

Greening Europe

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

Spring 2015

Greens secure investigation into tax avoidance

Take a look at the news recently and it's clear: tax avoidance and evasion has become epidemic. The recent scandal of HSBC helping clients evade tax and the earlier Lux Leaks exposure which revealed how corporations were involved in large scale tax avoidance schemes in Luxembourg demonstrate just how commonplace tax avoidance is.

The Greens in Europe have been pushing for a full inquiry into tax avoidance following the Lux Leaks scandal and finally secured a special committee to investigate tax avoidance in Europe. It is clear that without the efforts of the Greens no such inquiry would be taking place. Molly will be part of the special committee. She says:

"I am relieved that after many months of obstruction there will now be an investigation into the serious issues that have been brought into the spotlight by Lux Leaks and indeed other recent tax avoidance scandals. It is clear that without the pressure brought about by Greens and our petition calling for an inquiry which received the required support of 25% of MEPs, there would have been no serious investigation."

Greens believe tax is a fundamental part of creating and living in a civilised society. They want an end to 'tax shopping' – the practice of corporations seeking the lowest-tax territory – which puts pressure on governments to reduce their rates of corporate taxation. Greens also want to see an extension of country-by-country tax reporting to apply to all sectors, not just banks.

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](#)

Molly says:

"This constant downward pressure on tax yields undermines effective government and unpicks the public services all Europe's citizens depend on."



#LuxLeaks: Catching the scent

Molly's corner

As an MEP I spend a lot of my time inside air-conditioned rooms. However, several times a year we are given constituency weeks, when we are allowed to escape from our committees and plenaries and spend time in the places that we represent, meeting the people that we represent. While my weeks are usually spent in Brussels or Strasbourg, I also have opportunities at weekends for visits around the region. Weeks and weekends away from the stuffy atmosphere of the Parliament provide valuable opportunities to connect the work that we are doing in developing legislation with the way it affects people who live in the South West.

This edition of *Greening Europe* has a distinct South West focus but also weaves in issues that face us as Greens and as MEPs in the European Parliament.

I hope this provides a sense of the importance of the European Parliament and of the critical role Greens are playing in this to improve the quality of life for five million South West constituents while safeguarding our precious environment.



The Greens | European Free Alliance
in the European Parliament

Green Party
for the common good

The European picture . . .

Divest from fossil fuels



The Green Party fully supports divestment from fossil fuels, believing that we cannot limit global warming to below 2°C if we continue to invest in extracting fossil fuels. As an economist, Molly has also warned about the ‘carbon bubble’ – the risk posed to economies from the overvaluation of oil, gas and coal mining companies. She says:

“If we are serious about tackling climate change, fossil fuel reserves must be kept firmly in the ground, which would turn them into stranded financial assets.”

Greens are calling for ambitious climate and energy policies and a quick and decisive transition to a low-carbon economy as the way to prevent the ‘carbon bubble’ creating a future financial crisis.

Knowing your meat . . .

Molly has fully backed a resolution, adopted by MEPs, urging the European Commission to introduce legislation that ensures mandatory origin labelling for meat in processed foods. The vote was prompted in no small part by the horsemeat scandal in 2013. Research across the EU consistently shows that 90% of Europeans do care about the origin of their meat. Molly says:

“A more transparent meat supply chain will benefit consumers and businesses alike by making it harder for less scrupulous operators to cut corners.”

Syriza election victory

The election of the anti-austerity Syriza government in Greece has been welcomed by Molly. She said:

“The people of Greece have taken a strong stand against the politics of austerity. Greens share the view that austerity is a failed model which has piled misery on the poorest while making the wealthiest even richer. The result of the Greek election shows that challenging business as usual politics can win the support of the people. In the UK we are witnessing a Green Surge, in no small part due to our anti-austerity agenda. I am hopeful that the Greek election result marks the beginning of ordinary people standing up to a discredited economic model and failing Governments across Europe.”



Thoughts about the European Parliament?

A new report looking at public perceptions of the European Parliament finds the majority of EU citizens regard EU membership as a good thing. The survey, conducted in 28 Member States among almost 28,000 citizens, also found that protecting human rights is the most popular value and tackling poverty and social exclusion is the number one priority policy identified for the European Parliament.

