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[Press release](#) | 17.05.2018

Court action should be wake-up call to Germany, France and UK

Air quality

The Greens/EFA group has welcomed the decision of the European Commission to refer several EU countries to the European Court of Justice over their failure to take action on air quality.

Greens/EFA climate spokesperson **Bas Eickhout** comments:

"It is good to see the European Commission is finally ready to take serious legal action. It is shameful that some of Europe's wealthiest countries are dragging their heels on protecting their citizen's health. Air pollution is shortening the lives of hundreds of thousands of Europeans every single year. We hope the threat of court action will finally serve as a wake-up call for these countries to take immediate action to cut emissions and help improve the quality of the air their people breathe."

UK MEP and Greens/EFA member of the Transport and Tourism Committee **Keith Taylor** comments:

"The European Commission is being forced to take legal action against a UK Government that remains steadfastly apathetic in the face of a public health crisis."

"Post-Brexit, this is exactly the kind of scrutiny and oversight the Conservatives plan to escape. Proposals for a so-called environment watchdog that is nothing but a lame lapdog without the legal teeth to take the Government to court put this reality in sharp relief."

"It is only legal action by the EU and environmental lawyers building cases on the basis of EU law that has been able to force the UK Government to take any action on air pollution at all. Without a body with the legal might to enforce the EU's vital air pollution laws post-Brexit, the Conservatives would be left to stand idly by while Britain chokes."

Background

Germany, France and the United Kingdom are being taken to court for failing to take action to meet EU limits for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).

Italy, Romania and Hungary have also been referred to the ECJ for breaching particulate matter (PM₁₀) limits.

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Responsible MEPs



Bas Eickhout

Co-President



Keith Taylor

Member

Contact person



David Weir

Press & Media Advisor EN (English language press)

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