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Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 15 March 2017

[The Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 14:00]

Portfolio Question Time

Health and Sport

Mental Health

(Stigma and Discrimination in the Workplace)

1. Mairi Evans (Angus North and Mearns)

(SNP): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on what is being done to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination in the workplace. (S5O-00767)

The Minister for Mental Health (Maureen Watt): The Scottish Government provides £1 million per year, along with £0.5 million from Comic Relief, to fund see me, which is Scotland's national programme to end the stigma and discrimination that can be associated with mental illness. See me delivers the see me in work programme to support and enable employers in Scotland to create a mental health-friendly workplace where staff feel safe and able to talk openly about mental health and to support employees who are experiencing mental health issues to access their rights.

The Scottish Government also provides NHS Health Scotland with funding to provide programmes that are specifically targeted at workplace settings, including the healthy working lives and work positive programmes, which workplaces sign up to. Between April and November 2016, one-day mentally healthy workplace courses were delivered to 418 people and 221 businesses, and 7,921 people accessed the online course. That was the first year in which the online resource was actively promoted to employers. The mentally healthy workplace training for trainers course, which has been delivered to 34 trainers and 16 businesses, qualifies those who attend to deliver the mentally healthy workplace course at a local or business level.

Work positive courses were delivered to 113 people and 80 businesses to allow them to use the work positive resource in their businesses and identify the work-related issues that are causing stress to staff.

Mairi Evans: I asked the question because I have had a number of cases recently of people who take antidepressants, for example, being prevented from either entering other sectors of

employment or progressing in their careers, so I think that this is a very important issue.

A study that the Mental Health Foundation did last year found that one in six adults had reported symptoms of a mental health condition in the period 2012 to 2015. Further, 20 per cent of adults reported symptoms of depression in 2014-15. Statistics in the report also show a link between deprivation and depression.

While the statistics are already alarmingly high, what can be done to encourage those who are afraid of the perceived stigma attached to mental health issues to speak up and seek help?

Maureen Watt: I say to Mairi Evans and everyone in the chamber that we should all encourage people to talk openly about how they are feeling and encourage any person who is experiencing depression or any other mental health problem to come forward and seek support, for example from their general practitioner. GPs are well placed to advise and guide patients regarding appropriate treatment or management of symptoms. Out-of-hours support is also available from NHS 24, through the breathing space service and from the Samaritans.

On the stigma associated with mental health, as I said in my first answer, we fund the see me programme, and we are already seeing the benefit of tackling stigma and discrimination, with record numbers of people coming forward for support. We have also taken other awareness-raising actions to break down stigma, and our new mental health strategy will include ways in which we can further have parity of esteem and continue to reduce stigma.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): The minister will know that Scottish Conservatives have been urging more businesses to introduce workplace mental health champions. Is that something that the Scottish Government will look to take forward in the new mental health strategy? Will the minister confirm to Parliament when the new strategy will be published?

Maureen Watt: I will answer Miles Briggs's second question first. The mental health strategy will be published in the coming weeks.

On his point about working with businesses, I am engaged with businesses. In the coming weeks, I have an event with the Royal Bank of Scotland, at Gogarburn, and I am sure that a number of businesses—not just RBS—will be at that event.

I look forward to engaging further with businesses and workplaces as the mental health strategy is published and taken forward.

**Social Prescribing
(Referrals to Third Sector Support Services)**

2. Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what action is being taken to ensure that social prescribing enables general practices to refer obese patients and people with type 2 diabetes, and other medical conditions, to third sector support services. (S5O-00768)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Shona Robison): The Scottish Government funds the ALISS—a local information system for Scotland—programme through the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland. That online service enables GP practices to connect people to sources of support in the community across the full range of health and care services, including support services for diabetes and weight management.

We also fund the links worker programme, which is on the front line of the battle against health inequalities. The programme provides a dedicated individual, working in GP surgeries, to provide one-to-one support to people to address issues such as poverty, debt and isolation that are making them unwell. Over the next five years, we will increase the number of links workers in disadvantaged areas to 250.

Alexander Burnett: The cabinet secretary will be aware that organisations such as jogscotland are being used by GPs to help our most vulnerable patients. How does she feel that those third sector organisations can continue to operate when they are having their budgets slashed by the Scottish Government?

Shona Robison: I am sure that Alexander Burnett is aware that a number of organisations are funded by the Scottish Government through organisations such as sportscotland to ensure that patients' social needs and needs for physical activity and sport are taken forward. Obviously, in the difficult financial climate, difficult decisions are being made around the funding to particular organisations. However, discussions will continue to make sure that there is a broad range of organisations to which people can be referred.

Where third sector organisations come together with community health organisations to have a multidisciplinary team approach involving not just health professionals but those in third sector organisations—whether sporting organisations or others—who are able to offer something to patients, there is scope to improve signposting and cohesiveness, so that patients coming through the door of community health services can be signposted to the right organisation, whatever that organisation is.

Chronic Pain (NHS Grampian)

3. Richard Lochhead (Moray) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what treatment and support are available to chronic pain patients in the NHS Grampian area. (S5O-00769)

The Minister for Public Health and Sport (Aileen Campbell): It is the role of the Scottish Government to provide policies, frameworks and resources to national health service boards so that they can deliver services that meet the needs of their local populations. Within that context, it is a matter for NHS Grampian to plan, budget for and deliver the services required to meet the assessed needs of their resident population, including chronic pain patients.

In NHS Grampian, we are seeing improvement in patient waiting times, with patients across the region receiving treatment at a pain clinic within 18 weeks, rising from 68 per cent in September to nearly 77 per cent in the most recently published figures. We will continue to support all boards as they continue to work to improve pain services.

Richard Lochhead: I am sure that, like me, the minister cannot begin to imagine what it is like to suffer from chronic pain, but there has been some good news of which she may be aware. A pain clinic was recently reinstated at Dr Gray's hospital in Elgin, in my constituency, due in no small part to the patients group, aptly named Affa Sair, that was set up a couple of years ago and which has been very effective for patients in Moray and beyond.

However, unfortunately many chronic pain patients are still unable to have procedures such as pain-relieving injections or other treatments at Dr Gray's and have to travel to Aberdeen. The minister will be aware that that is particularly problematic and inconvenient for those with this particular condition. Would the minister be willing to look at the issue to ensure that chronic pain patients in Moray have access to the treatment that they need closer to their own doorstep, hopefully at Dr Gray's? Will she accept an invitation to come and meet the Affa Sair group in Moray at some point in the near future?

Aileen Campbell: My officials have made an offer to meet Affa Sair, in the first instance to be clear on the issues and concerns that the group has. I do not think that the offer has yet been taken up, but I too am happy to meet the group. I will also instruct my officials to look fully at the issues that Richard Lochhead has raised.

While the Information Services Division figures are encouraging and show that there has been improvement around waiting times, Richard Lochhead is absolutely right to raise these local concerns. My officials, along with the patient group, will work together to identify where further improvement can be made and I am happy to

engage with the member on the issue and to keep an eye on progress.

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): There are challenges for chronic pain patients not just in Grampian but right across Scotland. NHS Grampian is one of six health boards that is failing to meet the 18-week referral to treatment waiting time. Last year alone, health boards failed to meet the basic standard for 3,227 patients, half of whom were from Glasgow. Despite that, the Government has decided to close the centre for integrative care in Glasgow. How can that be an acceptable situation for any patient who has chronic pain? What specific action will the minister take?

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Shona Robison): It is not closed.

Anas Sarwar: The cabinet secretary says that what I say is misleading, but I reassure her that the only misleading is being done by the cabinet secretary herself.

Aileen Campbell: We need to correct a number of inaccurate assertions that Anas Sarwar has made. The centre for integrative care has not closed at all; in fact, therapies are still being provided at the centre, all of which are delivered during usual business hours.

Anas Sarwar: In-patient services are closed.

Aileen Campbell: My understanding is that Anas Sarwar tried to imply that the centre is closed, and that is not accurate. I am making sure, just for the record, that other members in the chamber absolutely understand that.

We are the only part of the UK to routinely publish data on waiting times for those with chronic pain. Although we must never be complacent on the issue, improvement has been made. I set out where improvement has been made in NHS Grampian, and it has been made nationally as well. However, we have given £100,000 to the University of Dundee to look to capture the data better so that we have the full story and we understand where we can make further improvement. The deputy chief medical officer will be overseeing and monitoring waiting times to ensure that we provide that much-needed help to people who suffer from chronic pain. We recognise the real stress and strain that it puts on people's lives.

I hope that that gives reassurance to Anas Sarwar, who seemed a wee bit unaware of some of the facts.

Physical Activity and Sport

4. Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on what action it is taking to ensure that physical activity and sport are

available to all, irrespective of background or personal circumstance. (S5O-00770)

The Minister for Public Health and Sport (Aileen Campbell): The Scottish Government is committed to increasing rates of physical activity. The active Scotland outcomes framework sets out our ambitions for a more active Scotland and is underpinned by a commitment to equality. For example, there are now better and more opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to participate in sport and physical activity right across Scotland, with 157 community sport hubs up and running, and that number will increase to 200 by 2020. Over the past year, sportscotland has worked with five local authority partners to provide additional support to identified hubs within the bottom 5 per cent of areas in the Scottish index of multiple deprivation. Sportscotland plans to expand that support to eight partners.

Brian Whittle: The minister and her Government talk about their desire to close the health inequality gap and focus on preventable health issues, yet it is by their actions that they should be judged. Jogscotland is free for all who participate and has 40,000 people per week—and growing—80 per cent of whom are women and 70 per cent of whom were previously inactive. However, it has had its funding withdrawn by the Government. We then find out that the organisation is deemed so important to the prevention of mental health issues that the Scottish Association for Mental Health is prepared to pick up some of the tab to keep it going. SAMH understands that it is far more effective, treatment-wise and cost-wise, to engage sufferers and potential sufferers in that way. If a mental health charity recognises the importance of that approach to the prevention agenda, why do the minister and her Government refuse to learn that lesson?

Aileen Campbell: Sportscotland has provided Scottish Athletics with a one-off payment of £65,000 to help jogscotland. I hope that the member recognises that. We will of course continue to look to see where we can further enhance the offer around the country to ensure that more people become more active.

Brian Whittle comes to the chamber weekly and is critical of the Government. Holding us to account is the right thing to do and it is part of the normal democratic process, but when he comes repeatedly to the Parliament, representing the Tories, and asks us to do more to help with equality and to help the vulnerable, that always sounds a bit hollow. The Scottish Government continues to have to mitigate and soften the blows brought about by his party's Government and its approach to austerity and welfare reform. On top of all the work and spending that we have had to do to mitigate the welfare reforms and austerity

measures that his Government continually takes to punish the most vulnerable in our country, the Government has, since 2009, invested more than £800 million in sport and activity. We will continue to work hard and work on our record of providing opportunity to increase and encourage activity for everybody across the country, and we will take absolutely no lessons from the Tories on that.

Ivan McKee (Glasgow Provan) (SNP): What progress has been made on the implementation of the Scottish National Party manifesto commitment to a network of regional sports centres?

Aileen Campbell: I thank Ivan McKee for the answer—I mean the question. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Order. Let us hear the minister.

Aileen Campbell: I appreciate Ivan McKee's question, because he is right to raise the SNP's commitment to a network of regional sports centres. It is important to recognise that sports facilities across the country are the best that they have ever been, due to the collaborative approach that has been taken across the sporting system. [*Interruption.*]

I hear a lot of members trying to heckle me while I am speaking. It would be appropriate for them to listen to my answers and the points that I am trying to make. Sportscotland remains committed to working with its partners to develop a network of national and regional facilities in which people can get involved in sport, whether that is in school or education, club or community, or performance environments.

We have already seen Oriam, the national performance centre for sport, open its doors in August last year, the national parasports centre will open shortly and the new national curling academy at the Peak in Stirling is well under way and due for completion later this year. I hope that that gives a bit of a flavour of our continued efforts to ensure that our facilities in Scotland continue to be among the best.

Suicide Rates (Disparity across Local Authorities)

5. **Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the recent Samaritans report, which recorded a disparity in suicide rates across local authorities. (S5O-00771)

The Minister for Mental Health (Maureen Watt): Any death by suicide is a tragedy. Sadly, the link between deprivation and risk of suicide is well known, as is the variability of suicide rates from one locality to another. We will take the report's recommendations into account, including by placing emphasis on inequalities, as we

develop a new suicide prevention strategy for publication early next year.

In Scotland, although suicide rates are higher than average in the most deprived areas, it is important to recognise that that inequality gap has narrowed over the past decade. Scotland's overall suicide rate has fallen by 18 per cent over the past decade or so, and the number of deaths by suicide in 2015 was the lowest in a single year since 1974.

From our discussions with a range of stakeholders, including Samaritans, it is clear that there is a perceived need to refresh and invigorate local suicide prevention action. That will vary from area to area, depending on local circumstances and local needs, and that is something to which we will pay particular attention in the development of a new suicide prevention strategy.

Jamie Greene: The Samaritans report highlighted that a person living in a deprived area is three times more likely to commit suicide than someone living in an affluent area. Inverclyde, in my region, has the highest suicide rate of any local authority in Scotland.

The causes of and reasons for suicide are varied. For example, figures released last year by the time for inclusive education campaign show that a quarter of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community had attempted suicide at least once; a statistic that shocks and deeply saddens me.

What actions will the Government take to better identify and improve outreach to people who are in high-risk areas and high-risk categories?

Maureen Watt: Jamie Greene raises the very important point that a suicide prevention strategy should take into account different activities and problems in not just local areas but groups such as the LGBTI community, who we know suffer from particular mental health problems—an issue that will be addressed in the mental health strategy and will also be taken forward in the suicide prevention strategy. I thank Jamie Greene for his question.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab): The minister will know that I raised the report with the Deputy First Minister during last week's First Minister's question time, and I am grateful that my suggestion of an evaluation of the previous strategy will be considered. I look forward to a reply from the minister on that in due course.

The Samaritans' report stresses that cross-governmental and cross-departmental co-operation is required in approaches to suicide prevention and that the development of all welfare, housing and employment policy should include an evaluation of the potential unintended impacts on

mental health and suicidal behaviour. Will the minister consider those aspects in the next suicide prevention strategy? What assurances will she give that her office is working in co-ordination with other Government departments to tackle and to prevent mental health challenges?

Maureen Watt: I assure the member that this Government works across portfolios on all aspects of government. I am well aware that improving the physical and mental health of the nation is not simply down to me as the Minister for Mental Health or, indeed, my colleagues in the health portfolio, but down to many other ministers, including those with portfolios in housing, communities, education and the environment. We are all in it together.

Sport (Participation by Women)

6. Jeremy Balfour (Lothian) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what it is doing to encourage more women to regularly participate in sport. (S5O-00772)

The Minister for Public Health and Sport (Aileen Campbell): The Scottish Government is committed to increasing rates of physical activity for everyone in Scotland, and our ambitions for a more active Scotland are underpinned by a commitment to equality. My strategic guidance letter to sportscotland emphasises the importance that the Scottish Government attaches to equalities. Our programme for government has a number of commitments, including a £300,000 sporting equality fund that is aimed at increasing the number of women and girls who participate in sport. Details of the fund will be announced shortly.

Scottish governing bodies of sport are doing good work on the equality standard for sport. Cricket, snow sport and karate provide excellent case studies of governing bodies taking steps to increase diversity on their boards, opportunities for women to participate, and support for coaches and role models. I am delighted that sportscotland is the latest public body to achieve gender equality on its board following last month's appointment of five new members.

Jeremy Balfour: I am sure that the minister will be aware of the findings of a survey that the Health and Sport Committee carried out as part of its sport for everyone inquiry that show that, across all age categories, rates of non-participation in regular sport and physical activity are higher among females than among males. I therefore urge the minister to focus on the barriers to participation that the survey uncovered, including caring and family commitments, the feeling of self-consciousness and negative experiences of physical education at school. What

consideration will she give to how more women can get involved regularly in sport?

Aileen Campbell: How we get women and girls more active continues to be a challenge and, as Jeremy Balfour rightly points out, non-participation rates are higher among those cohorts. He is also right to point out that we need to work hard to unpick, understand and overcome the multiple layers of potential barriers.

Sportscotland has identified equalities and inclusion as a key priority in its corporate plan. It is progressing our programme for government commitment and it is establishing an equality in sport and physical activity forum to take forward the recommendations on broader equality issues from the equality and sport research.

The member is right to raise the issue and to continue to apply pressure. My strategic guidance letter also emphasises the importance that we attach to equalities.

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): What impact does the minister expect on women's sporting participation levels, and particularly parasport participation levels, from the £12 million—half of which is from the Government—that is being invested in the unique state-of-the-art sports facilities at sportscotland's Inverclyde national centre in Largs, which we both recently visited?

Aileen Campbell: The national centre in Largs will be a first for Scotland and across the United Kingdom. It was good to get an opportunity to visit the centre, along with the constituency member, and to see how much attention to detail has been applied to ensure that the facility will be for everyone, regardless of their physical abilities. We should all feel proud of it.

The centre will open soon. I hope that it will increase activity levels for disabled people who have an interest in sport and activity. The centre is also determined to be a community asset and resource and to provide opportunities for girls, boys, men and women—young and old—across North Ayrshire and beyond.

NHS Ayrshire and Arran (Meetings)

7. Ruth Maguire (Cunninghame South) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government when it last met NHS Ayrshire and Arran and what issues were discussed. (S5O-00773)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Shona Robison): Ministers and Scottish Government officials regularly meet representatives of all health boards, including NHS Ayrshire and Arran, to discuss matters of importance to local people.

Ruth Maguire: Since the publication of the Scottish Government's national drugs strategy "The Road to Recovery" in 2008, the Government has taken a strongly recovery-focused approach to problematic drug and alcohol use. In my constituency, North Ayrshire alcohol and drug partnership has cemented its reputation as a leader when it comes to recovery, with countless local successes, including cafe solace and the funky films project.

I welcome the Scottish Government's new partnership for action on drugs in Scotland, which was launched in January. One of the top three priorities is listed as

"building communities focused on recovery and tackling stigma".

Will the cabinet secretary provide an update on the partnership's work and in particular on the development of the priorities and the work plan through the themed groups?

Shona Robison: The partnership for action on drugs in Scotland—PADS—and its sub-groups are making good progress on tackling problem drug use through reducing harm, embedding high-quality and consistent services and developing recovery-centred communities. The Minister for Public Health and Sport attended the PADS meeting on 8 March, which focused on two of its priorities: the Harry Burns review and children who are affected by parental substance misuse. The Scottish Recovery Consortium, which is funded by the Scottish Government, is working alongside PADS to ensure that recovery and lived experience are at the heart of its work.

North Ayrshire is a leading ADP, and it continues to exceed the national waiting time target for local delivery plans. It has implemented a number of recovery-focused initiatives, including two recovery community cafes, with a third site due to open shortly, as well as nine smart recovery meetings embedded across North Ayrshire. I pay tribute to the partnership for the work that it is doing.

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): In November last year, the cabinet secretary promised the parents of six babies who tragically died at Crosshouse hospital in Ayrshire from 2008, and whose deaths were deemed unnecessary, that there would be a full official review of their children's deaths. Given that promise, will she explain why five out of six of those families have discovered that the review by Healthcare Improvement Scotland will not consider their children's cases in detail, as their deaths occurred before the end of 2013? Will she intervene to ensure that the cases of all six families, including the cases of the babies who died between 2008 and the end of 2013, will be given the full and

official review that the families were promised and deserve?

Shona Robison: This is an important matter. I should say that the HIS review is independent. HIS has said that its representatives have met all the families who wanted to be involved. The member draws attention to the December 2013 date, which was specified by HIS because of the terms of reference of the review, which was to focus on whether NHS Ayrshire and Arran adhered to the national framework in dealing with significant adverse event reports, given that the previous review looked into cases prior to December 2013. That was the rationale for looking at cases beyond the December 2013 date, as cases before that date had already been looked into under the previous review.