The Green Party believes the UK should stay in a reformed Europe but wants to offer people the opportunity to vote in an in-out referendum.



Molly across the region

Five star fish on the menu!



On a visit to Bournemouth, Molly announced Bournemouth & Poole as the world's first Sustainable Fish City, awarding them their fifth and final star.

The Sustainable Fish Cities Programme is an initiative of an alliance of not-for-profit organisations that have been campaigning on marine conservation and sustainable fishing issues. They want to show what can be done if people and organisations make a concerted effort to change their buying habits.

The Bournemouth & Poole Sustainable Food City Partnership were the first to meet all of the requirements of a Sustainable Fish City, which include targets for schools and council catering, hospitals, universities, and workplaces. To achieve Sustainable Fish City status only fish from sustainable sources or those that carry the Marine Stewardship Council logo are used. Molly said:

"This initiative provides a really positive boost to those of us campaigning to reverse dwindling fish stocks and ultimately boost fisheries yields in the future."

Protect our NHS from TTIP

Green Party activists and campaigners from Save Dorset NHS are concerned about the potential impacts of the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement on the NHS. These are concerns shared by Molly, who joined campaigners as they called on David Cameron to use the UK veto in the European Council. They want him to protect the NHS from the risk of foreign investors suing governments over a loss of profits resulting from public policy decisions. There are fears that the TTIP deal would give multinational corporations such powers.

Greens join the call of campaigners wanting to safeguard the NHS. They want an NHS that is comprehensive, high quality and publicly financed. Molly said:

"I am delighted to find that TTIP is being resisted so strongly in North Dorset. Greens are at the forefront of fighting this dangerous trade deal in the European Parliament. We believe that TTIP will harm Britain and further undermine the NHS. Greens believe that the public must be at the heart of the NHS and that there must be no place for profit in health care."

Support for wind energy



The economic and environmental benefits of wind energy were championed by Molly on a visit to Charminster, near Dorchester. Molly visited High Burton Farm and the site of the proposed Slyer's Lane wind farm to hear first-hand the benefits of renewable energy to the economy in the South West. Molly says:

"The South West has the greatest potential for renewable energy anywhere in England and Wales and the sector can provide thousands of jobs. Renewables also offer opportunities for community ownership, taking the power out of the hands of giant corporations and giving it back to the people."

Protecting public forests

Molly visited the Forest of Dean in January for discussions with campaigners seeking to protect the public status of the forest. A forestry policy is currently being debated in the European Parliament and Molly is supporting this as a member of the Parliament's Agriculture Committee. She says:

"With strong pressure to privatise woodlands across the European Union, I want the policy to clearly identify woodlands as a public resource of social and ecological importance. Woodlands also play a vital role in preserving our global climate, something I am seeking to have recognised in European legislation."

Protecting wildlife in Devon

Beavers find sanctuary in the Otter



When the Government threatened to put Devon's beavers into captivity, thousands of people sent messages to the government, and Friends of the Earth began legal proceedings to stop them. Thanks to huge national and local support, the Government has backed down and just announced that Devon's beavers will be re-released into the wild. Molly says:

"I'm really delighted to hear that the beavers will be staying in the River Otter. I raised a question with the Commission wanting to know when beavers will receive protection under the EU's Habitats Directive, so I am delighted at this victory for our newest native species!"

Protecting Staverton wildlife area

Molly has thrown her weight behind a campaign to protect a South Hams wildlife area. She has written a letter urging Staverton Parish Council to honour a commitment to sell the area to the Staverton Wildlife and Conservation Area Society. In the letter, Molly says:

"Preserving biodiversity is of the utmost importance and protecting this area represents an important contribution to the welfare of current and future local residents."



Saving the Horrid ground weaver

Molly is supporting a campaign to prevent development on a site near Plymouth as it is one of only two known intact sites on the planet for the Horrid ground weaver spider. Plans to build new houses at Radford Quarry could push one of the rarest invertebrates in the UK close to extinction says Buglife, a conservation charity. The development on the site was refused by Plymouth Council but the applicant is appealing the decision and a planning inquiry has begun. Molly says:

"It is amazing that one of the World's rarest spiders is found in our region. It's clear that a failure to protect this site could be catastrophic for this tiny spider. That's why I have added my opposition to development of Radford Quarry."

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