



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Tuesday 17 March 2015

Session 4

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

Time for Reflection

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Good afternoon. The first item of business is time for reflection, for which our leader is Mr K Jagannathan from the Hindu Temple of Scotland, Rutherglen.

Mr K Jagannathan (Hindu Temple of Scotland, Rutherglen): Presiding Officer and members of the Scottish Parliament, good afternoon. On behalf of the Hindu Temple of Scotland in Rutherglen, Glasgow, I thank you all for inviting me to talk at time for reflection.

I would like to talk about a famous Hindu monk named Swami Vivekananda, who lived in India in the 19th century and was a key figure in introducing Indian philosophies of meditation to the western world. Swami Vivekananda likened the human mind to a monkey, which is always restless and constantly active by nature. He noticed that the human mind has a curiosity to explore the external world but lacks the ability to focus inwardly.

Swami Vivekananda stressed the importance of the practice of concentration, for he felt that the mind is limitless and that, through improved concentration, the mind can truly be a powerful force. The way to achieve that is to avoid distractions, as they can disturb the mind and make it unsettled. We can train the mind to focus by fixating on one object, and that is where meditation plays a big role.

What is meditation? People tend to associate meditation with worship or prayer, but that is not the case. Meditation means "towards a stress-free life". It is a discipline in which an individual trains the mind or induces a mode of consciousness. Meditation is being aware. Thus, when you are aware or conscious of your actions and are truly present in that given point in time, that is meditation. It could be being aware of your breathing, listening to the birds and engaging in activities free from distractions to the mind. That is known as effective meditation.

In our Hindu temple, the priest advises the devotees to keep their eyes closed for a few minutes to meditate, focusing with a calm and clear mind. Some devotees may silently repeat one word continuously to prevent distracting thoughts, for example, "Om".

There are many advantages to meditation. Meditation can give you a sense of calm, peace and balance. It decreases anxiety and builds self-confidence, which benefits your emotional wellbeing and overall health. Meditation is relevant in our modern world and, if we all take that minute to stop and meditate and to consider our actions, our words and their consequences, people can become more conscious of the outcomes. That can enable more peace, harmony and understanding between communities and with ourselves.

Topical Question Time

14:04

British Transport Police

1. Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Lab):

To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to consult on its proposal for the future of the British Transport Police. (S4T-00969)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson): The Scottish Government has been consistent in its view on integrating the British Transport Police in Scotland with Police Scotland, and that view has been made public since before police reform. My predecessor wrote to the United Kingdom minister for transport in 2011 and again in December 2013, submitting a business case for integration.

The Scottish Government will continue to engage with all key stakeholders, including the British Transport Police, the British Transport Police Authority, the British Transport Police Federation, the rail industry, the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers and Police Scotland, to ensure that our railways continue to enjoy excellent policing. That engagement will continue throughout 2015 as we work closely with stakeholders on proposals to shape the integration of the function of the BTP in Scotland with Police Scotland. The good work of BTP officers and staff in Scotland is valued by the Scottish Government and the people of Scotland, and protecting and maintaining their specialist skills and knowledge will be a priority.

Hugh Henry: I may be mistaken, but I think that the cabinet secretary missed out his willingness to talk to the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, which has also commented. I hoped that it would be included.

The cabinet secretary and the Scottish Government are trying to pull a fast one. There was an agreement in the Smith commission to devolve the powers of the British Transport Police to the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament, but there was no mention in that agreement of the abolition of the British Transport Police. The cabinet secretary may say that the Government is consistent in its views, but that does not absolve it of the need to properly consult. Again, will he take the opportunity to put on the record the willingness to consult meaningfully with all those who are involved before any final decision on structures is taken?

Michael Matheson: On the member's first point, I am more than happy to engage with ASLEF and any other stakeholder that has an interest in the particular issue.

