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Tuesday 29 November 2016

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Scottish Parliament

Tuesday 29 November 2016

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

Time for Reflection

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Good afternoon. Our first item of business this afternoon is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader today is Father Andrzej Halemba, who is the head of projects for the middle east with Aid to the Church in Need.

Father Andrzej Halemba (Aid to the Church in Need): Ladies and gentlemen, on this day, 29 November, in 257 AD, St Saturninus, the first Catholic bishop of Toulouse, was martyred for his faith in Toulouse, France. On that day, the temple oracles accused him of having previously struck them dumb when he had walked past. They threatened him and told him to either offer a sacrifice to appease their deities or expiate this crime with his blood. His reply was his final prayer for the cross:

“I adore one only God, and to him I am ready to offer a sacrifice of praise.”

He was still alive when he had his feet tied and roped to a bull, which dragged him about the town until the rope broke. Two Christian women gathered up his remains—reminiscent of the two women standing by Christ as he was crucified—and ensured that he received a reverential burial. The saint now rests in the basilica of St Saturninus, Toulouse. He is the patron saint of Toulouse.

St Saturninus’s witness was an expression of his faith—an act of sacrifice and adoration to God. This is reflected in John, chapter 12, verse 24:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

In 2014, Pope Francis described Christ as “the first martyr, the first ... faithful witness”.

He added that there are more such persecuted witnesses in the world today than there were in the first centuries of Christianity. The persecution of Christians is not a distant or historical series of events but a frightening reality for our brothers and sisters in Christ today. More Christians have been killed for their faith this century than in all the previous 19 centuries combined.

The international Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need asserts the validity of the estimate from Human Rights Watch observers that, of all

religiously based persecutions worldwide today, 75 per cent are aimed against Christians. They are suffering discrimination and intimidation and are being kidnapped, tortured and killed. They are consoled by Matthew’s beatitudes, at chapter 5, verse 11:

“Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.”

What will you do to help your fellow Christians who are persecuted because of their faith? St Teresa of Ávila said:

“Prayer is an act of love; words are not needed.”

How will you put your prayer into action?

Topical Question Time

14:05

Sexual Abuse

1. Rachael Hamilton (South Scotland) (Con):

To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to protect children involved in football from sexual abuse. (S5T-00231)

The Minister for Childcare and Early Years (Mark McDonald): Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children in Scotland, including when they take part in sport, is of paramount importance to us all. Through sportscotland, Children 1st has been funded to provide training, information and support to Scottish governing bodies of sport. That work includes putting in place minimum operating requirements for child protection to safeguard children and ensure that sport governing bodies take a consistent approach. The Scottish Football Association has implemented those requirements to ensure that all qualified coaches who are involved in youth football are registered with it and have undertaken the necessary disclosure checks.

With regard to the horrific allegations of non-recent abuse that have been made over the past week in England, any allegation of abuse should be directed to the police to investigate. The SFA is also encouraging anyone who has concerns relating to child abuse in Scottish football to contact the dedicated NSPCC hotline on 0800 023 2642. The hotline will be available 24 hours a day, and people who call will receive professional assistance and support in strict confidence.

Rachael Hamilton: Clearly, this is a distressing issue and one that should be approached with care and consideration. Does the Scottish Government support calls from the likes of Gordon Smith, the former SFA chief executive, to launch a wider inquiry into other areas, such as sport?

Mark McDonald: As I have mentioned, the hotline that was recently launched by the NSPCC is available to receive calls. It was launched only on Friday, and at this stage it is too early to say how many calls have been received. The Scottish Government will continue to liaise with the NSPCC and with governing bodies on the volume of calls that are being received and on whether any further steps are required later in the process.

Rachael Hamilton: I appreciate the work that the Scottish Government has done in setting up the hotline. However, I am disappointed that it is not undertaking an investigation into abuse in sports clubs. When asked about the current inquiry, Break the Silence said:

“Where we stand, it makes no difference where the abuse occurred. All survivors should be able to access recovery services.”

The current inquiry risks not going far enough in helping victims of child abuse. Will the Scottish Government listen, reconsider and instigate a focused investigation into abuse in sports clubs?

Mark McDonald: Rachael Hamilton will be aware that, in the Deputy First Minister's statement to Parliament, he made clear the parameters of the inquiry into historical child abuse and was very clear about the reasons behind those parameters. That said, we take seriously any indications or reports of sexual abuse in sporting bodies and will continue to monitor the number of calls that are made to the hotline to determine, alongside other bodies, whether any further action is required in that specific area. That does not affect the remit of the historical abuse inquiry, which has been set by the Deputy First Minister.

Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP): In his answer to Rachael Hamilton, the minister stated that any allegations of sexual abuse of young players in Scotland should be referred immediately to Police Scotland. Does he agree that the Scottish Football Association should not take any investigatory role in these matters, as there may well be a conflict of interest, and that any referrals to the SFA should be immediately referred to Police Scotland?

Mark McDonald: Anyone who believes they were abused as a child involved in football or who has a concern about someone they think was abused should contact the police to investigate. That also applies to anyone who is currently being abused or who is concerned about a child being abused, whether at football or in any other sporting environment—or, indeed, in any other circumstance. The right people to investigate criminal offences of abuse, whether current or non-recent, are Police Scotland, and I concur with Christine Grahame in that respect.

Children with Additional Support Needs

2. Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab):

To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the Scottish children's services coalition warning that Scotland faces a “lost generation” of children with additional support needs. (S5T-00232)

The Minister for Childcare and Early Years (Mark McDonald): The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 places duties on education authorities to identify, provide for and review the additional support needs of their pupils. Since the act was passed, it has been amended—in 2009 and again last year—to ensure

that children's rights sit at the heart of the legislation, the framework and the approach that is taken.

The act and other actions that have been taken by the Government and partner agencies—including education authorities, which in 2015 increased their spending on additional support needs by £24 million—are helping to provide better outcomes for children and young people with additional support needs. Achievement and attainment continue to improve. In 2015, 86.2 per cent of pupils with additional support needs had a positive destination, compared with 82.3 per cent in 2011-12, and 60.7 per cent of 2014-15 school leavers with additional support needs had one or more qualifications at Scottish credit and qualifications framework level 5 or better, which is an increase of 11.2 percentage points since 2011-12.

It is clear that we need to do more and stay focused on ensuring that children and young people are supported to fulfil their potential.

Monica Lennon: I refer to my entry in the register of members' interests, as I am a local councillor in South Lanarkshire Council.

Official figures for 2015 show that 22.5 per cent of pupils were recorded as having additional support needs. That is an increase of 16 per cent since 2013. Meanwhile, the number of learning support teachers fell by 13 per cent between 2010 and 2015—that is a decrease of 427. The number of support staff in schools, such as additional support needs auxiliaries and behaviour support staff, dropped by more than 9 per cent between 2010 and 2015. That is a reduction of just over 1,800. Will the minister act to protect the most vulnerable pupils by ruling out cuts to local authority budgets?

Mark McDonald: It is worth reflecting on what is captured by the figures on additional support needs that Monica Lennon cited. They capture pupils with any requirement for additional support throughout a school year. An identified additional support need does not necessarily exist throughout that year—for example, a family bereavement could require the provision of additional support to a pupil. A change was made to the statistics that were collected, and that is perhaps reflected in some of the figures that were captured by Monica Lennon.

It is worth noting that about 95 per cent of children are educated in mainstream settings, where support is provided through classroom support—the number of classroom assistants has increased—and through teacher professional development to enable teachers to better understand and support the needs of children with additional support needs.

Monica Lennon: The figures that I read out are concerning, and it is not just me who is concerned. The Scottish children's services coalition, alongside local authorities, has written to the Scottish Government to say that the cuts are affecting vulnerable children and families.

We read today, in a new report from the Accounts Commission, that local authorities face a predicted funding gap of £553 million by 2018-19. Scottish Labour would use the new powers to the Parliament to invest in vital services. The minister has not ruled out further cuts today, but will he think again and listen to the Scottish children's services coalition and parents across Scotland, and then seriously address the need to increase resources for services for children and young people with additional support needs?

Mark McDonald: I repeat, as I said in my initial answer to Monica Lennon, that in 2015, which is the last year for which we have audited figures, the spend on additional support needs increased by £24 million.

I have read the Scottish children's services coalition's press release, which makes it clear that the genesis of its concern is in Philip Hammond's autumn statement. That is the reality in which we operate in fiscal terms. The press release states that we need to look at greater public sector reform and collaboration, which is an agenda that we should all be signed up to. It follows clearly in the spirit of the Christie commission, and I will be more than happy to discuss that with the coalition in response to the letter that it has sent to the Scottish Government.

Jeremy Balfour (Lothian) (Con): I recently visited Seamab school in Perthshire, which cares for and educates vulnerable children with complex needs who are aged between five and 13. One member of staff informed me that one of the children who attends the school had 17 care placements before they arrived at the school. Another member of staff told me that another child was about to be removed from the school because the local authority was no longer willing to pay the necessary amount to the school.

Does the minister agree that any child who is placed with 17 sets of foster parents or any child who is removed from a school because of a financial measure has been failed by us all? Will he write today to each local authority to confirm the Government's position that each child's needs should be met according to those needs and not any other consideration?

Mark McDonald: The principle that lies behind GIRFEC is of course getting it right for every child. Jeremy Balfour's points tie in succinctly to the points that were raised in last week's debate on adoption and permanence, and I am sure that his

points will also feed into the work that is being undertaken in the care review in relation to children who find themselves moving from place to place rather than achieving early permanence, which would lead to better outcomes for them.

I take on board the points that Jeremy Balfour made. They would perhaps be better addressed as part of the wider review, and I am sure that he and other members will take the opportunity to feed into that review their views on how best to take the work forward.

Culture, Creative Industries and Tourism (European Union Referendum)

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-02795, in the name of Fiona Hyslop, on the implications for culture, the creative industries and tourism following the European Union referendum.

14:17

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): I am pleased to have secured this debate to discuss the critical issues within my wider portfolio following the EU referendum.

The shock and dismay that have been expressed by our cultural and creative industries and our tourism sector were immediate, heartfelt and emphatic. We have overwhelming support from those sectors for our place in the EU. The Creative Industries Federation, for example, has stated that 96 per cent of respondents in a survey of its membership are in favour of remaining within the EU. In the five months since the referendum, I have been incredibly encouraged by how the sectors have mobilised and have harnessed their collective resources to initiate key pieces of work, including reports by the Creative Industries Federation and the Scottish Tourism Alliance, which have provided invaluable feedback on areas of concern.

Brexit has not yet happened, but the referendum result had immediate effects. Devaluation of the pound resulted in performers at the Edinburgh international festival in August needing to be paid in their own currencies rather than in sterling, which increased costs to the EIF. We know that parts of our tourism industry have seen some short-term benefits through the initial devaluation of sterling, but there have also been increases in operating costs—in particular, in fuel and food prices.

We have also seen the inevitable loss of United Kingdom Government influence in the EU and some ostracising of the UK from decision-making processes. However, our voice must continue to be heard in decision making and our interests must be represented in, for example, digital single market negotiations, because they will affect our creative industries' long-term development.

Although we have already seen the immediate impacts of the vote to leave the EU, the longer-term effects are far less certain and of far greater concern. The Scottish Government is exploring all options to avoid a hard Brexit and to preserve the

benefits that we know our sectors gain from our relationship with the EU.

The leaked memo that was seen outside Downing Street points again—if it is in any way true—to the UK Government pursuing a hard Brexit. A hard Brexit must be resisted not just for Scotland but for the whole UK.

We know that our sectors are resilient, not least because of our exceptional offer in terms of our landscapes, history, heritage, and culture and because of our events and festivals. However, we must ensure that no limitations are placed on our labour supply so that the skills that are required by our cultural, creative and tourism businesses remain accessible, and the future of those industries is not put at risk.

More than 21,000 staff from the EU are employed in Scotland's tourism industry. That is almost 17 per cent of those who work in the sector, so a hard Brexit with no protection for existing EU employees could have catastrophic consequences for the industry.

There are also concerns about future infrastructure investment in the hotel sector and about our ability to attract and support new direct air routes, as well as about protecting the UK more generally as an aviation hub.

We know that Scotland already attracts many European visitors who contribute substantially to our economy. In 2015, visitors from Germany made 323,000 trips to Scotland and spent £175 million. There were 196,000 trips from France, during which our French visitors spent £118 million. We must continue not only to sustain but to grow that contribution, in order to support a vital industry and to strengthen its place as one of our key growth sectors.

Our doing so will rely on Scotland's maintaining a warm and welcoming outlook, so we must ensure that our European neighbours are in no doubt that Scotland wants to maintain a close relationship with them. We cannot allow the UK Government's efforts to change those relationships to tarnish and diminish Scotland's positive international reputation. Scotland enjoys a worldwide reputation for the warmth of its welcome. That reputation has been crystallised in recent months through the success of VisitScotland's spirit of Scotland campaign, which was launched by the First Minister in February. That launch fundamentally changed the way in which Scotland is marketed around the world: it is one global brand with one global welcome. That welcome is now particularly important for our visitors from the EU. Although other parts of the UK may be seeing their reputations suffer and may be viewed as being less-than-welcoming

places to visit, Scotland's doors remain open and that welcome is still there.

Our most recent Anholt-GfK nation brands index score was 61.8. That score ranked us in 17th place and showed that our reputation abroad is still strong. It is at least similar to, and sometimes ahead of, competitors' reputations. We must remember that seven of our top 10 visitor markets are in Europe, so we need to make sure that they know that Scotland has that welcome.

Our existing relationships with our European neighbours encapsulate who we want to be as citizens of an outward-facing nation. No matter what happens, those relationships will not suddenly cease to be. Scotland is, and has been throughout our history, an open and outward-looking country; our contemporary culture and place as a world-class destination reflect that. The Edinburgh international festival's slogan this summer—"Welcome, World"—was a fitting and timely focus for a festival that has become the largest of its kind in the world and which is the model for international co-operation through culture and the arts. Founded in 1947, it was rooted in the idea that culture must be a positive force for reconstructing a shattered post-war Europe.

As the Edinburgh festivals develop plans to celebrate their 70th anniversary in 2017, they have deep concerns about the impact that leaving the EU could have on their globally respected work, which brings the world to Scotland each year. I note that the Labour amendment stresses the importance of that anniversary.

Fergus Linehan, director of Edinburgh International Festival, told *The Herald* on 18 November about the dramatic negative impact that the referendum result was already having on its budget through the fall in sterling. Donald Shaw, who is the artistic director of Celtic Connections, suggested that the issue has already caused that festival to cut back on the number of American artists who will come to the 2017 festival. Those are significant concerns in terms of the position of our festivals and their international outlook.

The European capital of culture programme demonstrates the tangible benefits of cultural exchange through the EU. Places that hold the title can expect to achieve cultural, regenerative and economic benefits. I have today written to the UK Secretary of State for Culture, Karen Bradley, urgently seeking clarity on her intentions for UK participation in the capital of culture programme. Dundee is aiming to hold the title in 2023 and a significant amount of time, energy and funding has already been invested in the bid. It must not now have the rug pulled from under it.

The EU enriches Scotland's culture by bringing the culture of other countries to us both for business and pleasure, and by supporting Scottish artists, tourism and hospitality organisations to develop their international networks, and create perspective and influence. That interpersonal connection is very valuable in those sectors.

We know that artists and performers from outside the EU can already experience difficulties in bringing their work to the UK because of administrative burdens and the costs that are associated with obtaining visas. European artists currently do not face the same difficulties. We will oppose any changes that could negatively impact on them and the significant value that they add to Scotland's culture and to our experience of the wider world.

Access to a labour market of 500 million people is vital to our sectors in both economic and cultural terms. Our national performing companies have significant numbers of artists from other EU countries helping them to deliver the excellent performances that they produce; for example, almost 40 per cent of the performers at Scottish Ballet come from the EU.

Our tourism sector also depends on the numbers of EU nationals who work in it. I reiterate that 21,000 EU nationals work in Scotland's tourism industry, which is 17 per cent of the total workforce. That sector is already experiencing difficulties in recruiting chefs and staff with certain language skills. Reducing the ease with which those skills can be accessed from around the EU will only exacerbate those difficulties and seriously harm the sector.

We need our sectors to have unrestricted access to as wide a pool of talent as possible in the EU in order that they can fill skills gaps and ensure that companies have the right people to deliver their services.

EU membership has provided a framework for our sectors to grow. I have mentioned proposals for the EU digital single market, which could add €415 million to the EU's gross domestic product. Access to an EU-wide single market for digital goods and services would have huge benefits for Scotland's creative industries and their development.

We must also ensure that the proposals meet the needs of our stakeholders. I have spoken twice at the EU culture and audiovisual council on digital single market issues, and I will continue to use all the channels that are available to me to represent the interests of our stakeholders as those proposals develop. However, it is unclear how strongly the UK Government can now influence the shape of those proposals and realise

their potential for our sectors. Indeed, it is unclear whether we can even participate in them.

That is vital in both an economic sense and a cultural sense, because the EU currently constitutes a market for our cultural and creative offer, and EU regulation supports artistic creation. Rebecca O'Brien of Sixteen Films, who is the producer of Ken Loach's Palme d'Or winning film "I, Daniel Blake", has stated that all the company's films in recent decades have been European co-productions. Leaving the EU will not necessarily stop that type of artistic and creative collaboration, but it is likely to make it significantly more difficult and will potentially impact on funding.

EU funding for culture and tourism provides important financial resources to our sectors. However, equally important are the development opportunities that the EU's funding programmes provide for our cultural and creative sectors.

For the 2015 to 2018 European regional development programme, VisitScotland will draw down £11.7 million, which will help our small and medium-sized tourism enterprises to internationalise their business. That £11.7 million of support could be lost if that funding ends, and it is only a small part of our European funding. That could be felt hardest among our young people. Some 34 per cent of the tourism industry workforce in the UK is under the age of 25, which is three times the proportion across the economy as a whole. The loss of the current considerable EU funding would be detrimental to youth employment.

Since the launch of the creative Europe programme in 2014, 33 grants have been made to projects involving Scottish organisations. Those grants have a total value of €11.5 million, but the networking and learning opportunities that the projects provide are equal in importance to their monetary value. That interconnectedness and the free movement of people engender creative ideas and connections—in particular, in our creative industries and our culture sector. They are really important and have great value in and of themselves. EU funding is important to our sectors, but those relationships and the knowledge that European collaboration can help us to develop are also critical parts of our relationship.

The importance of protecting Scotland's relationship with the European Union is clear for the sectors. For culture, the creative industries and tourism, that relationship is particularly relevant for the workforce and freedom of movement. We rely on our strong networks to maintain our position as a modern and progressive nation with a global outlook. Our ties with Europe are historical, and we need to protect them if we are to continue to reap economic benefits and protect our

commitment to cultural and intellectual collaboration.

Scotland's culture is one of the many cultures that make up Europe's rich and diverse shared heritage. Scotland is not separate from Europe: European culture is our culture, and we are determined to protect all that our close relationships with our neighbours add to the lives of each and every one of us in this country.