It is important that, in taking forward the review, HIS is able to engage further with the families. I encourage it to do so to address their concerns. We must not lose sight of the fact that the review was established for a specific reason, which was to consider whether NHS Ayrshire and Arran adhered to the national guidance in dealing with significant adverse event reports since the previous review. I encourage HIS to engage further with the families, which I hope will address some of their concerns.

Stroke Recovery (Support)

8. Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what support is in place to assist people who have had a stroke with their recovery and in becoming as independent as possible. (S5O-00774)

The Minister for Public Health and Sport (Aileen Campbell): Stroke remains a clinical priority for the national health service in Scotland and the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government recognises the importance of recovery from stroke. The Scottish Government's stroke improvement plan, which was published in August 2014, includes priorities on supporting self-management and rehabilitation.

It is up to individual NHS boards to deliver the level of stroke services that is required in their area, which depends on local and individual need. Boards are responsible for delivering stroke care services via their stroke managed clinical networks. The Scottish stroke improvement team supports managed clinical networks in implementing local action plans to improve the delivery of stroke care across Scotland.

Alexander Stewart: Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland has raised concerns that national health service provision of rehabilitation for people who are recovering from strokes and who have a long-term condition often ends far too soon and that,

when they return home, such people are left without vital on-going support. What will the Scottish Government do to ensure that, across Scotland, a consistent pathway of rehabilitation is available from the NHS through to community support?

Aileen Campbell: We are seeing improvements across the country, but we will always take cognisance of concerns that are raised by individuals, organisations and groups.

We have started to collect data on rehabilitation. From November 2015 to January 2016, a rehabilitation sprint audit was conducted, and a second pilot is planned for the period from Monday 23 January 2017 to Sunday 2 April 2017. There is on-going analysis and data capture to see where we can make improvements. The issue also relates to delivering the full integration of health and social care to ensure that the right care packages are in place and that people who have suffered a stroke can get the help that they need in the right way and at the right time.

Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty

9. Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government how the national health service tackles health issues resulting from cold homes and fuel poverty. (S5O-00775)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Shona Robison): We know that health inequality is closely linked to income inequality. That is why the Scottish Government is committed to tackling poverty, including fuel poverty, as a priority. We recently published our fairer Scotland action plan, which sets out 50 concrete actions that we will take during the course of this parliamentary session to tackle inequality, such as developing referral pathways between NHS services and local services to maximise the income of patients; tackling the poverty premium; and delivering at least 50,000 affordable homes over the parliamentary term.

Since 2009, we have allocated more than £650 million to tackling fuel poverty and, as we announced in the programme for government, we will make available £500 million during the next four years, which means that more than £1 billion will have been committed by 2021 to tackle fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency.

Pauline McNeill: The World Health Organization says that 30 per cent of excess winter deaths are caused by cold homes and that a preventative approach could save the NHS £80 million. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and the existing homes alliance Scotland have recently recommended that the energy performance certificate rating of properties in areas in which there are fuel poor households

should be improved to band C as a minimum, and ideally to band B. Does the Scottish Government support bringing all properties into band C by 2025? I appreciate that this is a matter that goes beyond the minister's portfolio, but will she give a commitment to discuss targeting the poorest households to ensure that they reach the EPC rating that will prevent them from living in a cold home, so that we can eradicate the scourge of people living in cold homes?

Shona Robison: I will certainly get the Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities to write to Pauline McNeill on some of the specific issues that she raises, which are important but slightly outwith my portfolio. She will be aware that we are consulting on a new long-term fuel poverty strategy, including proposals for a new overarching target in autumn 2017. That will feed into the development of a new warm homes bill, which we plan to introduce in 2018. I suspect that that will provide a further opportunity for her to raise some of the issues and proposals around targeting that she has raised today. I will ensure that a more detailed response is sent to her in due course.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Shelter Scotland estimates that one in 10 households in Scotland is affected by dampness or condensation, which the existing homes alliance says can aggravate conditions such as heart disease, stroke and flu and increase the risk of mental health problems. What action is the Scottish Government taking to ensure that fewer homes are affected by conditions such as dampness or condensation?

Shona Robison: Further to what I said to Pauline McNeill, we have established an independent panel of experts to review the definition of fuel poverty, as recommended by the Scottish fuel poverty strategic working group. The review, which is due to be completed in late summer, will look at whether changes are needed to help us to better target our efforts to eradicate fuel poverty in the forthcoming warm homes bill. I am sure that the issue of tackling dampness that Donald Cameron raised will be explored.

I must remind the member that part of the reason why people struggle to pay their household bills is to do with welfare reforms. [Interruption.] The Tories might not like to hear the truth, but if household budgets are cut through welfare reforms and people who are in work are poorer due to cuts to tax credits, it is hardly rocket science to establish that they will struggle to pay their fuel bills. The Tories can guffaw all they like, but there is a direct correlation between welfare reform and people's ability to pay their bills. The consequence is fuel poverty. The Tories can

shake their heads all they like, but everybody else knows that to be the truth.

**NHS Ayrshire and Arran
(Underrecruitment of Consultants)**

10. **John Scott (Ayr) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government whether NHS Ayrshire and Arran's reported underrecruitment of 30 consultants will adversely impact on its ability to safely operate the combined assessment unit at Ayr Hospital when it opens in May 2017. (S5O-00776)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Shona Robison): National health service boards across Scotland, including NHS Ayrshire and Arran, have a statutory responsibility to carry out workforce planning and must make every effort to fill existing gaps to ensure that services continue to be delivered safely. The Scottish Government works closely with boards to give them the tools that they need to improve workforce planning. Under this Government, the number of consultants in NHS Ayrshire and Arran has increased by 62 per cent to more than 290 whole-time equivalent consultants. Additionally, in spring 2017, we will publish our national and regional workforce plan, which will improve workforce planning practice to make it clearer what should be planned at national, regional and local levels.

John Scott: The cabinet secretary will be aware that the welcome opening of the new combined assessment unit will, in all probability, result in increased admissions to Ayr hospital. If experience elsewhere is a guide, how does she envisage the additional workload being dealt with by the already overstretched staff at Ayr hospital specifically, and NHS Ayrshire and Arran generally, when waiting times for first appointments for many disciplines are already among the longest in Scotland?

Shona Robison: I know that John Scott has raised those issues before—quite rightly—and it is important that the Scottish Government supports boards such as NHS Ayrshire and Arran to ensure that they have the correct staff in place to deliver the services that local people need.

As I said, there has been an increase in the number of consultants and other staff, but demand has also grown. What is important in workforce planning—whether for the combined assessment unit or for the rest of NHS Ayrshire and Arran's services—is that it gets the right configuration of staff, and we will continue to support NHS Ayrshire and Arran to recruit. There are opportunities to look at recruiting clinicians to network positions where posts are very hard to fill and are specialist in nature; network positions involve clinicians being recruited to work across more than one site, which makes the posts more attractive.

I am happy to continue to talk to John Scott about this matter as we take it forward and, if he wants a meeting to discuss it in more detail, I will be happy to meet him.

Chronic Pain Treatment (Waiting Times)

11. **Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to claims that return patients who require regular treatment are not counted in chronic pain waiting times, and what action it is taking to address the reported excessive delays that some face before receiving treatment. (S5O-00777)

The Minister for Public Health and Sport (Aileen Campbell): Scotland is the only nation in the United Kingdom to routinely publish chronic pain waiting times. That is a clear sign of the Government's commitment to making improvements for people who live with chronic pain.

Chronic pain waiting times data that was published on 14 March by the Information Services Division showed an improvement in the number of patients who were seen within 18 weeks, which rose from 60.4 per cent to 64.5 per cent during the quarter ending in December 2016. I recognise that there is more progress to be made and the Government will continue to support national health service boards to ensure that chronic pain patients get swift access to the care that they need.

Appointments for return patients will always be subject to individual clinical assessment.

Douglas Ross: I thank the minister for her response, but she did not answer my specific question about return patients not being recorded. She will be aware of reports last week that thousands of chronic pain patients are suffering in what has been described as a "hidden national scandal". It seems that new chronic pain patients are given priority in a bid to meet the Scottish Government's target of 18 weeks from referral to first treatment, while return patients who need regular treatment are not counted. Will the minister consider including such patients in future reports?

A return patient who has commented on the matter is Chris Bridgeford, a pain sufferer from Forres, who founded the Moray-based Affa Sair support group for chronic pain sufferers, which the minister mentioned in response to an earlier question. He said:

"We have people despairing of their lives due to huge delays in treatment."

What more can be done to ensure that chronic pain patients in Moray and throughout Scotland who require regular treatment get treatment when

and where they need it? In her earlier answer, the minister talked about meeting Affa Sair; will she include all members of the Scottish Parliament who cover Moray in the meeting, so that we can continue with the cross-party work that has been successful locally?

Aileen Campbell: In my previous answer, I said that there have been improvements in NHS Grampian, because we have chosen to be the only country in the United Kingdom to publish the waiting times. I think that that indicates our commitment in the area.

Of course, we need to ensure that we fully understand the picture, which is why, as I said in my response to a supplementary to Richard Lochhead's question, we have given the University of Dundee £100,000 so that it can consider how we can better capture the data and drive improvement. The deputy chief medical officer will oversee and monitor waiting times to ensure that we get a full picture on how we can better help people who suffer from chronic pain.

I said that I would meet Affa Sair. I am instructing my officials to meet the group first and to do some work on the situation in Grampian. We will ensure that the member gets an update on that.

European Union Referendum (Reports on Implications for Scotland)

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-04570, in the name of Joan McAlpine, on behalf of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee, on reports on the implications of the European Union referendum for Scotland.

14:42

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): It is fitting and timely that the debate is taking place so shortly before the United Kingdom Government triggers article 50 and starts on the path of leaving the European Union.

The committee's inquiry work since the EU referendum on 23 June last year has revealed layer upon layer of complexity in relation to leaving the European Union. The committee initiated its work almost immediately after the referendum. I commend and thank my fellow committee members for the time and energy that they committed to the inquiry, which involved weekly and sometimes twice-weekly meetings, as well as visits, events and meetings with stakeholders and visiting parliamentarians. The fact that we are debating four reports today is testament to the committee's hard work. Although different members held different positions on some issues, we succeeded in reaching broad conclusions in a number of areas.

From early in our inquiry, our two expert advisers, Professor Sionaidh Douglas-Scott, of Queen Mary University of London's school of law, and Professor Michael Keating, of the University of Aberdeen and the centre on constitutional change, have supported the committee's work. I thank them for the many written and oral briefings that they provided to the committee. Their expertise and knowledge benefited our work. I also thank the committee clerks, who worked incredibly hard over the course of the inquiry.

An early action of the committee was to commission two pieces of research. The first, from the Fraser of Allander institute, was into the long-term economic implications of Brexit, and the second, from Professor Alan Page, of the University of Dundee, was on the implications of leaving the EU for the devolution settlement. Both pieces of research have been important in informing the committee's inquiry work—in particular, our most recent report, "Determining Scotland's future relationship with the European Union." I thank the Fraser of Allander institute and Professor Page for their work.

I also thank the Scottish Parliament information centre for the many briefings that it has published on the impact of Brexit on individual sectors in Scotland, and for the briefings that it prepared specifically for the committee.

In conducting our inquiry, we aimed to hear from stakeholders from as many sectors as possible, as well as from individuals who would be affected by Brexit. I am grateful to everyone who gave evidence to the committee. That evidence deepened our understanding and raised our awareness of the implications for Scotland of leaving the EU.

We received more than 160 written submissions in response to our call for evidence, and the views that were contained in those submissions are summarised in one of the reports that we are debating today—“Brexit—What Scotland thinks: summary of evidence and emerging issues”. That report shows that for virtually all sectors of the economy, with the notable exception of the catching part of the fishing industry, Brexit is a challenge. Whether the submissions were focused on justice and home affairs, further and higher education, schools and skills, agriculture and food, climate change and the environment, health and sport or equal opportunities and human rights, the overwhelming message was about concern and the risks that lie ahead that have been identified. There are fears about the risks of leaving the single market. There are fears about losing access to EU funding, such as horizon 2020 funding, and there are fears about the erosion of rights, about the huge volume of legislation that would need to be revised, about environmental standards, and about losing the EU citizens who work in so many sectors. There was very little optimism or sense of opportunity in the evidence that we received.

The report “Brexit—What Scotland thinks: summary of evidence and emerging issues” is a comprehensive summary of Scottish interests. I call on the Scottish Government and the United Kingdom Government in the weeks, months and years ahead to recognise those views in all discussions, negotiations and decisions relating to Scotland’s future. The report should be a reference point for identifying both what is and what is not in Scotland’s interests.

The committee undertook an early visit to Brussels in July last year, as well as another in January this year. In July, there was still a sense of shock and disbelief about the result of the referendum, and there was uncertainty about the next steps. However, by January, the Prime Minister had made known her intention to pursue a hard Brexit, and the experts in EU policy and the members of the European Parliament whom we met were clear about the challenges for both parties in the negotiations that lay ahead. Those

two visits were very important in giving us a perspective of the views from Brussels on the negotiations.

The visit to Brussels last July contributed to our first report, in September, which summarised the initial evidence that we heard and included our conclusion that access to the single market is vital to Scotland. The visit in January was invaluable in extending our understanding of the withdrawal negotiations, the negotiations to agree a new treaty and the need for transitional arrangements. In January, we published the report “EU Migration and EU Citizens’ Rights”. The evidence that that report brings together on EU migration to Scotland provides valuable quantitative and qualitative material on migration patterns and on the contribution of EU migrants to the Scottish economy and society. It also considers the rights of the 181,000 EU citizens who are resident in Scotland, who represent 3.4 per cent of the population, as well as the rights that UK citizens enjoy as EU citizens whether they live abroad or in Scotland.

The UK’s withdrawal from the EU has made all our futures uncertain, but in no group is that uncertainty more keenly felt than among the 181,000 EU citizens who live in Scotland and the Scots who have made their homes in Europe. In Scotland, EU citizens have settled in our cities, towns and rural communities. They have helped to reverse the population decline that so worried us at the beginning of the century. They have contributed to the growth of our economy by filling skilled and unskilled, and temporary and permanent jobs. Most important, they have settled in our communities, enriched our lives and broadened our cultural horizons.

In “EU Migration and EU Citizens’ Rights”, we include testimonies from two EU citizens who have lived in Scotland for many years. Both have made their homes here and regard Scotland as their home, but they were unclear about whether they could remain in the future, particularly given the complexity of the 85-page form and the documentation on health insurance, national insurance contributions, employment and periods spent outside the UK that people are required to submit when they apply for a resident’s card. It should not be forgotten that UK citizens living in this country and in Europe will also see a reduction in their rights on the UK’s leaving the EU. We have become used to moving freely within the EU for business and pleasure, but in the future, as a third country, we face the prospect of visa requirements or travel restrictions.

We heard from the Scottish Youth Parliament that young people in Scotland see freedom of movement as an opportunity rather than a threat, and want that right to be protected. There must be

consideration of how the rights of EU citizens in Scotland can be protected and how EU nationals who are already in Scotland can remain. Therefore, the committee concluded that, in the future, there should be a bespoke or differentiated solution for immigration policy in Scotland. Not only would that allow the Scottish Government to end any uncertainty for EU nationals, it would also protect Scotland from the demographic risks that are associated with a reduction in the number of EU migrants.

The committee's final report, which was published at the beginning of March, is entitled "Determining Scotland's future relationship with the European Union". It covers three key areas: future trading arrangements, intergovernmental relations and the impact of withdrawal on the devolution settlement.

The UK Government has chosen to withdraw not only from the European Union but from the European Economic Area. Witnesses told us that the UK will leave the most successful free trade area in the world and that it will no longer be a party to the EU's preferential trade agreements with more than 50 other countries. As we were told, never has a country decided to dismantle its existing trade agreements in such a way.

Scottish exporters have benefited from the abolition of tariffs and non-tariff barriers, and it has become the norm to send Scottish produce across the continent without any border controls. There is no need to satisfy rules of origin for goods that are manufactured in Scotland and exported to the EU. All that could go when we leave the EU. By choosing a hard Brexit, and by entering the negotiations with red lines that relate to freedom of movement, the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice and EU legislation, the UK might find that it can achieve only a very limited trade agreement with the EU, so Scottish businesses will suffer as a result. Alternatively, as we heard being suggested at the weekend, the UK may be unable to reach a deal with the EU within two years, and we will fall back on World Trade Organization rules.

The UK will be reducing its trading opportunities by choice. We heard that, since the second world war, there has been a progressive move towards reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers in international trade. The EU has made the greatest progress of any region in pursuing free trade, but the UK Government has decided that it wishes to give up those opportunities by leaving the EEA and starting from scratch in renegotiating its trading relationship with the world's biggest trading partner, as well as with other countries throughout the world.

The possibility of a hard Brexit on WTO terms looks increasingly likely, as UK ministers have

described that scenario as "perfectly OK". In contrast, the Fraser of Allander institute submitted a report to the committee that predicts that that situation would result in a 5 per cent reduction in gross domestic product, a 7 per cent reduction in real wages and the loss of 80,000 jobs.

Our latest report also considered the intergovernmental arrangements for agreeing the UK's position on Brexit and for conducting negotiations with the EU on withdrawal, as well as on the future trade relationship, and it considered intergovernmental relations between the UK and the Scottish Governments. Those areas will be the focus of other speakers, so I will limit myself to referring to the role that other sub-states have in relation to trade. During our inquiry work, we heard about how Québec, along with the other Canadian provinces, was included in negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, and about the influence that the Parliament of Wallonia was able to use to block the CETA agreement temporarily. Both those examples highlight the comparative limitations of the intergovernmental structures in the UK.

Finally, the report considered the impact on the devolution settlement of withdrawal from the EU. As all members will be aware, under the devolution settlement, powers that are not reserved to Westminster are powers of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government. Thus, under the devolution settlement, current EU competences—including the environment, agriculture, fisheries, justice and home affairs—fall within devolved policy areas. The committee concluded:

"We believe that any power currently a competence of the EU that is to be repatriated after Brexit and which is not currently listed in schedule 5 of the Scotland Act 1998 should be fully devolved, alongside a funding mechanism, resulting in no detriment to Scotland."

Scotland currently receives considerable funding under agricultural and structural funding programmes. There is no clarity about how funding in those areas would be calculated in the future. The committee considers that there is

"a very significant risk to EU competitive funding streams, agricultural support and structural funding in Scotland following withdrawal from the EU."

and is particularly concerned that

"Any move towards a territorial funding framework within the UK that is based in population share rather than the allocation system currently in use would see Scotland's agricultural sector, for example, lose hundreds of millions of pounds."

Finally, the majority of the committee concluded that a bespoke solution for Scotland that would enable it to remain in the single market should be explored as part of the negotiations ahead, and that the UK Government should provide a

response to “Scotland’s Place in Europe” before article 50 is triggered.

In conclusion, I say that members will see that there are significant implications for Scotland of withdrawal from the EU, which the committee’s reports highlight.

I move,

That the Parliament notes the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee’s 1st Report, 2016 (Session 5), The EU referendum result and its implications for Scotland: Initial Evidence (SP Paper 5); 1st Report, 2017 (Session 5), Brexit: What Scotland thinks: summary of evidence and emerging issues (SP Paper 64); 3rd Report (Session 5), EU Migration and EU Citizens’ Rights (SP Paper 84) and 4th Report, 2017 (Session 5), Determining Scotland’s future relationship with the European Union (SP Paper 99).

14:55

The Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland’s Place in Europe (Michael Russell): I thank the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee for tabling the reports that we are considering today and for its work, which has contributed—and, I am sure, will contribute—much to the wider consideration in our country of the implications of the EU referendum.