I find the member's position on the matter bizarre. As a Government, we set out our position on the integration of the British Transport Police in Scotland with Police Scotland back in 2011, and we have been consistent in that position. In fact, it was also in our white paper last year as the Scottish Government's preferred policy on this issue. We have engaged on the matter with stakeholders over that time not just in the justice portfolio but in the transport portfolio in the Scottish Government.

It should be recognised that all parties agreed to the Smith commission's recommendations, including the devolving of the functions of policing on Scotland's railways, which are currently carried out by the British Transport Police. We are saying that we wish to do that within the policing framework that we have in Scotland to create the appropriate accountability and line of authority in dealing with the matter, and we will consult stakeholders on how that will be achieved. Over the course of the year, stakeholders will be fully engaged in that process, which is an opportunity for them to make their views known on how it can be taken forward and how best we can ensure that we both maintain and protect the very specialist function that British Transport Police officers have. That is what we will do over the coming months and for the rest of this year before we come to a final decision on what the system will be like within the Police Scotland framework.

Hugh Henry: The cabinet secretary said that no one should be surprised because the proposals were included in the Government's white paper. As I recall, that white paper was rejected by the majority of people in Scotland, so he cannot use that as a justification.

I hope that I heard that there is a willingness by the Scottish Government to consult. I hope that the cabinet secretary will confirm that there is and that the Scottish Government will properly consult on structures, powers, cross-border legislation, funding and retaining the very discrete identity of the British Transport Police within Police Scotland. No one in the Labour Party disagrees with the transfer and devolving of powers to hold the British Transport Police responsible to the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament. That is not the issue; the issue is how we do that, how the functions, skills and expertise of the British Transport Police are protected and, critically, how funding and legislative issues relating to cross-border jurisdiction are addressed. Will the cabinet secretary confirm that all those issues will be fully consulted on and addressed before any final decision is taken?

Michael Matheson: If the member recognises that the topic was in our white paper, he must

have been aware of our policy position on the matter.

Hugh Henry's party has signed up to the Smith commission. It has accepted the commission's recommendation that the policing of our railways should be devolved to the Scottish Government. We are progressing that policy within the Police Scotland framework of a single national force operating in Scotland.

If the member had listened to my first answer, he would have heard me say that we will engage and consult stakeholders on how to do that, so that we protect and maintain the specialist function that is carried out by British Transport Police officers. It is in the interests of the Scottish Government and everyone else to ensure that our railways are effectively policed so, over the course of the year, we will consult stakeholders on how that can be achieved within our policing framework.

Roderick Campbell (North East Fife) (SNP): To what extent in any consultation will value for money in running a transport police service feature?

Michael Matheson: Resourcing will be an important part of our consideration. It is worth keeping in mind that the British Transport Police in Scotland is currently funded through Network Rail and the main train operator, ScotRail. It is, through various means, subsidised in effect by the Scottish Government, which largely pays for British transport policing in Scotland.

It may be helpful for the member to be aware that, in 2013-14, the costs met by Network Rail in Scotland and First ScotRail were around £19 million. The British Transport Police budget for Scotland was £12.5 million. That figure excludes the cost of functions that are centralised to the British Transport Police Authority.

The Government, including me and my colleague Derek Mackay, is keen to work with the rail industry, to ensure that we have a clear understanding of the funding mechanisms and the arrangements that will be put in place as we move forward.

Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con): What, if any, discussion or consultation took place with Network Rail and the train operators, such as Virgin Trains and Stagecoach, prior to the announcement of the proposal to integrate the British Transport Police in Scotland with Police Scotland? Will he guarantee that the current British Transport Police officers will not be deployed to general policing duties under the new proposals?

Michael Matheson: I return to my original answer. In 2011, we set out our position that

British transport policing in Scotland should be integrated into the police structure at that time, which was before the police reforms that have since taken place in Scotland. Back in 2013, we also put a business case to the member's United Kingdom Government colleague stating why transport policing should be part of Police Scotland. We have, therefore, engaged stakeholders on the matter over the course of several years. Our approach has not been a secret.