I move,

That the Parliament believes that the interests of Scotland's culture, creative and tourism sectors are best served by protecting the country's existing relationship with Europe, and in particular maintaining freedom of movement and access to EU funding and collaboration mechanisms; recognises the potentially severe negative impact that any hard Brexit proposed by the UK Government could have on the sectors' ability to compete in terms of cultural exports, staffing, skills and talent recruitment and retention, research and knowledge exchange, ability to influence key cultural policy, such as copyright law, and access to key EU markets; acknowledges the importance of EU-funded projects to the culture, creative industries and tourism sectors for networking and developing partnerships, including over €11.5 million of Creative Europe grants to projects involving Scottish partners since 2014, and supports the Scottish Government's position that the UK Government needs to find ways to maintain its influence as proposals develop for the digital single market.

14:29

Jackson Carlaw (Eastwood) (Con): Mrs Carlaw has given me strict instructions that I am to keep my blood pressure in check during this debate.

Here we are again. Mercifully, at least in the 12th debate on Brexit the magnificent confection of Scottish National Party smears, scaremongering and grievance is set to detain us for only a couple of hours.

I welcome the contributions that will be made by John Lamont and Rachael Hamilton, who will focus on tourism; Jamie Greene, who will focus on the digital economy; and Douglas Ross, who will draw the threads together at the conclusion.

Let us begin, then, with "Scotland: A European Nation", in which Nicola Sturgeon, like Pauline in the silent movie era, tells us that she is "in peril". Who is that pamphlet aimed at? What thesaurus of Scottish cultural history was thumbed through, and by whom, to equate the significance of our vote in June with that of Dolly the sheep? What did this nonsense cost the taxpayer?

Let me start with a quote from chapter 5, the "Conclusion", in which, with all the bounty of the richest fountain of largesse, Mr Russell and Ms Hyslop state:

"Whilst we accept that the formal EU negotiating role belongs constitutionally to the UK"—

gee, thanks—

"it is also clear that Scotland's political history and current constitutional framework make it imperative that our distinctive voice and view are heard loud and clear in London and throughout Europe."

There is a difference between representing "our distinctive voice" and the vacuous parade of European capitals that Mr Russell and Scotland's own Evita, the First Minister, have indulged themselves in since June with seemingly no tangible benefit of any material kind.

As the actor Tom Hanks reportedly admonished serial whingers after the US presidential election, it is time to

"put on your big boy pants"

and get on with making a success of the country as it is and not as they would have it. Well, it is time for both Mr Russell and Ms Hyslop to put on their big-boy pants and stop the ceaseless whingeing across Europe and the wider world, culminating in the Government's Armageddon motion for the culture and tourism sector on the decision that none of us three voted for in June, but which gained 17 million votes and a majority across the UK.

Brexit means—

The Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe (Michael Russell): Will the member give way?

Jackson Carlaw: In a moment.

Brexit means that Alex Neil was on the winning side of that vote, we three were on the wrong side and Scotland and the UK will be leaving the European Union.

Michael Russell: Assuming that the opinions of Mr Carlaw's constituents have not changed, when will he have the courage of his constituents' convictions and start to speak up for what they believe about this?

Jackson Carlaw: They voted, along with me, for the United Kingdom to remain in the European Union. They certainly did not vote for the Scottish Government to hijack their representation in the European referendum as an excuse for independence to be trailed out all over again.

What benefit is it to culture, tourism or our creative industries to be called the "Scottish shambles" by the Government of China; to campaign naively like some political ingénue on US polling day against the President-elect of the United States, a country with massive influence on our business and creative arts and artists; to be slapped down by the Government of Spain after waffling on about discussions; to be snubbed by Chancellor Merkel; to be told by Denmark that it will not intervene in the UK discussions; to be

dismissed by the Czech Republic and be told that it is

“premature to address the question of an independent Scotland and its relation to the EU”;

to be slapped down by the President of France, who made it clear that

“The negotiations will be conducted with the United Kingdom, not with a part of the United Kingdom”;

and, finally, to be told by Norway that, despite the former First Minister blunderbussing around the globe, Scottish membership of the European Free Trade Association is not possible, with the FM being urged to engage in a constructive dialogue with the UK Government on the matter?

This overreaching, fuelled by the messianic subservience of the First Minister’s party, is leading Scotland up a blind alley. At this rate, it may become necessary for the First Minister and Mr Russell to voluntarily surrender their passports before they do any further damage. Their six-month mission has failed to deliver. Their approach is distancing Scotland from the real discussion and debate and undermining Scotland’s voice in the negotiation that is soon to come.

Contrast the tweets, statements and behaviour of Mr Russell and the First Minister with those of Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London and no supporter of the UK Government, who, last week, tweeted about the positive discussions that he was having with the UK Government to ensure that the world knows that London—which also voted to remain—is “open for business” and that he is working to ensure the best deal for London and the UK.

Enough, then, of sashaying across the tarmac at number 10, sweeping past the Scottish news teams to grandstand for the benefit of the UK media. Scotland needs its Eva Perón to get on with the day job and to ensure that the subtle variables that can be negotiated in this process are achieved and not squandered.

Fiona Hyslop: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport estimates that 15 per cent of all multichannel broadcasting jobs in the UK rely on the audiovisual directive. If the UK no longer has full membership of the EU single market, it is highly likely that such regulations would continue to apply and would pose a significant threat to broadcasters and jobs in Scotland. Can we get to the motion in hand? Mr Carlaw should answer that question.

Jackson Carlaw: The motion is just a vacuous list of potential scaremongering, none of which is validated in substance at all.

I remember that, when ITV stopped showing “Miss Marple” and “Poirot” in Scotland, the voter

reigned supreme; I very much doubt that the rest of Europe is suddenly going to switch off the opportunity for Scottish programmes, Scottish broadcasting and Scottish participation any more than Britain is going to stop screening Scandinavian or other European television programmes. What the Government is suggesting is complete nonsense.

Scotland’s creative artists have thrived without the EU. As Lewis Macdonald points out in his amendment, it was a Jewish immigrant who founded the Edinburgh festival, the 70th anniversary of which we are set to celebrate. All the talent that Fiona Hyslop mentioned thrived before we were in the EU. Did Jack Buchanan need to be in the EU to become a major global star? Absolutely not. Our acting and musical talent and our directors and artists are the toast of the creative arts the world over.

Are there challenges ahead? Of course. We are set to unpick a framework that has evolved over 40 years, but we are not doomed to fail, as Michael Russell and Fiona Hyslop lamentably insist we are. Will EU nations no longer wish to see our productions? Of course not. The creative industries are worth some £84.1 billion annually to the UK and some £3.7 billion to Scotland, and some 71,800 people are employed in the sector. Perhaps we will even be able to reverse the savage 11 per cent cut in funding for Scottish culture that the Scottish Government has imposed in the past year.

As I observed in the recent debate on the BBC charter, the Scottish Government needs to do far more than whinge about Brexit. We need studio capacity. The Pentland Studios proposal, on which the reporter was expected to rule back in June, remains moribund. Scottish Enterprise lags behind its Northern Irish counterpart in appreciating its role in investing in and securing new business for Scotland.

Brexit is a challenge, not a brick wall and, by working together with the UK Government, we can secure a flourishing future for the arts and tourism. I commend my amendment to the chamber.

I move amendment S5M-02795.1, to leave out from “the country’s existing” to end and insert:

“Scotland’s position within the UK and ensuring that Scotland retains unfettered access to the UK single market and leaves the EU on the same terms as the rest of the UK; recognises the potentially severe negative impact that any future Scottish independence referendum would have on the economic growth of Scotland’s culture, creative industries and tourism sectors, in particular, because Scotland exports more in creative industries to the rest of the UK than it does to its EU and other international partners; acknowledges that it is in Scotland’s interests to maintain a strong relationship with its European and other international partners, and recognises the benefits that Brexit may bring to these industries through the UK

Government concluding free-trade agreements with the EU and other countries around the globe.”

14:36

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab): Much of the focus of debate since 23 June has been on the economic impact of leaving the European Union and how to maintain the benefits that we have derived from being in the EU. Unfettered access to the single market and membership of the customs union have been critical to jobs, business and growth in Scotland and across the United Kingdom for more than 40 years, but our place in Europe is not just about trade and investment. It is also about culture, our interaction with the rest of the continent, and our shared values and aspirations for the future.

The Government’s motion talks about

“Scotland’s culture, creative industries and tourism sectors”,

and much of its focus is on economic aspects of those, such as

“EU funding and collaboration mechanisms ... access to key EU markets”

and

“proposals ... for the digital single market.”

We agree that all of those industrial, sectoral issues are important, and so are

“Creative Europe grants to projects involving Scottish partners”,

and access to “skills and talent” and “research and knowledge exchange”.

However, the cultural implications of Brexit go wider and deeper than simply the economic impacts and the institutional relationships between Scotland and the EU. The choice between engagement and isolation is an economic and a political choice, but it is also a cultural choice. That is why I lodged my amendment, and it is also why we on this side reject the Conservative amendment.

We have just heard a very good example of how, with every passing week, the Tories’ embrace of Brexit appears to be becoming closer and warmer. To talk of the benefits that Brexit “may bring” to Scotland’s culture, creative industries and tourism sectors at the same time as denouncing the “potentially severe negative impact” of jeopardising Scotland’s

“unfettered access to the UK single market”

through more referendums makes no more rational sense than it does to reject Brexit and embrace independence. It is simply fantasy to claim that such benefits might come from

“the UK Government concluding free-trade agreements with the EU and other countries around the globe.”

What we are actually contemplating is the UK withdrawing from agreements with 30 of our friends and neighbours that go far beyond free-trade agreements and give access to a single market of 500 million people. Saying that you favour free trade while embracing the prospect of tariffs and visas does not disguise the reality of what Britain walking away from Europe could mean.

Culture counts, the campaign to highlight the value of culture in Scotland, which has 46 national, umbrella and membership bodies across the arts, heritage, screen and creative industries, gave evidence on the implications of Brexit to the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. Its description of the nature of culture is one that everyone would endorse. It said:

“Our cultural life is an expression of who we are, who we want to be, and how others see us. This is as much true of our collective national identity, at home and abroad, as it is of the many and diverse artistic expressions we exercise as individuals.”

Donald Dewar spoke in similar terms at the opening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999:

“This is about more than our politics and our laws. This is about who we are, how we carry ourselves.”

Culture is more than an aggregation of economic benefits. It is cultural life that makes us human and we must seek to protect Scotland’s open and welcoming culture in the difficult and dangerous times that lie ahead. Our amendment highlights the inclusive and outward-looking character of that culture, because those characteristics are more important today than they have been in many years.

As the cabinet secretary mentioned, the Edinburgh International Festival will celebrate its 70th anniversary in 2017. That is more than two generations of welcoming the world. In 1947, Europe was only beginning to recover from the devastating impact of the second world war. The idea that this country should host a festival of arts and culture as a beacon of hope for Europe began with Rudolf Bing, who fled from Austria to Britain in the 1930s. It was endorsed by Herbert Morrison, leader of the House of Commons in the post-war Labour Government. Edinburgh overtook Oxford as the host city of choice on the initiative of Henry Harvey Wood, who worked in Edinburgh for the British Council.

The Edinburgh festival is in Scotland and of Scotland but it is not just for Scotland or by Scotland. Its artists, its audiences and its purpose are, and always have been, for and by the rest of Britain and the rest of the world, and it grew as a symbol of hope out of the darkest times in the

modern history of Europe. In our time, we cannot fail to see the risk of dark times ahead. There are people who want Britain to turn its back on Europe, just as there are people who want America to turn its back on the world. The need to look outwards, not inwards, has never been greater, and it is as urgent a need in Scotland as it is anywhere else.

Labour's vision is of a Scotland in the 2020s that has not turned its back on the rest of Britain or on the rest of Europe. That is the vision that we propose and for which we will vote.

I move amendment S5M-02795.2, to insert after "mechanisms":

“; believes that, with the approach of the 70th anniversary of the Edinburgh International Festival in 2017, it is more important than ever to promote the inclusive and outward-looking character of Scotland's culture and its welcome to the world”.

The Presiding Officer: We now move to the open debate. I remind members that we have plenty of time in hand so they should feel free to make and take interventions.

14:42

Ash Denham (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP): Our creative industries are one of Scotland's success stories. If members are asked to think of a book that has been adapted as a series—for Amazon and featuring sweeping Scottish scenery and historic castles—they might think of “Outlander”. If they are asked to think of a top video game, they might think of Grand Theft Auto. If they are asked to think of an arts festival, they will almost certainly think of Edinburgh. The success of the few that I have mentioned is that they are just as famous outside Scotland as they are in it. That is because Scotland's creative industries have an impact, showcase Scotland and our home-grown talent and bring people here in their millions.

The sector contributes much to the country in many different ways, but its contribution to the economy is significant. Data published by Scottish Development International in June this year showed that Scotland's creative industries contribute £3.7 billion in gross value added to the Scottish economy each year, employ nearly 80,000 people and have a total turnover of £5.2 billion.

I am an Edinburgh MSP and Edinburgh is home to the international festival, the fringe and other programmes that make it the largest arts festival in the world. There are now 12 major festivals in Edinburgh—the festival city. The theme of the 2016 Edinburgh festival was “Welcome world” to demonstrate the international outlook of Scotland's festivals.

The international festival in August is a state-of-the-art, world-class cultural event that projects Edinburgh on to a world stage. The festivals, combined, attract 4.5 million people and generate £280 million for Edinburgh and £313 million for Scotland per year. A survey reported in *The Herald* recently stated that 94 per cent of tourists say that the festivals are part of what makes Edinburgh a special place to visit. Festivals are integral to the city, but they could be under threat. A change to immigration rules or to funding streams due to Brexit will pose a serious risk to them.

Fergus Linehan, the director of EIF, said that the current political culture of battenning down the hatches was the opposite of the movement that inspired the creation of the festival in 1947—as an example of international cultural exchange and to unite people—and that we should seek to maintain that. Festivals Edinburgh stated that it was detecting

“increased caution in international partners in committing to medium to long term collaborations because of the uncertainty”

due to Brexit.

According to the Brexit report that the Creative Industries Federation recently published, access to international talent is a pivotal issue for the city. With thousands of international performers programmed every year, changes to UK visa requirements for non-EU performers have already made booking acts far more difficult, and festival organisers are concerned about the impact of extending tougher visa conditions to European performers as well. European visitors constitute their largest international market, so changes to ease of entry if visas are required could damage visitor numbers. It makes no sense to make it more difficult for visitors to visit.

The Edinburgh international festival is among the festivals that have reported an immediate impact on their business planning from the fluctuation in sterling. Given lead times, traditionally the international festival negotiates contracts with acts in pounds sterling in order to protect against fluctuation in international markets. Since the referendum, artists are insisting on payment in their own currency, which leaves budgets and profits more vulnerable to the changing performance of currencies.

Video games are another Scottish success story. With the right conditions, video games could be a growth market for Scotland, attracting large amounts of investment money. Scotland is developing a reputation as a place where creative companies can be built and can grow and flourish. However, in order to grow, companies must be able to access the best talent from around the world. Chris Van der Kuyl of 4J Studios, which

develops Minecraft—a particular favourite of my sons—believes that the UK Government needs to adopt a more “enlightened immigration policy” as skills shortages in the technology sector are constraining growth. He says that foreign students who come to study video games development are “fairly heavily leant on to get out of the country after graduating”,

which he said was “disastrous”. He said:

“In our immigration policy we’re very well structured to invite people in who have already proven themselves, but they’re already settled.

We need to attract talent that is very early-career, that doesn’t quite fit the Home Office boxes that are there at the moment, but which is exactly what we need in our companies.”

Creative industries are, by their very nature, collaborative. They engage across borders, bringing ideas and people together. A hard Brexit would challenge those principles, which underpin the success of these sectors. That is why a hard Brexit is not in Scotland’s best interests and must be challenged.

14:48

John Lamont (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): This is the 12th debate that we have had on the EU referendum result—the 12th opportunity for the SNP to stand up and talk about how great the EU is and how everyone in Scotland wants to remain a member. What, I ask, has been achieved so far? There is little in the way of clarity on the Scottish Government’s position, but much in the way of grievance; and we have spent less than half the time debating education, a topic that is supposedly the SNP’s number 1 priority.

Nevertheless, I am happy to speak today on the implications for culture and tourism of the UK’s decision to leave the EU, and I will focus my remarks on tourism, which is one of the most important sectors for the Borders economy.

The Borders is and will remain a fantastic tourist destination that attracts visitors from all parts of the world. It has fiercely proud towns, each with something to offer, and it benefits from a lot of hard work by organisations such as the Scottish Borders tourism partnership.

Let us not overemphasise the impact that Brexit will have on tourism. The UK is not part of the eurozone, the Schengen area or other features of the EU that impact most on that sector, so withdrawal from the EU will not result in major change. Tourism was not a major consideration in the run-up to the referendum and since June there has not been an influx of warnings from tourism leaders about the consequences of Brexit.

Fiona Hyslop: Will the member give way?

John Lamont: I want to make some progress, if I may.

The Scottish National Party-chaired Scottish Affairs Committee opened an inquiry into Scotland’s place in Europe shortly after the vote, and not a single Scottish tourism organisation responded. This is not the major issue for our tourism sector that the Scottish Government is trying to claim it is.

The Government’s motion speaks about the need to maintain freedom of movement. The First Minister has said that she wants the deal to maintain membership of the single market. We have repeatedly heard from the SNP that one of the benefits of Scottish independence would be our ability to operate a totally different immigration system. However, in the same breath, it claims that it will not have a hard border with the rest of the United Kingdom. That is complete nonsense.

The First Minister is in Ireland at the moment. There, she will see that the Irish quietly align their immigration system with that of the United Kingdom in order to make the common travel area work. The Scottish Government will also be well aware of the fact that Northern Ireland is treated as a special case because of its recent troubled history. A similar soft border with the rest of the United Kingdom would be possible only if, like Ireland, Scotland was not part of the Schengen area and if, like Ireland, we aligned our immigration policy with that of the rest of the United Kingdom.

Therefore, perhaps SNP members or, indeed, the minister could clarify why it would be in the interests of the tourism sector to put up a hard border with the rest of the UK, which is our nearest neighbour and largest market—silence.

Presiding Officer—

Fiona Hyslop: Would the member agree with Willie Macleod, the executive director of the British Hospitality Association, that

“Predicted industry growth will be threatened as the demand for staff cannot be met from the domestic job market—any curbs on access to the European workforce will constrain the industry, impacting on the way we all now live”?

This is about freedom of movement as part of the single market. Does the member understand that the leaders of our tourism industry are seriously concerned about access to skilled staff unless we have access to the single market, including freedom of movement? Is he against a hard Brexit—yes or no?

John Lamont: The minister has failed to answer the point that I made about the impact of a hard border with the rest of the United Kingdom.

Scotland cannot have a separate immigration policy from the rest of the United Kingdom without having a hard border. That is a point that the minister has singularly failed to answer.