There is, of course, a sense in which those implications cannot yet be fully understood and will not be for a long time, but the implications of the United Kingdom’s rush towards, and achievement of, the hardest of Brexits will eventually emerge. The damage that will be done will not be completely visible on the day after the UK leaves the EU but, bit by bit, its effect will be felt. Indeed, some of it is beginning to be felt already, with increased prices and greater economic uncertainty.

Our job, as members of the Scottish Parliament, is to find ways to mitigate such damage and, if possible, to avoid as much of it as we can. It is the belief of the Scottish Government that that can now be done only by allowing the Scottish people to make an informed choice as to the future that they prefer.

This debate is very timely. It will give the Scottish Parliament a chance to reflect on key issues that are covered in the reports and to inform the wider public of the issues at stake. I say at the outset that we broadly welcome the reports and their conclusions.

Adam Tomkins (Glasgow) (Con): Will the minister take an intervention?

Michael Russell: Of course I will, if Mr Tomkins allows me to make some progress first.

Let me address some of the conclusions. The overarching findings from the reports highlight a number of common themes, including the economic, social, constitutional and legal implications and challenges that we will face when we are taken out of the European Union.

The committee’s reports recognise a number of key benefits of EU membership. They recognise the importance of the single market, the way in which Scotland has benefited from increasing trade opportunities during the UK’s 43 years of membership and the fact that EU membership and access have been of vital importance to Scotland’s economy. They recognise that migration is key to addressing Scotland’s demographic challenges and that it is necessary to guarantee the rights of EU citizens who are resident in the UK. They recognise the importance of retaining freedom of movement, and that a bespoke solution that reflects Scotland’s majority vote to remain in the single market is required for Scotland. In short, the committee comes to many of the same conclusions that we came to in our paper, “Scotland’s Place in Europe”. I particularly welcome the committee’s recognition of the importance of membership of, not merely access to, the single market, and of the fact that a differentiated approach is required for Scotland.

Of course, “Scotland’s Place in Europe” went further. It recommended continuing membership of the single market for the UK as a whole and pointed out the benefits of such membership, but that option was rejected by the Prime Minister 48 hours before the Scottish suggestions were discussed at the joint ministerial committee. That contempt for effective process has been the pattern over the past few months. Even now, on this very day, we have no idea of the timing, substance or format of the article 50 letter.

The JMC (European negotiations) agenda is meant to be set and shaped by officials from all the Administrations, but there have been endless delays, papers have been provided late and discussion of key strategic choices that we thought we had all said should appear in the agenda and work plan has been omitted.

The JMC(EN) terms of reference set the aim of agreeing a UK approach to and objectives for the article 50 negotiations and of having “oversight” of those negotiations to ensure that, as far as it is possible in any negotiation, the outcomes agreed by all four Administrations are achieved. Those terms of reference were painstakingly negotiated and were based on the commitment to agreeing a UK approach that the Prime Minister set out when she came to Scotland and met the First Minister on 15 July, yet the Prime Minister now refers to the purpose of the committee as merely for the devolved Administrations to “make

representations” to the UK Government and behaves accordingly.

The ministers from devolved Administrations travel long distances to attend, as the meetings are always held in London. UK Government ministers attend to listen to the devolved Administrations, but they rarely have insights of any substance to offer. The JMC process has barely discussed, let alone agreed, a UK approach to article 50 and the subsequent negotiations. Matters raised by me have been taken away for consideration, but not answered. It is clearly the UK Government alone that is agreeing the approach, and there should be no pretence about that.

The chamber does not just have to take my word for that. As my Welsh colleague Mark Drakeford pointed out in his evidence to the House of Commons Exiting the European Union Committee:

“St Fagans Community Council, in my constituency, would be better organised than most JMC meetings have been.”

He then added a sentiment I agree with entirely, namely:

“There is a need for greater effort to go into basic running of this very important forum.”

All of that has bedevilled genuine attempts to get constructive progress, as has the UK Government’s growing insistence that the campaign promise to repatriate all relevant powers after Brexit was not a promise at all. Instead, a new concept of the UK single market has been invented to justify an anti-devolution power grab that is shamefully being supported by the Tory members of this Parliament, against the interests of their constituents and our democracy.

Yet we have kept trying. Even now, we are prepared to continue to discuss areas of mutual concern and Brexit issues of vital importance to Scotland. However, we must prepare ourselves for the future. We can have little if any confidence in the UK Government’s ability to secure a deal that works for us. That deal—a compromise deal involving single market membership for Scotland and an increase in devolved powers—has been on offer from us for the past three months, but it has produced no formal response. As a result, the First Minister has rightly determined that we must provide a clear plan for the next two years, and she has done that by ensuring that the people of Scotland will get to choose between the Brexit deal as negotiated by the UK and independence, on a prospectus that will be brought forward by the Scottish Government.

Adam Tomkins: The minister has just picked up on the point that I sought to intervene on earlier. Right at the beginning of his remarks, he

said—if I am quoting him correctly—that the implications of Brexit will not be understood for a long time, and he also said that on Monday the First Minister called for an informed choice. Does it not follow from his own logic that that informed choice cannot be made for a long time, given that the terms of Brexit will not be understood for a long time?

Michael Russell: It does not, and it is regrettable that not only Mr Tomkins but the entire Tory benches do not know what is in article 50. Let me tell them: there is a two-year timescale, at the end of which the European Parliament will vote yes or no. If the negotiated settlement between the EU and the UK can be voted on by the European Parliament, it can be voted on by the Scottish people, and we will put against it a clear option of independence. That will be an informed choice, and the people of Scotland will choose.

Let me carry on. As the First Minister also made clear at her press conference on Monday, we remain open to a substantive and positive response to our paper and proposals. However, it is hard to see that coming forward; indeed, the opposite is still happening. Last Thursday, the Prime Minister’s spokesperson ruled out any devolved responsibility for migration within hours of David Davis—with whom I have no issue in terms of his personal commitment to progress—indicating in the house that that might still be possible, and also while a high-level civil service negotiation group was still in existence, trying to identify a way forward. I do not know when we will next have contact on Brexit with UK ministers, as the JMC that was scheduled for this week has been cancelled, but I make it clear that we want that contact to continue. Indeed, on many issues such as the great repeal bill, it will be essential.

Leaving the EU will be profoundly damaging to our economy, our society and our reputation in the world. The people of Scotland did not vote for that damage, and they have the right to reject it and choose a different future. This Government has a mandate from its manifesto for that approach. Each of us on this side of the chamber told our electorate that we believed that

“the Scottish Parliament should have the right to hold another referendum ... if there is a significant and material change in the circumstances that prevailed in 2014, such as Scotland being taken out of the EU against our will.”

There is a contrast between that clear statement, which is now being honoured and which is underpinned by the fact that we are sitting here as an elected Government—

Adam Tomkins: A minority Government.

Michael Russell: Not so much of a minority as the Tories—who are, indeed, half the number, if I remember correctly.

There is a contrast between that statement and that of the Tories, whose 2015 manifesto, we will recall, said, “yes to the Single Market”. On mandates, let us be crystal clear: we are honouring a mandate, and they are breaking one. Accordingly, we now have a plan in place that will move to the next stage on Tuesday and Wednesday when this Scottish Parliament will be asked to approve a request for a section 30 order.

Those who believe in the 19th century concept of an untrammelled, sovereign and very British Parliament are now in charge of the Tory party, and such people are in the UK Government. They refuse to accept the help of those who contribute to our wellbeing because they come from elsewhere; they are reluctant to encourage our young people from every background to live and learn in other places; they refuse to accept the judgments of courts outside our shores; and they look backwards with longing to the days of empire. For those people, the very idea of devolution is a threat to that sovereignty and to their myth-ridden nostalgic world view.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): Please conclude.

Michael Russell: They want power to be concentrated at Westminster; indeed, they believe that that is the only place from which power should be exercised. I do not believe that. I believe in an independent future and a system that works for Scotland. There is a choice to be made, and that choice will be made by the Scottish people.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I gave Michael Russell slightly longer because he took quite a long intervention.

15:05

Jackson Carlaw (Eastwood) (Con): I begin with my own tribute to the clerks and officials who have served the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee.

When the committee was first established after the election, we had a merry discussion about our work programme. It would be fair to say that then neither MSPs nor officials expected the turn of events that will no doubt be rehearsed throughout this debate. In consequence of that, the committee has had extensive meetings and open consultations; taken evidence from ministers at Westminster and Holyrood; participated in visits to Brussels; and engaged with diplomats from nations across Europe, whether in the European Union or not. Throughout, we tried to establish the facts as best we could in a world in which informed and uninformed speculation was king. The four reports are a testament to the efforts of all the clerks and officials, my colleagues and our convener, Joan McAlpine, to whom I hope to pay a

more extensive tribute in my own way later in my remarks. I thank them sincerely on behalf of Rachael Hamilton and myself.

Nowhere in those reports will members find committee members arguing for a second referendum on Scottish independence. All of us campaigned for a remain vote last June, and none of us sought the challenge that the majority voted for in the UK’s referendum.

Beyond the politicking, the committee endeavoured to explore the potential for variations in any final UK settlement that might be open to Scotland to secure, and our visit to Brussels last summer suggested that such variations might be possible on programmes such as Erasmus and horizon 2020 and in other areas. However, that advice was caveated. We were told by one member state’s EU ambassador that that was dependent on the closest possible working relationship between Scottish Government ministers and UK Government ministers. The UK is the member state, and other EU member states will take their lead from it. We were told that, should that relationship be in any way compromised,

“the shutters will come down all over Europe to any variable settlement for Scotland”.

Joan McAlpine and others have sought to diminish that phrase ever since.

Our dismay on Monday was therefore profound. At a stroke—a hugely self-indulgent stroke at that—the leader of the SNP has alienated Scotland from the whole negotiated Brexit withdrawal process. Who, at meetings of the JMC or in Wales, Northern Ireland, Gibraltar, the Channel Islands or Europe can trust any confidences to Scottish Government ministers, as they have announced so belligerently in advance of any negotiation or agreement that they intend to campaign against it and against our neighbours in these isles?

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): Can the member recall being told of any one instance of the Scottish Government having ever betrayed the confidences of the Westminster Government?

Jackson Carlaw: The Scottish Government has now made it clear that its intention is not to support any negotiated agreement, but to seek independence. Of course it cannot be relied upon.

I welcome the cabinet secretary back to debates on Europe and am delighted that her junior minister is allowing her to participate this afternoon. Members occasionally want to hear from the organ grinder.

Scotland's case, which is a vital one, will now be all the harder to press, negotiate or secure when the attention—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Wait a wee minute, Mr Carlaw. I know that this is a heated debate, but I am mulling over the reference to “the organ grinder”. I am not very happy about that. Okay?

Jackson Carlaw: The boss.

The attention of Scottish Government ministers is not on the deal in prospect, but on the separation that they intend to make their life's only true work and priority. That is a tragedy for Scotland. If Scotland's destiny continues to be within the United Kingdom—2 million people voted for that just two and a half years ago—the SNP will have undermined Scotland's potential to have any varied relationship with the future EU. That is both an abdication of duty and a disgrace.

In the committee's conclusion on intergovernmental relations in its most recent report, it made a series of strong recommendations. Across the political spectrum, members recognised both the enormity and complexity of the discussions ahead.

On the basis of the counter-briefings received, we gently admonished both Governments for allowing a perception to emerge that they had not been working hand in hand. As I have said before, we on this side of the chamber have noted the reputation of the Scottish Government minister who has assumed responsibility for these matters of being a pussy cat at the JMC meetings and a locker-room hero when he pitches up afterwards outside number 10 or in this chamber to vent his grievances before us all.

We noted the Secretary of State for Scotland's commitment to provide a formal written response to the Scottish Government's submission, together with our expectation that that would be published ahead of the triggering of article 50.

Michael Russell: Will the member take an intervention?

Jackson Carlaw: Not at this point.

We sought agreement to the participation of Scottish Government ministers in negotiations that will follow in bilateral and quadrilateral talks with international partners on new post-withdrawal trading relationships. We talked of a joint ministerial committee on international trade. In other words, as a committee, we recommended a Scottish Government involved heart and soul and body and spirit in the multiple strands of work required to negotiate and secure Scotland's interests in the agreement reached to withdraw from the EU.

No committee member has argued or concluded that that will be easy. If anything, the extensive engagement that we have had since last June has illustrated just how difficult and fraught it will inevitably prove to be, and has identified the considerable, exceptional legislative burden for which this Parliament will have to prepare.

We were ultimately divided on the prospects of continued membership of the single market, which the SNP leader has called for. Indeed, I have yet to hear any member state diplomat argue that that is achievable, and all 27 member states would have to agree to it. However, it was that demand that lay at the centre of the Scottish Government's submission. Was it sincere? Was it all along a plan knowingly doomed to be denied support across Europe? Was it always intended to be an unobtainable object that the SNP willed the UK Government to acknowledge and reject, sowing yet another grievance, but ahead of any EU state delivering the coup de grace?

If the SNP Government was sincere, it would today be touring the capitals of Europe urging EU member states to declare their support for such an idea, but it is not doing that and we all know why. According to press reports and senior ministerial sources, the SNP is no longer clear itself on what the Scottish Government's EU policy would be. It is hard to see how Scotland's interests can be fought for now in the negotiations that lie ahead.

Scottish Government ministers have driven a coach and horses through the recommendations in the committee reports and have humiliated the committee convener, Joan McAlpine. Indeed, the way in which that loyal backbencher has been traduced is an absolute tragedy. Clearly, SNP ministers can no longer be trusted in the work that lies ahead. Their ultimatum and their objective are incompatible with almost all the conclusions that the committee reached.

There will be debating time aplenty next week to discuss the doomed actions and motivations of the Scottish Government in calling for a second independence referendum. Today, with the Scottish Government's announcement, which is effectively an abdication of its responsibility in the negotiations that lie ahead, we call on others who care about Scotland's place in the UK and the future trading relationships that we will enjoy therein to work together to achieve all that is best in the EU withdrawal negotiations for Scotland. We can no longer rely on the Scottish Government to achieve that objective.

15:13

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): Clarity and certainty have become rare currencies in politics. The issues that we face are defined by

disruption to so much that we have, until now, taken for granted. That in turn leads to understandable angst, not just in Scotland and the UK, but globally. The EU underpins much of how our economy, government and legal system work, but not always in obvious ways. Therefore, the prospect of leaving the EU raises questions where previously we assumed certainty.

The committee must be commended for the cool-headed analysis that its published reports undoubtedly represent. The reports are extensive in their scope, thorough in their approach and, above all, balanced. Many of the topics raised in the reports have been covered in previous debates, but I think that it is worth summarising the key points of clarity that the reports afford us. Leaving the world's largest free-trade area will have a fundamental impact on how our economy works and how our industry operates. Those impacts will be counted in jobs and measured in the prosperity of working people.

The committee's work is clear and, indeed, sobering. The committee makes it clear that, 10 years after leaving the single market, our gross domestic product is expected to be between 2 and 5 per cent lower than it would have been otherwise and employment is expected to be between 1 and 3 per cent lower. That amounts to losing as much as £8 billion from our economy and up to 90,000 jobs from our workforce.

Edinburgh is home to the second-largest financial services centre in the UK and is a leader for asset management in Europe. Just last week, I visited Standard Life at its headquarters in Edinburgh, and the impact of Brexit on that leading employer of thousands of people in the city was made clear and very real. In Germany alone, Standard Life has over half a million customers that it is able to serve solely due to the passporting rights that it enjoys by dint of the UK's membership of the European Union. Crashing out of the EU and relying on equivalence rules rather than having full passporting rights will make serving retail customers in financial services an impossibility. That will force companies to look at relocation and they will take with them the high-value, high-wage jobs that the financial services industry provides.

Other sectors face similar challenges. The reports highlight the difficulties that are being faced by the energy industries, tourism and the wholesale and retail trade, amongst others. The real cost of Brexit will be lost jobs, livelihoods and opportunities for industries, businesses and the people who work in them.

Although, on the one hand, that loss of jobs is undoubtedly one of the most severe problems that we are facing while we contemplate Brexit, we are simultaneously facing a critical loss of labour and

access to skills. Freedom of movement within the EU has given us the ability to fill skills gaps as needed and expand our economy's capacity and capability while preserving existing standards of employment. The strength of the European Union has been to give us the flexibility to find skills where and when we need them, because it has allowed people from throughout Europe to come here to work and help our economy to grow and adapt, and that has been underwritten by strong regulation, guaranteeing working standards and rights at work.

However, it is not just working standards that the European Union has guaranteed. It is a union that has fostered co-operation and developed shared standards across a broad range of areas. On the environment, we have seen the benefits of international collaboration, with the EU taking action on air quality, climate change, water quality, species protection and habitat protection. Likewise, in health, we have seen co-operation on pharmaceutical laws and public health initiatives.

Over the years, much Eurosceptic bile has been directed at European standards in various types of trade. Even after Brexit, we will still have to abide by those rules if we want to sell our goods and services into Europe, but we will have no say over them and we will have to bear the cost of running parallel bureaucracy and regulation systems here.

The co-operation is also embedded in the body of law that we have come to rely on. European institutions, standards and laws are embedded in and intertwined with laws and regulations that have been set in Scotland and the UK. As the committee's summary of evidence sets out, 2,029 regulations and 1,070 directives that our laws and regulations rely on will need to be reviewed. That represents a legal and technical challenge that is without precedent and it will continue for years, if not decades, following withdrawal from the EU.

The importance of the committee's work is that it sets out with clarity the complexity of our relationship. Our economy, our laws, our regulations and our society have become interlinked. Our 40 years of development and co-operation in the European Union mean that breaking those bonds and interdependencies will bring uncertainties and risks, and the committee's reports set those out.

However, that also exposes the faults and inconsistencies in the SNP Scottish Government's logic. It is impossible to discuss those issues and the reports without reflecting on the decisions that the First Minister has taken over the past few days. The decision to pursue independence is, according to the First Minister, predicated on withdrawal from the European Union. It is motivated by those costs, uncertainties and risks, but however great the risks that are posed to

Scotland by withdrawal from the European Union, it is incoherent to argue that they are mitigated by seeking to withdraw from another union. In fact, the opposite is true—separation would double down on those costs and risks.

Our economic bonds with the UK have been developed over 300 years and that trade is worth four times our European trade. Our legal systems and social institutions are intertwined and embedded in fundamental ways. If breaking our bonds with Europe exposes us to risks, the risks and costs of breaking deeper and more fundamental bonds with the UK can only be more profound. That is the lesson from the committee's reports. *[Interruption.]*

Leaving the European Union will have pronounced consequences, costs and risks that will be counted in lost jobs and lost prosperity, but to respond to those risks and costs by breaking the bonds that we have with the nations with which we share so much and have even deeper interdependencies simply makes no sense whatsoever. *[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Can we just calm down a wee bit please—especially the chorus that is going on in the background?

15:19

Ash Denham (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP): I draw attention to the fact that I am the parliamentary liaison officer to the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs.

While we should no longer be surprised, it is nonetheless alarming to see yet another committee in this Parliament clearly spell out how damaging Brexit will be to Scotland. Of Scotland's international exports, £12.3 billion-worth, or 43 per cent, goes to the EU. In plain terms, that is the economic value that a hard Tory Brexit seeks to tear Scotland away from. According to the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee's report "Brexit: What Scotland thinks: summary of evidence and emerging issues", leaving the EU could cost Scottish GDP between £3 billion and £8 billion, and cut between 30,000 and 90,000 jobs in the 10 years following the UK's exit.

I know that such dire numbers have been reported before, and I am sure that they will fall on deaf ears yet again for some in the chamber, who complacently stand by as the UK Government seeks to wrench Scotland from the world's single biggest market against its will. The SNP, however, has been anything but complacent. The committee's report "Determining Scotland's future relationship with the European Union" concluded that

"a bespoke solution for Scotland must be considered before and after Article 50 is triggered."