Devolution has been agreed and the UK Government has submitted draft clauses that set out how the function is to be devolved to the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament. We are going to engage on how that can best be achieved in the policing structure in Scotland. All stakeholders, whether they be rail operators, unions or other specialist organisations that have an interest in the matter, will have an opportunity to engage with us and be consulted on how we can best achieve the two things that are most important: maintaining and protecting the specialist function that our British Transport Police officers provide.

Alison McInnes (North East Scotland) (LD): The cabinet secretary is right to say that it has long been the Government's view to devolve transport policing, although some of us might think that it arrived at that view without sufficient dialogue with the British Transport Police and the unions. In his defence, the cabinet secretary has said that there have been four years of discussions since the decision was taken. Will he give details on those discussions? How often have stakeholders been met? What concerns were raised and how have they been addressed?

Michael Matheson: It is worth keeping it in mind that a range of organisations opposed the idea that the functions should be devolved in the first place. A number of organisations were not satisfied with the recommendations that were arrived at by the Smith commission, which the member's party and other parties signed up to. I recognise that there is a long-standing objection to the idea that the functions should be devolved.

Over the years, my predecessor engaged with a number of stakeholders, including the rail operators and other interested parties, on these matters. My officials have been engaged in dialogue with the British Transport Police in London, with the British Transport Police Authority and with the British Transport Police Federation in recent months.

I can assure the member that, as has always been the case, we are going to engage with stakeholders on how we can best achieve with move forward to integration in Scotland in a way that allows us to protect and maintain specialist

functions. If the member is keen to be assured about our commitment to ensuring that that engagement will be undertaken, she can have that assurance here today. I will ensure that those stakeholders that have a view on how things should be shaped within the policing structure that we now have in Scotland will have an opportunity to express it over the coming weeks and months.

Severe and Extreme Poverty

2. Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government how it is tackling severe and extreme poverty in Scotland. (S4T-00976)

The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners' Rights (Alex Neil): Yesterday we published the "Severe Poverty in Scotland" report, which showed that, in 2012-13, 510,000 people were classed as living in households in severe or extreme poverty. That figure is a disgrace. It is an unfortunate, inevitable result of the United Kingdom Government's failed austerity agenda and welfare cuts, which are slashing incomes for some of our poorest households.

With employment increasing and unemployment down, Scotland is outperforming the rest of the UK, yet the statistics show that a job is no longer any guarantee against severe or extreme poverty. That is why we oppose cutting in-work tax credits, and it is why the Scottish Government and its agencies are paying the living wage, encouraging other employers to follow suit.

We have put tackling poverty and inequality at the heart of Government, through policies such as the council tax freeze, free prescriptions and expanding childcare provision. Further, we are mitigating the worst of the welfare cuts by replacing income lost through the bedroom tax or council tax benefit cuts. That action is making a real difference, and we will continue to make the argument for a fairer welfare system.

Clare Adamson: Last week, the Welfare Reform Committee heard from Professor Fothergill of Sheffield Hallam University. He told members that in-work households can expect to lose around £730 million a year as a result of welfare cuts. How have such shocking figures on poverty been influenced by cuts to benefits for people who are in work?

Alex Neil: There is no doubt that welfare reform has impacted on the incomes of the poorest households in Scotland. Poorer households in work have relied on tax credits and other benefits to boost their incomes over recent years. However, as the severe poverty report has pointed out, changes to benefits and tax credits in 2012-13 served to reduce household incomes for some

poorer households in work, including families with children. It is also worth noting that additional welfare reform changes that have been introduced more recently were not factored into the severe poverty report and have not yet been factored into Scotland's annual poverty statistics.

Clare Adamson: I concur with the cabinet secretary that the UK Government's decision to freeze work allowances will cut the incomes of those who are in work and who are working hard to get out of poverty. Will he join me in calling on the Chancellor of the Exchequer to significantly increase the work allowance in this week's budget?

Alex Neil: We certainly will. As the First Minister outlined in a speech in London yesterday, the analysis that was published by the Scottish Government on Monday showed that more than half of all children and more than 40 per cent of working-age adults in severe poverty in Scotland live in households where at least one person is in work.