Leaving the EU presents us with a “major opportunity” to “boost ... tourism”—those are not my words but those of Alex Neil—and, according to the Scottish Tourism Alliance, since the EU referendum result, 57 per cent of businesses have felt confident about the next 12 months compared with only 21 per cent that feel concerned. Businesses responding to the STA survey realise that there are real opportunities to remove red tape—which is a common complaint about many aspects of the EU—improve efficiency and raise Scotland’s profile internationally. The fall in the pound has produced a short-term boost, but Brexit can also provide the opportunity for Scotland to explore new and emerging markets outside the EU.

Lewis Macdonald: I am curious to know whether Mr Lamont agrees with Alex Neil.

John Lamont: I agree that we need to accept the democratic wishes of the United Kingdom electorate—despite the fact that I voted to remain part of the EU, I respect the result—and move to the best deal for my constituents in the Borders, for Scotland and for the United Kingdom.

Fiona Hyslop: What is that?

John Lamont: SNP members are shouting, “What is that?” but I am no clearer about the SNP’s position on that either.

What was of the greatest concern among the businesses who responded to the Scottish Tourism Alliance survey on Brexit? One of the most common concerns expressed by businesses in the tourism sector was the threat of a second independence referendum. The SNP says that it wants what is best for Scotland and that constitutional uncertainty and leaving markets is bad for business. What the tourism sector wants is for the threat of a second independence referendum to be taken off the table.

Tourism in the Scottish Borders has a very bright future with the right support and the right marketing. There are a host of opportunities to promote the Borders as a great destination. There is fishing on the Tweed, the Berwickshire coastline to explore, our abbeys to visit and our many common ridings and festivals to attend—I am sure that the Deputy Presiding Officer would agree.

One very positive idea is the borderlands initiative, which seeks to promote the south of Scotland and north of England as a tourist destination. A constituent of mine, Brian Moffat, is a champion of the idea and has written extensively about the shared history and potential of the

borderlands. I last raised the idea with the cabinet secretary at the beginning of October and I wonder whether she has managed to give it further consideration.

It certainly is in Scotland’s interests to maintain a strong relationship with its European and other international partners. The Scottish Government needs to work with the UK Government to ensure that that happens and that tourism in the Borders and elsewhere in Scotland is given a bright future.

14:55

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): John Lamont spoke about clarity from the Scottish Government. I will give him the opportunity to provide some clarity on his party’s position on the deal that the UK will get from Europe when it leaves the EU. What do the Conservative Party and the UK Government want from any deal?

John Lamont: I am happy to continue my speech. It is clear that the UK Government wants to achieve the best deal for my constituents in the Borders, the best deal for Scotland and the best deal for the United Kingdom, recognising that there were 17 million votes to leave the EU. I suggest to Stuart McMillan that the SNP needs to remove from the table the prospect of a second independence vote, to allow tourism and other sectors of the Scottish economy to move forward without that threat hanging over them.

Stuart McMillan: Once again, there is an utter lack of clarity from the Conservatives. I provided John Lamont with a genuine opportunity to say something on the record. Unfortunately, once again the Conservatives are lacking in clarity and detail, in any way, shape or form, in terms of going forward with the European question.

I want to talk about two personal experiences that I had some years ago. Two of Scotland’s cultural worldwide brands are the kilt and bagpipes—or so I thought. As every member knows, I take my responsibility as parliamentary piper seriously and enjoy playing our national instrument. We all have to start somewhere, and my first attempt at busking internationally was in West Berlin in 1988, outside the Kaiser Wilhelm church. I was taking part in a German exchange trip through school and, being a 16-year-old boy, I was a bit self-conscious about wearing a kilt. Prior to playing, I changed into the kilt in a nearby bar. When I was leaving to go and play, the barman shouted, “Ah, Engländer!”

In 2001, I was best man and piper at a friend’s wedding in a small village in France. The local mayor was delighted to have such an international gathering: my friend Tom was Polish-French and members of his family had travelled from Poland

and Germany to be there. Then there was me, standing there with my pipes and kilt—the whole lot. The mayor referred to me as “anglais”.

The fact that I was born in England meant that both those people were factually correct, although they were not to know that. The thing that got me was this: how and when did the kilt and bagpipes become symbols of England?

Those two events taught me a few lessons and awakened me to a few points, one of which was that, no matter how far the Scots have travelled, we still have an educational and cultural job to undertake when highlighting our country. The 2014 referendum will have helped with that, so possibly my two anecdotes are now redundant. However, when we stop telling people about our culture, our history and our tourism offering, we lose out economically.

A number of years ago, a debate took place in the chamber when Jamie McGrigor was taking forward his member’s bill. He gave the example of the number of people internationally who do not realise that golf is a Scottish sport—but that is because we have stopped telling people that golf is a Scottish sport.

I accept that tartan and the pipes might not be everyone’s taste—I do not know why—but they are just two small cogs in our culture and tourism wheel that help not only to attract people to Scotland but to promote our country globally. That is why leaving the single market and the EU will provide a huge challenge for Scotland and for the UK.

I have piped at a few festivals across Europe, and I know that leaving the EU and the single market will certainly increase red tape for performers—both those who are leaving Scotland and those who are coming here. What effect will that have on the many festivals that take place in Scotland annually? Every year, Glasgow hosts the world pipe band championships. Bringing a pipe band to Scotland from elsewhere in the world is not cheap, and the added burden of the cost of a visa might prevent some bands from travelling, which will also prevent them from performing and competing, and ultimately from visiting our country at all.

Janet Archer, the chief executive of Creative Scotland, said:

“Arts and culture transcend borders and bring people together from across the globe.”

I could not agree more. The cultural sector has major concerns that include the loss of EU funding; restrictions on freedom of movement for artists, performers and companies; rising costs; and an inward focus. One fifth of the staff of the National Galleries of Scotland and Scottish Ballet

come from Europe, and fears have been expressed about the loss of international talent from Scotland as a result of leaving the EU and the single market.

Today’s debate is about culture and tourism. We have had a number of debates about other sectors, and I am sure that some of the arguments and reasons—both for and against—that we are hearing today can be applied to all other sectors, including sport and football. We could go through the Scottish Professional Football League teams and highlight all the players from EU nations. Over the years, many of those players have had a huge and positive impact on our game.

Two weeks ago, in my capacity as chair of the cross-party group on recreational boating and marine tourism—which meets tonight at 6 pm in committee room 5—I attended the cruise summit that was hosted by Fergus Ewing MSP, the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity. We have made progress in bringing the marine tourism sector together, and last year Scotland’s first ever marine tourism strategy—which emanated from the work of the cross-party group—was published.

In the past two years, Greenock ocean terminal has received more than 200,000 visitors from cruise tourism generating wealth and business opportunities for the area. The figures can be doubled when we consider the staff on the ships, too. Inverclyde has a huge amount to gain from exploiting an even greater share of the growing tourism market, and its location lends itself to even greater marine tourism opportunities. Inverclyde is a partner in the city deal scheme, and one of the scheme’s plans is to expand the cruise liner sector.

Cruise tourism is the fastest-growing segment of the travel industry. There has been a 17 per cent growth in the economic impact of the European cruise industry in the past five years. The shipbuilding order book has orders for 73 ships that are worth billions of pounds—17 will have more than 5,000 berths. Those figures highlight a sector that is moving forward and will continue to do so, thereby helping Scotland’s economy and my constituency.

I have one final point to make with regard to John Lamont’s comments on tourism. Last week, the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee took evidence from Tim Reardon of the UK Chamber of Shipping. He said:

“The right of free movement underpins our business, whether it involves tourist travel by ferry or cruise ships coming in from western Europe. Because of where Scotland is geographically, it is part of a north-west European itinerary, so it is predominantly Europeans who are on board the vessels that come into ports in Scotland. Their ability to do so without needing a visa in advance is

critical to the success of that business".—[*Official Report, Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee*, 24 November 2016; c 35.]

Brexit and leaving the single market pose a fresh economic challenge for Scotland and the UK. My own constituency could be adversely affected, which is why I will back the motion in the name of the cabinet secretary at decision time.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): As members can see, we have time in hand, so I am being generous with members' speeches.

15:03

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I am pleased to contribute to the debate. The process of leaving the EU is complex and we are still in the early stages. In previous debates, members have stressed the great uncertainty that surrounds our future in many significant areas, and the desire for us to retain as many of the benefits of membership as possible. The arts, the creative industries and tourism are no different.

In modern economies, there are huge opportunities for our creative industries. In recognition of that, the EU established the creative Europe fund to support the cultural, creative and audiovisual sectors. The EU has pledged to invest nearly €1.5 billion in the creative industries between 2014 and 2020. During its first two years, the fund supported 230 UK cultural organisations and audiovisual companies, as well as the cinema distribution of 84 UK films in other European countries with grants of up to €40 million. It is early days for the fund, but it has already supported projects in Scotland and throughout the UK.

The UK financial situation remains challenging, so arts funding and culture are under significant pressure. Although I recognise that the Scottish Government has sought to protect cultural spend, that spend is largely focused on the national offerings. Meanwhile, there is huge pressure on local authorities, which support a lot of cultural activity and enable communities to participate in the arts. That is one reason why we will argue for a different tax policy in the upcoming budget.

Alongside the pressures that we see in Scotland sits the approach taken by the Tory Government. I was astonished by John Lamont's claims that the arts are flourishing under the UK Government, because we are seeing drastic cuts to local arts provision across the UK regions. As we leave the EU, the support that is offered and the exchanges that are available will be further reduced. That will all have an impact on people's engagement with the arts and their ability to create and participate in the arts in Scotland.

The UK Government is struggling to come up with any answers to the questions about our future. The focus of the debate remains on the single market, trade and security, and we hear reports of concerns about the capacity of civil servants to deal with all those issues. Therefore, it is legitimate to be concerned about the future of our creative industries and tourism and whether they will get the scrutiny that they need and deserve.

Alongside the work that is being done by Scottish Parliament committees, I am pleased to see that the UK Parliament's Culture, Media and Sport Committee is conducting an inquiry into the impact of Brexit on the creative industries, tourism and the digital single market. It will start to take evidence in the new year, but some of the evidence that it has already received shows that there are clear complexities that need to be addressed. Broadcasting is facing unique pressures. For example, the British Screen Advisory Council has highlighted the importance of UK content continuing, post-Brexit, to meet the qualifying requirements for European work by remaining a signatory to the European Convention on Transfrontier Television.

The single digital market has transformed the way that we buy, sell and communicate across the UK. The UK digital market is worth €118 billion a year, and 43 per cent of UK digital exports go to the EU. Although that is dominated by the single trade market, it is also about innovation, shared content, research, knowledge transfer and a consistent and fair copyrighting system that recognises new technologies. My colleague, Catherine Stihler MEP, has been doing a lot of work in that area, particularly in campaigning for comprehensive digital access for public libraries. All that work and influence is being put at risk by the UK leaving the EU.

Tourism faces huge challenges in so many areas, such as the future workforce, currency fluctuation, the ending of European development funding, which is important for the viability of rural tourism, and potential restrictions on visitors and visas for travel.

I spoke to Fife Chamber of Commerce on Friday. Although people recognise that Brexit is causing great uncertainty and that the immediate impact of rising costs is cancelling out any benefits from exports, there was a suggestion that inward tourism could benefit from the weakening of the currency, and that at this point in time we have a promotional opportunity that should not be missed. However, we cannot forget the outward tourism sector and the tour operators in the UK who will face significant challenges with their products. There might be a short-term advantage for tourism, but the long term is much more uncertain.

It will be interesting to hear the cabinet secretary's views on that.

The culture community was one of the most vocal in supporting membership of the EU. Polling suggests that a huge majority of them voted to remain. The arts know no boundaries; they are internationalist and inclusive. As other members have said, next year we celebrate 70 years of the Edinburgh international festival, which was started in the wake of the second world war in 1947. The festival's remit was to

“provide a platform for the flowering of the human spirit”.

It is internationalist, celebratory and challenging, and it is increasingly focused on inclusivity by staging more public performances. It brings together cultures from all over the world.

As yet unknown changes to the freedom of movement of people across the EU creates uncertainty and worry. Removing the free movement of EU nationals will restrict cultural exchange and collaboration. It will also potentially impact on festival audiences. I recognise that many of the performers and visitors come from further afield than the EU. There is a system of visas and permits, but to apply that to all non-UK performers will add to the complexity, the bureaucracy and the cost of staging the Edinburgh international festival and the fringe—and the same applies to many other festivals in Scotland. That stands to have a negative impact on the breadth, the depth and the quality of our festivals.

It is also about the message that the result sends. For those of us who value a diverse society, welcome people who choose to make their lives here in the UK, believe that a good balance can be found between encouraging immigration and supporting our values and communities, the result of the referendum has been worrying, and some of the reasons for it are troubling.

Culture is about who we are. It is not uniform or homogeneous; it tells and interprets many stories. Expression will not end with Brexit; it will respond. We need to listen—it can offer as a way through these difficult times.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Maree Todd.

15:10

Maree Todd (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): Mòran taing—many thanks—Presiding Officer.

It is Gaelic week in the Scottish Parliament, so I want to take the opportunity to highlight the contribution that Gaelic language makes to our culture, creative industries and tourism.

Our Gaelic language is central to our culture, and the EU recognises the language formally and supports and protects it under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

As well as Gaelic's cultural and community benefits, the economic benefit is now well known and is worth nearly £150 million a year to our economy. Using bilingual branding and signage adds value and authenticity to products and services and improves customers' perceptions of provenance. Gaelic can also be viewed and used as an asset in a range of fields, particularly in the creative industries, food and drink, education and learning, heritage and tourism.

As I prepared my speech and thought about what to say, I was struck by the idea that a sense of egalitarianism is central to the European project. The EU does not disadvantage those on the periphery, it does not disadvantage minority languages and it does not disadvantage those living in rural areas. That has translated into massive support for infrastructure projects all around the Highlands and Islands, ensuring that those of us in rural areas have the same opportunity to participate as those people in cities have.

LEADER funding, which, of course, comes from the EU, has made a real difference to people who live and work in rural areas. The bottom-up methodology has harnessed people's vision, energy and commitment, and some rural communities have come alive again.

The tourism industry is absolutely crucial to the economy of the Highlands and Islands—proportionally, much more crucial than it is to the economy in the rest of Scotland. When we consider tourism, a couple of phrases spring to mind: “ceud mìle fàilte”, or “a hundred thousand welcomes”; and “fàilte gu Alba”, or “welcome to Scotland”. Even those of us who do not speak Gaelic, like myself, know those phrases. In a way, those words are reflective of why our place in the EU is so important. We are a welcoming country, known for our hospitality, and we are keen to share our culture with our friends and neighbours in the world.

We have many world-class attractions that attract visitors from across the globe. Each year, nearly 350,000 people come to my constituency to visit Urquhart castle, and 140,000 visit the Orkney Italian chapel. More than a million visitors come annually, supplementing local expenditure.

A strong tourism sector in the Highlands and Islands can help to create much more resilient communities. If we get it right, tourism helps to support a vibrant regional identity and attracts people to live, work and invest in and visit our region.

Globally, tourism is one of the world's largest industries in terms of outputs. It creates some eight per cent of jobs worldwide, expanding annually at the rate of four to five per cent.

The Highland region is home to some of the world's finest food and drink producers. Famous for fine malt whisky, outstanding seafood and world-class meat and game, the industry in the Highlands is a huge employer and generates a turnover of more than £1 billion a year. The last thing that we need is to put up barriers to trade or to people coming to visit us. We need to remain open to that market of nearly 500 million people.

Many of my constituents are worried about restrictions on the four fundamental freedoms of the EU, but in particular we are worried about restrictions on the freedom of movement, which we think will be damaging to tourism and will affect visitors and the people who work in tourism. If people visit the Highlands and Islands, they will meet plenty of new Scots working in the tourism industry. I have just been up in Shetland, where I heard of several businesses where more than half the workforce are citizens of other EU countries. If those people do not or are unable to stay, there are no Shetlanders to take over from them. Those businesses have serious concerns about future staffing.

Last week, I spoke about the positive changes that the Scottish Government has made on travel to the islands, such as road-equivalent tariff, which has made the Western Isles much more accessible, and the price freeze on ferry routes to Orkney and Shetland. For my constituents on the islands, it is one step forward thanks to the Scottish Government and two steps back thanks to Brexit, as the islands become more accessible and the UK less. Let us keep the door open and ensure that visitors are welcome at our tables.

EU membership supports culture, tourism and the creative industries, all of which are absolutely vital to the Highlands and Islands. Why should the people of the Highlands and Islands suffer the consequences of a Brexit that they did not vote for? Why should our economy be weakened because of a Brexit that we did not vote for? Why? We did not vote to become poorer. In fact, why should any part of Scotland lose out on the benefits of EU membership when every single part of Scotland voted to remain a member? It is not fair to my constituents or to the rest of the people of Scotland to be taken out of the EU against our will. I believe that all members, as representatives of the people of Scotland, must do everything in their power to ensure that our current relationship with the EU is not lost.

Mòran taing.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Tapadh leibh, Ms Todd—I hope that I have got that correct.

15:17

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): It is another Tuesday afternoon and we indeed have the 12th debate on the issue, but the Tory position gets harder every week. In many ways, we are grateful to the Tories, because their approach certainly livens up proceedings. Last week, I heard nothing but Rees-Mogg and Iain Duncan Smith; today, we had Jackson Carlaw taking the same position. If anybody dares to mention the facts—and there are facts—or to say that leaving the European Union with a hard Brexit will damage the UK and the economy, we get the Rees-Mogg or Duncan Smith treatment, which is to say, “How dare you even suggest such a thing? The only way is up.” That shows breathtaking naivety. We need only read any decent account of what is going on to question the Tory position.

In fairness to Douglas Ross, who we have heard will wind up for the Tories, I suppose that he is the only one who would welcome staying in the European Union. He will be the only Tory in Europe after we have left, because he will still be refereeing on Wednesday nights across in Madrid, and good luck to him with that.

For Jackson Carlaw to accuse others of blunderbussing, when Boris Johnson, the Foreign Secretary, goes round the world in the way that he does, takes the breath away. That was breathtaking from the Conservatives.

Stuart McMillan was right about clarity. It is no good John Lamont lecturing any Government in any other part of the United Kingdom on clarity. The clarity that this country needs is on the negotiating position on Brexit. It now appears to be, “Eat your cake,” or, “Have some cake,” or whatever is going on with cake. That seems to be the only game in town. That is a true indictment of a Government that does not have a clue as to what its position is. That is the case not least because the infighting is not between the Labour Party, the Scottish National Party, the Liberal Democrats and others and the Tories but within the Conservative Party, as it has been from day 1. As far as I can remember, that has been going on for about 40 years, and it continues.

John Lamont: Will the member give way?

Tavish Scott: If John Lamont wants to explain to me 40 years of Conservative splits on Europe, he can take all afternoon.

John Lamont: When Menzies Campbell was the leader of the Lib Dems, he proposed a referendum on leaving the EU. What would his position have been had the British people

delivered the verdict that they have now delivered?