Such a solution is precisely what the Scottish Government has worked earnestly to achieve.

As was noted in evidence to the committee, the Scottish Government was the first constituent part of the UK to deliver a report that set out what it wanted and what the options were. Theresa May's approach to Scotland's compromise proposals was "unfortunate" and "a disappointment"—those are not my words; they are the words of those who testified for the committee's inquiry. Dame Mariot Leslie, a former senior diplomat and permanent representative to NATO, commented that

"It was extraordinarily unfortunate that the Prime Minister's speech"

at Lancaster House

"seemed to set"

the Scottish Government's paper

"aside when it had not been considered in any detail at the joint ministerial committee."

Michael Russell, Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, stated that,

"there was great disappointment that the Prime Minister did not wait to present her Government's outline of plans until after they had been discussed with the JMC".—*[Official Report, Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee, 2 February 2017; c 9, 18.]*

It is now beyond doubt that Theresa May and her Tory recruits here at Holyrood have no care at all for the 62 per cent of Scots who voted to remain in the EU, nor will they give an inch of compromise to protect Scotland's place in Europe. Yet here we stand looking down the barrel of the gun that is article 50, facing great complexity and great uncertainty, and with no bespoke solution emerging for Scotland. As the Scottish Chambers of Commerce testified, the Prime Minister has not been clear about where the country is going, where it will end up and what her policies are surrounding new free-trade agreements between the UK and the EU.

Further, the committee received ample evidence from businesses that are concerned about the uncertainty surrounding the UK's future trading relationship with the EU. Numerous organisations, including the Royal Town Planning Institute, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Construction Scotland, noted reduced investor confidence as a consequence of prolonged Brexit uncertainty.

Professor Gordon Masterton, of the Institution of Civil Engineers, stated that companies are operating in a field of uncertainty, which represented the

“worst business and investment risk possible.”—[*Official Report, Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee*, 24 November 2016; c 20.]

He urged the committee that “this period of uncertainty” must be navigated through “as quickly as possible”. However, the sheer complexity of the position of a UK outside the EU and the renegotiation of trade deals will be anything but quick to navigate. Dr Margulis of the University of Stirling pointed out that the process of merely renegotiating the market access that the UK currently has—not additional trade deals—could take “years if not decades”.

Professor Anton Muscatelli, of the University of Glasgow, agreed. He noted that the global atmosphere has grown “increasingly protectionist” and, therefore, the UK

“must ... not think that life outside the EU will be a bed of roses.”—[*Official Report, Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee*, 2 February 2017; c 16.]

Despite warnings from experts, Greg Hands, the UK Minister of State for International Trade, still had the audacity to claim that the UK wants the new agreement

“to be the most comprehensive free-trade agreement that anybody has yet negotiated in the world.”—[*Official Report, Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee*, 22 February 2017; c 19.]

Well, Mr Hands, a world-renowned, comprehensive trade agreement has already been reached: it is called the European single market, and Scotland is not prepared to be dragged from it and over a disastrous fiscal cliff against its will.

The committee’s conclusions and recommendations give more alarming proof of how destructive Brexit will be. Complacency about those warnings will yield only calamity. Although Tory and Labour members may be okay with that, I am not, the SNP is not and the Scottish Government is not, and we will do everything in our power to stand against the recklessness of Westminster.

15:25

Rachael Hamilton (South Scotland) (Con): I reiterate the words of our convener, my colleague Jackson Carlaw and other committee members in thanking the clerks to the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee for their concerted efforts.

As has been mentioned, events following Monday’s announcements have sadly rendered much of our committee’s work superfluous.

Unbeknown to members of the committee, it was the SNP Government’s desire to use the decision by the UK to leave the European Union as a reason to call for a second independence referendum. Nowhere in the body of the committee’s report on “Determining Scotland’s future relationship with the European Union” is there any suggestion—not one word; not one iota—that Scotland should be independent. Nowhere in the report did the committee recommend leaving the United Kingdom.

Joan McAlpine: Will the member take an intervention?

Rachael Hamilton: I ask Joan McAlpine to let me make some progress, please, and then I will take an intervention.

Much time was spent in the committee on discussing options that are not possible. For those reasons, members will note that Jackson Carlaw and I dissented from parts of the report. He and I dissented from the argument that

“Moving from full EU membership to EEA membership would be an easier transition for Scottish businesses than leaving the EU completely as they would be able to remain in the single market. Membership of the EEA would also allow freedom of movement, which is very important to key parts of the Scottish economy as well contributing to Scotland’s population growth.”

It is clear from Brussels and EU experts that there can be no bespoke deal for Scotland. The United Kingdom is the departing EU member state and will negotiate its exit. That means getting the best deal for Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland.

Joan McAlpine: Rachael Hamilton says that Europe has ruled out a bespoke deal but, in fact, the European Parliament’s Committee on Constitutional Affairs, which, as she knows, we met when we were in Brussels, has said in a report that a differentiated deal for Scotland should be considered.

Perhaps Rachael Hamilton will also note the fact that the purpose of the committee’s inquiry was nothing to do with Scottish independence; its purpose was to look at Scotland’s future in the EU, so it is not really a surprise that the reports do not refer to independence.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I will make up your time, Ms Hamilton.

Rachael Hamilton: I thank Joan McAlpine for that very long intervention. As she knows, Dr Fabian Zuleeg said that it is “highly unlikely” that there will be a bespoke agreement for Scotland, and so did Charles Grant.

The hypocrisy of the SNP and the Greens in exuding outrage about our leaving the single market is almost beyond belief. Let me explain. If

we had become independent in 2014, we would have left the European Union, the single market and our most important trading partner in the single market, which is the rest of the UK. The report specifically makes that point when it states:

“The EU is now the single largest market for Scottish exports outwith the UK.”

Professor Michael Keating said:

“It’s not possible. If Scotland was in the single market and the UK was outside there would be a hard economic border between Scotland and England.”

That begs the question: why would Scottish businesses cut off their nose to spite their face?

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

Rachael Hamilton: I cannot, because I took such a long intervention earlier. I am sorry.

The people of Scotland have witnessed another screeching U-turn. The SNP and the Greens are now fanatical about the single market, obsessed with the EU and preoccupied with using anything to hold another divisive independence referendum.

Labour and the Liberal Democrats also agreed to the language in the report, inadvertently promoting a bespoke deal and undermining the Brexit negotiations. I recognise the motives of the Liberal Democrats, because their leader and party want to rerun the referendum and ignore the vote of June 2016. However, I cannot understand Labour—currently, nobody gets Labour. Does it support Brexit? Does it support Scottish independence? The leaders of both those parties have shown utter disregard for the results of the referendums and confused us on where they stand. A vacillating Labour Party leadership must be to blame for pushing our sole Labour committee member to agree to the idea of a bespoke deal for Scotland and in turn back the SNP to weaken the Brexit negotiations and further the SNP’s cause for independence.

Daniel Johnson: Will the member give way?

Rachael Hamilton: I will take a quick intervention.

Daniel Johnson: What part of rejecting the need for a referendum or rejecting independence itself does Rachael Hamilton not understand? Kezia Dugdale has made the position utterly clear. Would Rachael Hamilton please not slander her in the chamber?

Rachael Hamilton: The Labour Party voted for the European referendum, so that answers Daniel Johnson’s point.

The second conclusion that Jackson Carlaw and I dissented from relates to speculation. The report it uses that very word when it says:

“there is already speculation that the EU may seek to agree the principles of the withdrawal agreement before starting the process of negotiating the future trade agreement. Some have said that the negotiations for the trade agreement could continue for years, thus the UK would leave the EU without a new trade agreement in place. On withdrawal, the UK would also no longer be party to the preferential trade agreements that the EU has with third countries. It is vital, therefore, that transitional agreements be requested by the UK in the Article 50 letter.”

It is unhelpful to promote further uncertainty in a time of uncertainty. The UK Government has proposed phasing arrangements to ensure that there is a smooth transition. That is neither fantasy nor speculation—that is fact.

Let us not forget the enormous benefit that Scotland gets from the UK’s network of more than 100 countries, which promotes a solid base for securing strong trade deals. Those trading relationships and that influence should not be jeopardised. It is better to be at the table than dining alone.

To some extent, that is agreed in the report. We agreed that, together as one—as a United Kingdom—we should continue to participate in strong and productive intergovernmental relations. The report recognises that Scottish ministers have

“participated in negotiations following the prior agreement of a UK negotiating line and set of priorities”.

Certainly, we would like to enjoy the further participation of Scottish ministers, although now it seems that the Scottish Government would rather try to disrupt the negotiations than positively engage in them. The SNP Government seems to want to dine alone.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I have a little time in hand for interventions if members wish to take them, but of course that is up to members.

15:32

Richard Lochhead (Moray) (SNP): I, too, thank my fellow committee members for all their hard work on the reports, as well as the clerks, the advisers, the witnesses who appeared before us or wrote to the committee.

The most recent report is very important, as all four reports that the committee has issued have been. They shine a light on how EU membership has been interwoven with Scottish society and our economy in our recent past. Our future relationship with Europe will be the transcending issue of our time. Just as our forebears in the post-war environment in Scotland and elsewhere in Europe were brave enough to reorganise countries’ relationships with each other and create the European Economic Community—of course the UK first joined the European Free Trade Association and then in the 1970s joined the EEC—our current generation of politicians will

have to be equally courageous and show vision if we are to secure the best future for the people of Scotland, the rest of the UK and the rest of Europe.

The report highlights issues of importance to Scotland that must be taken on board before the triggering of article 50. The work on our reports has been challenging given the refusal of David Davis to attend our committee. It is pretty outrageous that, although the biggest challenge that Scotland faces since the last war is our relationship with Europe, the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union has not appeared before a Scottish Parliament committee. Likewise, Liam Fox, the trade secretary, has not appeared before our committee, despite our requests. To rub salt into the wound, David Davis's junior minister, David Jones, agreed to appear before the committee but then cancelled his appearance and said that he would meet the committee after article 50 is triggered. That is wholly unacceptable when the people of Scotland face such a big issue. It shows disrespect, it is discourteous and it is dismissive of Scotland and the Scottish Parliament.

Adam Tomkins: How many times has the Secretary of State for Scotland appeared before the committee?

Richard Lochhead: The Secretary of State for Scotland has appeared before the committee, but we invited the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union to appear before us to discuss what is described as the biggest challenge that Scotland faces since the second world war. As I said, it is discourteous and disrespectful that he has not appeared before us.

However, this morning, the secretary of state appeared before a House of Commons committee. He is in the headlines for that appearance because it turns out that—and this is probably why he is too embarrassed to appear before the Scottish Parliament committee—he has not quantified the cost to the UK of leaving Europe and having to use World Trade Organization rules, despite the fact that Theresa May has said, time and again, that

“no deal ... is better than a bad deal.”

He is being slated in the House of Commons and across the media as we speak, because he has not quantified the cost of moving to WTO rules.

David Davis has acknowledged that we will lose financial passporting and the EU open skies agreement. When he was challenged by Hilary Benn, he acknowledged that, if we end up with WTO rules, meat and dairy producers in Scotland and throughout the UK will be hit by tariffs of between 30 per cent and 40 per cent. It is no wonder that he has been unwilling to come before

the Scottish Parliament committee, given that those industries are disproportionately more important to Scotland than they are to the rest of the UK.

Our most recent report addressed the cost of moving to WTO rules, as opposed to maintaining links with the single market or the EU. The Fraser of Allander institute told us that GDP in Scotland would go down by 5.3 per cent, exports by 11.3 per cent, real wages by 7.2 per cent and employment by 3.2 per cent.

It is important that, as the committee has tried to highlight, we see the debate in terms of future generations. It is about Scotland's long-term future. It is not just about the political banter in this chamber; it cannot be seen simply through this current debate. There are real issues at stake for Scotland and its future generations.

Some of the most powerful evidence to the committee was given by Kirsty MacLachlan. I will give her correct title, because it shows that she knows what she is speaking about. She is the senior statistician and head of demographic statistics at the National Records of Scotland. On demographic projections, she told us:

“between 2014 and 2039 ... the working-age population in Scotland will increase by 1 per cent ... and by 13 per cent in England.”—[*Official Report, Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee*, 8 December 2016; c 17.]

With zero EU migration, the projections are that the UK's working-age population will increase by 6 per cent and that Scotland's working-age population will go down by 3 per cent.

That is bad enough, but let us look at the projected number of Scottish children—our future. Between 2014 and 2039, the number of children is projected to go up by 9 per cent in the UK and by 1 per cent in Scotland. However, post-Brexit, in a zero-EU-migration scenario, the number of children will go up by 3 per cent in the UK and down by 5 per cent in Scotland.

This debate is about Scotland's future and its future generations. That is why the committee and many other people in Scotland have found it so important that we maintain our links with the single market—indeed, our membership of the single market—and our wider links with Europe. It is also why one of the committee's reports concluded:

“The evidence that we have collected shows that demographic risks for Scotland of a reduction in the number of EU migrants are more acute than for the UK as a whole. This leads us to conclude that there has to be a bespoke—or differentiated—solution for immigration policy in Scotland in the future.”

All the members of the committee signed up to that conclusion.

The issues that I have raised are of profound importance to Scotland's future. Yesterday morning, when I was listening to "Good Morning Scotland", I heard James Hick, managing director of the ManpowerGroup, talk about companies in Scotland not being willing to hire as many people as they had previously hoped to hire. He said:

"The uncertainty of being able to access labour from outside the UK is causing workers who may have wanted to come to Scotland and the UK, to not come in the numbers that they were able to and wanted to come in. That is causing major problems in that sector and in others."

That is a huge issue for Scotland's economy.

I will finish on another issue that the committee picked up on.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You must do so in a sentence or two only, please.

Richard Lochhead: The issue is the threat to devolved powers in Scotland. It is important that we all recognise the difference between not taking powers that we have at the moment and that we enjoy in this Parliament and stopping the powers that should be devolved coming back to this Parliament from Brussels. The threat is that powers are not going to come back to Scotland from Brussels. When I challenged the Secretary of State for Scotland on whether the power to set fish quotas would come back to Scotland, he was unwilling to make specific commitments.

That is a real threat and that is why this issue will continue to dominate Scotland's efforts over the next two years to find the best solution for our people's future.

15:39

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): I thank all the members of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee for the excellent and thorough report that they have prepared for us.

Sometimes, events have a horrible habit of raining on our parade. Just as the committee has made some useful recommendations regarding article 50, two major factors come into play. They have been referred to already. The article 50 bill cleared the Commons on Monday, and the First Minister announced proposals for the second independence referendum. More of that next week.

Triggering article 50 takes the UK into uncharted territories. As members will know, no full member state has ever left the EU, so it is very difficult to predict the next steps, although we have a few clues. Full single market membership is not sought by the UK Government, nor is it likely to be granted, because the gatekeeper condition of the four freedoms would not be met.

We know that the European Commission's Michel Barnier is the chief negotiator and needs to take instructions from the remaining 27 EU countries. The European Parliament also needs to give the go-ahead for talks. The final Brexit deal can be ratified by a qualified majority of the other 27 EU leaders, but any new trade deal requires a unanimous vote of all 27 and likely approval by national and, in some cases, regional Parliaments, as we know from the CETA deal.

What would the effect be in Scotland? The introductory paragraph of SP paper 99.1, "Determining Scotland's future relationship with the European Union", makes the valid point that, when we are considering future trading relationships, there are three models that we need to consider. First, there is a future with the EEA and EFTA. Secondly, there is a future through the Swiss bilateral agreement model. Thirdly, there is a future through the World Trade Organization. I will touch on those three models, and I will link them with the evidence that was taken by the committee.

Members will know that EFTA was set up in 1960, and the UK was a founding member. When Norway, Lichtenstein and Iceland joined the single market, they became part of the wider European Economic Area, which includes all 28 EU members. The EFTA countries are a part of the single market, but they are at arm's length from the EU. The advantage of that model is that, if the UK joined, it would avoid the ground-zero approach of a sudden dislocation from the single market.

However, it is not all plain sailing, as we would expect. Membership of the EEA, as we have heard from Daniel Johnson, is not on a par with Scotland's current deal. Financial services would suffer, as the three European supervisory agencies on banking, insurance and the security markets are not incorporated into that agreement. For an EEA agreement to work, Britain would require full equivalence from the European supervisory agencies.

There is another problem. Ian Dunt, editor of politics.co.uk, said in his recent book:

"And even when equivalent status is secured, the EU has extraordinary powers to cut the life support at any time. It can withdraw equivalent status whenever it likes with just a few days' notice. This imbalance of power is reflected in the way that EEA countries are in an almost servile state next to the legislative force of the EU. They must accept the rules the EU passes about the single market, but they cannot influence them."

However, it is not all doom and gloom. EEA/EFTA countries such as Norway pay less in contributions than full EU members. The UK, of course, is a net contributor. Norway has the benefits of the single market but implements only

just over a quarter of all EU laws. It also has exemptions from areas of law such as fisheries and justice. Would it not be ironic if the UK went full circle and rejoined EFTA after a 40-year gap, creating a two-speed Europe?

The second model is the Swiss bilateral model. The Swiss deal is fiendishly complex, as members will know. Switzerland is a member of EFTA but not of the EEA. It is in the single market but not the EU or the customs union. It is a classic example of the Schleswig-Holstein question. As Lord Palmerston is reported to have said,

“Only three people ... have ever really understood the Schleswig-Holstein business—the Prince Consort, who is dead—a German professor, who has gone mad—and I, who have forgotten all about it.”

It started with a referendum—which sounds familiar. In 1992, Swiss voters rejected the idea of joining the EEA. However, the Swiss Government thought that the single market was a good idea. Six years later, the Swiss got their multiple agreement. However, for the Euro bureaucrats, that bespoke model is a fudge and a muddle. They cannot file it under “EEA”, “Customs Union” or “eurozone”. It is bespoke with a capital B. Whether Europe will want to go down that road again is open to much debate.

Fiona Hyslop: Has the member had any indication from the Secretary of State for Scotland, or indeed any UK Government representative, whether it is that very complicated, challenging model—the Swiss model—that the UK wishes to adopt?

David Stewart: My advice is that the Swiss model was a one-off—it was a bespoke model that was difficult to reach. With regard to my personal preference, the EEA model is an existing and well-trodden path, and it is what I would recommend to Parliament.

The final model is the WTO model. Again, the UK was a founder member in 1995 and was in the WTO’s predecessor arrangement, the general agreement on tariffs and trade, which started in 1948. The WTO has 164 members and accounts for 97 per cent of world trade. We are currently members of the WTO and would default to its rules in the event of a hard Brexit. The sting in the tail of WTO rules is the most favoured nation clause. That means that a country cannot discriminate in its tariffs. The UK needs to establish itself within the WTO, as currently all the negotiations are done by the EU on our behalf.

What the UK needs to do is to create schedules on goods and services. There must be a full analysis of how we would trade with the rest of the world and how the other WTO members would trade with us. We can probably avoid some of the problems with complaints from other countries by

following EU external tariffs. However, as the convener pointed out earlier, the Fraser of Allander institute suggested to the committee that there will be long-term economic downturns in the Scottish economy, GDP, real wages and employment if we revert to trade rules under the WTO.

Brexit is the most fundamental political sea-change in my lifetime. However, I believe that the reports that are before us today represent a first-class analysis of the issues, and I commend them to Parliament.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr Stewart. I will need to read your speech in the *Official Report* afterwards so that I can understand the complicated alternatives that you gave. You can add me to your list of people who do not understand the Swiss model.

15:46

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green): The evidence that our committee has received in recent months has made clear the extent of the confusion and concern that is felt across Scotland about what leaving the EU will entail. With very few exceptions, that evidence has suggested that the question that we are considering is a matter of the scale of the damage, not whether we can avoid it.

