

**30 September 2009**

**Green Party leader engaging in cynical exercise to keep himself in office – McKenna**

Former Green Party MEP Patricia McKenna has accused Green Party leader and Minister for the Environment, John Gormley, of abusing his position as minister in order to secure a 'Yes' vote on the Lisbon Treaty.

McKenna made her claims after discovering that the minister had invited leading activist from animal welfare campaigns into his offices on Monday last for a private meeting where he stressed that a 'Yes' vote on Lisbon was necessary to ensure that their concerns on animal welfare issues would be addressed by the current government.

McKenna said 'I was absolutely astounded to learn that Mr. Gormley invited four leading animal rights campaigners to his office on Monday last for a meeting lasting from 4.30 to 7pm to try and push for a 'Yes' vote on the Lisbon Treaty. At this meeting he stressed that the passing of the Lisbon Treaty was essential if they wanted their concerns on animal welfare issues to be met. He told them that unless the Lisbon Treaty was passed the current government would fall and that his party would be unable to push for animal rights guarantees to be included in the revised programme for Government.'

'This is a sick and cynical exercise of manipulation by the minister and has little to do with the issue of animal welfare and all to do with the welfare of his own political future. At the meeting he claimed that in order to ensure that bans on fur farming, hare coursing and stag hunting are included in the revised programme for government it is necessary that the Greens stay in power. This is nothing short of moral blackmail. The irony is that the minister had the opportunity to refuse a license for stag hunting this year on the grounds that the conditions of the license had been breached but he didn't do it.'

'How many more campaigning groups has the minister tried to manipulate in this way in order to keep himself in office?' she asked. 'Minister Gormley should make a full statement on this matter and say whether he will meet his promises made behind closed doors and what will happen if he fails to get these issues addressed in the revised programme for government.'

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