

Greening Europe

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

September 2014

Molly pledges to make finance work for the common good

As an economist and Green Party national speaker on finance, Molly was immediately invited to join the Parliament's Economics and Monetary Affairs Committee, whose responsibilities include banking regulation, taxation and stabilising the global financial system.

The Green Group already has a strong reputation through introducing the cap on bankers' bonuses and stronger financial regulation. The next two years will focus on challenging the politics of austerity which Greens believe is causing immense suffering across member states.

Molly will also be watching the financiers' friends in government, who are wasting money trying to stop EU regulation on finance and banking coming to Britain. She asked Commission President Juncker not to allow the UK to negotiate opt-outs from EU regulations which would serve The City at the expense of the people of Europe.

Not everyone is happy to see Molly on such an important Committee. "It would appear my appointment has upset The City boys," says Molly.

Reports by financial journalists regret the loss of former Committee chair, Lib Dem MEP Sharon Bowles, and welcome the 'expertise' of UKIP member Patrick O'Flynn.

Molly says: "Mr O'Flynn's experience as a columnist on the Daily Express is evidently more useful to the Committee than my own previous experience as a professor of economics. As for Sharon Bowles, she has drifted effortlessly through the revolving door to a new job at the London Stock Exchange."

Launch of website

www.mollymep.org.uk has now been launched! Read all the latest news, find details of Molly's work in the European Parliament, view the latest videos featuring Molly and much more! **You can also sign up to receive regular email updates.**

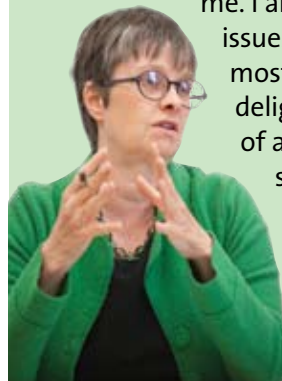


Molly's corner

Since my election on 26th May my life has been a whirlwind of new people, places and responsibilities. My position on the Economics and Monetary Affairs Committee provides opportunities to question senior politicians; I eagerly await Chancellor George Osborne's visit to the Committee!

I am thrilled to have been elected as the first Green to hold senior office in the South West. With the other 49 members of the Green group in the Parliament I will seek to resist any threats to our social and environmental standards from corporate power; the potentially disastrous and undemocratic TTIP treaty is an example of this. I also hope to highlight the ways that EU laws protect our environment, as in air and water quality.

I am deeply aware of the trust that people across the six counties of the West Country have put in me. I am choosing carefully which issues to focus on to make the most of my time and I am delighted to have the support of a team of three excellent staff. This newsletter will be produced about every two months, but you can subscribe to receive fortnightly email updates (see left).



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Helping the European Parliament work for the common good

A tax for the common good

Molly has sought to put pressure on Chancellor George Osborne to accept plans for an EU-wide Financial Transaction Tax. Using her position on the Economics and Monetary Affairs Committee she has been pushing for a European-wide initiative, which would of course include the UK.

Osborne remains firmly opposed to this tiny tax of about 0.05% on transactions made by banks, hedge funds and the financial sector; a tax that could nonetheless raise billions of pounds a year for social and environmental initiatives. Osborne even attempted a legal challenge against it; something that was rejected by the European Court of Justice.

Molly says: “Osborne and his banking cronies are increasingly isolated in their opposition to this popular tax. Greens will continue to keep pressure up on the UK government and in the European Parliament to support a tax that will work for the common good.”

Trade deal could TTIP SW farmers over the edge

The Greens in Europe have been at the forefront of the campaign to see off the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), a ‘free trade’ agreement between the US and the EU.



Molly has used her role as an MEP to highlight the devastating effect TTIP could have on the region’s many small-scale farmers. It could mean food products such as chemically washed poultry, livestock treated with growth hormones and genetically modified crops – all allowed in the US – being sold in the UK. This would severely undermine farmers in the South West who adhere to the higher European standards on animal welfare and on a GM crops ban.

Molly says: “TTIP is a huge threat to hard-fought-for European standards on the quality and safety of our food and on animal welfare. This could severely affect small-scale farmers in the South West, many of whom are leading the way in implementing sustainable farming practices.”

TTIP would also grant corporations the power to sue governments and lock-in the privatisation of public services including the NHS.



Photo © Audrius Meskauskas / CC-BY-SA-3.0

“The proposals to protect corporate investors against the democratic interests of citizens must not be allowed to stand. Greens in the Parliament will do everything possible to prevent TTIP from being agreed,” says Molly.

Greens reject Gaza resolution

As violence took a devastating toll on Palestinians in Gaza, Molly expressed her deep disappointment at the outcome of a European Parliamentary resolution on the conflict.

Molly refused to sign the final resolution, from which the other groups had removed key demands put forward by the Green Group in the Parliament. These included a comprehensive UN arms embargo applied to all parties in the region and the immediate lifting of the blockade.

