media Officer
media@mollymep.org.uk For enquiries relating to press and media.

Alex Machin, Constituency Coordinator
office@mollymep.org.uk For issues relating to the South West constituency or to invite Molly to attend an event.

Regional Liaison Officers (RLOs) – for issues relating to counties in the region

- **Andy Pratt, RLO for Cornwall and Devon**
devcorn@mollymep.org.uk
- **Helen Royall, RLO for Gloucestershire and Somerset**
glossom@mollymep.org.uk
- **Amanda Williams, RLO for Dorset and Wiltshire**
dorwilts@mollymep.org.uk

Parliamentary address:
Molly Scott Cato MEP
ASP 04F143
European Parliament
60, Rue Wiertz
B-1047 Brussels

Bristol office address:
Unit 216
Brunswick Court
Brunswick Square
Bristol BS2 8PE
Tel. 0117 916 6598

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