Tavish Scott: I do not know what that has to do with 40 years of Tory splits on Europe. I will give way again if John Lamont wants to tell us what the latest Conservative position is.

We are not dealing with Ming Campbell's leadership, which was some years ago; we are dealing with the position of the Conservative Government of our country now. It would help if the Tories addressed that. We will wait for Douglas Ross to wind up and tell us what the Conservative position will be today or tomorrow and goodness knows what else.

An upside to the debate is that it has reawakened many people's interest in European politics. The interest this week is in the Italian referendum on Sunday, as what happens to the Prime Minister of Italy has profound implications for the European Union, as does the decision by the centre right in French politics—I am not sure that I understand this in any sense—to select as its candidate Monsieur Fillon, who I presume will take on the clever nationalism of Marine Le Pen next spring.

Last week, Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, announced that she will run again. All that I can say to that is thank goodness. She is about the most stable and sensible politician in the whole of European politics. An endorsement from me will not make a blind bit of difference—thank goodness—but I darn well hope that she wins, because the European Union will be a stronger place if she does.

The cabinet secretary, Claire Baker, Ash Denham and others talked about the importance of cultural tourism and other sectors, and I cannot better their arguments. The Erasmus scheme seems to be quite important to the numbers, but there are plenty of statistics out there and we can trade them all day. The Conservatives will disagree with those figures, because they support the argument that the European Union is unimportant, while the rest of us—thankfully—take a different view.

What cannot be argued with is the point that, last week, the Conservatives' own chancellor blew a hole in their Brexit strategy when he told his party, as well as the rest of the House of Commons, the reality of the public finances. Those finances underpin spending on the arts, as Claire Baker pointed out, and they are being cut not just in Scotland but in every part of England—that point was made to me by some cousins in the west country just the other day.

What the chancellor pointed out, on the basis of his own analysis and, more to the point, the analysis that is provided by independent experts—

yes, they are experts and therefore should be listened to rather than dismissed, which is the standard position now—was that there will be a £59 billion hole in the public finances over the next five years. It does not matter whether we think that the Government is right or wrong on Scotland, on health or on education; the fact is that there will be less public money to spend on the arts, tourism, culture and other public services according to the figures that the Conservative Government has produced. The Conservatives have come here today and given us all a lecture about spending on this and that when their chancellor has illustrated the dramatic impact that Brexit will have on the UK economy over the next five years. If we get one thing from the Tories in winding up the debate, maybe it will be an acceptance that their chancellor has laid out the dire financial position and how difficult that will be for every Government across the United Kingdom.

Not only that, but the Institute for Fiscal Studies has backed up the chancellor by pointing to the fact that the falling pound is driving up inflation and the fact that Brexit is causing the biggest squeeze on take-home pay in 70 years for the people we represent in Edinburgh and the people MPs represent in the House of Commons. To ignore those facts and brush them under the table is not to accept the facts that the Conservatives' chancellor presented to the House of Commons just last week.

I will conclude with two points. Mark Carney's intervention on Sunday seems to be the most important one to be knocking around in the Brexit debate. He said that transitional relief is needed, that it needs to be provided for two years longer and that we need to work really hard to make sure that that happens. Thankfully, the Tories cannot sack him, because there would be a run on the pound if they did. He is immovable in that sense, which is a great relief to the rest of us.

The other telling remark of the past few days came from Brian Kerr, who must be one of the UK's most experienced EU negotiators. He said that there is less than a 50 per cent chance of securing an orderly Brexit within two years and that a "decade of uncertainty" is possible. That is Mark Carney's point—the longer it takes to negotiate a transitional plan, the more likely it is that the Government will be able to retain single market access and that, therefore, the public finances—which are dire—will have some semblance of structure underneath them. That would complete the circle by allowing us to invest in the arts, culture and the other areas that we have addressed this afternoon.

Lewis Macdonald quoted Donald Dewar, who said:

"This is about who we are, how we carry ourselves."

I think that Donald would have been pretty depressed by what we have heard today from the Tories.

15:25

Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP): As I rise to speak, I am conscious that it is six months since I first spoke in the Parliament. In those six months, we have witnessed greater political turbulence around the globe than at any point in the Parliament's history and certainly since the fall of the Berlin wall.

In my first speech, I argued that the European Union is more than the sum of various treaties and trade agreements. I stated my belief that our European citizenship gives expression to our ancient sense of European identity. At the heart of that shared identity is a shared set of values and, crucially, a shared culture.

I am therefore grateful to have the opportunity to contribute to the debate, which, in its consideration of culture, permits a discussion of the great anchors of our European civilisation and of what constitutes our European identity. However, before considering the cultural dimension of our relationship with Europe and the European Union, I will briefly comment on the nature of the Brexit debate over the past few months.

When considering the implications of Brexit, it has become all too easy to be ensnared in a debate that is exclusively about trade. Although retaining full membership of the single market must be the Scottish Government's prime objective, the fundamental reasons for wishing to retain membership transcend the obvious benefits of the four fundamental freedoms. Simply put, the idea and realisation of the single market have been the scaffolding that has supported peace, stability and democracy in post-war Europe. The foundations of that shared peace and prosperity have been our shared culture, identity and values.

It has been said in the chamber by some that leaving the EU does not mean leaving Europe. Unfortunately, that applies only in a strictly geographic sense. The manner in which the leave campaign was conducted and the attitude of many prominent Brexiteers imply a rejection not only of the EU but of the very idea of Europe.

At least since Roman times, Britain has had an on-going relationship with our neighbours on the continent. That relationship has been defined and influenced by a range of institutions and treaties. The Roman empire, the Catholic church, the Hanseatic league, the concert of Europe and the political-familial connections of royal households are perhaps a few of the most prominent. Although none of those august bodies achieved permanence as a political force or enjoyed parity

of influence across the continent, their existence and history demonstrate a long-standing willingness to employ not just force but discourse in fostering inter-European engagement.

The many endeavours of European co-operation that predated the European Union grew in the fertile soil of a shared cultural identity and heritage, and themselves facilitated the exchange of new ideas. Although there are many aspects to and manifestations of that shared identity and culture—such as the linguistic, the literary and the religious—I will turn to the one that I think is most relevant to this afternoon's debate and the current state of affairs, and that is the values of the enlightenment.

The values of the enlightenment—democracy, liberty, secularism, rationality, freedom of expression and the belief that the human condition can be improved—are embodied in the project of European unity. We know that to truly realise such ambitions is our greatest challenge, but we know equally that they are what defines us as Europeans. They are our heritage and they have been our gift to the world. They have informed the constitutions and the cultures of countless republics and democracies around the globe.

The campaign to leave Europe was a repudiation of those values—a rejection of the idea of Europe. It was a campaign that dismissed fact, denigrated experts and trafficked in the politics of division and xenophobia.

The 1 million Scots who voted to leave did so for a variety of reasons. I spoke to many in my constituency of Renfrewshire South who felt neglected and alienated by the political process and who saw the EU as an irrelevancy. We must listen to and engage with those people.

While I regret not persuading more of my fellow Scots of the case for the EU, I feel nothing but contempt for many of the principal architects of the deceitful and xenophobic leave campaign. We need only consider those who so loudly promoted and preached for the diplomatic disaster of a leave vote—a dismal ensemble of the unthinking bien pensant right and the isolationist left, in a ghastly embrace with those vultures of the counter-enlightenment, Farage and Johnson.

When the result of the EU referendum became apparent, I felt that something fundamental had been stripped away—not just from me but from future generations. For me as a new and young member of the Parliament, it has been a sobering and disillusioning experience to witness how glibly and superficially some other members in this place have treated what is a tragedy.

The consequences of that tragedy are incalculable. The liberal world order is buckling.

The centre is struggling to hold. The far right menaces our great democracies.

We are approaching a period of great danger as the global order continues to destabilise. Our influence in this place is limited but, where we can bring it to bear, we must. Brexit bromides are no substitute for a coherent plan from the UK Government. Britain cannot have its cake and eat it. A hard Brexit will not only undermine our own economy; it could, in its disavowal of European culture and values, act as a fillip to fascism on the continent.

The Westminster Government faces a choice. It can recognise our shared culture and values and reaffirm our commitment to European partnership by committing the UK to full membership of the single market, with freedom of movement, or it can heed the siren calls of British exceptionalism, undermine our European partners, reject our shared culture and values, and sleepwalk us into catastrophe. Should the latter seem likely to prevail, Scotland must reaffirm its European values independently.

15:32

Rachael Hamilton (South Scotland) (Con): I refer members to my entry in the register of members' interests and the fact that I own a hotel.

Tom Arthur is suffering from Brexitphobia, I think; the Scottish Government is gripped by it almost to the point of forgetting what our day job is. The fear of Scotland exiting Europe has become the subtitle to every motion that we find ourselves debating.

Scottish businesses, on the other hand, are preparing the ground for the change ahead. Tourism is vital to Scotland and I thank those who work day in, day out in the tourism industry to help to drive the Scottish economy. It is business as usual for us and for them; after all, people's livelihoods depend on offering high-quality, creative and innovative attractions and ensuring that visitors receive a warm welcome.

We must congratulate the South Scotland businesses Born in the Borders visitor centre and Galloway Activity Centre on being regional winners of awards for innovation in tourism at the latest Thistle awards ceremony.

Stuart McMillan: Will the member take an intervention?

Rachael Hamilton: Go on, then.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I think that you could find a nicer way of saying that, Ms Hamilton.

Stuart McMillan: I appreciate Rachael Hamilton taking a brief intervention.

On the subject of welcoming visitors to the country, does Rachael Hamilton agree with the UK Government's proposal to have face-to-face passport control checks on cruise liners when they enter UK waters?

Rachael Hamilton: We do not have many cruise liners in South Scotland but, to refer to my own business and what we offer our European friends, our business has increased because we are welcoming and we offer a really good service in Scotland.

Our Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee work programme has seen us taking evidence from Scottish businesses in different sectors. Their key message is that the worst risk to business is uncertainty. As I said, I am a business owner in the hospitality industry and I can back up that statement. Businesses want to hear that Governments are supportive and are prepared to pull fiscal levers if necessary—for example, cutting interest rates made borrowing a little cheaper in the first week after the EU referendum. Last week's announcement that Scotland will receive an extra £800 million for infrastructure and innovation projects to boost productivity and long-term economic growth is the type of message that gives the tourism industry confidence.

Let us examine the depreciation of sterling after the EU referendum. In the short term, the low value of the pound has been an incentive to overseas travellers. It has been viewed by the tourism industry as a boost. Tourism spending in Scotland recorded the highest second-quarter figures, with international tourist spending breaking through the £500 million barrier. That increase in expenditure benefits the whole economy, including retail and more widely. Furthermore, both Glasgow and Edinburgh airports have seen significant increases in passenger numbers, with international visitors up 9.4 per cent at Glasgow airport in July this year.

Scotland is seen as a safe place following terrorist incidents in traditional European short-break destinations. People are concerned about security and safety and are avoiding a number of European cities, choosing to travel to Scotland or the rest of the UK, for example. Equally, Brits are opting for safer destinations, many trying a staycation for the first time.

We must not forget that tourism is performing well because Scotland is a world-class destination. Members may have found themselves caught, like Jackson Carlaw, in the mystical and spell-binding "Outlander" saga, which is enjoyed by millions of viewers and is a worldwide success. Scotland has shown that it can offer the perfect backdrop for authors and television producers to work their magic, from the ancient and mysterious standing

stones in Dumfries and Galloway to dramatic castles, magnificent stately homes such as Gosford house in East Lothian and breathtaking landscapes. So-called screen tourism is now worth millions to the Scottish economy. Tourism bosses believe that the benefits from the long-running success of “Outlander” could outstrip those from mainstream blockbuster movies.

I recently visited Thirlestane castle near Lauder, one of the oldest and most impressive castles in Scotland. I saw first-hand the great work done there. Historic buildings such as those have helped to welcome nearly 15 million overnight tourism trips in Scotland in 2015, for which visitor expenditure totalled over £5 billion. There were 124 million day visits in Scotland in 2015, with a total spend of £3.9 billion. However, we understand that preserving historic attractions to ensure that they remain prominent tourist attractions is a huge challenge. Preserving them must be on the Brexit wish list.

Fiona Hyslop said it herself. Brexit has not happened, which means that we need to concentrate on the here and now. The tourism industry makes up about 7.7 per cent of Scotland's workforce. We in the Parliament talk a lot about skills gaps—Fiona Hyslop's motion talks about the severe negative impact that Brexit could have on staffing and skills. I visited Dumfries and Galloway College last week and we spoke about the flexible and blended learning opportunities that they offer school leavers, from Langholm to Stranraer and from Kirkconnel to Gretna. Brexit was not mentioned once.

Skills Development Scotland has identified a skills gap in the tourism industry and—

Fiona Hyslop *rose*—

Rachael Hamilton: Do you want to intervene? Okay.

Fiona Hyslop: Does the member agree with the chief executive of the Scottish Tourism Alliance, Marc Crothall? He said today:

“One of the critical issues for industry is the potential changes to the free movement of people, which will directly affect the sector's ability to attract, employ and retain overseas staff both seasonal and permanent.”

I recognise that there will be a regional variation in demand across the country, but does the member agree with that very important criticism and the concern that has come from the Scottish Tourism Alliance?

Rachael Hamilton: I thank the member for her intervention. I do not believe that it was a criticism by Marc Crothall. He is merely pointing out that Scotland needs to bring more people into the country to make it a success. Yes, there are a number of people who work within that industry

whom we are not skilling up, unfortunately; we must make sure that we skill people up. We need to get into schools and we need to ensure that hospitality and tourism businesses are communicating their needs, just as SDS is. There is a skills gap and we need to ensure that we narrow that gap with our own people.

Maree Todd: Will the member take an intervention?

Rachael Hamilton: Okay.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excuse me a minute. Could we have a less casual approach to accepting interventions? I realise that the member is under a bit of pressure, but “okay” is too casual. *[Interruption.]* Yes, Mr Carlaw. We could do with some charm, which you have in abundance.

Maree Todd: Can I ask what the member's suggestion would be for those communities, for example the island communities that I mentioned, that do not have people to upskill to work in their tourism sector? They are heavily dependent on EU citizens who come and work in the food and drink sector, which is absolutely vital to the economy that I live in.

Rachael Hamilton: I can speak again from experience. We employ 52 people and they are all local.

I discussed with Dumfries and Galloway College connectivity, road and rail transport, data download speeds and wi-fi. The college had to get special derogation from the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council to allow it to use money from its pot to fund buses to ferry pupils to the college. The college's rural location poses challenges. It has upgraded to the Scottish wide area network—SWAN—broadband system so that pupils have access to fast download speeds. That all falls apart, of course, when they head home and cannot even get a mobile signal.

In summary, it would be helpful for the Scottish Government to stop doom-mongering and give tourism businesses the reassurances that they need. In 2008, tourism businesses either sank or swam. Those that survived the economic crisis have strong and resilient business structures and are able to survive. We also survived the uncertainty of an independence referendum.

The future success of Scotland's economy depends on growth and competitiveness. The Scottish Government's tourism strategy should therefore deliver a business environment that supports growth. Perhaps the cabinet secretary would consider that we need to refresh the strategy in light of the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Scotland's tourism and creative industries are growing and should be supported by the Scottish

Government to enable each and every business to survive.

15:40

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): The thrust of Jackson Carlaw's speech seemed entirely premised on the argument that Scotland should get back in its box and not make its voice heard on the world stage. Although it might be amusing to compare a First Minister with a democratic mandate with the wife of the Argentinian strongman Juan Perón, many will consider that to be insulting. That said, Evita was wildly popular in Argentina in the 1940s and enjoyed the kind of support that the Scottish Conservatives can only dream about. Perhaps that is where Mr Carlaw got the comparison from.

I return to the motion.

Scotland has a long history of cultural cross-fertilisation with Europe. We are all familiar with the Scottish enlightenment in the 18th century, which others have spoken about. There was a great flourishing of intellectual exchange with Europe then. Since as far back as the 13th century, Scots in search of a university education have gone to the continent, especially to Paris. By the 17th century, they were looking to the Netherlands for ideas and education: around 1,500 Scots were enrolled at Leiden University in the 17th century. At that time, 30,000 Scots lived in Poland, particularly in Kraków. Even the Scots language has European roots, with its links to German, Norwegian and Dutch, as well as old English.

Although there are considerable financial and organisational arguments for Scotland to maintain the closest possible ties with Europe, this is also about the type of country that we wish to be. It has already been said that the culture sector wishes to look outward and to cross-fertilise with a myriad of different people and cultural traditions, in the UK and also far beyond it. We are being offered a narrowing and limiting of options to be marooned on the island of Britain with people who still have not got over the decline of the British empire and whose idea of art seems to be painting the atlas red again.

In the wake of the referendum vote, Creative Scotland surveyed cultural organisations on their views on the result and what it meant for them, and 188 responded. Forty per cent had received European Union-linked funding in the past, and a total of €1 million-plus was reported. Partnership working was even more important than the funding to those who responded. They gave details of collaborations with as many as 14 countries, including Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland and countries further afield.

Other members, including the cabinet secretary, have quoted the director of the Edinburgh International Festival, Fergus Linehan, who has expressed fear that the political trend of "battening down the hatches" is antithetical to the internationalism of the festival. That comment almost certainly also refers to the situation in America, where there is a rise of an authoritarian philistinism. Today, the Conservative Party suggested that the American people should just bow down and put up with that by putting on their "big-boy pants". I realise that the Trump age has resulted in what people call a post-truth era in which facts and expertise must be ignored in favour of crass assertions, but I am disappointed that Jackson Carlaw has adopted that post-truth approach, as I had always considered him to be one of the more thoughtful and less zealous members of the Conservative Party.

How can we consider the dismissal by the Tories of so much expert opinion in the field of culture as anything other than post truth? The submission to the then European and External Relations Committee by the organisation culture counts reflects on the survey that was conducted by Creative Scotland—and indeed on the views of its own members. It will be dismissed by the post-truthers as whingeing, no doubt, but I for one respect the views of experts such as those in culture counts, who engage with the Parliament and who value the parliamentary time that we have devoted to matters that concern their sectors.

In its submission, culture counts clearly outlines five areas where its members are very concerned about the future of the cultural sector. They are particularly concerned about the

"Protection of the right to take part in cultural life as a human right",

which they point out is protected by current EU law. We do not know whether that will continue post Brexit. Will it?

Culture counts is further concerned about the free movement of people. It points out that EU nationals still do not know their status. When will the UK Government tell them?

On free trade, culture counts says:

"The EU is the largest export market for the UK creative industries".

How will those industries feature in any deal? How will they be affected by tariffs or non-tariff barriers? The UK Government has provided no clarity.

Funding has already been discussed in detail. Creative Europe's funds affect a myriad of projects, from the Scottish Poetry Library to the Scottish Youth Dance theatre. How will those funds be replaced? Will they be replaced? That is

a matter for the UK Government, but answers there are none.