The UK Government's policy of freezing work allowances in effect cuts the benefits of workers on low incomes. That is why the First Minister called on the UK Government yesterday to announce a significant increase in the work allowance in the budget tomorrow. Increasing the work allowance would help to ensure that those who are in work but who are on low incomes have a better chance of lifting themselves and their families out of poverty, and it would substantially boost the welfare to work incentive that would be available.

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab): Will the cabinet secretary join me in congratulating Renfrewshire Council on the publication of its tackling poverty commission report? Following the publication of the report, what will the Scottish Government do to help Renfrewshire Council to lift children out of poverty in Renfrewshire?

Alex Neil: Like many other parts of west and central Scotland, Renfrewshire is an area where there is a great deal of poverty among children. We will work with Renfrewshire Council, and indeed every council, in urban and rural areas, to tackle child poverty. The best way to do that is to ensure that we get a Government that is prepared to adopt the kind of policies on tax and benefits that would benefit poorer people, and the best way to do that is to transfer responsibility for tax and benefits to this Parliament, because, irrespective of which party forms the Government in London—Labour or Tory—there is no doubt that Tory policies will continue.

Scotland's Place in Europe

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-12670, in the name of Humza Yousaf, on Scotland's place in Europe.

14:21

The Minister for Europe and International Development (Humza Yousaf): Scotland has been a progressive and integral part of the European Union for the past 40 years. Engagement with the EU and its institutions is a core priority for this Government. It is a priority that is central to our programme for government with its focus on driving sustainable growth and, tied to that, tackling inequality. That flows from Scotland's economic strategy, which has internationalisation and engagement with the European Union at its core.

I want to focus on Scotland's place in the European Union. First, I will focus on our strategic priorities for engagement in the EU, our successes and how we are building on those successes. Secondly, I want to focus on the benefits that EU membership brings to Scotland and vice versa, and why it is vital that that membership continues.

Lastly, I want to spell out why it would be unacceptable for Scotland to be dragged from the European Union against her will and why we need to put in place appropriate safeguards to prevent that from happening.

The institutions in Brussels have undergone considerable renewal and change over the past year or so. Elections to the European Parliament in May 2014 returned many new members of the European Parliament from across Europe. They also returned a number of members of strengthened Eurosceptic parties—a symptom, perhaps, of the frustration felt by EU citizens that the institutions have grown too remote from the citizens they are meant to serve.

A new European Commission, under the presidency of Jean-Claude Juncker, has taken office, with significant changes to its feel and structure. That includes a beefed-up role for vice-presidents, who, over the next five years, will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of key strategic objectives in, for example, energy, economic growth and the completion of the single market.

The Commission has now published its work programme for 2015, which is a 23-point plan aimed at progressing the Commission's EU 2020 growth strategy. The programme is designed to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth across the entire continent. It fits squarely with our

own economic agenda, which, as well as an economic focus, has a social focus. I wrote to the European and External Relations Committee earlier this year to set out the key areas of interest for the Scottish Government. A copy of that letter is available in the Scottish Parliament information centre.

Critical issues for Scotland in that work programme include ensuring the successful agreement of the so-called Juncker investment package, which is a loan guarantee fund designed to deliver up to €315 billion in funding to kick-start a pipeline of capital projects across the EU, including, we hope, in Scotland.

We also attach great importance to the completion of the single market in digital infrastructure, the abolition of EU roaming charges and the delivery of an ambitious international climate agreement, in discussions on which Scotland has been a leader.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): The minister will be aware of the importance of structural funding to the region that I partly represent. At the back end of last year, there was some concern about decisions on how that funding will be distributed in the Highlands and Islands being centralised more to Edinburgh rather than being made, as has been the case in the past, by partners in the Highlands and Islands. Can the minister give an assurance that that will not be the case and that the decisions will be taken in the Highlands and Islands?