We have heard from charities, businesses, expert bodies, trade unions, individuals of immense experience—as well as from our constituents across the country—and the responses have been overwhelmingly negative. It is clear that, in its narrow-minded approach to Brexit, the Westminster Government has not given any consideration to Scotland. In fact, it is becoming increasingly clear that the UK Government does not know what it is trying to do: its approach to Brexit is confused, contradictory and dangerous.

On trade, we hear about aspirations of a global Britain trading with the world at the same time as we hear that we are to leave the world’s largest single market, in a hard Brexit. The Tories want to take back control of national sovereignty at the same time as the UK becomes a global trading nation. The thing is, access to global markets means reducing non-tariff barriers. The EU, which is the largest single market in the world, not only constitutes a significant proportion of global trade, but influences trading standards everywhere. The UK will give up direct input into shaping the very regulations by which we will need to abide. The stated intention of withdrawing from the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice will likely be incompatible with a meaningful future relationship with the EU. Trading relationships require

arbitration, and a trade deal with the EU would almost certainly require having the ECJ as that court of arbitration. “Taking back control” sounds ever more vacuous.

The contradictions are now matched by absurd rhetoric. Neo-imperialist terms such as “empire 2.0” are bandied about and, just this week, the Secretary of State for International Trade tried to rewrite the history of the British empire at the very time when he expects to win favourable trade deals with countries that are still scarred by our colonial oppression. The ignorance of history and of present reality from the Westminster Government is dangerous. Protectionist isolationism is not compatible with being a global trading nation. Further, from what we know, neither of those contradictory visions is deliverable or desirable for Scotland or for the UK.

In its rush to mitigate the damage of Brexit, the UK Government cosies up to the US Administration of Donald Trump. That will not end well. It intends to cut a deal with a man who has been explicit about putting American corporate interests ahead of all else. Our committee heard the evidence quite clearly: US negotiating style is to present the deal that it has come up with and then tell other Governments to sign. The only economic bloc with which it does not take that approach is the European Union, because the EU is too big.

The rhetoric about the Scottish Parliament being one of the most powerful sub-state parliaments in the world will look tragically empty when we are faced with UK trade deals that we are set to have no role in approving, while our colleagues in the Belgian state parliaments can decide the future of EU trade deals.

The Westminster Government’s hard Brexit still hangs over citizens of other European nations living here, and a threat to them should be seen as a threat to all of us, and to the economic, social and cultural health of our society as a whole. Free movement enriches Scotland. As we heard in committee, sectors across our economy face huge problems if free movement is restricted. Hotel and restaurant staff, research staff at our world-class universities, seasonal agricultural workers and many others are drawn from across Europe, yet the Westminster Government has refused to give assurances to EU citizens. It has been prompted repeatedly—in the House of Commons, in the House of Lords, in our committee and in the chamber of this Parliament—but each time it has instead decided to continue the uncertainty and anxiety that is faced by more than 180,000 people in Scotland, and millions across the UK who have chosen to come and live here.

EU citizens who want permanent residency face harassment from the British state. Just recently, a

German PhD student was threatened with deportation if she did not produce medical insurance documentation. The UK has constructed a bureaucratic nightmare for such people. If EU citizens wish to attain permanent residency, they must fill out an 85-page form and produce a mass of documentation from the previous five years of their life, including a diary of every time they have left and re-entered the UK. The situation is so bad that the European Parliament has set up a task force to investigate the UK’s treatment of EU citizens.

It is also clear to the committee—and to most of us—that the Conservatives are treating Scotland with contempt. We voted by 62 per cent to 38 per cent to remain in the EU.

Rachael Hamilton: Does the member remember that the voting slip said:

“Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?”

Ross Greer: Rachael Hamilton should think about her interventions a bit harder before making them. Of course we all remember the question on the ballot paper. Scotland voted for the UK to remain in the European Union, and people in Scotland were told in 2014 that voting no was the only way to stay in the European Union, but that has tragically turned out not to be the case.

The Scottish Government published compromise proposals that were based around EEA membership—going further than I was comfortable with—and tried to come to some kind of understanding with the UK Government, but those proposals have been roundly ignored. The Scottish Government is not even aware of when article 50 will be triggered. That is the level of contempt with which the UK Government treats the devolved Administrations.

There is no UK-wide approach to Brexit as was promised, and it is beyond doubt that leaving the EU will directly impact on the devolution settlement—the Supreme Court has already attested to that—yet the UK Government has refused to apply the Sewel convention. This is a constitutional crisis of the UK Government’s making. It is clear that Scotland’s vote to remain in the EU is being ignored. The UK that Scotland voted to stay a part of in 2014 no longer exists.

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The member is in his last minute.

Ross Greer: In that UK’s place is a country that is becoming increasingly inward looking and regressive, and which has turned its back on its European partners and tilted back towards a subservient relationship with the new American

Administration. Scotland must choose whether that is a future that we want to be part of, or whether we want to put our future in our own hands.

15:53

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): I remind members that I am the parliamentary liaison officer to the Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity.

The points that I am about to make will focus on the future relationship of Scotland, the UK and the EU with our agricultural sector. The opening sentences from the latest Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee report state:

“In the 43 years that the UK has been part of the European Union, Scotland has benefited from increasing trade opportunities. The EU is now the single largest market for Scottish exports outwith the UK.”

I am a member of that committee and we have heard lots of evidence and expert opinion from witnesses. Many thanks are due to the committee convener and members, to the clerks for their diligent work on reports, and to Professor Michael Keating and Professor Sionaidh Douglas-Scott for their expertise and input.

We need to be quite clear about what the aim will be 24 months from now, in March 2019, for negotiations on agriculture regarding trade, tariffs and support—that is, the replacement for the common agriculture policy. We heard evidence from Peter Hardwick of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, who told the committee that, when negotiating trade agreements, agriculture proved to be one of the most challenging sectors. He said:

“agriculture is always concluded at the end because it is the most difficult bit”,

and he went on to say that

“we cannot see a solution that delivers what the sector needs if it includes tariffs.”—[*Official Report, Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee, 24 November 2016; c 27.*]

Mr Hardwick’s most crucial point was that “On-going tariff-free access” for beef and lamb exports is essential for Scotland.

Finlay Carson: Would the member be happy if Scotland remained in the common agricultural policy and the common fisheries policy?

Emma Harper: We have talked about the common agricultural policy and the common fisheries policy in previous debates. The CFP needs amendment; it is not a policy that the SNP has ever supported.

This morning, the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, David Davis, confirmed what many people in the industry have suspected, which is that there will be tariffs of at least 30 per cent to 40 per cent for beef and dairy.

The committee heard evidence that exposed the significant risk to various EU funding streams, including horizon 2020, LEADER and NUTS 2. Agricultural support is a particular focus for me. It is not yet clear whether the UK Government will provide support and funding for agribusiness to the same extent as the European Union currently does. If the future framework for funding is determined by population share, rather than by the current allocation system, Scotland’s share of agriculture sector support will be reduced from 18 per cent to a meagre 8 per cent. That translates into hundreds of millions of pounds of support vanishing.

Farming and agribusiness in Scotland are vital for our rural economy. Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity Fergus Ewing is correct when he refers to farmers as “custodians of the countryside”. They are the folk who grow our food, rear the beasts and look after the land. They are crucial for the rural economy and they spend their money locally, thereby contributing to the sustainability of our rural communities. I have been out and about, speaking to many local rural and agriculture businessfolk and farmers since the vote to remove us from Europe.

We have the opportunity to revert to World Trade Organization options for trade agreements, but we all need to understand that that would mean that there would be no subsidies and no support for agriculture.

Finlay Carson: Will the member take an intervention?

Emma Harper: I have already taken an intervention from Finlay Carson. I need to make progress, or I will run out of time.

Such are the WTO rules. The only trade agreement that allows for subsidy for farmers is the trade deal with the EU, which we are about to leave.

Last week, as part of my committee work, I was speaking to one of the Conservative members of the London Assembly, here in this Parliament. I told him that Scotland has 974 dairy farms, 48 per cent of which are in Dumfries and Galloway. I explained that in recent years many of the dairymen have hailed from eastern European countries including Romania, Lithuania and Poland. I relayed that information because I was curious about the perspective from London on how we can recruit replacement dairymen if Prime Minister Theresa May fails to guarantee EU citizens the right to remain as residents in the UK,

even if they have been here for five or 10 years. My Conservative visitor's solution was that we will need to find unemployed people from Sunderland, take them from their homes, ship them to Scotland and expect them to work as dairymen—a job for which they have no skills. That is the answer. It is simple: we just force folks to up sticks and move from their homes, their families and their communities. It is also completely disrespectful to the dairy industry to assume that being a dairyman is an unskilled job.

Whatever happens during the post-article 50 negotiations, I ask the Scottish Government continuously to pressure the UK Government to acknowledge the democratic will of my constituents and the constituents of all members, including Conservative members, who are the 62 per cent of people in Scotland who voted to remain in the union of free nations. I ask that both Governments keep Scottish folk and agribusinesses informed, included and involved in relation to progress regarding the EU exit.

I remain committed to mak siccar that the best deal will be achieved for Scotland.

15:59

Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I acknowledge the work of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee, which diligently took evidence from ministers both here at Holyrood and at Westminster, and travelled to Brussels to discuss many aspects of the debate that we are having this afternoon. The committee took evidence from individuals, groups and organisations, and it looked at sectors such as agriculture, tourism and fisheries as well as at the economy.

I pay tribute to the committee members, who worked diligently, for their endeavours and to all the individuals who gave of their time and their talents to support the committee and ensure that it came up with good recommendations such as we have seen in the reports that we are discussing today. Those individuals worked in good faith to ensure that the recommendations were what the committee believed in and what it wanted the public in Scotland and this Parliament to see.

Nevertheless, as many members have pointed out, this debate takes place in the aftermath of the First Minister's betrayal of the people of Scotland, who, only two short years ago, made clear their desire to remain a strong and integral part of the United Kingdom.

Gillian Martin: Will the member take an intervention?

Alexander Stewart: Not quite now. I will take an intervention from the member later.

They did so in full acknowledgement of the fact that the then Prime Minister had pledged to hold a referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union. In fact, "Scotland's Future", which was seen by many people as a taxpayer-funded SNP manifesto and which was published prior to the referendum, stated:

"If we remain in the UK, the Conservative Party's promise of an in/out referendum on EU membership raises the serious possibility that Scotland will be forced to leave the EU".

Despite the SNP's whole approach to politics, the people of Britain's wish to leave has been expressed and we must respect that wish in the context that we are working with.

The two years of division and the divisive debate that took place have left us with a situation. We know that there is neglect of our public services, and the people of Scotland do not want to go back to any of the processes that took place. The Scottish National Party has, once again, turned to its comfort blanket of independence at any cost to ensure that its utterly abysmal record in government and its lack of attention and involvement—

Ash Denham: I have a question for the member. How many jobs would have to be predicted to be lost in Scotland before the Conservatives would act and stand up for Scotland? Thirty thousand? Forty thousand? Eighty thousand? How many?

Alexander Stewart: You need to think about independence. If you were making independence—

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): Speak through the chair, please.

Alexander Stewart: Independence would cost tens of thousands of jobs. Even over the past few days, I have had constituents cancelling orders and who are unhappy about the way we are going forward. That is having a massive impact on our economy now because of the action of the First Minister.

Let us think long and hard. Let us look at the world that we live in. This country was known to lead the world on education, and education was discussed in the committee many times. However, we now do not even lead on education in the UK. Almost every endeavour and every policy that the nationalists bring forward cause division and instability.

Gillian Martin: Will the member take an intervention now?

Alexander Stewart: No. I have taken one already and I want to make progress.

If the Scottish Government really wanted to get the best deal for Scotland in the imminent negotiations with its European partners, it would take the threat of an independence referendum off the table. That shows us where we really are. Mike Russell—who is no longer in the chamber—and his colleagues professed to be doing everything in their power to fight for Scottish interests, but they have completely changed their view. They wanted to ensure that unworkable and impracticable solutions were on the table when they sat down with the UK Government. As has been mentioned, they did not create a big issue at the table; it was when they came outside and saw the media that they wanted to create the issue.

We know that the domestic market is important to Scotland and is worth four times our trade in goods and services with the EU market. Only members who are situated in the central benches of this chamber could argue that the EU single market is more important to Scotland than the UK domestic market and keep a straight face.

Our Prime Minister, Theresa May, has made it absolutely, categorically clear that she will insist on negotiating a Brexit that works for the whole of the United Kingdom. If the SNP stopped its posturing and thought for one minute that it might want to work together, we might find some common ground that would work for the people of Scotland and of the United Kingdom.

The approach that has been taken by the Scottish Government thus far has been entirely divisive. It wants to cause as much difficulty as it can, and the First Minister's announcement on Monday was just a platform for doing that.

The opportunities for agriculture, fisheries and trade that present themselves now as we depart the political structures of the European Union are immense. We have seen that. Some of the individuals who gave evidence assured us that that was the case.

As someone who campaigned to leave, I accept that there will be challenges as we go forward—no one has ever suggested otherwise—but no challenge that is presented by Brexit will be solved by independence, and no Government should do all within its power to stymie debate. The SNP should play its part to ensure that Brexit works for everybody in this United Kingdom. Scotland can do well from it. I support the recommendations that came from the reports. Thank you.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I will have to be strict with time for the last speeches—we are really pushed.

16:06

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): I thank Daniel Johnson for making a genuinely pro-European speech in his first five minutes. He set out exactly what Labour has been missing. If I may say so, if Jeremy Corbyn had been making that kind of contribution, we would not be quite in the mess that we are, given his complete inability to make a speech in favour of the European Union. I genuinely thank Daniel Johnson for saying exactly what should have been coming from Labour's benches down at Westminster but, sadly, was not.

I thank the committee clerks, as other committee colleagues have done. I thank my committee colleagues, too, for pulling together a report that, I must confess, I did not necessarily believe would be possible at the start of that Thursday morning at 8 am, if I remember it correctly.

I have two wider points. There are Dutch elections going on today. If I, as a pro-European, wish anything, it is that Mark Rutter is re-elected and that he stems the tide of alt-truth, or anti-immigration populism. Secondly, I saw on Twitter last night the flow of requests for money for both sides of the debate, and then, 10 minutes later, in the news at the back of 10 o'clock, the millions of people who are facing famine in Africa. I just hope that we in Scotland remember to look outwards rather than inwards, given the destitution that people face in other parts of the world.

I want to make a number of points about where we are now. Others have commented—correctly, in my view—that committee reports come and go, and that some of them gather dust. This one gathered dust instantly—or within three or four days—because of what has happened in the past couple of days. That was caused not by Nicola Sturgeon, or even Theresa May, but by David Cameron. His gamble to buy off the Conservative Party in order to try to mend a historic split within it caused the unholy mess that this country is now in—

Adam Tomkins: Will the member give way?

Tavish Scott: I will finish this point, and then I will happily give way.

That caused the unholy mess that we are now in, and I suspect that history will be very unkind to David Cameron's premiership. If Adam Tomkins wants to argue with that, he is welcome to.

Adam Tomkins: Is it Liberal Democrat policy now to have fewer referendums or more referendums? Mr Scott seems to want to have another referendum to reverse the result of June 2016, despite the fact that he thinks that holding that referendum was a mistake. Which is it?

Should we have more referendums in this country or should we have fewer?

Tavish Scott: I have not even mentioned referendums yet, and Mr Tomkins is off on one about the issue. I will deal with that question in a few moments.

Mike Russell began by saying that leaving the European Union will be profoundly damaging. That is absolutely true not just for Scotland, of course, but for the whole of the United Kingdom. The number of times that the committee heard evidence about the damage to the financial centres of London—which link to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, not least because of different mergers that have just taken place across financial services—was very considerable indeed.

Mike Russell said that some of the impact is already beginning to be felt, and he mentioned democracy and mandate. I want to make two gentle remarks to Mike Russell—although I see that he is not in the chamber—on democracy. I saw him on television last night talking about the importance of democracy. Of course democracy is important; he makes a fair point. However, he must recognise that the Parliament has agreed to motions criticising the Government's position on Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council and education policy, so let us be tight about our definitions of when Parliaments say things and when Parliaments do not say things.

On mandate, we all have a mandate. I have a mandate, too. I was elected in Shetland on a mandate of making the case for the European Union and standing up against a second referendum on independence. Quite understandably, Mike Russell and his party believe that they stood on a mandate to make their case but, at the very least, they must recognise and respect the fact that those of us on other sides absolutely did not, and that we will make our own case.

What I fear most of all is Scotland leaving the UK and the UK leaving the EU. That would be the worst of all worlds. I do not fear that for my own sake, because by the time all this happens—whatever happens—I will be at the stage that Gordon Wilson has reached, whereby he was trotted out on the telly last night as an old man of politics to opine on the latest development and conduct an elegant elder statesman's U-turn and support his party. I have no doubt that we will all get to that point—well, it is more difficult for a Liberal. [*Laughter.*] Anyway, at some point, we will all be in that place.

I fear our being out of Europe and out of the UK for my children's sake and the sake of the next generation. My kids are pro-Europeans. I regularly

go to school classes in Shetland and—with the Education and Skills Committee that I am honoured to be a member of—across Scotland, where I meet young people who are European in their outlook.

I think that the huge decision that the UK Government has taken is, as has been said, profoundly damaging. That is why, especially given all the remarks that have been made about clarity, if we are to have a second referendum—the Greens will vote for it, so there will be a parliamentary majority in favour of it—the decision must be made in full knowledge of what has happened. Therefore, to say, as the First Minister did, that the referendum must take place within a precise period of time before the outcome of Brexit is known is wrong, because anyone who knows anything about the tortuous negotiations of the EU will know that nothing is agreed to or all is agreed to. Only at the very last minute will we know what has been agreed to. Therefore, it is only right, if the people of Scotland are to be subjected to another referendum on this nation's constitutional future, that they know exactly what has happened in those Brexit negotiations.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I remind members that we are very pressed for time.

16:12

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): I commend the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee's reports to Parliament and thank colleagues from across the chamber, the committee's excellent clerking team, our advisers and everyone who has provided evidence. I believe that the committee's reports will help many people to understand some of the issues that Scotland and the UK face as we venture headlong into the Brexit process.

Article 50 has not yet been triggered, but we know that that could happen any day now. I echo the comments of some in asking the Prime Minister to at least respect 25 March, which is the anniversary of the signing of the treaty of Rome, by not triggering article 50 on that day, the day before or the day after, and I ask her to let Europeans who care about the EU enjoy their day. If the UK Government respects 25 March, it will garner some credibility, which at the moment is in short supply.

The Foreign Secretary's comments have not helped. Boris Johnson's attempt to compare the EU and Hitler was ill advised, to say the least. He said:

"Napoleon, Hitler, various people tried this out, and it ends tragically. The EU is an attempt to do this by different methods. But fundamentally what is lacking is the eternal problem, which is that there is no underlying loyalty to the idea of Europe."

For the UK Government's Foreign Secretary to have made such remarks was ill advised, to say the least. Alexander Stewart—who I see has left the chamber—accused us of being divisive. I would argue that, in making such a comparison, the Foreign Secretary was being utterly divisive. Rachael Hamilton said that we were in a time of uncertainty for the economy; unfortunately, such comments by the Foreign Secretary make that uncertainty worse and detract from the respect for the UK Government in the EU.

Our committee has produced four excellent reports, and I have no hesitation in highlighting them when I talk to constituents, local businesses and anyone else with an interest. Now that political interest in Scotland is at such an increased level—which I and, I am sure, MSPs across the chamber welcome—I hope that we can highlight the various points that are made in those reports.