Finally, on international relations, culture counts speaks about the need for

“putting the nation on the map for visitors and investors from across the EU”.

What does Brexit say to them? What does it say about our attitude to our international partners? Another Conservative, Chris Patten, put it best in his article in *The Guardian* on 7 June. He asked:

“what is Brexit’s message to the world”?

He answered:

“two fingers”.

He went on to say that it would perhaps be more appropriate to use the terrace chant of the Millwall football crowd:

“No one likes us, we don’t care.”

That is the cultural cry of the Brexiteers, and it is a very ugly sound indeed.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Before we come to the next speaker, I can tell the closing speakers that there is time in hand, so they can each add a couple of minutes on to their closing speeches. I know you enjoy that.

I call Jamie Greene, to be followed by Ruth Maguire, who will be the last speaker in the open debate.

15:47

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): I hope that my colleagues will excuse my croakiness, which is nothing to do with the fact that this is the 12th debate that we have had on the EU. It is just general man flu. I apologise—I will struggle through.

It is clear that the debate has been called not because the Scottish Government has any real concerns over the impact of Brexit on the Scottish creative and tourism industries, but because instead of debating legislation and addressing the real issues that face our country today, the Scottish Parliament is being forced once again to play the big “Brexit bad” game.

My colleague Tom Arthur declined to take any interventions during his very eloquent speech. I wonder, though, whether his view is that a Scottish leave voter is different from an English leave voter. Do they deserve similar or different outcomes from the vote that we had this year?

Tom Arthur: Will the member give way?

Jamie Greene: I will be very happy to give way, if Mr Arthur wishes to clarify his position on that.

Tom Arthur: It comes down, very simply, to democracy. A majority of people in Scotland, as in my constituency, voted to remain. In England, they did not. Perhaps we have different concepts of nationhood.

Jamie Greene: Perhaps we have different ideas of what democracy is. I think that we voted as a United Kingdom, and the leave vote was overwhelmingly in the majority.

Ash Denham: Will the member take an intervention?

Jamie Greene: No. I would like to make some progress.

As is clear from this and our other recent Brexit debates, there is a lot of heated debate and wounds are still fresh. I am genuinely inspired by the enthusiasm that was shown by Tom Arthur in his speech. He is, as a remainer, genuinely very angry that the rest of the country voted to leave. I could see that enthusiasm and anger coming through in his speech. It was apparent. However, we need to be a little bit more optimistic about Scotland’s future, so it is about time that the language coming from Parliament was more optimistic about it.

Much has been said by colleagues about tourism. There is nothing to suggest that tourism will be eternally dented by the UK choosing to leave the European Union. Just as we will always want to visit the continent to climb the Eiffel tower, or to go on holiday to lie on the beaches of southern Spain, our friends in Europe will still want to come here to see our beautiful Highlands and Islands, and they will still want to come and play golf, to cycle round Millport and to shop on the Royal Mile. In fact, the Scottish Tourism Alliance has pointed out that the weaker pound is proving to be a huge incentive for Europeans to come to the UK to shop in numbers that we have not seen in decades.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Jamie Greene: I would like to make some progress.

Far from the doom and gloom that we are hearing from SNP members, the figures from UKinbound show that tourism has been performing extremely well since June. Not surprisingly, it seems that people from around the globe are still keen to come and visit our country.

Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

Jamie Greene: No. I would like to make some progress.

The Government motion says that to protect our cultural and tourism sectors, there must be free

movement of people, but freedom to live and work permanently in a country is not the same as freedom to visit and enjoy a country. Either the SNP does not understand that distinction, or it is deliberately fudging the lines.

Fiona Hyslop: Throughout my speech, I made it clear that our focus is on freedom of movement to ensure that the tourism sector can be fully and properly staffed. Because 17 per cent of tourism sector staff are EU nationals, that is a real issue. Could Jamie Greene engage with that point, please?

Jamie Greene: I will do that. The cabinet secretary made an important point. We recruit a chunk of the staff for the tourism industry from overseas. I do not think that Conservative members are in any doubt about the importance of those people, nor are we undermining the value of the work that they do. Do I have the answers on what will happen in the future, post-Brexit? No. I do not think that any of us does, which is why we are having the debates. I cannot undermine the outcome of the negotiation before the negotiation has taken place. We should bear in mind the fact that there are millions of Brits living in Europe, who are just as important in the current discussion. That is often forgotten.

Jackson Carlaw said that I would talk about digital issues. There is a lot that I could say, but I will focus on the digital single market, because it is an area that was, in a previous life—before I was elected to Parliament—very close to my heart. The idea that our creative industries are entirely dependent on political membership of the EU is quite absurd. Along with the UK, Scotland can influence the digital single market because it is a leading player in the industry. We need only look at the EU's score cards, which repeatedly put the UK at the top when it comes to connectivity, skills and our internet economy. In fact, our internet economy is the highest in the G20. If the Scottish Government has specific requirements on the digital single market, it should work with the UK Government so that those requirements can be included in the negotiations. I would welcome any comments from ministers to the effect that they will work with the UK Government, which is the negotiating partner in the current situation.

However, the digital single market is not all perfect—although that is another speech for another day. I would be happy to discuss the matter with the Scottish Government. There are many concerns about areas of the DSM that do not work for the UK. There are, for example, huge discussions to be had about data protection, intellectual property ownership, the general data protection regulation and geoblocking of free content that has been paid for by UK licence payers, so I do not think that the grass is always

greener on the European side. Member states in that market also have concerns.

Fiona Hyslop: Those points are particularly well made, and such issues are exactly what the debate should be about. It is vital that we help to shape the digital single market before the UK leaves the EU, and even during the process, because if we do not it will be shaped for us, and that might not happen in a way that the creative industries in Scotland or the UK as a whole would like.

Jamie Greene: I welcome that feedback. If the Scottish Government is willing to accept all ideas and input to that conversation, I will be happy to put forward ideas. We should be presenting our ideas alongside our colleagues at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and putting forward in the discussions a strong case for what will work for us in the digital single market post-Brexit.

I was going to talk about some of the success stories in the digital industries in Scotland. We have had that debate previously and I am sure that we will have many opportunities to have it in the future. Instead, I conclude by saying that we should work together to protect Scotland's creative, tourism and digital industries. The way to do that is not to undermine or forget the importance of our current single largest trading market: the UK. That is why our amendment is important.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Ruth Maguire is the last speaker in the open debate.

15:55

Ruth Maguire (Cunninghame South) (SNP): The Scotland to which I hope everyone in the chamber aspires is inclusive, tolerant and outward looking. I strongly believe that we will be best served by protecting our existing relationship with Europe and the freedom of movement within the EU that enriches our lives. If we want that inclusive, tolerant and outward-looking country that welcomes people from all around the world, it is vital that we send a message of welcome and openness. It is vital that Scotland makes it clear that it is not represented in Europe or further afield by a right-wing rabble of Tories who are intent on a hard Brexit and obsessed by restricting immigration, which could have catastrophic consequences for our culture and tourism industries.

We have heard how Scottish cultural and creative organisations have benefited greatly from being able to access the EU's funding programmes, how important collaboration is and how rising costs and bureaucracy hamper the ability to co-produce and make connections. We have also heard that key concerns of the sector

include fear about loss of funding from EU sources; hindrances to free movement of artists, performers and companies; and rising costs. However, as important as the loss of funding that would come from a hard Brexit is the isolationist message that it would send to the world—a message that might deter people from coming here in the first place.

Back in October, in the debate on higher and further education and the EU referendum we heard how agencies in China and the far east are already telling students not to go to Scotland or the UK because they are closed, and that they should go somewhere else. “Closed” is not what we want the rest of the world to hear. Brexit has not even happened yet, but the signals that Westminster is sending to the rest of the world are clear, and they are not helpful to Scotland. Perhaps now more than ever, I recognise the importance of Scotland speaking with its own voice on the international stage. I am proud of the work that our cabinet secretaries and First Minister are doing.

Members have outlined all the pragmatic and practical reasons why freedom of movement is of key importance to the cultural and creative sectors, but as the cabinet secretary mentioned in her opening speech, we should take a second to consider the personal enrichment and benefits that come from free movement, and the cultural interchange that is provided through exchanges and collaborations. I will illustrate that with a story that relates to my constituency of Cunninghame South.

This weekend, members of Irvine Burns Club will welcome Paul Malgrati. Paul comes from Paris and first came to Scotland three years ago as part of a study-abroad exchange between his university in Paris and the University of St Andrews. During his time in Scotland, as well as studying English literature at the university, Paul met and fell in love with a Dundonian lass, made deep and enduring friendships and developed a passion for the languages, literature and culture of Scotland.

A few months ago, Paul returned to St Andrews to begin a PhD studying the political uses of Robert Burns in the 20th century. He has also recently written a piece for *Bella Caledonia* in Scots describing how he came to know and love Scotland, its language, culture and politics. He will travel to Irvine on Saturday to meet our world-famous Irvine Burns Club, share his passion for Burns and learn more about him and his work with like-minded people.

I am sure that we all know similar stories of people who came to Scotland to work or study and stayed as personal relationships and ties developed. Some of us will also know how fearful

some of those people are for their future. Culture may well transcend boundaries and borders, but it is arguable that more important than whether somebody has to get a visa is whether they want to go somewhere in the first place—whether they feel welcome. I want people who have chosen to make Scotland their home to hear this loud and clear: you are welcome here and your contribution is valued for all the reasons that have been outlined during the debate and—more important—for the personal richness that a multicultural society brings to all our lives.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to closing speeches. I note that three members who spoke in the debate are not in the chamber. The Presiding Officers are tired of repeating this, so we will be discussing what the result will be for members who disobey the chair. [*Interruption.*]

Ah, here they come—the sprinters. I say to members rushing into the chamber that I give adequate warning. I give warnings before the penultimate speaker in the open debate and before the last speaker. You are lucky, but I will still name you. The members who were not in the chamber are Maree Todd, Tavish Scott and Tom Arthur. I am glad that you have come back. You heard what I have said: we are not going to continue saying it. It is a discourtesy to the chair and to other members, and it is going to stop.

16:01

Lewis Macdonald: This afternoon’s debate has highlighted some of the risks and costs of Britain leaving the European Union as far as culture, the creative industries and tourism are concerned. On the one hand, we know that any deal on Brexit, including any deal that provides for continuing access to or membership of the single market, on whatever terms, will bring to an end our right to have a say in the future development of EU law and policy. There is no getting away from that simple fact, no matter how hard anyone may work to keep us as close to Europe as possible. No membership of the EU means no vote in the EU.

On the other hand, there are clearly things that can be done to maintain our access to some of the advantages that being part of Europe brings to Scotland’s creative industries, tourism and our cultural life, and Tavish Scott rounded up some of the recent developments that show that this is still very much a live debate.

Jamie Greene raised the issue of the digital single market, which is a new initiative and is, perhaps, a good place to start. It seeks to put Europe at the front edge of the digital age, make cross-border e-commerce easier and address some serious inequalities arising from the free market, such as unfair charges for parcel delivery

to rural and island customers. Like most EU initiatives, it also has the potential to get things wrong by applying the same principles in different countries where circumstances are not the same. For example, users of the BBC iPlayer in the UK must now have a television licence, as the rules catch up with technological change. That requirement does not, and cannot, exist across borders, so the British Government should be working right now to reduce the impact on public service broadcasting of some of the new rules that the European Commission will propose, or even seeking to exclude the sector altogether.

The good news is that those rules and policies are still developing and, as the cabinet secretary said, as long as we are a member of the EU, it is possible to seek to shape them to reflect our needs and priorities. However, the bad news is that our ability to have a say in future policy developments will be lost, whether we are in or out of the single market, and our credibility will be sharply reduced the moment that we give formal notice to quit.

Jamie Greene: Is the member suggesting that, upon Brexit, all of those rules and laws would somehow disappear? I do not think that the UK Government would suddenly have to reinvent the wheel from scratch. We will inherit and can keep any good ideas that we make progress on over the next few years.

Lewis Macdonald: I am not suggesting that. The digital single market will continue to develop—successfully, I hope—when the United Kingdom gives notice to quit. However, the critical point is that, no matter how much we engage with it, when we are no longer at the table with a vote and a say in the development of those policies, they are much less likely to reflect the needs and priorities of the sector in this country.

Claire Baker rightly highlighted the cuts to arts funding under the current UK Government. That is the real context in which those ministers are tasked with representing our broadcasters, our creative industries and our cultural sector in the negotiations that lie ahead. That context is bound to give us cause for concern.

I was intrigued to hear John Lamont quote the views of Alex Neil as evidence of the prospects for our tourism industry. We never learned whether Mr Lamont shared Mr Neil's view that Brexit is actually good news for the Scottish tourism sector. If he does, it would be good to know. Clearly, though, the majority of people in the chamber are more concerned today with the threats and risks that lie ahead than with the opportunities that may come our way incidentally.

Maree Todd made a strong plea, which I would endorse, for us not to close any doors on Europe.

It is even more important for Scottish tourism that no doors should be closed on Britain either. When the Scottish Tourism Alliance surveyed its members this summer, it found that talk of another referendum on independence was the single greatest cause of uncertainty for its members. It is not a subject on which I intend to wax eloquent this afternoon—I am glad that others have not done so either—but it is important, when we are making the case for an open-door policy towards Europe, that we recognise that fundamental and central to that is an open-door policy within these islands.

Rachael Hamilton cited, quite fairly, the short-term benefits to Scottish tourism this summer as the result of a weak pound, but a decline in Britain's buying power cannot be a long-term plan for the tourism sector or the economy as a whole. We need to hear more from Conservative members about what, in their view, the long term might look like.

As a single market, Europe is tightly defined by rules and regulations but, as a cultural construct and geographical space, it offers more scope for countries outwith the EU. The European cultural convention, for example, has 50 member states, from Iceland to Azerbaijan. The Bologna accord has a similar number and has worked over the years to evolve the European higher education area. Indeed, I represented the Scottish Government of the time at a Bologna process conference in Berlin in 2003 and have seen at first hand just how much those bodies, separate from the EU though they might be, engage in collective European diplomacy on the same model as the European Union.

There are many other such bodies, some of which have been mentioned today. Creative Europe is rightly highlighted as a grant funder of projects in Scotland. Its membership extends not just to Norway and Iceland but to other countries, for example in the Balkans and, from 2017, Israel.

In tourism, the European common aviation area is important; it, too, extends beyond the member states of the EU. The principles of that agreement are worth noting because they so closely reflect some of the principles that we have debated at other times in the past few weeks: free movement of people and cargo; freedom of establishment; equal conditions of competition; and common rules in the areas of safety, security, air traffic management, and social and environmental protection. The point here is that there are a whole raft of agreements of that kind to which other European countries have access without being members of the European Union. It is important for the Scottish Government and the UK Government to reflect on that and set out clearly what their objectives are, not just in terms of the single

market or otherwise, but in terms of those other cross-border agreements.

We have seen today a scribbled note made public from conversations in Downing Street. Conservative members and ministers will deny that having your cake and eating it is the sum total of the negotiating strategy to follow. However, it is clear that there is serious work to be done and we need to know what the objectives of the UK Government and the Scottish Government, and the other devolved Administrations engaging with them, will be. Mr Russell has promised to publish the Scottish Government's plans before Christmas, and perhaps he can say more about that today, but we urgently need to hear from UK ministers as well—not platitudes or wishful thinking, but concrete and specific objectives and some idea of how they intend to achieve them.

16:09

Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Con):

As we have heard a number of times today, this is the 12th debate that we have had on this subject, but unfortunately it is not the glorious 12th. The Scottish Government has dedicated a dozen debates, out of its own time, to focus on Europe. One would think that, if there was going to be a Scottish Government debate, it would fill its back benches with speakers who were passionate and made substantive points. What did we get? We got Joan McAlpine talking about 17th century education in the Netherlands and Stuart McMillan telling us about his international busking career.

Joan McAlpine: Will the member take an intervention?

Douglas Ross: If I can finish this point. Mr McMillan made it very well, so I want to repeat it.

Stuart McMillan: Will the member take an intervention?

Douglas Ross: Hold on—I will come to you both.

We heard that in 1988, Mr McMillan went to a bar to get changed into his kilt. Then we heard that in 2011, his friend Tom and he met a local mayor. If that is the substantive point that the SNP is putting across, this debate should be the 12th and final one, because clearly it does not have enough to say.

I will go to the lady first: Ms McAlpine.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: It is for me to call Ms McAlpine.

Joan McAlpine: I assume that Douglas Ross makes a rhetorical point, but I am sure that he would admit that in the substantive part of my speech I quoted from the organisation culture counts, which made an extensive submission

about its deep and factual concerns about the impact on the cultural sector of leaving the EU. Does he not agree that we in this chamber have a responsibility to respond to those very serious concerns from expert organisations across Scotland?

Douglas Ross: I agree that we have a duty to respond to those things, but the fact that there was so much filler in the speeches from the SNP back benches shows how much the SNP has to say on the issue. It is vacuous to say the least.

I want to go on to a number of other points—

Stuart McMillan: Will the member take an intervention?

Douglas Ross: I mentioned Mr McMillan, so I will take his intervention—with your permission, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: It is always with my permission, Mr Ross.

Stuart McMillan: After hearing the beginning of his speech, I must say that it is a shame that Douglas Ross is here today. We probably would have been better off if he had been out refereeing somewhere. Nonetheless, I raised the points that I did because I was giving some context to why I believe that being in Europe is so important. Douglas Ross was clearly not listening to my point about the mayor. The mayor was doing a wedding—that is what happens in France. The mayor was the person who was marrying Tom and his wife. The point was very clear; unfortunately Mr Ross did not want to listen.

Douglas Ross: I apologise if I had switched off by the point at which Mr McMillan was telling me about mayors and how they conduct weddings.

Mr McMillan went on to mention the world pipe band championships and the threat that they are under. The hint is in the name: the world pipe band championships. Mr McMillan must consider that.

I have used three minutes on the first two speakers, so I will quickly mention some others. We had Ash Denham, who said “if”, “could”, “might”, “maybe”—everything was predicated with uncertainty because everything that the SNP is putting forward is trying to rustle up scare stories about the EU.

Ash Denham: Will the member give way?

Douglas Ross: No. I cannot take an intervention from each SNP member who I criticise for having nothing to say. Ash Denham had her chance over six minutes; I do not have much more time.

When we got some substantive points they were made by my colleague John Lamont, who

mentioned the Borders tourism partnership. He made a very telling contribution when he said that not one tourism body had responded to the EU inquiry by the Scottish Affairs Committee, which is chaired by an SNP member.

Claire Baker mentioned the huge challenges that tourism faces and her discussions with Fife Chamber of Commerce about inward tourism and promotional opportunities. I want to discuss those things in relation to my area of Moray as I progress.

Maree Todd spoke about the Gaelic language—I say to her mòran taing for that. She also spoke about how crucial tourism is to the whole of the Highlands and Islands economy. I fully agree with that and, when I give some examples from Moray, I hope that she will agree that some positives, as well as uncertainties, can come out of this. I see that she is nodding, and I appreciate that.