Humza Yousaf: That is an issue that the member has raised previously, and I know that he has had reassurances from this Government. We share his concerns, and I am happy to give him further reassurances in that regard.

I also want to provide some reassurance on the horizon 2020 programme, which Liam McArthur, Claire Baker and members of the academic sector have raised with me. It should be said that we see it as a very successful programme. Scottish academics and institutions have received a great deal of funding from it—we have punched above our weight—so any further reduction in horizon 2020 funding would give us cause for concern. I raised the issue with the United Kingdom Government, and it would be fair to say that, when I did so, a number of UK Government ministers who were present shared my concern.

I hope that the Juncker investment package will provide opportunities for educational establishments and academic institutions to access more funding. Although there has been a monetary reduction in the budget for the horizon 2020 programme, the funding has increased by around 38 per cent. I intend to provide further reassurances on that in the course of the debate.

I will touch on the benefits of EU membership shortly, but it is important to see the EU not just as a place where rules and regulations are made, important as they are; the EU is so much more than that. It is a marketplace for exchanging ideas and for showcasing areas in which Scotland can display leadership.

We have displayed leadership through our hard-working Brussels office in the field of energy policy, which I know is of interest to members. We have worked closely with other states and sub-states to increase the visibility of marine renewable energy, and Scotland has played a leading role in the vanguard initiative, which, as members will know, is a collaboration of 25 innovative European regions that aims to influence EU innovation and industrial policies through collaboration.

The initiative has been active on advanced manufacturing, in which Scotland most certainly has a role to play, and we look forward to welcoming its members to Edinburgh for a visit next week. We have also gathered support among a number of EU member states as a consequence of lobbying for the right to introduce minimum unit pricing for alcohol following the referral of the Scottish Government's case to the European Court of Justice.

The Scottish Government has never argued that the EU is perfect—no member state that I have come across has ever argued that. The institutions of the EU have grown distant from its citizens and there is a need for those institutions to reconnect. Key to that is pursuing an agenda that generally adds value and addresses those issues that are problems for citizens across the EU. That is why we welcomed the Commission's plans to tackle stubbornly high youth unemployment, to promote energy security through the energy union package and to tackle climate change or build a north seas grid. Members will be aware of our document, "Scotland's Priorities for EU Reform".

The Commission's agenda needs to address many other issues, including tackling red tape, for example by decentralising fisheries management, reducing the complexity of the common agricultural policy, extending impact assessments to the additional stages of the regulatory process and giving sub-national Parliaments such as the Scottish Parliament a greater say in ensuring that proposed EU legislation respects the subsidiarity principle.

The Commission's regulatory fitness and performance—REFIT—programme, which will examine the suitability of existing rules, is welcome. Indeed, the Scottish Government has seconded a senior official to the European Commission to undertake a review of the birds and habitats directives under the REFIT

programme. That is an issue that a number of environmental organisations have raised with me and my colleague Dr McLeod. I give an assurance that we will look to the REFIT programme to maintain and increase standards.

The sort of reforms that I have just argued for are about doing things in the EU better and smarter. Of course, EU institutions must also do their part to ensure that they operate transparently, and perhaps that is most important for the current negotiations that are taking place on the transatlantic trade and investment partnership. I am pleased that the Commission has taken on board the issue of transparency and we are now seeing documentation and discussions online. While the Scottish Government acknowledges that TTIP could well bring benefits, we believe that more needs to be done to address our concerns about the potential impact on the national health service, public services and, of course, the investor-state dispute settlement. We will continue to monitor TTIP.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP):

On the issue of TTIP, would the minister accept that we probably have more common ground with some of our European neighbours than we do with the London Government as far as commitment to public services is concerned?

Humza Yousaf: I am doing my best to be as consensual as I can in the debate. The UK Government knows our position and that we are asking for a black-and-white exemption for the NHS. That is what the people, the Scottish Government and a number of parties in the chamber want. People are not convinced by what we are hearing from the Commission at the moment. If the UK Government and the Commission are telling us that there is no threat to the NHS, I can see no reason why we should not see the black-and-white exemption that the First Minister herself has called for. As the member said, that commitment is shared across Europe when it comes to public services.