I have to point out that during an evidence session that the committee had on 22 February, the Rt Hon Greg Hands MP, the Minister of State for Trade and Investment, stated in response to a question from my colleague Emma Harper that,

“In 2015, Scotland secured a total of 119 foreign direct investment projects, which makes it the second most attractive region in the UK, behind only London.”—[*Official Report, Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee*, 22 February 2017; c 13.]

That somewhat let the cat out of the bag about the UK Government's position and thinking about Scotland, because Scotland is not a region; it is a nation. At the time, I gently asked the minister to reconsider his comments, and his reply was what can only be described as supercilious. However, I genuinely do not blame him; that reflects the culture of the Westminster bubble, which considers Scotland as an irrelevance at worst and an annoyance at best.

Adam Tomkins: Scotland is, of course, a nation—all of us in all parties in the chamber agree on that. However, as a matter of European law, Scotland is classified as a region.

Stuart McMillan: The minister Mr Hands was talking about foreign direct investment in a UK sense. Mr Tomkins is absolutely correct that Scotland is a nation, but I ask him to please say that to his ministers down in London, because they do not know or respect Scotland.

The people of Scotland did not vote for Brexit, and only one of the nation's 59 MPs backed the UK Government by voting to trigger article 50. I do not want Scotland to lose an estimated 80,000 jobs within a decade or to cost people an average of £2,000 in wages, as is indicated in the Fraser of Allander institute research that the committee commissioned. I do not want Scotland to be ignored any longer. If it can be ignored on an issue

of such magnitude as our membership of the European Union and the single market, it is clear that the UK Government can ignore our voice and our interests at any time. We are not going back into our box, and the politics of the past is no longer acceptable to the electorate of Scotland.

Our committee's recent report entitled “Determining Scotland's future relationship with the European Union” clearly highlights the position that many people across Scotland hold. Our key recommendation of

“a bespoke solution for Scotland”

is not something that many people will argue against. It has caused debate, but clearly not at the UK level, given that the UK Government appears to have ignored the compromise suggestion that the Scottish Government made in December. Rachael Hamilton said that a bespoke solution is highly unlikely, but I am sure that, decades and decades ago, when people first thought about going to the moon and sending rockets up into space, others probably thought that that sort of thing was highly unlikely to happen. Did that stop people from trying? No, it did not, and we should not stop trying to find a bespoke solution for Scotland.

Finlay Carson: Will the member give way?

Stuart McMillan: No—I am in my last minute. The compromise suggestion does not seek to make Scotland different; it is a compromise to help our economy and the people who live in Scotland.

A further recommendation of the committee was to explore EEA membership with the EU 27 before and after the triggering of article 50. Many comments have been made in recent months about the opportunity that Brexit provides, but I argue that Scotland and the UK should have the opportunity to have the differential position. Our committee recognised that there is no direct precedent for such a solution, but I note that a variety of differential arrangements already exists in the EU—the arrangement between the Faroe Islands and Denmark provides one example.

I am conscious of the time, Presiding Officer, and I know that you are going to stop me, but I want to say finally—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No, Mr McMillan. We are seriously pressed for time.

Stuart McMillan: I want to say that I will support the motion tonight.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr McMillan.

I should say that it is the Presiding Officer's quite strict rule that members should stay in the chamber for at least two speeches after their own, unless they have asked the Presiding Officer to let

them do otherwise and have been given permission to do so. I am sure that Mr Alexander Stewart will apologise when he comes back into the chamber.

16:19

Ross Thomson (North East Scotland) (Con):

I, too, thank the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee for its work and for bringing forward the debate. It is most striking that the committee's first report of 2016 calls for engagement from across Scotland. That is encouraging, and it demonstrates the importance of bringing people together to establish facts, challenges, solutions and opportunities from exiting the European Union. However, after Monday morning's announcement by the First Minister, it is apparent that such constructive engagement is the last thing that is on the Scottish Government's agenda. The Government would rather pursue another divisive independence referendum than explore the numerous opportunities for Scotland that Brexit presents.

Stuart McMillan: Will the member take an intervention?

Ross Thomson: No. I am not even a minute into my speech.

It could not be clearer that the Government's so-called compromise proposals were never genuine or sincere; instead, they were just another move in the SNP's independence game plan. However, as the Prime Minister has said, politics is not a game. The lives of our people are not a game, and the prosperity of our businesses and industries is not a game.

Ash Denham: Will the member take an intervention?

Ross Thomson: No, thank you.

The security of people's jobs is not a game, and the future of our country is not a game.

I have lost count of the number of people from across Scotland who have contacted me since Monday to express their dismay and anger. That anger is particularly potent from the north-east's fishing communities. In her opening remarks, the convener of the committee described the challenges that fishermen face. The report reflects the evidence that the committee heard. Let us be clear: the Scottish Fishermen's Federation has been unequivocal in its support of the UK Government's approach to leaving the EU. The chief executive of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, Bertie Armstrong, has reiterated that the Scottish Government is

"making the wrong argument at the wrong time"

when it comes to independence.

Gillian Martin: Will the member take an intervention?

Ross Thomson: No, I will not.

We can imagine the palpable frustration from fishermen who now fear that the SNP will sell out their industry and coastal communities by dragging them back into the EU and the common fisheries policy. Alex Neil is absolutely right that the SNP and any pro-independence campaign will haemorrhage votes in the north-east if they continue to disregard the legitimate views of leave voters.

Joan McAlpine: Will the member take an intervention?

Ross Thomson: No, I will not.

A theme in the report is the option of EFTA membership for Scotland, which David Stewart highlighted. Maybe it was Alex Neil's words of wisdom that led to the total and utter chaos that we have seen in the SNP today. There are reports that it is now considering ditching its policy of supporting full EU membership in favour of a Norway-style deal. Just a day after the First Minister demanded a second vote on independence, senior nationalist sources told *The Daily Telegraph* that Nicola Sturgeon would instead try to join EFTA. That is despite Mike Russell's stating only yesterday in the Parliament that the SNP remains in favour of full EU membership. Even senior SNP figures cannot seem to agree on what relationship Scotland should have with the EU.

What makes the whole fiasco even more extraordinary is that the First Minister stated in July last year that the EFTA option would leave Scotland with no influence. I will quote her—I hope that Alex Neil and his Brexit colleagues are listening. She said:

"To end up in a position, which is highly possible, where we have to abide by all the rules of the single market and pay to be part of it, but have no say whatsoever in what the rules are, would not be taking back control, to coin a phrase we've heard more than once recently—it would be giving up control. Having an influence in the world we live in matters—for all of us."

While the Prime Minister attempts to negotiate bold and ambitious free-trade deals with the EU and others, the Scottish Government continues to overinflate the importance of the single market and conveniently sidesteps the fact that Scotland's biggest trading partner is the rest of the UK. However, the SNP's contempt for cold, hard facts, economic reality and the benefits of Brexit should come as no surprise to anyone in the Parliament.

Joan McAlpine: Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: It is clear that Mr Thomson is not taking interventions. Can we have a wee bit of calm, please?

Ross Thomson: Thank you very much, Presiding Officer.

The Scottish Government has abdicated its responsibility to promote Scotland's interests in the negotiations that are to come. [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Arthur, please be quiet. I am sorry, Mr Thomson—carry on.

Ross Thomson: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

The Scottish Government will be actively and aggressively talking down the UK Government's efforts to achieve the best deal for the whole United Kingdom. It is up to the rest of us to stand up for the democratic decisions that we have made as a country. The Scottish Conservatives can and will do just that.

16:25

Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP): Reports, reports, reports—by the time the Prime Minister triggers article 50, there will be a library full of reviews, considerations, discussion minutes and research files. Some of them will be genuinely useful and intelligent, such as the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee's first report of 2016, on the EU referendum result, but others pull together thinly veiled propaganda that represents, as my colleague Stephen Gethins MP has said, a "dereliction of duty".

That is what happens when there is a vacuum and a Government completely fails to provide readable, accessible and objective information. Such a vacuum also creates a space in which extremist people develop the status of heroes. Vacuums are dangerous. I therefore congratulate the committee on producing accessible and readable reports. Together, the committee's members have distilled a wide range of different perceptions into documents that are practical and real: we hear the voices, we get the issues and we digest and respond.

Colleagues have spoken at length—we had anger from the Tory side, but whether it is righteous remains to be seen—about the difficulties that lie ahead in securing sustainable trade deals post-Brexit. We are standing on a cliff edge, about to say goodbye to all the riches that Europe has brought us during the past decades, but the Brexiteers are waving their hats and cheering for the end of the four fundamental trade freedoms: the free movement of goods; freedom of movement for workers; the right of establishment and the freedom to provide

services; and the free movement of capital. Not to give reassurance on Monday to EU nationals who live here was a disgusting act by the UK Government, and it is not representative of the country in which I live.

The Brexiteers cheer because they are under the illusion that they will be living in a land that is flowing with milk and honey, but they are blind to what will be the end of everything that we have had from the EU—from a legal guarantee of human rights and social protection, and the support of major national partners in the event of war, to CAP payments. That is like someone setting fire to their own house and cheering at the destruction as the roof blows up.

The four freedoms have a series of associated social protections—that applies particularly to freedom of movement. The Scottish Government and Governments across Europe have been working hard—indeed, they have been very successful—in the drive to protect against human trafficking, discrimination, violence against women and girls, and LGBTI bullying and abuse.

Many support groups, such as Scottish Women's Aid, Enable, Engender, Money Advice Scotland and Stonewall, and many other organisations, including disability rights groups, follow carefully what we are achieving and commend the Scottish Parliament for it. As the convener of the Equalities and Human Rights Committee, I participate in those important exchanges constantly.

We have set ourselves goals that represent who we are and the kind of country that we want to live in and play a part in. We are global citizens who happen to live in a forward-thinking, innovative, protecting and compassionate society. That we are citizens of Europe puts us into a huge and disparate group of some 600 million people, the vast majority of whom share our ideals and our values. I hate to look towards the prospect of a passport that no longer says that I am a citizen of the European Union, but I look forward to one that says that I am a citizen of Scotland and the European Union.

The nasty aspects of today's reality include terrorist bombs in France, Belgium, Germany and Glasgow; cruel and destructive actions against refugees, not just by Governments across Europe but by the UK Government; human trafficking; torture; and female genital mutilation. I could list more such aspects, but at present we tackle them together with the strength and impact of not only 28 countries—perhaps to be 27 soon—but a central core of legislation that protects workers' rights through the working time directive, holiday leave entitlement, maternity rights, equal pay rights and sickness benefits. Of course, there is

also the right not to be discriminated against or tortured.

Let us consider one of those rights—the right to healthcare while on holiday. In committee today, David Davis said when asked that he could not confirm whether UK citizens will no longer have access to the European health insurance card. He said, “Probably,” but he said that he has not looked at the issue. That seems to sum up the UK Government entirely.

As has been widely reported today, the Westminster Government is ill prepared for dealing with the implications at any level of leaving the EU. Some of its members have overtly lied to the public and others have been misleading. There is not much truth to be found, because the truth is too awful to talk about. That is why David Davis has admitted that he has no plan A, B, C or even Z.

I hope that the way forward is paved with good intentions, but there are an awful lot of challenges. Scotland will make its presence felt. We will demand recognition at the negotiating table and we will fight for the representation of our people. Ultimately, Scots will make their own decision about the kind of society that they want to be part of and how they want to make that work. I know which side I will be on.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the closing speeches. I am disappointed to see that not all members who took part in the debate are back in the chamber. I call Daniel Johnson. You have up to six minutes, Mr Johnson.

16:31

Daniel Johnson: This has been, at times, a contentious and fraught debate, but that is not surprising given the subject matter that we are discussing and the context in which we are having the debate. However, there are some common threads, so let me begin with consensus.

First and foremost, I reiterate my thanks to the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee for the hard work that has gone into its reports and for their clarity. They are valuable and useful. Richard Lochhead made the important point that the EU has been the context for the current political generation and that, whatever our points of view or our perspectives, we need to think about future generations. That is absolutely right.

Three principal issues have been discussed: the impact on the economy and jobs; the impact on people; and the options that we have. However, before I go any further, I thank Tavish Scott for his kind words about what I said earlier. Whatever happens and whatever option this country—the

UK or Scotland—takes, it is incumbent on all of us who are pro-European to continue to make the case for Europe. I, for one, am committed to making the case for the UK’s participation in Europe—indeed, I am committed to making the case for the European Union—beyond whatever happens through article 50 and the UK’s exit from the European Union. That is my personal commitment.

Let me talk briefly about the impact on jobs and the economy. I do not want to cover the ground in depth, but it is clear that there is going to be a huge impact on jobs, and that has to be our fundamental consideration. Again, I think that there is consensus on that. We also have to recognise that, as we move from a situation of deeper co-operation, we will need to make compromises through trade deals.

There are areas that we have not discussed. The profound implications for universities and research funding will have impacts both on jobs and on the wider benefits. One or two members mentioned agriculture, which is an area of huge complexity and one that requires our attention.

I reiterate the brutal impacts that are outlined in the numbers from the Fraser of Allander institute, which a number of speakers mentioned. They suggest that crashing out of the European Union on WTO rules would lead to declines of 5.3 per cent in GDP, 11.3 per cent in exports and 7.2 per cent in employment. Those are circumstances that we cannot accept.

Joan McAlpine: I agree with the points that the member has made about an exit under WTO rules. Does he agree with the chief economist of Quality Meat Scotland, who has pointed out that, under WTO rules, the tariff on a carcase of lamb will increase by 49 per cent, so a carcase that sells at present for £80 will go up to something like £119?

Daniel Johnson: I would not pretend to know the detail, but that is an example of the tariffs and trade conditions that we need to look at. I will come back to that point later.

We also need to look at the people impacts. Christina McKelvie made an impassioned speech about the real impacts, and it is indeed people’s lives that we are talking about. The Government is treating people who have made their lives in this country as a bargaining chip. It is absurd that the UK Government did not accept Harriet Harman’s amendment, which would have basically ensured that people who are already here could stay here. What is the cost? There is no concession there. I understand the need to bargain over the rights of EU citizens in the future, but surely we can extend those rights to the EU citizens who are already here.

The debate is about Scotland's options going forward, and I thank my colleague David Stewart for his very thorough explanation of the three different options and the costs and downsides to each of them. Even the EEA-EFTA model is not without complications and downsides—the costs to the financial services sector would be profound. The Swiss model is probably unrepeatable, and I have already mentioned the WTO rules. Ross Greer correctly pointed out that the concept of becoming a global trading nation means accepting the restrictions and tariffs placed on us.

We also need to look at the Scottish Government's so-called alternative model. It is important that we explore every opportunity to maintain our links with, access to and membership of the single market. However, simply to present its option as a concrete and sure model that we can just take off the shelf is not correct—the committee's reports make that clear. Dag Wernø Holter from EFTA said:

“there have been no concrete, direct discussions either between the EFTA states or between EFTA and the Faroe Islands on that matter in any substantial way.”—[*Official Report, Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee*, 17 November 2016; c 29.]

To stand in front of us and claim that that option can be taken easily, swiftly and without cost or consequence is simply a nonsense.

Michael Russell: Throughout “Scotland's Place in Europe”, Mr Johnson will find references to the difficulties of moving forward on any of those options, including the UK option. I am sure that he would like to be fair about that—I will be happy to send the references to him.

Daniel Johnson: Let me be fair—that is what the paper says. However, those are not the words that Government ministers utter when describing the paper. The option is presented as a certainty, and that is unfair and dishonest.

It is also dishonest to talk about job losses and the economic costs of coming out of the EU without acknowledging the costs and implications of coming out of the UK. If coming out of the EU and destroying the bonds that we have with the rest of the EU has costs, implications and risks, those costs and risks are faced many times over if we come out of the UK. That is the realistic and honest assessment that we have to have if we are discussing independence.

Finally—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No, Mr Johnson. I am afraid that you have to close. We are pushed for time.

Daniel Johnson: That is why Labour rejects independence and rejects the need for a second

independence referendum. I will close on that point.

16:37

Adam Tomkins (Glasgow) (Con): I start by praising the committee's work and thanking the members from all parties who serve on the committee, as well as the parliamentary staff. The committee's work is impressive in both its quantity and quality—it is rich and full. However, as David Stewart rather eloquently put it,

“events have a horrible habit of raining on our parade.”

I rather share my friend and colleague Jackson Carlaw's sympathy for the convener, Joan McAlpine, who had the rug pulled out from under her by the First Minister on Monday.

From the richness of the committee's work I want to pull out three broad themes, each of which has been reflected in the debate. The first is the theme of opportunity versus risk. Richard Lochhead put something very strikingly in his speech. He said that the creation of the EU was an act of political bravery in the immediate post-war era of European politics, and he is right about that. We now need to be equally brave and bold in our advocacy of the relationship that we as the UK should have not only with the EU, but with the rest of the world. It seems to me that there is a big argument to be had about that—a big argument about what Brexit means and what it should become.

Ash Denham cited the evidence given to the committee by my boss at the University of Glasgow, Anton Muscatelli, in which he said that we live in a world in which protectionism is on the rise and liberal unionism—liberal internationalism—is struggling to make its voice heard. My view and the view of my party is very much that Brexit must not mean a surrender to nationalist protectionism. Brexit should not mean that we put up walls between ourselves and our nearest neighbours; it needs to mean that we pursue what the Prime Minister has described as the

“freest possible trade in goods and services”

with the European Union, the fullest possible access to the European single market and the “greatest possible” participation in it. Some members of this Parliament like to describe that as the hardest of hard Tory Brexits, but that is not what a hard Brexit is. We cannot simultaneously say that what the Prime Minister is seeking is a hard Brexit and then say that coming out of the EU and trading on WTO terms would be the hardest of hard Brexits, because those are not the same things. The Prime Minister and the British Government do not want Brexit to mean trading on WTO terms. We want the “freest possible trade in

goods and services” with the European Union, the fullest possible access to the European single market and the “greatest possible” participation in it.

Ross Greer: Will the member give way?

Adam Tomkins: Not at the moment.

We must be brave and bold in articulating that vision of free trade. In Scottish politics at the moment, the question is asked: what kind of country do we want to be? The kind of country that I want us to be is a country that is one of the world’s beacons for free trade and for the freedom, liberty and prosperity that come with free trade. That is the argument that we should be making in Scotland and throughout the United Kingdom. On the question of what Brexit means, that is my view about what it should mean, and it is a view that Ruth Davidson and Theresa May share.

Michael Russell: I hear the member’s articulation and I understand it, but can he point to any difficulty in being that type of open, bold and expansive nation within membership of the EU? It seems to work for Germany, which exports far more than we do. What is it about the EU that holds that back? Nobody has yet defined that.

Adam Tomkins: The answer is that membership of the European Union—and, indeed, membership of the European Economic Area—prevents a member state from making a free-trade agreement on its own terms with any other country in the world.

Michael Russell: No, it does not.

Adam Tomkins: It does. The European Union is a trading bloc—it has never been part of the European Union to be a proponent of free trade with the rest of the world. I and my party want the United Kingdom to be a beacon of global free trade.

The second theme that I want to draw out—I am in my last minute, so it will have to be the last theme that I draw out—is the idea that what the SNP produced in December was a reasonable compromise deal. That is a myth that needs to be nailed. The idea is that we could have a differentiated deal for Scotland—with Scotland being in the European Economic Area while the rest of the United Kingdom was outside it—without there being any material change to the nature of the border between Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom. That just does not work. Members do not have to take my word or my party’s word for that. That is what Svein Roald Hansen, the head of the Norwegian Parliament’s EEA and EFTA delegation, said and it is what the deputy chair of the Norwegian Parliament’s foreign affairs committee has said. Michael Russell is fond of quoting Welsh ministers, but the Welsh First

Minister, Carwyn Jones, has also ruled out Scotland getting a special deal from the European Union.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You must close.

Adam Tomkins: Professor Michael Keating of the University of Edinburgh has said:

“It’s not possible. If Scotland was in the single market and the UK was outside there would be a hard economic border between Scotland and England.”