Tavish Scott wanted to know the Conservative position. Our position is that we listened to the democratic will of the people of the United Kingdom.

Tavish Scott: Will the member take an intervention?

Douglas Ross: We are not a rump of eight Liberal Democrat MPs who want to re-run the vote until we get the result that we want. I cannot think where Mr Scott got that idea from, but I welcome the comments of his former colleague Vince Cable, who said that such a move would be “disrespectful” to the voters.

Tavish Scott: Will the member give way?

Douglas Ross: I am sorry—I have much to get through in my last few minutes.

I could use the word “passionate” to describe Tom Arthur’s speech—that is what I have written down. He said that leaving the EU does not mean leaving Europe, but he went on to criticise all Brexiteers—all 17 million of them in the United Kingdom and 1.6 million in Scotland. I began to wonder whether any members of the SNP—indeed, any of Mr Arthur’s colleagues—had voted for Brexit. We know that yes, they did. For Mr Arthur to be so disrespectful to the people who took a decision—

Tom Arthur: Will the member take an intervention?

Douglas Ross: I am sorry. I have taken enough interventions.

Tom Arthur: No—you cannot just misquote.

Douglas Ross: To be so disrespectful to the people who took a democratic decision is unfitting for a politician in this chamber. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Please stand up if you want to intervene, Mr Arthur.

Ash Denham: We are trying, Presiding Officer, but the member will not take an intervention.

Douglas Ross: I have taken several interventions, and I have two more minutes to go.

Rachael Hamilton mentioned—quite correctly—the tourism that is associated with historical buildings such as Gosford house in East Lothian. Jamie Greene mentioned the digital single market, which he is well placed to talk about given his previous experience outwith Parliament. It is extremely important to put on record, as he did, the fact that the UK is top in the internet economy. I agreed with Ruth Maguire when she said that we should all take an inclusive, tolerant and outward-looking approach to our multicultural society; I welcome those comments.

Finally, in response to the remarks from Claire Baker and Maree Todd, my colleague from the Highlands and Islands, about the importance of tourism for their regions, I will focus specifically on tourism in Moray, which is where I come from. In 2014, prior to the formation of the Moray Speyside tourism group, tourism contributed £94 million to the Moray economy. Almost three years later, that figure has increased to £106 million. Tourism directly sustains 2,500 jobs or accounts in Moray, and 10 per cent of the area’s economic output comes from tourism. In 2015, 700,000 visitors from around the world visited Moray. There are immediate opportunities, as well as some risks, arising from Brexit and the falling pound. VisitBritain data from earlier this year shows that US and European visitors are generally getting more for their money and are spending more money in our local economies. Prices for those from the US are now 10 to 15 per cent lower than they were prior to the Brexit vote.

Prior to today’s debate, I spoke to the Moray tourism partnership, which gave me some anecdotal feedback from businesses across Moray. Those businesses suggest that 2016 has been their busiest year to date, and visitor numbers are rising year on year. In Aberlour distillery, numbers are up 18 per cent. In the Scottish dolphin centre just outside Spey bay—in my own council ward—numbers are up 6 per cent. In Elgin cathedral, numbers are up 4 per cent, and at Glenlivet distillery numbers are up 13 per cent. We should all welcome those results, and I hope that members all round the chamber are doing so.

The majority of tourists in Moray are not from Europe or the rest of the world—they are our neighbours and friends in the rest of the UK. Places such as Moray comprehensively rejected the separatism that the SNP put forward, and they

came within a whisker of voting for Brexit. Those are the people whom we have to listen to and respect. Today's debate has shown a deficit in that regard, given some of the arguments from SNP members who simply want to foster resentment towards this rather than looking to a positive future.

16:18

The Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe (Michael Russell): I wanted to start with something that was positive in Lewis Macdonald's speech, but first I offer a piece of advice to Douglas Ross. It would perhaps be sensible if he spent a little less time running the line in Lisbon and a little bit more time learning the art of politics in Scotland. That was among the most graceless closing speeches I have ever heard; I am sure that my colleagues will reflect on the insults that were directed at them.

Lewis Macdonald set out the finely made point that culture defines us. He touched on a great speech—one of the greatest speeches to this Parliament—by Donald Dewar on 1 July 1999. I will quote from that speech, because it sets the context for what we should try to do. I regard myself as being privileged to have heard it. In a famous passage, Donald Dewar said:

"In the quiet moments of today ... we might hear some echoes from the past. The shout of the welder in the din of the great Clyde shipyards; the speak of the Mearns, rooted in the land; the discourse of the enlightenment, when Edinburgh and Glasgow were a light held to the intellectual life of Europe; the wild cry of the great pipes; and back to the distant noise of battles from the days of Bruce and Wallace."

He then went on to point out that that was the foundation for the voice of Scotland and said that, above all, it was a voice for the future. The Scottish Parliament has a duty to be a voice for the future. That was the Rolls-Royce of speeches. What a contrast with the comedy unicycle that we heard from some of the Tories.

Those words are important because the debate is about who we are, how we represent ourselves to the world, and what we regard as valuable in cultural and economic terms. Lewis Macdonald recognised the link between the cultural and the economic, as did Ash Denham and Joan McAlpine. Ash Denham went on to talk about the cultural and the economic in terms of freedom of movement.

The first point to make, therefore, is that underpinning our success in a variety of elements in our national life is freedom of movement—people's ability to come here to work for a week, a month, a year or for the rest of their lives, and to enrich our culture. Ruth Maguire talked about the passion of one individual from France for the

poems of Robert Burns; plenty of Scots go from Scotland to Europe and show their passion for things in other countries. It is about that openness and exchange that we should be talking today—not just about money. So few members did that, and none were Tories, alas.

Stuart McMillan gave the Conservatives the opportunity to say what they want and to define what is important to them, but yet again we heard that "Brexit means Brexit". There was no mention of priority being given to the single market, the four freedoms, the customs union, a Canada-plus model, the EEA, or EFTA. There was just "the best deal" and "Brexit means Brexit".

Claire Baker talked about the digital single market very well. Maree Todd talked about Gaelic and our contribution to linguistic diversity. Gaelic is the one thing that cements us into a Europe of languages. I speak as the first minister ever to make a speech in Gaelic at the Council of Ministers. I remember the speech and the excitement that came from other ministers at that meeting. Having spoken in Gaelic at that meeting, I was immediately followed by an Irish minister who spoke Irish and a Welsh minister who spoke Welsh. That is still a unique treble that represents how we were folded into the concerns of Europe.

Tavish Scott talked about the debate reawakening our interest in European politics; he was absolutely right. We are also reawakening our interest in Tavish Scott as a thinking and contributing politician, although that will not help him particularly with the man he is sitting next to. Tavish Scott made a fine speech about how that interest in European politics would sensitise us to the difficulties that exist in the European Union beyond Brexit and the fact that we need a vision of a renewed Europe.

Two weeks ago at a dinner in Berlin I was incredibly fortunate to hear Martin Schulz make one of the finest speeches about Europe that I have ever heard. We should be talking about and debating those values. Tom Arthur talked about the values of the enlightenment, just as Donald Dewar did in 1999. He called Brexit a campaign against enlightenment, which is something that we should think about. Brexit calls on us to turn our backs on the notion of progress; it calls on us to say that we will reject those influences and that we will turn inwards. That is neither necessary nor sensible.

While I was listening to Rachael Hamilton, I wanted to remind her of reality. As many of the Tories did, she accused the Scottish Government of doom-mongering. Well, here are three actual facts from November. The first is the point that Tavish Scott made, which is that the costs of Brexit are now becoming apparent. The £350 million a week bonus has gone. The cost of Brexit

is £226 million a week in increased borrowing. That is a fact. The second fact is in a report from Hitachi Capital in November that shows that £6.5 million of investment has been withheld to date. That is a fact. A third fact comes from IHS Markit's survey on sentiment, which shows that the population's sentiment has changed. People were asked to take a 10-year-view. The figure in July was -3.5, but it is now -18.4. In Scotland, according to the Tories, we should be jolly and we should be delighted about Brexit. Indeed, it is such good news that we are not reflecting the people of Scotland. What does sentiment tell us about Scotland? The figure for July was -27 and today it is -42. The Tories do not have the courage of their constituents' convictions, who are not fooled by what has taken place. There is a problem: those are facts and that is reality.

I will finish by reflecting on Jackson Carlaw's speech. I am going to recommend that people look at that speech on video. I am going to use it when I come to train speakers of any sort, because it was an object lesson for students of politics of what happens when a person knows that they are in desperate trouble: they gabble faster, throw out more insults and threaten and bluster. What is the effect of that? There is no effect, because what people see is exactly what they know is going on. The emperor has no clothes.

If anyone doubts that, they should read Mr Carlaw's amendment. Mr Carlaw is a man of subtlety; he is a clever man and he does not lodge such amendments unless he is desperate. I have to look at only one or two of the lines in it. It says that Scotland should leave

"the EU on the same terms as the rest of the UK".

Why would we do that? Differentiation underpins devolution and the whole UK. The Act of Union 1707 is an act of differentiation. It would be unique in constitutional terms in these islands if we did that; indeed, it would be disastrous in constitutional terms if we did that. However, according to Mr Carlaw, that is what we should do.

There is also a reference to the "negative impact" of independence, making this—this is what the Tories want—a choice between the UK and the EU. Why? That is utterly inconsistent with the Tories' argument. The Tories claim that we can have all the benefits of European membership but not be in it, so why would it be different in Scotland? The amendment is absolutely incoherent. It talks about

"the benefits that Brexit may bring"

but when the chance was given to them, none could say what those benefits are. It talks about free-trade agreements, yet none could mention what those are to be. The amendment confirms what is in the scribbled notes that were carried out

of Downing Street: the Tories intend the hardest of hard Brexits, they intend isolationism and they are determined to ignore Scottish democracy.

This morning, the leader of the Irish Seanad told Nicola Sturgeon before she spoke—as the first serving leader of a Government to speak to the Seanad—that he understands and respects Scotland's vote to remain in the European Union. Unfortunately, Jackson Carlaw—a Scottish MSP—does not understand or respect the Scottish vote to remain in the European Union.

The choice for Scotland is either to remain in the EU or to be dragged out of it against our will. There is an equally existential choice for the Scottish Tories: speak for people in Scotland and in their constituencies or speak only for their party in London. They cannot do both.

St Andrew's Day

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-02796, in the name of Alasdair Allan, on celebrating St Andrew's day.

16:28

The Minister for International Development and Europe (Dr Alasdair Allan): Presiding Officer, I wish you and other members a happy St Andrew's day tomorrow. Scotland has a strong national identity, which is reflected in St Andrew's day being celebrated not only in Scotland, but widely throughout the world.

For many, St Andrew's day is marked through a celebration of Scottish culture, with traditional Scottish food, music and dance, but our national day also shows a celebration of Scotland's unique culture, creativity, diverse communities and international reputation for promoting civic pride and engagement, as well as sustainable economic and social development, although that is less important than enjoying ourselves.

Many countries have a designated date on which celebrations are held to mark their nationhood. Indeed, as St Andrew is also the patron saint of countries such as Barbados, Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Russia, Ukraine and Bulgaria, we will not be the only ones celebrating. The importance attached to national days and the degree to which they are celebrated vary greatly from country to country, but our ambition is for St Andrew's day to be recognised in the same manner as Australia day, St Patrick's day in Ireland, Bastille day in France and independence day in America, with a greater tradition of celebrating this important day across the nation and more widely. We would do well to emulate the scale on which the Norwegians have the good sense to celebrate annually having a constitution. It is also worth mentioning that, tomorrow, Barbados celebrates the 50th anniversary of its national independence day.

Nine years ago, the first Scottish National Party Government initiated the concept of Scotland's winter festivals to boost the national and international celebration of St Andrew's day, Hogmanay and Burns night, and to showcase Scotland's unique culture and creativity and the many reasons why Scotland should be seen as a year-round visitor attraction. Since the introduction of the winter festivals, they have gone from strength to strength. The 2015-16 programme attracted audiences of more than 300,000 people, and, in addition, 8 million people across the world were engaged in the celebration online.

This year, the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs has announced a funding contribution of £390,000 to support 22 key cultural events as part of the 2016-17 programme. Those include a torchlight festival in Glasgow, an open-air ceilidh in St Andrews and a four-day festival of light at Irvine's harbourside. This year, 10 events celebrating St Andrew's day—in Argyll and Bute, Dundee, Edinburgh, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, Fife, Glasgow and North Ayrshire—have received a share of more than £122,000 in funding to support activities. Last year, St Andrew's day attracted 86,000 people, with highlights including events in Edinburgh, Oban and St Andrews.

St Andrew's day will grow in stature. With that in mind, it is worth mentioning that our aim is to see the saltire projected on to Edinburgh Castle for St Andrew's day 2017. However, for the celebration of St Andrew's day to be truly embedded into our culture, we need to encourage people to take ownership of their national day and to celebrate it in their own way, reflecting their own cultural and ethnic diversity. That could be, for example, by celebrating the occasion at home with friends or family, by developing events in the neighbourhood, by giving something back to the community in the spirit of St Andrew's day or by welcoming and celebrating with Scotland's multicultural communities on or around 30 November.

I hope that during the debate the Parliament will join me in welcoming the many successes of the St Andrew's day celebration to date and that members will explore the many opportunities that our national day can provide in future.

I move,

That the Parliament notes the fantastic opportunity that St Andrew's Day provides to showcase and celebrate Scotland's unique culture and identity at home and abroad and to boost the country's international reputation by sending a positive and inclusive message to the country and the world about Scotland and its people; acknowledges the potential of St Andrew's Day to further spotlight the contribution that Scots make across the globe and in many different fields of endeavour while emphasising a unity through the celebration of the wide diversity of faiths, cultures and ethnic origins that is the reality of the nation today; recognises the growing success of the St Andrew's Day celebrations over recent years and signals its support for the activities that are planned to mark St Andrew's Day 2016, and extends an invitation to people from near and far to join the celebration of Scotland's national day.

16:33

Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con): Today, we are celebrating St Andrew's day. The reason why we do it is, of course, because St Andrew is Scotland's patron saint. As Alasdair Allan pointed out, St Andrew is also the patron saint of several other countries. Additionally, he is the patron saint

of fishermen, which I think members will all agree is particularly appropriate for Scotland, given our long-established reputation as a seafaring nation and the high quality of our seafood. Among other things, St Andrew is the patron saint of fishmongers, gout, singers, sore throats, spinsters, maidens, old maids and women wishing to become mothers.

A symbol of our connection to St Andrew is that our national flags are famously adorned with the cross of St Andrew, which is prominently placed on the saltire and the union jack. The flag was given its place by Óengus, who vowed that, if granted victory, he would appoint St Andrew as the patron saint of Scotland. Then, on the morning of a battle, white clouds forming an X shape in the sky are said to have appeared. Emboldened by that apparent divine intervention, Óengus and his combined force took to the field and, despite their inferior numbers, were victorious.

The symbol went on to become the flag of Scotland, although we share that particular flag design with others including—but not limited to—Tenerife, whose blue is traditionally a darker navy blue. I found two interesting theories that try to explain the Tenerife flag's resemblance to the flag of Scotland. One is that, during the battle of Santa Cruz, so revered were the Scottish sailors for their bravery and high standard of sailing that the flag was adopted by the island as its own. Seeing that we lost that battle, I have reason to doubt whether that is true. The second theory is that, because Scotland and Tenerife share St Andrew as a patron saint, they use his cross as well.

I quite enjoyed the story of St Andrew's arrival in Tenerife, which has it that he arrived on the island just as the new wine was being produced. It would have been rude of him not to partake in the local festivities, so St Andrew took part enthusiastically. Like so many others have since, while he was abroad, trying to keep up with the locals, he ended up a little worse for wear. While he was in an intoxicated state, the local children decided to play a joke on him, tying pots and pans to his clothes so that, whenever he moved in his sleep, they made an almighty clatter and woke him up. The children, no doubt, thought that that was extremely funny, but I doubt that St Andrew was quite as amused. Nowadays, in honour of that prank, on the eve of St Andrew's day—which is today—local children collect tins and cans of all shapes and sizes, tie them together and drag them through the streets in his honour. That is commendable, but I imagine that there is quite a racket being made in Tenerife today.

As the motion notes, we are debating St Andrew's day, and the day will be full of activities, including in my region of West Scotland. One example is that St Andrew's day is the starting

point of Irvine's art and light winter show, which is called "Illumination: Harbour Festival of Light". The festivities run from tomorrow until 3 December and include free events tomorrow to mark St Andrew's day and a firework display. In that display, the night skies above the harbour will be lit up with a Saltire.

I believe that it is also worth highlighting the work that is being done by Historic Scotland this year, as in previous years. Last weekend, Historic Scotland gave away tickets frequently so that people could enter historic sites all over Scotland in honour of St Andrew's day. That was to give people all over the country the chance to learn a bit more about Scotland's culture and fascinating history.

I hope that everyone who takes part in the St Andrew's day celebrations enjoys the day. I also hope that they take a moment to consider the day's background and history, to appreciate the wider connections around the world that our national day has.

16:37

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland)
(Lab): Scots have honoured St Andrew for 1,300 years but, as both Dr Allan and Mr Corry have said, his legacy does not belong to Scotland alone. He was, in today's terms, a Palestinian Jew. He was a working fisherman from the Sea of Galilee who answered Christ's call to be a fisher of men. As a disciple of Jesus, he preached widely in the eastern Roman world and is credited with founding the See of Byzantium, which was later the imperial capital of Constantinople—today Europe's greatest Muslim city, Istanbul. He was put to death by the Roman governor of Patras, in Greece, and later legend had it that he died on an X-shaped cross, which is his symbol today.

A Palestinian, a Jew, a Christian, a martyr, a working man: those are powerful words in today's world, just as they were in the first century of the Christian era. All those things together make Andrew much more than just a national saint, although he is that too, not just in Scotland but in Russia, Romania, Greece and other places with a Christian heritage, as we have heard. When we celebrate St Andrew's Day, we celebrate not just our own heritage but the international importance of his tradition and the diversity symbolised in his life.

On Saturday, I spoke at the annual St Andrew's day rally organised by Aberdeen Trades Union Council as a celebration of cultural diversity and of opposition to racism and fascism at home and abroad. The Scottish Trades Union Congress held a parallel event in Glasgow.

Those annual demonstrations make a visible link between Scotland's commemorations of a 1st century saint and the multicultural and interfaith perspectives that are so urgently needed in the 21st century. My audience included members of many trade unions and also supporters of #WeAreAberdeen, a social network that was created to counter xenophobia and racism in the aftermath of the European Union referendum.

There were families there who have taken refuge in the north-east from the war in Syria, whose story was told by a speaker from the amal committee—'amal' being the Arabic word for hope. There were members of the Aberdeen Hebrew congregation, the most northerly synagogue in these islands. There were North Americans and Palestinians, Nigerians and Poles, and Shelley Milne of Aberdeen's Solidarity with Refugees, who talked about the next challenge, to support people from islands in the southern oceans whose homes will sooner or later be inundated as a result of climate change.

