



WE Party Conference

Lettering 7 – 9 September 2018

Title: A Women's Equality Party policy on Brexit

Proposed by: Steering Committee

Proposer: Bea Gare

Co-Proposer: Shola Mos-Shogbamimu

Type of motion: Policy

Motion text:

1 The Women's Equality Party's second Conference:

- 2 ● *Regrets* that women's voices were unheard during the referendum campaign in 2016.
3 ● *Notes* the increasingly hostile environment to minorities, EU and foreign citizens since the
4 referendum.
5 ● *Is alarmed by* the ways in which Brexit threatens economic damage that will be felt
6 disproportionately by women and women's services.
7 ● *Reaffirms* its support for the protections provided by the EU for women.
8 ● *Notes* that the EU requires significant reform including on equality for women.
9 ● *Deplores* the compromises on equal rights agreed by HM Government in return for the
10 support of the Democratic Unionist Party to secure Brexit.

11 The existing policy of the Women's Equality Party is to campaign for the best outcome for women,
12 whether or not Brexit proceeds. This conference reaffirms that policy but also recognises that the
13 current chaotic rush to Brexit offers no reassurances of better outcomes for women and many
14 points of heightened risk.

15 We therefore resolve to:

- 16 1. Call for any deal with the European Union—or absent any deal, any unilateral Brexit plan—to be
17 subject to a meaningful parliamentary assessment and vote or, failing guarantees of such a
18 process, a People's Vote.
- 19 2. Seek to include in the franchise for a People's Vote all those aged sixteen or older permanently
20 resident in the UK; all those registered to vote in UK Local or General Elections, and all British
21 citizens resident in the EU but outside the UK.
- 22 3. Work, if we remain in the EU, to ensure that the EU's future policies include systematic
23 integration of equal opportunities for all women by altering decision-making rules and norms.



24 4. Work, if we leave the EU, for the retention and improvement of rights for women gained through
25 EU membership.

26 5. Oppose the diminution of such rights.

Motion rationale:

27 To date, EU-driven (and UK supported) gender mainstreaming of legislation around Brexit has been
28 passive, with empty promises of gender equality without the transformative action required to drive
29 real change.

30 A UK remaining in the EU would have to work to bring about transformational change for women's
31 equality. If Brexit proceeds, WE must work to ensure that our hard-won rights are not diminished or
32 removed. The path to Brexit and the current rushed and chaotic process raises many red flags and
33 our policy must be updated to the current realities.

34 During the referendum campaign women's voices were hardly heard. Analysis by Loughborough
35 University shows that men dominated 85% of press coverage and 75% of TV time during a
36 significant period of the EU Referendum debate. There are also unanswered questions over the
37 conduct of the campaign.

38 These factors rather than encouraging scrutiny and reflection are contributing instead to the
39 railroading of the political process and an attempt to silence legitimate debate. This is alarming and
40 in direct opposition to the inclusive and tolerant policies of the Women's Equality Party. Moreover
41 political discourse across the spectrum of old parties, including pro-EU parties, ignores the fact that
42 the brunt of the consequences are gendered and particularly damaging to women.

43 Lord Callanan, a DexEU Minister, is on record as wanting to scrap EU safeguards for workers and
44 for pregnant women. We hear about 'ensuring equal rights for workers in the name of uniting the
45 whole nation' without any explicit reference to women and the exact policy instruments and
46 preventions to ensure their equality if the UK leaves the EU. The deeply gendered impacts of the
47 political, economic and security changes are largely overlooked.

48 At our First conference in 2016 the Women's Equality Party drew up ten requirements for the Brexit
49 arrangements that would protect the wellbeing of the most vulnerable in society and for our
50 international security. There is, as yet, no evidence that the arrangements being negotiated by Her
51 Majesty's Government would meet any of these requirements and the opposition has also failed to
52 provide a blueprint for a women-friendly Brexit.

53 For this reason we call for a thorough assessment of the situation before any irrevocable final step,
54 including a vote in Parliament or a People's Vote, that absent any progress on these matters may
55 include the option of delaying or halting Brexit.

References:

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