Those are not my words; they are Professor Keating’s.

Michael Russell rose—

Adam Tomkins: I am sorry, but I am out of time.

Michael Russell: I am very happy—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Russell, the member is finished. I know that you are terribly disappointed about that.

Michael Russell: I am.

16:44

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): I thank the committee for its excellent reports and thoughtful recommendations. I also thank the convener, Joan McAlpine, for her equally excellent exposition of their content. The committee offers a welcome and measured voice in the debate about Scotland’s future relationship with Europe.

This morning, I spoke at the opening of the Scottish Tourism Alliance conference and the launch of Scottish tourism week. The sector is of great importance to Scotland, and it has benefited from Scotland’s being part of the EU and the single market. The challenges that the sector faces bring into sharp focus a number of the committee’s points. In particular, the committee recognises the benefits that Scotland has enjoyed from freedom of movement and the valuable contribution that our fellow EU citizens make to our economic prosperity, with over 20,000 being employed in the tourism sector alone. As Christina McKelvie pointed out, those are the same EU citizens whom the UK Government voted, on Monday in the House of Commons, not to protect.

UK ministers like to pretend that they have the same approach to EU nationals as the Scottish Government has, but they do not. We want their rights to be protected and guaranteed: the Tories want to use them as bargaining chips. Ross Greer pointed out—and the committee report says—how difficult it is to complete the 85-page form to become a resident of the UK.

More broadly, migration is key to addressing Scotland's demographic challenges and to our future prosperity. As Richard Lochhead set out in his speech, the growth of our population is crucial to the growth of the Scottish economy, and EU nationals play a vital part in that. There are Scottish jobs and businesses that rely on EU nationals.

Our ability to create a more productive and fairer Scotland depends more than ever on trading with our friends in Europe and the rest of the world, and on attracting investment and talent into our economy. Like Tavish Scott, I thank Daniel Johnson for his opening speech—or at least the first half of it—as it set out the European proposition very well. The great risk to Scottish jobs and our economy is a hard Brexit; worse still would be for the UK to leave the EU with no deal at all.

Joan McAlpine cited evidence in the report that the world has never seen a trade arrangement being dismantled in this way. Ash Denham pointed to evidence that rebuilding the trade deals that we currently have, let alone building any in addition, will take years.

I looked at what I might want to quote from the Conservative speeches. When I looked at what I had written regarding Alexander Stewart's speech, I saw that it was only one word: "bitter".

I turn to the more substantive contributions on the committee's evidence. David Stewart pointed out that the Fraser of Allander institute concluded that if, after Brexit, we were to find ourselves in a scenario in which Scotland was operating under WTO regulations, outside the single market, in 10 years Scottish GDP would be 5 per cent lower, exports would be 11 per cent lower, real wages would be 7 per cent lower and the number of people employed would be 3 per cent lower.

Richard Lochhead pointed out the agriculture tariffs of 30 per cent to 40 per cent that we face, and Emma Harper quoted Peter Hardwick, who said that agricultural deals will come at the end, because they tend to be the most difficult ones. She also referred to the dairy-labour market.

Members should remember that the UK Government has no mandate from any part of the UK specifically to leave the single market. We can be out of the EU and still be a member of the single market. Indeed, the Conservative Government at Westminster was elected on a manifesto that said:

"We say: Yes to the Single Market."

That is just one reason why the Tory Government's decision to ignore the Scottish Government's compromise proposals is democratically wrong. Yes—the compromise

proposals are technically and legally challenging, but we have been told that they are possible, if the political will exists. The UK Government is determined to take the UK out of the single market.

Finlay Carson: Does the cabinet secretary agree that the single market is underpinned by various policies, two of which are the common fisheries policy and the common agricultural policy? If she does, does she suggest that the SNP Government wants to stay part of the CFP?

Fiona Hyslop: I would ask Finlay Carson whether he could guarantee that the UK Government will not trade the fisheries policies and position of Scotland for benefits in terms of its trading operations.

The UK Government has not moved an inch towards compromise or agreement. We have a choice: to follow the UK towards a hard Brexit or become an independent country.

The First Minister has set out a plan to protect Scotland's interests. We will do all that we can to protect Scotland during the UK's negotiations to leave the EU—we have responsibility to do that. When the terms of Brexit are known, we will give people a choice over the direction that Scotland should take before it is too late to change course. Before people make that choice, we will set out the challenges and opportunities of independence: how to secure our relationship with Europe and build a stronger economy and a fairer society.

Rachael Hamilton: Will the minister take an intervention?

Fiona Hyslop: I want to move on.

My ministerial colleagues and I continue to be active in engaging in Europe and beyond—as Jackson Carlaw has urged us to do. He was a bit ungracious to his convener, so he might want to reflect on his remarks.

Since the referendum, we have met the EU institutions and all 27 member states. Only last week, Fergus Ewing met Commissioner Hogan and Minister Creed during a visit to Brussels, and Keith Brown visited Berlin and Hamburg. Across Europe—and the world—Scotland's predicament has been met with interest, understanding and open ears. Europe is listening to us.

Scotland is at a crossroads: at stake is the type of country that we want to be. We want to be seen as an outgoing and welcoming European nation. We embrace the values of democracy. Let us not be driven against our will to a damaging hard Brexit; let us instead give the people of Scotland the opportunity to choose their future for themselves.

16:50

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland)

(Lab): In my role as the committee's deputy convener, I thank the committee clerks and advisers, the SPICe researchers and all those who assisted us in our work and who have contributed to the debate. I also make a special mention of the elected members of the Welsh and London assemblies who came to Scotland to discuss issues of common interest, as well as the elected representatives who met us during our visits to London and to Brussels.

Today's debate has focused on our most recent report "Determining Scotland's future relationship with the European Union". Although we did not achieve complete consensus, it is striking that all five parties on the committee were able to agree to a broad range of conclusions based on the evidence that we heard.

The report is only a fortnight old. In some respects, its conclusions and the committee's recommendations have been overtaken by events, as Mike Russell made clear in his opening speech. However, the report's tenor remains relevant.

Although committee members agreed about the benefits of the single market for Scotland and for the UK as a whole, we neither endorsed the Scottish Government's proposed mechanism for Scotland to remain in the single market if the rest of the UK were to leave, nor did we reject it; instead, we said:

"a bespoke solution that reflects Scotland's majority vote to remain in the single market should be explored with the EU 27 as part of the negotiations ahead, before and after the triggering of Article 50."

It is worth remembering that all committee members agreed to that wording.

At the time that we agreed the report, a majority of the committee believed that a differentiated solution could be found in the EU to accommodate Scotland in, or its connection to, the single market, but no collective view was expressed about what that differentiated solution might be. However, we were explicit in saying that a bespoke solution for Scotland—within the UK—should continue to be explored after, as well as before, the triggering of article 50.

Given this week's events, whether anyone still believes that a bespoke solution for Scotland within the UK is possible is a debate for another day. Suffice it to say at this juncture that nothing in the evidence that we heard from Scottish ministers led us to expect a fundamental change in their approach before the triggering of article 50.

It is important to note that the committee welcomed the intensification of discussions at official and ministerial level on the proposals made

by the Scottish and Welsh Governments. We called on UK ministers to respond to the Scottish Government's proposals before invoking article 50 and we asked them to say whether the Scottish Government's objectives for a differentiated solution would be set out in the article 50 letter to the EU.

Those were reasonable demands, commanding all-party support on the committee, even if their force has been somewhat weakened by this week's wider developments. Our call for the Scottish and UK Governments to work together on those matters still stands; so, too, does our call—made by the majority—for transitional agreements to be requested by the UK Government in the letter triggering article 50.

The convener mentioned that, in Brussels, we met members of the European Parliament's Committee on Constitutional Affairs. In their discussions with us, they were clear that a withdrawal agreement would be negotiated first, followed by a separate agreement on the UK's future trade relationship with the European Union.

Our committee's report on migration and citizens' rights recognised the contribution of EU citizens living in this country, called for them to be reassured about their future status without further delay and acknowledged the case for a differentiated approach to the issue of free movement and migration in the UK.

We now know that the UK Government has chosen to leave the future of EU citizens in this country to be dealt with as part of the withdrawal agreement, which will also have to deal with other difficult issues: EU staff and pensions; UK payments as part of current EU programmes; and the location of EU agencies.

Even if the divorce deal dealing with all those difficult issues is done within a two-year timeframe, a future trade deal between the UK and the EU clearly will not be. The Canadians, whom we also met in Brussels, took two years to agree the scope of what would be included in their trade deal with the European Union and then another five years to agree the terms. Ratification and implementation follow thereafter.

In view of such daunting timescales, the majority of the committee took the view that the UK Government must seek to agree transitional arrangements as part of the article 50 process to maintain something like the existing terms of trade while a long-term agreement is put in place.

In Brussels, we also heard from lawyers with expertise in these areas that World Trade Organization rules permit transitional arrangements for up to 10 years, after which the default position of WTO terms and tariffs would come into force. Avoiding such an outcome—

dependence on WTO rules—would require a final deal to be reached during a transitional period, which, in turn, would have to follow from the withdrawal agreement. The committee heard from nobody at all outwith the UK Government who believes that such transitional arrangements might not be necessary.

On the subject of powers repatriated from Brussels, as the convener said, we concluded that any such power that is not currently reserved should be devolved, alongside a funding mechanism, with no detriment to Scotland. Different parties have different views on what should happen with the repatriation of other competences, but an agreed starting point for that debate is laid out in our reports.

There are many EU funding streams, but structural funds and agricultural support cover the main ones that are delivered through a territorial funding framework. The question of whether there should be a UK-wide framework for agreeing support for disadvantaged regions or less favoured areas objectively across Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales was raised. If that is to happen, the reports' clear implication is that such a framework has to be devised by the UK Government and the devolved Administrations working together, rather than being determined by the UK Government alone.

Whatever the timescale for article 50, the committee agreed unanimously that the respective Governments should deal with European partners on the basis of an agreed approach. Current practice in relation to the Council of Ministers is described in our reports in these terms:

“Scottish Ministers have participated in negotiations following the prior agreement of a UK negotiating line and set of priorities. This principle should apply to the withdrawal agreement and any new free trade agreements.”

We also said that, as those negotiations proceed, a means should be found to involve the Scottish Government in discussions on future trade deals, whether by creating a joint ministerial committee on international trade or in some other way. Just as importantly, we called for the written agreement between the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament to be augmented to ensure that committees of the Parliament are fully informed by ministers on both the EU withdrawal agreement and any future trade deals. Here again, events this week may have put some of those recommendations in a different light, but they remain the unanimous recommendations of all members of the committee.

The reports have not sought to lay down red lines, whether to the Scottish Government, the UK Government or, indeed, the EU 27. They propose that if the will is there, a means can be found to

square the circle of Scottish support for a close relationship with Europe and freedom of movement with the UK-wide decision to leave the EU—a decision that is not challenged or denied in the reports.

The reports call for a response from UK Government ministers to the Scottish Government's proposals before the triggering of article 50. They also call on both Governments to continue to work together for a mutually beneficial outcome once that critical point has passed. The reports do not express a view on the merits or weaknesses of the Scottish Government's proposal. The committee divided on the merits of the UK Government's approach, but we agreed on almost everything else.

These are serious reports, and they deserve to be taken seriously by all parties and by both Governments. How far developments this week suggest that that is happening I will, for the moment, leave for others to judge. The only thing that we can be certain of today is that we will face continuing uncertainty tomorrow.

I commend the approach that the committee has taken in its reports as the right approach to that uncertainty in the period ahead.

Business Motions

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-04609, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Tuesday 21 March 2017

2.00 pm Time for Reflection
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
followed by Topical Questions (if selected)
followed by Scottish Government Debate: Scotland's Choice
followed by Business Motions
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time
followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 22 March 2017

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 2.00 pm Portfolio Questions
 Communities, Social Security and
 Equalities
followed by Continuation of Scottish Government
 Debate: Scotland's Choice
followed by Standards, Procedures and Public
 Appointments Committee Motion: Acting
 Conveners
followed by Business Motions
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time
followed by Members' Business

Thursday 23 March 2017

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 11.40 am General Questions
 12.00 pm First Minister's Questions
 12.45 pm Members' Business
 2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 2.30 pm Ministerial Statement: Expansion of Free
 Early Learning and Childcare
followed by Scottish Government Debate: British
 Sign Language (BSL) Consultation
followed by Business Motions
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 28 March 2017

2.00 pm Time for Reflection
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
followed by Topical Questions (if selected)
followed by Scottish Government Business
followed by Business Motions
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time
followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 29 March 2017

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 2.00 pm Portfolio Questions
 Finance and the Constitution;
 Economy, Jobs and Fair Work
followed by Scottish Liberal Democrat Business
followed by Business Motions
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time
followed by Members' Business

Thursday 30 March 2017

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 11.40 am General Questions
 12.00 pm First Minister's Questions
 12.45 pm Members' Business
 2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 2.30 pm Scottish Government Business
followed by Business Motions
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time—[*Joe FitzPatrick.*]

Motion agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-04610, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a timetable at stage 1 for the Seat Belts on School Transport (Scotland) Bill.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Seat Belts on School Transport (Scotland) Bill at Stage 1 be completed by 25 May 2017.—[*Joe FitzPatrick*]

Motion agreed to.

Parliamentary Bureau Motion

17:01

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of a Parliamentary Bureau motion. I ask Joe FitzPatrick to move motion S5M-04611, on First Minister's questions, portfolio and general questions and topical questions.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the period for Members to—

lodge a First Minister's Question for answer on Thursday 20 April should end at 9.30am on Tuesday 18 April;

submit their names for Portfolio and General Questions on Wednesday 19 and Thursday 20 April should end at noon on Monday 10 April; and

lodge a Topical Question for answer on Tuesday 18 April should be 9.30am on Tuesday 18 April.—[*Joe FitzPatrick*]

Motion agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The question on the motion will be put at decision time.

Before we move to decision time, I am sure that members will wish to join me in welcoming to the gallery Mr Akbar Khan, the secretary general of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. [*Applause.*]

Decision Time

17:01

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): There are two questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that motion S5M-04570, in the name of Joan McAlpine, on behalf of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee, on reports on the implications of the European Union referendum for Scotland, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament notes the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee's 1st Report, 2016 (Session 5), *The EU referendum result and its implications for Scotland: Initial Evidence* (SP Paper 5); 1st Report, 2017 (Session 5), *Brexit: What Scotland thinks: summary of evidence and emerging issues* (SP Paper 64); 3rd Report (Session 5), *EU Migration and EU Citizens' Rights* (SP Paper 84) and 4th Report, 2017 (Session 5), *Determining Scotland's future relationship with the European Union* (SP Paper 99).

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S5M-04611, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on First Minister's questions, portfolio and general questions and topical questions, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the period for Members to—

lodge a First Minister's Question for answer on Thursday 20 April should end at 9.30am on Tuesday 18 April;

submit their names for Portfolio and General Questions on Wednesday 19 and Thursday 20 April should end at noon on Monday 10 April; and

lodge a Topical Question for answer on Tuesday 18 April should be 9.30am on Tuesday 18 April.

Commonwealth Day 2017

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): The final item of business today is a members' business debate on motion S5M-04048, in the name of Stuart McMillan, on Commonwealth day 2017. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament celebrates the importance of Commonwealth Day 2017; acknowledges that Commonwealth Day is an opportunity for the Parliament to focus beyond Scotland's borders and draw attention to the connections it has made across the globe; notes that Commonwealth Day is held on the second Monday in March each year and is an opportunity for individuals, communities and organisations to promote the Commonwealth's shared values of peace, democracy and equality, and to celebrate the association's rich diversity; acknowledges that, at a time of increasing instability and uncertainty in the world, the Commonwealth family of nations in its rich diversity becomes an ever more needed source of strength and hope for all its members; understands that the theme of an Inclusive Commonwealth highlights the values of tolerance, respect and understanding, as well as equity and fairness, set out in the Commonwealth Charter; further notes that the theme informs events organised by governments, schools, community groups and individuals to celebrate Commonwealth Day, and helps to guide activities by Commonwealth organisations throughout the year, and further recognises that, in celebrating Commonwealth Day, the Parliament also celebrates the role of democracy in the positive relationships forged within the Commonwealth.

17:03

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): Last week, we had international women's day; this Friday, we have St Patrick's day; and, on Monday of this week, we had Commonwealth day.

Like the celebrations of the global achievements of women and the usually more exuberant affirmations of Irish identity, Commonwealth day is marked across the globe; it is not marked only in the 53 member countries of the modern Commonwealth. Commonwealth Day is an opportunity for individuals, communities and organisations to promote the Commonwealth's shared values of peace, democracy and equality, and to celebrate the association's rich diversity.

Having emerged from a group of countries that shared a connection with Britain, the modern Commonwealth has been based, from the beginning in 1949, on the maintenance of fundamental values and principles. Since the 1949 declaration, the Commonwealth has regularly restated and refreshed those principles and values.

The Commonwealth comprises people from all the world's continents and, despite the incredible diversity of its members, we are intrinsically linked

through our common history. At a time of increasing instability and uncertainty in the world—today marks the sixth anniversary of the start of the conflict in Syria, for example—the Commonwealth family of nations in its rich diversity becomes an ever more needed source of strength and hope for all its members.

The theme of this year's Commonwealth day is peace building. A peace-building Commonwealth is a natural follow on from 2016's theme of an inclusive Commonwealth, and it reaffirms the Commonwealth charter principle that

"international peace and security, sustainable economic growth and development and the rule of law are essential to the progress and prosperity of all."

The strength of the Commonwealth's commitment to its principles and values, including the promotion of human and political rights, has helped to give it a substantial and distinctive role in the international community. The Commonwealth theme for 2016 celebrated the diversity of the Commonwealth, which is made up of more than 2 billion people. Every person is different and has something unique to offer, and the Commonwealth charter asserts that everyone is equal and deserves to be treated fairly, whether they are rich or poor, and without regard to their race, age, gender, belief or other identity. The Commonwealth builds a better world by including and respecting everybody and the richness of their personalities.

This year's theme informs events to celebrate Commonwealth day that are organised by Governments, schools, community groups and individuals, and it helps to guide activities that are organised by Commonwealth organisations throughout the year.

Membership of the Commonwealth is widely seen as implying a guarantee that a country upholds high standards in democracy and human rights. Scotland remains a progressive, open, outward-looking and inclusive nation, and an internationalist country. As a nation, we value our links with our Commonwealth cousins and, through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, this Parliament plays its part in that.

In my constituency, Greenock and Inverclyde, the Inverclyde Malawi schools partnership has been running since 2007. It links local schools with schools in the Chiradzulu district in Malawi. In the previous parliamentary session, the Inverclyde partner schools supported a wide range of projects, including ones that installed solar and mains electricity, provided clean water, supported feeding programmes, built classrooms and teachers' houses, and—I particularly like this one—formed the Malawi branch of the Greenock Morton supporters club. I do not know how people say, "Mon the ton!" in the various Malawian

languages, but I am looking forward to learning at some point.

Fourteen schools have already built strong partnerships with young people in Malawi, which not only helps people in Malawi during difficult times but encourages our young people to see themselves as global citizens. Of the 2.4 billion people in the Commonwealth, 60 per cent are young people, which shows the importance of such partnerships in the future.

The spirit of friendship that brings the nations and territories of the Commonwealth together is evidenced by Scotland's connection with the late Nelson Mandela. The lessons of his life, his magnanimity and his power of forgiveness will shine as beacons for decades and centuries to come.