Molly also pushed hard for the inclusion of a call to terminate Tony Blair’s role as ‘Peace Envoy’ for the Middle East, describing his record as one ‘marred by conflicts of interest’.

Molly says: “We need a far stronger message to come out of the Parliament which condemns unequivocally all violence, international human rights violations and breaches of humanitarian law.”

Standing up for Cornwall

Molly’s first official action as an MEP was to stand up for Cornwall and the Cornish people. Molly submitted a question to the European Commission seeking assurances that it would support the principle of Cornwall and the Cornish people being able to decide how to allocate European ‘convergence funding’.



Molly on a visit to Penzance during the election campaign

The question was prompted by Coalition government plans to take away Cornwall’s decision-making powers on how to spend its £450 million allocation and hand them over to Whitehall. The Government has since relented and given Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly autonomy over their EU funds.

The European Green Group has made the idea of subsidiarity – decentralising decision-making to as local a level as possible – one of its key targets for the current Parliament.

Greens angry at gender imbalance

Molly and other Green MEPs have expressed dismay at the lack of female candidates nominated by EU member states for commissioner posts in the next European Commission.

Molly says: “Based on the current list, we would have fewer women than in the outgoing European Commission. This is clearly unacceptable and

Any Questions for Molly

In July, Molly rushed back from Brussels to make her debut appearance on BBC Radio 4’s *Any Questions?*. During the show she drew attention to the way government policies are hurting women and defended trade unions. saying: “In Britain we have a particularly conflicted approach to Labour relations, in strong contrast to what we see in other European countries. Part of the reason Germany is so successful is the fact that Trade Unions are involved in the management of firms, and in Sweden Trade Unions are represented on boards. That’s a much more constructive way of looking at how an economy might work and both those economies, I would suggest, are more successful than ours.”

Molly’s appearance met with much acclaim. Comments on Twitter included: “A distinct, honest voice free from bombast and cliché”; “Really excellent performance by Molly; clear, incisive and to the point.”

Commission President Juncker must send EU governments back to the drawing board”.

In the Green Group 21 out of 50 elected members are women and authority resides with a gender-balanced bureau and male and female co-chairs.

David Cameron, who recently appointed more women to the cabinet amidst much fanfare, has nominated Lord Hill, a male Eurosceptic, as Britain’s next European Commissioner.

“We are very happy for Cameron to take a leaf out of our book when it comes to addressing gender balance,” says Molly.

The European Parliament: a few facts and figures

The European Parliament (EP) is one of the three main institutions involved in the creation of European law, along with the European Commission and the European Council of Ministers. It is the only directly elected EU body and has 751 members from 28 countries. The main role of Parliament is to scrutinise, amend and adopt EU legislation passed down from the European Commission. Proposed EU legislation is scrutinised within the Parliament’s 20 permanent committees, each responsible for a specific policy area. The political make-up of the Committees reflects that of the European Parliament as a whole.

South West constituency news

Molly becomes first Green MEP to visit the Rock

Molly's overland trip to Gibraltar, part of the South West constituency, took her through Spain to the border crossing that has been under dispute. Molly was impressed by a delegation of unions who have formed a Border Contact Group to lobby for improvements to the situation.

Molly found Gibraltar's 28,000 population to be a diverse and vibrant multicultural community. The territory has its own government which makes its own laws within the EU framework; the exception being foreign and defence policy.



With little flat land available the island has little ability to produce food. This means much food is flown in from the UK, creating significant food miles. However, the territory is promoting its green credentials by, for example, transforming its desalination plant to solar power, saving 30% energy, and ambitious energy efficiency plans for government-owned houses.

Molly says: "It is clear the people of Gibraltar genuinely need support from their MEPs on a number of issues and that the government is keen to establish closer links with the South West."

The day Green turned Pink

In August Molly lent her support to the Wool Against Weapons campaign, joining hundreds of peace campaigners unfurling a 7-mile-long pink scarf between the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) at Aldermaston and Burghfield.

The campaign saw hundreds of knitters across the country knitting pieces of pink wool and crochet to form a giant peace scarf.

Speaking at the event Molly reiterated her strong opposition to the renewal of Trident and to nuclear energy and her support for nuclear disarmament. Speech on You Tube: <http://bit.ly/1zExKlF>

Privatised rail is poor value for money

Molly backed Green Party involvement in a day of action on rail in August. Campaigners leafleted railway stations across the South West, including Bristol, Exeter, Taunton and Truro.

Greens used the day to push for public ownership and to slam a Network Rail report which concludes that all investment options for the South West are 'poor value for money'. Greens argue it is the private franchise system that offers poor value, both to rail passengers and tax payers. Research has shown at least £1 billion a year could be saved by renationalising the railways; money that could be reinvested in creating a truly resilient railway network and reduce fares..

Molly says: "The Green Group in the European Parliament has been fighting EU proposals that mirror many aspects of the UK model of privatisation. How ironic, when the idea of taking back our railways into public ownership has never been more popular."

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