Those were appropriate subjects for a modern St Andrew's day. They promoted an awareness of the peoples and cultures of the wider world and the threats that they face, alongside a celebration of our own religious and political tradition.

The cross of St Andrew, as has been said, appears in many places. It is the national flag of Scotland. In different forms, it is the national flag of Greece, the ensign of the Russian navy, the provincial flag of Nova Scotia and part of the union flag of Great Britain, which features too in Australia, New Zealand and many other places that are home to people of Scottish origin around the world.

Our other patron saint, Columba or Columcille, is likewise not a saint for Scotland alone. Born in Doire Chaluim Chille—otherwise Derry or Londonderry—and buried in Ì Chaluim Chille—or Iona—he symbolises in a way that Andrew does not the shared Gaelic heritage of Scotland and Ireland.

When we celebrate Andrew every November, and Columba every June, we are marking the link with generations that have gone before us. We are also acknowledging that our world is not limited by borders in or around this island or anywhere else. Like Andrew and Columcille, we should look to the salvation of all humanity, wherever people happen to live.

16:42

Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP): I thank the Scottish Government for bringing forward the motion and giving us the opportunity to reflect on the many benefits of St Andrew's day as a national

holiday for all Scots at home, and as a day of celebration for the wider Scots diaspora.

The diaspora community is much wider than many would think. Somewhere in the region of 50 million people worldwide claim a Scottish connection. As the supporters of having St Andrew's day as a national holiday pointed out in 2007, there was huge potential for us in utilising our national day to promote Scotland as an outward-looking and inclusive nation with a vibrant culture as well as a destination for tourism and investment.

Scots, as we know, have been avid explorers and have contributed over the past 400 years to the creation and development of many towns, cities and states across the world, on every continent. Evidence of that is reflected in the names of many of towns and cities across the world. Rutherglen has a namesake in Victoria, Australia, and Blantyre in Malawi is also named after part of my constituency.

Wherever Scots settled, in addition to their business acumen and engineering skills, they brought elements of their music and culture, which remain embedded in those communities to this day. We are just as likely to find a McGregor at a Highland games in Colorado or Christchurch as we are in Dunoon.

Like many emigrants, Scots have founded societies and clubs across the globe, initially to provide support for impoverished fellow Scots, but also to celebrate and maintain their culture and to share it with others.

The first Scots charitable society was formed in Boston in 1657, and the first St Andrew's society was formed in South Carolina on St Andrew's day in 1729. Scores more St Andrew's societies were to be formed throughout the United States and Canada over the following century. There are now hundreds of St Andrew's and Scottish societies, clubs and associations throughout the world.

New groups continue to be created. I take this opportunity to extend the congratulations and goodwill of the Parliament to the recently formed Finnish Scottish society in Helsinki and wish it well for its inaugural St Andrew's day event this coming weekend.

The creation of St Andrew's day as a national public holiday is not just an opportunity for us to celebrate the positive aspects of our culture and society here and overseas. It also marks the start of two months of Scottish cultural celebration that straddle the festive season, including hogmanay, the birthday of our national bard and—also in January—the excellent and diverse Celtic Connections festival in Glasgow. We certainly know how to throw a party.

Those who proposed making St Andrew's day a bank holiday foresaw that it

"would encourage all the people of Scotland—irrespective of their ethnic origins and beliefs—to participate in the celebration of our national identity and social inclusion."—*[Official Report, 1 December 2004; c 12454.]*

I believe that it has achieved that and can continue to do so.

I wish colleagues across the chamber and all citizens at home and abroad a very happy St Andrew's day to you and yours.

16:45

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD): I will remember two very important measures that, in 2007, the newly elected Scottish National Party Government wanted to carry on from the previous Administration. One was the newly introduced public holiday for St Andrew's day; the other, which was in my constituency at the time, was a grade-separated junction on the A90 at Laurencekirk—and quite right too.

After nearly a decade, the Government has been 50 per cent successful. No one, least of all me, could accuse this Government of not achieving at least half its targets. However, the transport minister would be pleased to know, if he were here, that I will return to pursue that other target in the chamber on Thursday.

As members may be aware, the St Andrew's cross is not only the flag of Scotland, as has been mentioned, but the flag of Nova Scotia and indeed of other jurisdictions. It also stands for M for Mike in the international code of signals and the phonetic alphabet. *[Interruption.]* I say to Christine Grahame that it does—it does.

As it happens, my older son is called Andrew; even so, I would never presume to say that I share a connection with both the apostle Andrew and the archangel Michael. However, perhaps in the chamber we all share one common trait with them. As the Bible says, perhaps we are all fishers of men, or—in this modern world—fishers of men and women. Like Andrew and Michael, we are all searching for people to join our cause to make Scotland a fairer, more tolerant and even better place for those who live here than it already is. Across the chamber, we do not always agree on how to do that, but I believe that we all share those values.

As we come into the 17th year of the Scottish Parliament, with a Scottish Government that has more powers to improve the lives of Scotland's people, we only need a Government that is willing to use those powers for the greater good. You never know—on St Andrew's day tomorrow, we might all get a surprise: the Government might

actually use its new powers to really improve people's lives.

The Presiding Officer: Unless there are other contributions, I ask the minister, Alasdair Allan, to wind up the debate. I know that it is early, Mr Allan. I suspect that we might end the debate early.

16:48

Dr Allan: Twelve minutes? *[Laughter.]*

The Presiding Officer: Don't worry, Mr Allan. Do not feel obliged to talk for 12 minutes.

Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP): Will the minister take an intervention?

Dr Allan: I would be very grateful.

The Presiding Officer: Christine Grahame has a very helpful intervention.

Christine Grahame: I have not heard any member mention Dennis Canavan, who introduced his own member's bill—the St Andrew's Day Bank Holiday (Scotland) Bill—which became an act in 2007. He is a gentleman who is much missed in the Parliament, and he did much to emphasise the importance of St Andrew's day. I put that on the record. I cannot talk for any longer, so the minister will have to make up the rest of the time himself.

Dr Allan: I am very grateful for the intervention and thank Christine Grahame for raising that point. I have written to Mr Canavan to indicate that I am very willing to meet him to hear his ideas about how St Andrew's day can be more widely celebrated.

However brief, this has been an informative debate about St Andrew's day. I will now bear in mind the name of St Andrew if I am ever afflicted by gout—I thank Mr Corry for the recommendation. Mr Rumbles made a rather braver attempt to attribute to St Andrew saintly powers over issues as varied as road junctions and parliamentary sarcasm.

I am delighted that this year, we are able to celebrate St Andrew's day in style.

Mr Macdonald reminded us, importantly, of St Andrew the man, the fisherman and the disciple. In the spirit of that contribution, I am delighted that this year we are launching an initiative called share for St Andrew on 30 November. We are encouraging people to give 30 minutes of their time to share, in the spirit of St Andrew. There are many ways to take part: for example, people can volunteer, donate clothes to charity or welcome somebody new to the community.

If we are fully to harness the potential of the St Andrew's day celebrations, we must do all that we can to engage young people in them. Therefore, it is good to see the finals of national schools debating competitions, one in Gaelic and one in English, taking place in the Parliament on, respectively, tomorrow and Monday. As well as enhancing the St Andrew's day celebrations, those events will, we hope, shape some parliamentarians to serve in the chamber in the future.

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): I wonder whether the minister might join me in celebrating one particular occasion that happened on 30 November 1990. Members of my generation and perhaps a little bit younger may remember that that was the day on which Margaret Thatcher left 10 Downing Street.

Dr Allan: I will say no more about that subject, other than that I was at university at the time.

There are some examples that we can all look at to ensure that the celebration of St Andrew's day extends to the whole of Scotland and becomes something truly special and unique.

Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): As far as something unique is concerned, I am sure that the minister is aware that St Andrew's day is celebrated in Barbados as the national day of independence. Does he think that, at this time of year, it might be suitable for Scots to embrace Barbados as having a warmer climate than we have here?

Dr Allan: I hesitate to say anything that sounds as if I am fishing for a fact-finding mission to Barbados. I have indicated, and am very happy to indicate again, Scotland's warm wishes to Barbados on its national day.

I would also like to engage Scotland's diverse communities in the St Andrew's day celebrations. We are giving BEMIS a funding contribution of £54,000 to deliver a multicultural celebration of both 2016 as the year of innovation, architecture and design and Scotland's winter festivals. This year's programme is developing well and includes 11 events developed by multicultural communities. The programme builds on 2015 activity, which attracted 12,000 people to 65 multicultural events across Scotland, eight of which specifically celebrated St Andrew's day.

The key to the success of the multicultural celebrations around St Andrew's day has been a warm invitation to take part in the celebrations and the provision of inspiration and support, alongside an absolute willingness to accept that people will also want to celebrate the national day in their own way and in their own time.

In time, if we keep innovation, inspiration, collaboration and, crucially, the engagement of the community at the heart of all our St Andrew's day activities, we will see the celebration of St Andrew's day grow to new heights: boosting our economy; enhancing our international profile; and—most important—emphasising unity through the celebration of the wide diversity of faiths, cultures and ethnic origins that is the reality of Scotland today.

More than anything else, as we celebrate the many things associated with our national identity and culture, we should not be too dour to say that St Andrew's day is a day for Scotland to enjoy itself.

I hope that members will join me in wishing the people of Scotland and those with an affinity to Scotland a very happy St Andrew's day when it comes—latha sona Naoimh Anndrais dhuibh uile.

The Presiding Officer: I thank the minister.

Normally, we would move on to the next item of business, but given that we have finished a little early I will suspend business for five minutes.

16:54

Meeting suspended.

17:00

On resuming—

Business Motion

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-02827, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees to the following revisions to the programme of business for—

(a) Wednesday 30 November 2016

after

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions
Health and Sport

insert

followed by Ministerial Statement: Response to the
Autumn Statement

delete

5.00 pm Decision Time

and insert

5.30 pm Decision Time

(b) Thursday 1 December 2016—

delete

2.30 pm Scottish Government Debate:
Recognising 16 Days of Action to End
Violence Against Women and Girls

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Support
for Scotland's Renewables

and insert

2.30 pm Ministerial Statement: Minimum Age of
Criminal Responsibility

followed by Scottish Government Debate:
Recognising 16 days of Action to End
Violence Against Women and Girls

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions—[Joe
FitzPatrick.]

Motion agreed to.

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): There are four questions to be put at decision time. I remind members that, if the amendment in the name of Jackson Carlaw is agreed to, the amendment in the name of Lewis Macdonald will fall.

The first question is, that amendment S5M-02795.1, in the name of Jackson Carlaw, which seeks to amend motion S5M-02795, in the name of Fiona Hyslop, on the implications for culture, the creative industries and tourism following the European Union referendum, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
Hamilton, Rachael (South Scotland) (Con)
Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Thomson, Ross (North East Scotland) (Con)
Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)

Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Evans, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)

White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 29, Against 84, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-02795.2, in the name of Lewis Macdonald, which seeks to amend the motion in the name of Fiona Hyslop, be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S5M-02795, in the name of Fiona Hyslop, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Evans, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)

Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Against

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (South Scotland) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Thomson, Ross (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)

Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 84, Against 29, Abstentions 0.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament believes that the interests of Scotland's culture, creative and tourism sectors are best served by protecting the country's existing relationship with Europe, and in particular maintaining freedom of movement and access to EU funding and collaboration mechanisms; believes that, with the approach of the 70th anniversary of the Edinburgh International Festival in 2017, it is more important than ever to promote the inclusive and outward-looking character of Scotland's culture and its welcome to the world; recognises the potentially severe negative impact that any hard Brexit proposed by the UK Government could have on the sectors' ability to compete in terms of cultural exports, staffing, skills and talent recruitment and retention, research and knowledge exchange, ability to influence key cultural policy, such as copyright law, and access to key EU markets; acknowledges the importance of EU-funded projects to the culture, creative industries and tourism sectors for networking and developing partnerships, including over €11.5 million of Creative Europe grants to projects involving Scottish partners since 2014, and supports the Scottish Government's position that the UK Government needs to find ways to maintain its influence as proposals develop for the digital single market.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes decision time. [*Interruption.*] I beg your pardon—sorry.

The final question is, that motion S5M-02796, in the name of Alasdair Allan, on celebrating St Andrew's day, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament notes the fantastic opportunity that St Andrew's Day provides to showcase and celebrate Scotland's unique culture and identity at home and abroad and to boost the country's international reputation by sending a positive and inclusive message to the country and the world about Scotland and its people; acknowledges the potential of St Andrew's Day to further spotlight the contribution that Scots make across the globe and in many different fields of endeavour while emphasising a unity through the celebration of the wide diversity of faiths, cultures and ethnic origins that is the reality of the nation today; recognises the growing success of the St Andrew's Day celebrations over recent years and signals its support for the activities that are planned to mark St Andrew's Day 2016, and extends an invitation to people from near and far to join the celebration of Scotland's national day.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes decision time.

Blood Donation

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): The next item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-01537, in the name of Rona Mackay, on men who have sex with men—blood donations. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament acknowledges that, in 2011, the law regarding men who have sex with men being allowed to donate blood changed from a lifetime ban to a 12-month temporary deferral, subject to sexual abstinence; notes the view that, in the name of equality, Scotland needs to go further to ensure that all people can donate blood and that they should not be assessed on their sexual orientation, with the introduction of new non-discriminatory risk assessment in line with organ, stem cell and bone marrow donations, and believes that this would increase the number of much-needed donors in Strathkelvin and Bearsden and nationally.

17:05

Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): I am delighted that, for the first time, we are debating this hugely important issue in the chamber, and I am grateful for the great level of cross-party support that my motion on men who have sex with men being treated equally with regard to blood donations has had.

At our party's autumn conference, the First Minister said that the key message that she wanted to promote above all else was inclusion, and my motion is about exactly that—equality and inclusion. Scotland has led the way on equality in recent years, and our party has an unblemished track record on promoting equal rights. In 2005, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender was banned; in 2009, same-sex couples were allowed to adopt children; and in 2014, we legalised same-sex marriage.

As the law stands, no men who have had sex with men in the previous 12 months, or women who have had sex with men who have had sex with men, may give blood within the 12-month deferral period. Those rules are archaic and have their origins in the 1980s, when little was known of the risk of HIV, the modes of contracting it or its prevalence in specific communities.

In last week's debate on adoption, I spoke of close friends of mine who are in a same-sex marriage and who have just gone through the adoption process. How will those men, who are in a loving, monogamous relationship, explain to their child why they are being treated differently when it comes to giving blood? Shockingly, if their child ever needed a blood transfusion and they were a match, they would not be allowed to save their own child's life in an emergency. In the name

of equality, it is time to end the current discriminatory process and to base donor eligibility on risk, regardless of sexual orientation.

The current rules on blood donation make no reference to someone's personal risk of being a carrier of HIV. A promiscuous straight person would be able to donate blood, while a monogamous gay or bisexual man would not. Scotland has a chance to address one major area where inequality still exists and, at the same time, to tackle the chronic lack of uptake in blood donation and the need for new donors to come forward to meet our demand for blood products. Over the past 10 years, there has been a 40 per cent drop in the number of people who give blood, and current figures suggest that only 4 per cent of people in the United Kingdom regularly donate, yet 6,000 blood transfusions are needed in the UK every day.

Stonewall Scotland believes that excluding thousands of gay and bisexual men who may safely be eligible to donate threatens the blood supply that one in four people will rely on at some point in their life. The fact is that the breakdown shows that the number of heterosexual people with HIV is rising, and the eligibility rules take no account of that. In addition, the regulation of men who have sex with men donating is based on self-declaration and it is incredibly simple to hide sexual activity in order to give blood.

Of course there must be stringent donor selection criteria that are aimed at protecting donors and recipients of blood transfusions—no one would ever argue otherwise—but those criteria should be based on participation in high-risk behaviour rather than sexual orientation.

The public need to have confidence in the transfusion system, and it is important to stress that all blood is screened to the highest level. That said, the fact that the statistics show that only one bag of blood has tested positive for HIV in the past four years puts what we are talking about in perspective.

We need to introduce a non-discriminatory risk assessment policy that will judge each individual equally, whether they are straight, bisexual or gay. The current rules were put in place in 2011, after the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs—SaBTO—reviewed the donation rules. SaBTO recommended reducing the lifetime ban to a one-year deferral for men who have sex with men, and that recommendation was accepted.

Scotland needs to go further to ensure that all people can donate blood on the basis of their personal risk of blood-borne virus transmission, not their sexual orientation. Although health matters are devolved to the Scottish Parliament,

blood donation policy has so far been in line with approaches in England and Wales, following the guidance provided by SaBTO.

In June 2016, an all-party parliamentary group at Westminster on blood donation began an inquiry into the current rules. That debate is happening alongside a review by SaBTO of the blood donor selection criteria. Stewart McDonald, the MP for Glasgow South, recently chaired an evidence-taking session at Westminster on the issue, and the APPG is due to make a recommendation early in 2017.

The Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service could determine its own policies and restrictions for men who have sex with men, but it would be unlikely to be willing to implement a policy that was contrary to the evidence-based guidance of the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs. However, in 2011, the Northern Ireland Executive chose not to implement SaBTO's proposed change to the deferral criteria for that group and maintained a ban. Wales, England and Scotland all moved to a 12-month deferral period after the last MSM sexual contact. Northern Ireland changed its criteria this year to fall into line with the rest of the United Kingdom, which sets a precedent for autonomy.

To highlight the great anomaly, gay men can join the bone marrow register and donate organs and stem cells. Everyone goes through the same health and suitability checks—sexuality does not matter one bit. Whatever a person's age, health or sexual orientation, they can donate.

Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Spain, Italy and Mexico are some of the countries that accept donations without basing eligibility on sexual orientation. Spain has a deferral period of at least six months after a change of partner for heterosexual and MSM donors, with permanent deferral for individuals who have multiple sexual partners. In Italy, a deferral period of four months applies to people who have multiple partners when they have had a change in regular partner.

It should be possible to ask donors more detailed questions about their sexual activity rather than just whether they have had sex with another man in the past year. We would thereby gain more accurate information on risk and make the blood supply safer, which is of paramount importance. Of course, the current law also affects transgender people who want to donate blood, as it means that any man who transitioned to being a woman is still classed as an MSM and is therefore not allowed to donate, even though it might be a number of years since they last identified as being an MSM. Lifting the ban on MSM donating blood and replacing it with a more equal, non-discriminatory risk assessment is fairer, particularly since one in three 16 to 24-year-olds do not identify as heterosexual.

The Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service recently published a document with an updated position on gay blood donation. That document recognises the principles of kindness and mutual trust that are expected between all blood donors and the blood transfusion service. However, the mutual trust that the service expects is not reflected in the selection and deferral criteria, which is evident from the fact that there is no consideration of the position of thousands of gay and bisexual men who are in committed relationships, where the risk of HIV transmission is negligible.