The story of Nelson Mandela's special relationship with Scotland is also a tribute to the role that this nation's anti-apartheid campaigners played in contributing to the demise of the apartheid regime. Mandela was regarded as a terrorist by many and he was an uncomfortable subject for the majority who sat on the fence on the issue of apartheid. However, in Glasgow, a small group of activists was active from the 1960s onwards in trying to assist the African National Congress and, as Mandela was increasingly singled out as a symbol of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, the campaign began to gain traction. Mandela was granted the freedom of Glasgow in 1981 and many cities followed that example. A declaration was launched the following year—signed by 2,500 city mayors—that called for Mandela's release from prison and, for that reason, the story is one that Scotland can be justly proud of.

The Mandela connection reaffirmed Scotland's great tradition of political internationalism. Perhaps Scotland's greatest reward for allying itself with Mandela's battle against apartheid is the collective sense of national decency that such a positive role engendered. That is an important point to remember and it has great relevance for today and for this year's theme for Commonwealth day.

Support for far-right politicians is increasing worldwide. That should be of huge concern to those of us who value peace and prosperity for everyone, wherever we live. As Europe grapples with the defining issues of our age—the largest refugee crisis since the end of the second world war, the growth in inequality and the impact of climate change—now, more than ever, nations across the world must work together.

In opposing apartheid, Scotland revealed itself as a nation that is capable of displaying the qualities that are needed if we are to lay claim to being a tolerant, caring, peace-building and

multicultural society. As well as upholding its values in its own member states, the Commonwealth has the potential to be a hugely influential voice in the wider international community. The diversity of the Commonwealth, whose membership includes some of the smallest states in the world and some of the largest, with very poor countries and some of the richest, must be seen as a particular strength.

It is important that we continue to affirm our commitment to work together as a diverse community of nations, individually and collectively.

17:10

Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con): Commonwealth day is officially celebrated annually on the second Monday in March, and the Scottish Parliament holds a debate to recognise the importance of the Commonwealth as soon as possible thereafter. I thank Stuart McMillan for using his debating time to bring his motion to the Parliament.

The theme for Commonwealth day this year is a peace-building Commonwealth. In this time of world uncertainty and instability, the theme is particularly relevant. The Commonwealth is a family of 53 nations, which stretches across all continents. It is a unique organisation of members with a shared history, who are eminently suited to working together to deliver the peace-building objective. The values and aspirations that unite the Commonwealth are democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association was founded in 1911 and consists of 180 branches, which operate across nine regions—ours is the British islands and Mediterranean region. In October 2016 the seventh secretary general of the CPA, Akbar Khan, took up his post and hit the ground running. It is an honour for our branch that, within months of his appointment to his demanding job, he has chosen to be here in Scotland to listen to this evening's debate, and that Dr Chaudhury, the chair of the CPA, has been here today to meet members of the Scottish Parliament.

The CPA's remit is to connect, develop, promote and support parliamentarians

“to identify benchmarks of good governance and to implement the enduring values of the Commonwealth.”

Good governance and the peaceful transition of power are crucial if international peace and security are to be maintained.

For the remainder of my speech, I will focus on the Commonwealth women parliamentarians group, which was founded in 1989 to increase the number of female elected representatives in

Parliaments and legislatures across the Commonwealth and to ensure that women's issues are brought to the fore in parliamentary debate and legislation.

I am a member of the CWP BIMR steering group, and last month I took part in the CWP's international working group at Wilton Park, in Sussex. Wilton Park is a very special conference centre, which promotes peace and reconciliation, and it was against that backdrop of consensus building that the working group met and took important decisions that embodied Commonwealth day's peace-building theme.

Increasing female representation in the Commonwealth Parliaments is CWP's main goal, but the working group, taking account of the huge diversity and complexity of the issues that parliamentarians in the CWP member states face, also focused on key agreed priorities for the next three years, which include ending violence against women by adopting a zero-tolerance approach to it, in whatever form it takes. It was stressed—crucially—that tackling the issue must be recognised not as an additional spend but as an investment in promoting peace, stability and economic growth.

Parliamentarians throughout the Commonwealth are keenly aware that tackling violence against women, wherever it takes place—in the home, in war zones, or in the worrying levels of abuse that are directed through the internet—is an essential prerequisite to strengthening international peace and security and that, through their effective work for co-operation, the CPA and CWP are ideally placed to take the lead in ensuring that that message is heard loud and clear.

17:15

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): I thank my colleague Stuart McMillan for securing the debate. Since its creation, the Commonwealth has aimed to secure democracy and peace in its member states by promoting the values of tolerance, respect and understanding. The theme of this year's Commonwealth day—a peace-building Commonwealth—invites us to reflect on the current state of peace and security in each member state and collaborate even more on issues of mutual interest.

The Commonwealth is a unique international organisation with a fundamental belief in freedom. Although it is composed mainly of former components of the British empire, countries that were never under British rule, such as Mozambique and Rwanda, have also seen the value of joining and have done so, as has Francophone Cameroon.

In the world of sport, nations and territories, no matter how small, can compete in the Commonwealth games, with Tristan Da Cunha, St Helena and Niue, which has a population of 312, all having sent competitors to the 2014 Glasgow games. I am sure that we all recall those games very fondly, with Scotland competing in its own right—unlike in the Olympics—and doing tremendously well, winning 19 golds and coming fourth. That was well out of proportion to our population in comparison with Australia, Canada and England. In my constituency, the lasting legacy of the games is a unique new state-of-the-art facility at sportscotland's Inverclyde national sports training centre in Largs, which will open in a few short weeks and will help to nurture our future sporting talent.

As a free association, the Commonwealth does not impose any legal or economic obligations, and each member can withdraw at any time without facing sanctions. However, what sets it apart from other intergovernmental organisations is the diversity of its member states. From republics and monarchies and from small Pacific islands to India, Australia and Canada, the Commonwealth's mission is to build bridges, allowing smaller nations to sit down with their larger counterparts as equals. The Commonwealth offers the opportunity to the least-developed member states to negotiate bilateral agreements with more developed countries. In that way, many benefit from strong economic support from the richest Commonwealth member states. However, Commonwealth trade not only helps poorer members; it brings benefits to all members including the UK. Our most important Commonwealth economic partners are Australia, India and Canada, which together invest billions of pounds in the UK annually as a direct result of our strong Commonwealth bonds.

Every year, the Commonwealth supports many cultural and economic projects between member states at every level. As a member of the cross-party group in the Scottish Parliament on Malawi, I warmly support the Scotland Malawi Partnership, which is a perfect example of the bridges that exist between Commonwealth nations. The partnership celebrates more than 1,000 civic links between all 73 Holyrood constituencies and Malawi, and the University of Edinburgh estimates that, as of last year, more than 94,000 Scots are actively involved in those projects. That outlines the desire of the people of Scotland to open up even more to the rest of the world, which is something deeply rooted in our culture.

In my constituency, three schools are twinned with schools in Malawi, promoting friendship and learning between our two countries. The Largs St John's church and the Ardrossan presbytery not only organise solidarity actions such as the

collection of clothing, food and medical supplies but provide a strong support to their sister churches in Malawi. For instance, Largs St John's church contributes directly to the economic life of Katalonje, a little village in Malawi, by supporting the development of women's crafts and work training. I believe that such examples show why the Commonwealth continues to thrive and resonate with so many people in Scotland today.

Nevertheless, many Commonwealth countries still lack basic freedoms, and we cannot be blind to that. The Scottish branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is well respected for its excellent work and its sincere efforts to make improvements in democratic accountability across the Commonwealth. It is great to have Akbar Khan, the secretary general of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, here with us today. I understand that he visited Stockbridge primary school and Holyrood senior school along with Deputy Presiding Officer Linda Fabiani. Such outreach helps to relay the value of the Commonwealth and start discussions about democracy and diversity along with other serious topics such as apartheid, climate change, equality and diversity.

I commend the work of people at every level, from the international to the very local, that allows the Commonwealth family to exist and develop regardless of race, nationality and religion.

17:19

Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab): It is a privilege to have the opportunity to participate in the debate, which I congratulate Stuart McMillan on securing.

This week of all weeks, we reflect on the Commonwealth and on the Commonwealth games in Glasgow, as we have seen the Commonwealth baton again sent off on its journey around the world. It is wonderful to think of that baton traversing continents when at one point it traversed Pollok, Cardonald and other bits of the Southside of Glasgow.

That reminds us of the sheer joy of the Commonwealth games in Glasgow—the friendly games. They saw young people from around the world coming together to compete at the highest levels, and the games showed the world that Glasgow and Scotland can be a wonderful platform for such events and for people coming together.

This afternoon, I had the privilege of chairing an event of the Scotland branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association with the CPA's secretary-general Mr Akbar Khan, involving students and young people from across Scotland. It was a fabulous, hugely thought

provoking and challenging event about what the Commonwealth means now. The young people were there with many ideas and thoughts on what the relationship should be, and I was grateful to have the opportunity to be there.

When we think of the Commonwealth, we cannot stress too heavily its importance at a time of great insecurity, in a world that feels increasingly fragile and less safe than it did even five or 10 years ago. There could be no more appropriate time to have the theme of a peace-building Commonwealth. At the global level, our communities are looking outwards, reaching out to each other and finding ways of co-operating.

The message of peace building is relevant at a global level and at a community level, but it is also relevant in our own homes. I am particularly pleased with the emphasis on addressing domestic abuse. Can we be free as a country if any one of us is not safe and secure in our own home? That message of security and safety is globally understood but, critically, it is locally realised.

The scale of the Commonwealth family is massive. It has 2.4 billion people, or one third of the world's population, and 60 per cent of them are under 30. The reality is that the Commonwealth is a young and vibrant organisation. It is not a relic of past glories, but something that speaks to the best in our international capacity to co-operate.

The Commonwealth involves a new relationship. Those of us of a certain vintage can almost reach back and touch the colonial past with which the Commonwealth is associated. In the past, the Commonwealth was, perhaps, about first-world countries helping and supporting those in the developing world. That sense of help and support is still relevant, and we see significant partnerships in places such as Malawi, but we also have to recognise that there is now a modern relationship. The Commonwealth has the power to give voice to tiny countries on climate change—countries that do not cause the damage but which are on the front line of suffering because of it.

Many Commonwealth countries have modern, thriving and innovative economies that we need to work and trade with, have proper respect for and learn from. Those important modern relationships have replaced the colonial relationships of the past.

Uniquely, the Commonwealth has the potential to trade, but it is not a trading bloc—that is not its point. It is not a supranational organisation but, centrally, it is a voluntary commonwealth of its peoples—not its Governments or states, but its peoples. It has the potential to stand strong, in these fragile times, for the very important values of

democracy, gender equality, the separation of powers and the rule of law. It celebrates diversity, development and democracy.

There can be no more important time to recognise the Commonwealth's strength. It is not something to celebrate simply because of its past, but because it is utterly relevant in these times. I thank everyone in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and its Scotland branch for all that they do to ensure that those values endure.

17:24

Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife)

(Con): I congratulate Stuart McMillan on securing the debate and thank him for raising the subject of Commonwealth day in the Scottish Parliament this evening.

Although the Commonwealth is made up of a very diverse family of nations, we are united by our common ties and shared history. As we have heard, a third of the world's population—2.4 billion people—are involved in the Commonwealth. They work together locally, nationally and globally. The Commonwealth helps to strengthen those bonds, and its member states work together to be a global force for good that is recognised and respected throughout the world.

The values that are shared by the member states of the Commonwealth, which can be found in the Commonwealth charter, are ones that I am sure we all share. Human rights, the rule of law and democracy are the fundamental building blocks of a free and tolerant society. We must all work together to ensure that those values are upheld.

Those shared values are at the heart of this year's Commonwealth day theme of a peace-building Commonwealth. What a wonderful theme to have. It brings together youth and people of all ages throughout the Commonwealth to work for peace, which is something that we all strive for. The very nature of the Commonwealth, which unites some very different countries, is a force for good and a source of stability in the very uncertain times in which we live. The world is a much more dangerous place than it was some time ago. We are not quite sure where we are going, but the fact that the Commonwealth pulls together its member nations and their people gives us strength.

As others have done, I pay tribute to the work of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I thank the secretary general, Mr Akbar Khan, for being in the gallery for the debate. The fact that he is here in Holyrood is a source of pride for us and is testament to what we are trying to achieve. We thank him for coming.

As a new member of the Scottish Parliament, I have been extremely impressed by the efforts to act as the voice of democracy across the Commonwealth nations and by the work that is done to play an active role in the development of member states. I am delighted to be a co-convenor of the cross-party group on Malawi. I have been astounded by the number of projects that are taking place—there are more than 1,000 of them in Scotland—and the number of individuals and organisations that are involved, all of which are to be congratulated on what they are trying to achieve in building bridges and opportunities for young and old in the countries concerned.

With my background in local government, I know how important it is to look for examples of good and best practice in other authorities, and I see that in what is happening across the various Parliaments, which is to be welcomed. The exchanging of information and the sharing of experiences among the members of different legislatures across the Commonwealth can have a profoundly positive impact on parliamentary democracy, which is what we want to see.

I am delighted that Margaret Mitchell talked about the role of women, which is vital. We must encourage more women to participate in the parliamentary process across the Commonwealth. In that regard, I would like to think that the minority Scottish Government values the work of the CPA and everyone who is involved.

The work that the Commonwealth of nations does on a day-to-day basis enriches our lives and promotes stability in times of uncertainty around the world. Following this year's Commonwealth day, I am sure that everyone across the chamber will welcome its achievements, and I wish the Commonwealth continued success. It plays a vital role, which is still very much alive. The Commonwealth started in a very different era, but it is very relevant in today's circumstances. Today's people want to participate and to be involved in it, and I wish it continued success.

17:29

Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con): I thank Stuart McMillan for securing this evening's debate to mark Commonwealth day, which is a very important day.

The Commonwealth is a unique creation. It is a group of diverse nations across the planet that are united, as the motion says, in the

“shared values of peace, democracy and equality”,

so it is only right for Commonwealth day to be marked here in the Scottish Parliament.

The Commonwealth charter's 16 values and principles, which cover issues from democracy and human rights all the way through to access to health and education, are key to the Commonwealth's success, and they provide a guideline to the necessary building blocks for a successful, modern and vibrant democratic state in the 21st century. The charter is part of the reason why we should welcome the expansion of the Commonwealth to other countries such as Rwanda, which joined in 2009, and Suriname, which applied to join in 2012. It is a sign that, although the shared values that I mentioned earlier seem to be in full retreat in some parts of the world, in others they are still being embraced and put into action.

I want to mention a part of the Commonwealth's special bond that means a great deal to me and my role as convener of the cross-party group on the armed forces and veterans community. Watching the unveiling of the Afghanistan and Iraq memorial in London last week, I was reminded of those with whom I served, who included servicemen and servicewomen from Commonwealth countries in operations overseas. It is worth reminding people in this country that Commonwealth citizens freely join our military forces and serve a vital role. Thousands are currently serving in the Army, the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy, and they do so with distinction and honour. I should mention, for example, Sergeant Johnson Beharry, who was born in Grenada and won the Victoria Cross in Iraq some years ago. Their contribution to our military should be welcomed and celebrated; they joined our military forces because the Commonwealth truly matters to them and they share its values, which are worth defending. War memorials throughout our country, from Banff to Bathgate and from Inverness to Inveraray, are inscribed with the names of the fallen from several Commonwealth nations and countries.

I firmly believe that the Commonwealth is one of the world's great institutions, and it is certainly worth celebrating and defending. Indeed, that belief is endorsed by the presence in Parliament today of the secretary general of the CPA, which we really appreciate.

17:31

The Minister for International Development and Europe (Dr Alasdair Allan): As other members have done, I thank Stuart McMillan for giving Parliament the opportunity to celebrate the importance of the Commonwealth family of nations and to emphasise the mutual benefits that are provided by maintaining and enhancing our existing unique relationship with the independent countries around that world that make up the

Commonwealth. At this point, I must give Parliament apologies from the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop, who would have been here but for a long-standing engagement. As others have done, I welcome to the gallery Mr Akbar Khan, who is the secretary general of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and pay tribute to the very important work that the association carries out.

The Commonwealth charter explicitly recognises that

"in an era of changing economic circumstances and uncertainty, new trade and economic patterns, unprecedented threats to peace and security, and a surge in popular demands for democracy, human rights and broadened economic opportunities, the potential of and need for the Commonwealth"

has never been greater

"as a compelling force for good and as an effective network for co-operation and for promoting development".

That description of a time of rapid and unsettling change sounds familiar to all of us who are living in 2017, and it emphasises that the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, as enshrined in the charter, remain values that every generation needs to cherish. The same points were made by, among others, Margaret Mitchell, Alexander Stewart and Maurice Corry in today's earlier debate. Indeed, the First Minister has outlined and underlined our unequivocal support for those values, as represented in other documents such as the European convention on human rights, and we are doing everything in our power to defend the Human Rights Act 1998, which gives the convention effect domestically.

Our programme for government commits to exploring how we can go further in giving effect to the economic, social and cultural rights that are set out in United Nations treaties and other international treaties. Scotland's international framework outlines a strong emphasis on working with our fellow Commonwealth countries to achieve that, and we will consistently and constantly strive to build, maintain and strengthen such relationships through formal trading relationships, which yielded £2.7 billion from exports to the Commonwealth in 2015, and through greater awareness of each other's cultures, which will allow us to unlock a wealth of reciprocal benefits.

As Kenneth Gibson and Johann Lamont rightly identified, those are by no means the only benefits of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth games are perhaps its most visible manifestation, and the Scottish ministers have made it clear that

"The Commonwealth Games values of humanity, equality and destiny are universal and cherished in Scotland."

The 2014 games in Glasgow allowed ministers to promote actively a positive vision of human rights. We sought to raise issues with visiting nations where appropriate, and we worked with stakeholders to put human rights at the heart of the games through awareness raising. In doing that, we welcomed the organising committee's human rights policy statement and provided funding of £25,000 for Pride house in Glasgow during the games.

As part of our efforts to promote those Commonwealth values, the Scottish Government supports various projects, including Beyond Borders Scotland's "women in conflict 1325 fellowship", which provides training to 50 women annually from international conflict areas in order to reaffirm and enhance the role of women in prevention and resolution of conflict.

Promotion of equality in parallel with our Commonwealth partners is also a core component of our international development work. There is work in Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia that is aligned to the 16 United Nations sustainable development goals. One goal states the need to

"Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls".

All projects that are delivered using the international development fund need to demonstrate how they have embedded those goals in their work.

I welcome Mr Gibson's reference to the links between the peoples of Scotland and Malawi, which the Scotland Malawi Partnership in particular represents. Since 2005, we have allocated over £58 million to development initiatives, provided humanitarian assistance, and improved energy access for 80,000 people as part of our long-standing special link with Malawi. That relationship, of course, dates back to the work of missionaries and Dr David Livingstone. It also looks to the future, in our planned new co-operation agreement. In preparing that, I will be aware—in a way that I was not previously—of the role that Greenock Morton Football Club plays in Malawian society.

We have recently opened a new funding round for Zambia and Rwanda and invited Scotland-based organisations to develop projects to contribute to the global fight against poverty and inequality.

Our work in India and Pakistan further strengthens our commitment to sustainable development. The Scottish Government is working with Scottish and local partners on clean water, sanitation and sustainable energy, for example. That work and those connections are evidenced by the Pakistan Scottish scholarship scheme for women in higher education, which the Scottish

Government introduced in 2013 in collaboration with the British Council. It has enabled hundreds of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to study.

We live in somewhat uncertain times—a number of members have alluded to that. As the United Kingdom progresses towards its exit from the European Union, it is becoming even more important that we maintain and strengthen relationships with the independent countries across the world that comprise the Commonwealth, and that we strengthen the friendships that exist between the peoples of the Commonwealth. That is becoming more important than ever for providing stability in these times of uncertainty.

Scotland remains as passionate as ever about our place in the Commonwealth, and we will remain a committed member of the Commonwealth family of nations.

Meeting closed at 17:39.

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