

Dr. Caroline Lucas MEP, Leader of the Green Party, explains what Green Party candidates would do to help small businesses if elected to the European Parliament on 4th June.

Small businesses are under pressure as never before. Huge supermarkets destroy local shops and exploit the smaller companies that supply them. Big companies pay late and poach workers from small firms. Complex regulation makes life impossible.

Yet it is not small businesses that cause the most pollution, waste the most resources and exploit their workers. They serve largely local markets and strengthen local economies and communities. They provide many jobs, are centres of creativity and innovation, and lead in the emerging green economy, providing organic food and services like insulation or community transport. Many are cooperatives or community enterprises. Small business goes with the grain of the green ethos - building a local and increasingly self-reliant economy means building up small business.

The Green Party would introduce a framework of policy to give preferential support to local and smaller businesses and counteract the excessive power of global corporations. Most significantly we would reform the tax system by replacing the Unified Business Rate with a land tax paid to local rather than central government, and by banding corporation tax so that small businesses pay lower rates than larger businesses.

Other Green policies to support small business include:

Reduce bureaucracy by scrapping VAT

Simplify PAYE by abolishing National Insurance and merging it with income tax

Introduce a Citizens' Income to enable people to become self-employed

Support local community banks tasked with supporting small local enterprises

Assist new start-ups, especially in the green economy

Introduce legislation to outlaw late payment