For the sake of equality, Scotland needs to go further to ensure that all people can donate blood on the basis of their personal risk of blood-borne virus transmission, not their sexual orientation. We need to introduce a non-discriminatory risk assessment policy that will judge each individual equally, whether they are straight, bisexual or gay. That would increase the number of much-needed donors throughout Scotland.

As I mentioned, my motion is about equality and inclusion. As my colleague Patrick Grady MP recently said at the first meeting of the APPG on blood donation, for many gay men, a 12-month deferral is, in effect, a lifetime deferral. Even if we shortened the deferral period to three months, it would still, without doubt, be a discriminatory measure against MSM couples who are in stable, loving relationships. That is not equal or inclusive. Let us go further, Scotland, and end that inequality now.

17:13

Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP): We have moved a long way since homosexual relations between men over 21 and in private ceased to be illegal in 1967. We would think that, by now, being gay should not be an issue. Like gender inequality, the notion of homophobia ought to have fallen out of use by now. I do not know why we find ourselves exposed to discrimination of any kind wherever it is directed, but I recognise that it is still with us, as we discussed only a few weeks ago in a debate on hate crime.

When discrimination is built into the official system, we need to be very wary. Not long ago, as Rona Mackay said, gay couples could not apply to adopt children. Thankfully, we have changed that. The public good must always be linked to the human rights of any individual.

There are solid clinical reasons why certain groups of people cannot give blood, although they could well become recipients of someone else's donation. Those with type 1 diabetes, which is controlled by insulin, cannot donate. That is not

because there is anything wrong with their blood, but because the blood donation service deems the risk too high for the potential donor. There are some medications that preclude someone from giving blood, and the same restriction applies to people with certain blood conditions or a history of specific diseases that could potentially be passed on to a recipient.

Those criteria are clear and widely accepted. We would be in a dangerous situation if clinical filtering mechanisms did not exist and life events such as birth and major road traffic accidents, and all the diseases that we can now control and manage, would become far greater threats. That aside, the critical point is that those criteria involve decisions that are made on scientific grounds, not as a result of some sort of irrational discrimination. They are, as it were, the outcomes of positive or rational discrimination.

We all know that blood donations must be safe. Anyone can acquire a blood-borne virus or a sexually transmitted disease, but some people have an increased risk of exposure and so might not be able to give blood or will be excluded for a certain period of time; we heard about that in Rona Mackay's speech.

In June this year, it was revealed that UK blood is safer since the lifetime ban on gay men donating blood was changed in 2011. The Department of Health in England said:

"Surveillance data derived from the tests carried out on every blood donation in England, Scotland and Wales since the policy change show that fewer infections are being detected in donated blood".

Major HIV charities, including the Terrence Higgins Trust, supported the change from a total ban on MSM giving blood to a 12-month exclusion period. However, we are now hearing calls for that exclusion to be revisited and, in April, SaBTO set up a working group to review the current donor acceptance criteria and consider any available new evidence. I support those calls.

Stonewall has described the move as

"a step in the right direction"

and highlighted the fact that a high-risk heterosexual would be less controlled than a low-risk gay man who was in a monogamous relationship.

I hope that all organisations with an interest in ending this discrimination will work with SaBTO to ensure that the policy and procedures maintain safety for everyone who uses transfusion and blood services, irrespective of sexual orientation.

HIV Scotland tells us in its briefing that

"every blood donation in Scotland is screened and the tests for HIV are now highly accurate".

It also says that men who have had sex with one man in the past 12 months are likely to be of lower risk than many of those who are allowed to donate blood, including men and women who have unprotected sex with different partners.

It is time that we moved to non-discriminatory risk assessments to end this inequality. I support the motion in my friend Rona Mackay's name and congratulate her on bringing the issue to the chamber.

17:18

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): I, too, congratulate Rona Mackay on securing the debate.

It is pretty obvious to anyone that the primary objective of the blood transfusion service should be to maximise the safety of the supply of blood that is needed in critical services. However, there is a good argument that the current irrational criteria that are being applied do not maximise safety or supply. Additionally, there is an argument that applies to every aspect of our public services, which is that any element of discrimination or prejudice that is built into the way in which they work either strengthens or fails to challenge discrimination and prejudice in wider society, which means that there is a principled reason why every aspect of our public services must avoid discrimination.

In addition, on a third level, there is a case for saying that the discrimination itself undermines that first objective of maximising safety and supply. There will be many people who might well be willing and able safely to donate blood that is needed in Scotland but who choose not to, because of the way that they feel they might be judged or spoken to, or because they feel that they might be asked inappropriate questions.

That does not apply just to gay or bisexual men, or to men who have sex with men. Underlying some of the criteria that are being applied—in my view, they are quite irrational—we must also consider, for example, trans or non-binary people, who, if they are asked to explain whether they have had same-sex relationships in the past 12 months, may feel unable to give a straightforward answer that is both honest to themselves and gives the person asking for it the information that is being sought. They may simply feel unwilling to be categorised in a binary sense by being asked to give that information in the first place.

The most important thing that we have to do to ensure safety of the blood supply is testing, which is now being done to a far higher standard than it was in the past—certainly to a far higher standard than was possible when the original criteria were set down. We also have to ensure that people feel

that giving blood is something that is valued. If some people are simply being told that their blood is not valued, or indeed if they have to tell lies in order to supply safe blood—which they know is safe—we are undermining that second goal of increasing the supply of blood that is needed.

I want to say something about another aspect of the criteria that we are not talking about. If a woman is asked whether she has had sex with a man who has ever had sex with a man, or if anyone is asked whether they have had sex with someone who has ever had sex for money, how many of them could give a 100 per cent guarantee that they know the correct answer? Again, we are asking for information that people may not be able to give with 100 per cent certainty and which is not in fact needed to ensure 100 per cent certainty of the safety of blood that is being donated.

I thank—I am sure that we all do—all those many people who donate blood and the people who deliver the service in communities up and down the country. It is a vital service, which genuinely save lives. We should value everyone who chooses to donate blood and everyone who works to ensure that the supply of that blood is available and is safe where it is needed. We should change the irrational rules that undermine both those objectives.

17:22

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): I, too, congratulate Rona Mackay on securing this evening's debate and on the campaigning that she has undertaken on this issue since she was elected.

The 2011 change, which was initiated by the UK Government's Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs, was a welcome step forward. However, looking at it now, it looks like just a small step forward. I acknowledge that many men who have sex with men—including many gay couples in long-term, monogamous relationships—and who want to donate blood remain deeply disappointed and frustrated that they are still unable to do so. As Patrick Harvie said, there have been advances in technology and testing. I think that we would all agree that it is the right time to look again at the matter, with the aim of blood donation risk assessments being carried out, as happens with organ, stem cell and bone marrow donations.

I am very sympathetic to the suggestion that sexual behaviour and not sexual orientation should be the determining factor in whether someone can donate blood and that individual, risk-based assessments are thus more appropriate than a blanket-ban approach.

I welcome the fact that the UK Government's advisory committee has initiated a new review of policy in this area and I think that we all look forward to its conclusions in order to move the issue forward.

A number of other developed nations, including our European partners Italy and Spain, do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation but, rather, use the individual risk assessment approach. We should look at how those countries manage their systems of blood donations safely and effectively and see what we can learn from them.

Like other members, I thank all those who work for the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service and all the blood donors—not only in my Lothian region, but across Scotland—for the literally life-saving contribution that they make. They really do help to save lives and we must do all that we can to support them and to encourage more people to come forward and donate blood.

Last Friday, I met representatives of a local cancer charity in my region, who informed me that, on average, patients with leukaemia commonly require up to eight units of blood or blood products each day during treatment, for weeks at a time. It is estimated that 18 blood donors are required to provide the blood that is needed for just one leukaemia patient undergoing a month's treatment.

It is therefore of real concern that the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service has said that the number of new blood donors in Scotland has declined by 30 per cent in the past five years. Statistics show that 96 per cent of new donors are under the age of 55, but the blood transfusion service is increasingly relying on donors aged over 55 to make sure that there is always enough blood for patients. Less than 4 per cent of the eligible population in Scotland are active blood donors, so we need to look at new and imaginative ways of getting more people to become active donors.

When the minister responds to the debate, I would like her to outline the Scottish Government's position on people who have had blood transfusions who are currently excluded from donating blood, as that is another potentially large group in society who would very much like to give blood. We need to look at that area and move it forward.

I again welcome the debate and recognise the cross-party support that exists for a better assessment policy. I believe that, working together, we can introduce such a system and I look forward to progress being made to implement it.

17:26

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): I commend Rona Mackay for bringing her important motion to the chamber for debate and for the work that she and many groups across Scotland have done to raise awareness of an important issue.

All members agree that the absolute priority for blood donations is to ensure that we have a safe and reliable supply of blood for those who need it. That means having enough blood to meet demand and it means ensuring, with confidence, that the blood that is available to the public is free from infection or disease.

Current trends in Scotland show that the number of registered blood donors has fallen by 30 per cent since 2011. At present, only 4 per cent of the eligible population—people who are aged between 17 and 70—are registered to donate blood. In preparing for this evening's debate, I checked the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service's current stock levels and they showed that stocks of type O negative blood are below the service's six-day supply target. We owe a real debt of gratitude to the people who donate blood, but it is clear that more needs to be done to encourage those who are not blood donors to sign up and to give blood regularly.

The safety of the blood supply is, of course, of paramount importance but, as we have heard in the debate, the current rules are not focused on the safety of the supply. They were introduced in 2011 and placed a 12-month blanket deferral period for blood donations from men who have sex with men. That was a reduction of the previous lifetime deferral that had been introduced in the 1980s, but it does not go far enough.

The previous policy was born of fear of transmission of HIV and other infections to people who were receiving donated blood. The severity of those concerns cannot be downplayed. Since 2001, we have seen the number of HIV cases in Scotland rise annually—Health Protection Scotland calculates that 372 cases were reported in 2014. Of course, the rise in numbers can be attributed to many factors, including an increase in the number of people coming forward to be tested. Thanks to scientific advances it is now, with the right treatment, possible for someone living with HIV to have a normal healthy life expectancy if they are tested early and treatment begins as soon as possible.

Scientific advances mean that it is now appropriate to review the policy of a 12-month deferral period for blood donations from the men who have sex with men community, and to consider a new non-discriminatory risk assessment that is in line with those for organ, stem cell and bone marrow donations. As Patrick

Harvie said, we know that testing is more accurate than ever. Nucleic acid testing, which is carried out on all blood donations, can detect HIV in the blood after nine days, which is a shorter window than for hepatitis B or syphilis.

It is clear that blood donation services accept that specific behaviours, rather than a person's sexuality, determine risk of infection. A man who has had sex with one man in the past 12 months is likely to have a lower risk than many other people who are allowed to donate blood, including men and women who have had unprotected sex with different partners. If we assume that gay people are more promiscuous than heterosexuals, we make the same mistake as those who regarded HIV and AIDS as conditions that affected only gay men.

The issue raises the question—in light of the Equality Act 2010—whether it is unlawful to discriminate in blood donation on the basis of sexual orientation, because it relates to the provision of goods or services. Whether the current rules are lawful is an important question that we have to consider.

The 2010 act states that a donation can be lawfully refused if the decision is based on scientific evidence. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that the scientific evidence does not make it reasonable to refuse donations simply on the basis of a blanket ban.

Labour very much welcomes the motion. As Rona Mackay said, the current rules are archaic and do not promote equality. To continue to exclude people who may be able to donate threatens the provision of a sufficient supply of blood, on which one in four of us will rely at some point in our life.

17:30

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): I join members in congratulating Rona Mackay on bringing this important debate to the chamber.

Quite simply, blood must be available 24/7 throughout Scotland, including in remote areas. However, blood has a very short shelf life and cannot be stockpiled. Every day, therefore, NHS Scotland depends on donors to help to maintain stock levels. As Colin Smyth said, the number of new donors has fallen by 30 per cent in just five years, and less than 4 per cent of the eligible population are active blood donors. It is important to note that funding for the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service has fallen by 16 per cent since 2010, which I hope the minister will take into account.

We all agree that there is a need to encourage new people to give blood. A whole generation of

Scots does not remember the television advert that featured Rowan Atkinson talking to a stone, which I recall seeing as a child; I remember the effect that it had on me and the importance of the matter that it addressed. We now need to think about how we encourage new people to give blood.

On the specific issue that we are debating, I believe that we cannot, when the need for more blood is so critical, afford to exclude any potential donors unjustly. I share the view that members all across the chamber have expressed: that men who have sex with men should not be prevented from donating blood based on their sexual orientation alone. Instead, their individual risk should be assessed by a healthcare professional. There is little chance that a potential donor of any sexual orientation will be allowed to donate blood if they are not entirely fit to do so. Just yesterday, at Inverclyde royal hospital, I met some nurses who work with blood-borne viruses, and they told me that cases of heterosexual HIV infection are going up. There is a huge amount of misconception about gay men and blood donation. Improvements in testing and many other safeguards have reduced the risk to an acceptable level.

Due to the drop in donors, we face a shortage of blood. Right now in Scotland there is only six days' supply of type B negative and just seven days' supply of A positive. That is a real problem for someone in one of those blood groups who has had an accident or will have an operation and needs blood. The issue really is affecting people in Scotland right now. I am sure that we all agree that it is in our interests not to prevent healthy people from giving blood. If the scientific evidence tells us that people do not pose a risk, we should allow them to give blood.

On a personal note, I am a card-carrying organ donor, but I have never given blood. That comes down in large part to the issue that Patrick Harvie raised—the stigma that people feel when having difficult private discussions about their sexual practices. We must make sure that our policies are based on scientific evidence and are in the best interests of the public. I welcome the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs policy review, and I hope that the UK Government and the Scottish Government will try to implement any recommendations that come from it. We should remember that regulation of blood donation keeps us all safe—but it should also keep us all equal.

17:34

The Minister for Mental Health (Maureen Watt): Unfortunately, the Minister for Public Health and Sport is not able to be here today. As I have

held that post previously and considered the issue, I am happy to be here to speak on this important matter. I thank all those members who have contributed to the debate.

We welcome the intentions that the motion reflects. Of course, we want to ensure that the NHS has sufficient blood to meet demand, so I also thank the many thousands of people who come forward to give blood every year. Demand for blood has reduced by 20 per cent in recent years, but we continue to ask for new donors to replace older ones who have dropped away, because we need donations from people who have certain types of blood. Anyone who wishes to join the register is very welcome indeed.

The motion talks about equality, which the Government takes seriously, but this is a matter of neither equality nor deliberate discrimination: it is a matter of the safety of the blood supply.

I will explain the rationale for the current restrictions. I know that some men who have sex with men feel that they are being unjustly prevented from donating blood, but the deferral is based on current epidemiology and a scientific assessment of risk. The Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service has a clear duty to minimise the risk of a blood transfusion transmitting any infection. When we go to give blood, we are all asked the same questions on the same questionnaire. In 2015, for example, approximately 25,000 potential donors were deferred for various reasons and 31 of them were men who have sex with men. The rest were deferred for other reasons, including people who had travelled to certain countries, people who had recently had a tattoo and people who take certain medication or have certain illnesses. People are not deferred on the basis of sexual orientation but on the basis of high-risk behaviours.

Patrick Harvie: Does that low figure not suggest, as many of us did during the debate, that a great many people who identify as men and who are in stable and monogamous same-sex relationships just do not turn up? They are potentially valuable blood donors whose blood is not a risk because of their sexual activity, but they are just not turning up to offer blood in the first place.

Maureen Watt: I am not sure whether there are any figures for people who do not turn up to give blood in the first place, but everyone will agree that safety is paramount.

The deferral of men who have sex with men is based on two facts. First, they are at significantly higher risk of HIV than other groups, and secondly, it is not always possible to detect the presence of infections in donated blood. From Health Protection Scotland data, we know that in

Scotland the prevalence rate of HIV among men who have sex with men is 7.7 per cent. In heterosexual individuals, that figure is 0.07 per cent. Men who have sex with men are therefore 100 times more likely to be infected with HIV than others.

Of course, monogamous relationships and the use of condoms reduces transmission of HIV and other infections, but they cannot eliminate the risk altogether. Approximately 30 per cent of men who have sex with men and who are infected with HIV are unaware of their infection. That would not represent such a significant risk if it was possible to always detect HIV infection in donated blood. The latest tests are very sensitive, but they are not perfect. Certain infections, including HIV, have what is called a window period immediately after infection when they are not yet detectable. The last two transfusion-related transmissions of HIV in the UK were as a result of the window period. That risk is not purely theoretical and it is why the deferral is currently recommended.

The motion specifically refers to the donation of organs and stem cells. However, it is important to understand why the criteria for those donations are different. For example, there is a limited supply of organs and, in those cases, the recipient will often be in a life-or-death situation. The life-saving benefit of a transplant will often outweigh the potential risk of HIV or other serious infections, so the risk assessment differs. That is not the case for blood donation, and as the blood transfusion service always has sufficient blood available to meet demand it does not need to take risks.

Decisions about the criteria for donating blood are based on the best available scientific evidence. This is complex, technical work, so we follow the advice of the expert advisory committee on the safety of blood, tissues and organs, which, as other members have mentioned, is also known as SaBTO.

SaBTO has set up a working group to review the donor selection criteria. As has been mentioned, it will report next year. The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport wrote to SaBTO earlier this year to encourage it to give consideration to other methods of managing the risk to the blood supply, including looking at other models of individualised assessment of donors' risk. The review is welcome because it is assessing the latest evidence and considering different approaches to blood safety. The working group is also engaging with groups that may be affected by its recommendations, including organisations that represent men who have sex with men.

The advice from SaBTO is not static: it previously recommended a change in policy in 2011, which has been implemented.

I am grateful to be able to provide the Government's position on the issue, to explain the good reasons for the current policy and to provide reassurance that it continues to be under review.

It is also important to reflect the historical experience of those who were infected with serious viruses, such as HIV or hepatitis C, as a result of NHS blood and blood products. The Penrose inquiry report on that matter was published last year. At the time of the report's publication I met many of the families involved and I know that those affected would feel strongly that blood safety should never be compromised and that any risks should be mitigated as far as possible. That is what our deferral policies seek to do, based on expert advice.

One inadvertent infection via blood would be one too many. It would have lifelong consequences for those affected and could have a detrimental effect on trust in the blood transfusion service and the wider NHS.

We will seriously consider any recommendations from the review.

Rona Mackay: Will the minister take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I will let the member intervene, because it is a serious and important debate, but it would have been helpful had you intervened earlier. I knew that you had been thinking about it for a long time.

Rona Mackay: Although I agree with the minister that safety is paramount, does she not agree that risk should be based on sexual behaviour rather than on orientation?

Maureen Watt: That is absolutely what I have said throughout my speech. It is about the high risk of certain behaviours, not about sexual orientation. I hope that I made that absolutely clear. I hope that members will also understand why the current deferrals are in place. Of course, if SaBTO comes up with recommendations that we should change that, that will be considered at the time. I hope that I have set out the current position.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you very much minister, especially for stepping in for a colleague. I thank all members for a serious and thoughtful debate.

Meeting closed at 17:43.

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