In spite of all the concerns that we have, the treaty framework is a suitable legal basis for effecting that necessary change. We do not believe that there is a need for treaty change for the reforms to take place. Indeed, many of them can best be accomplished through existing programmes being operated by the European Commission, such as EU 2020.

Politicians, political parties, civic society and perhaps the business sector need to talk more about the benefits of being part of the European Union. We do not do enough of that. Membership of the European Union gives us access to 500 million citizens and around 20 million businesses that operate in the EU single market.

The EU is a vital export market for Scottish firms, accounting for almost half—46 per cent—of Scotland's international exports in 2013, which is worth a massive almost £13 billion each year. Almost 40 per cent of the 2,100 foreign-owned businesses in Scotland in 2013 were owned by firms based in the EU, and in every year since 2006 Scotland has been ranked as one of the top two areas of the UK outside London for attracting inward investment. Research suggests that more than 330,000 Scottish jobs were associated with exports to the EU.

Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP): Does the minister agree that there is still more to be done within the domestic market to encourage small and medium-sized businesses to look at the potential for export within the European market?

Humza Yousaf: I agree entirely. Internationalisation is one of the four priorities of Scotland's economic strategy, which the First Minister and Deputy First Minister launched a couple of weeks ago. One top of that, I agree that too few companies in Scotland export to too few sectors in too few countries. It is a priority of the Scottish Government and agencies such as Scottish Development International to increase that pool, and small and medium-sized businesses must certainly be a part of that.

It is important that we do not just view our relationship with the EU as simply a business transaction. It is much more than that. President Juncker has been very clear that protecting the welfare of our citizens in the EU, promoting equality, improving conditions for workers, and strengthening consumer rights are an important part of the agenda and the relationship.

I also welcome the social, cultural and economic benefits that migration from the EU delivers to Scotland's communities. The right to freedom of movement is also of huge benefit to Scots who move to live, study and work elsewhere in the EU. It is estimated that 171,000 people who were born elsewhere in the EU live in Scotland. It is very much a two-way exchange that benefits both Scotland and, I would hope, the rest of the European Union.

There is a lot of negative rhetoric about migration from Europe. A study from University College London says that, between 2001 and 2011, EU migrants were responsible for a net benefit to the UK of £20 billion. All of us as politicians have an important job to ensure that we do not let ourselves get dragged down into negativity or hostility in this debate.

Scotland wants to continue to be a constructive member of the EU. We have a general election coming up seven weeks on Thursday, and part of

that discussion and debate has been about an in/out referendum. The Scottish Government does not support the Prime Minister's proposals for such a referendum. We believe that it puts our membership, our businesses and our academic sector at risk.

As parliamentarians, we should not wait for that in/out referendum to put the positive case for Europe on the table. In that regard—

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott): Will you draw to a close, please?

Humza Yousaf: I will end on this point. We believe that there should be a double-majority system for that referendum. We believe that Scotland and indeed other parts of the United Kingdom should not be dragged outside the European Union against their will.

That is why we state in our motion that the UK should not be dragged out of Europe if there is not a majority in favour of that not just in the entire UK but in each of those countries. This Government will continue to press for a double-majority voting system in the event of a future referendum. After all, if Scotland is an equal member of the United Kingdom, its voice should be listened to.

I move,

That the Parliament supports Scotland's place in the European Union (EU) and its role as an active and constructive member; recognises the importance of the EU single market, which gives Scotland access to 500 million people and 22 million businesses across the EU; further recognises the additional social, cultural and educational benefits of EU membership; highlights the importance of ensuring that Scotland can make a contribution to EU policy-making, particularly in light of the recommendations of the Smith Commission, to support the work of the Scottish Government to deliver sustainable growth, address long-standing inequalities and protect Scotland's public services; understands the importance of protecting Scotland's EU membership, and welcomes the Scottish Government's double majority proposal, which would prevent Scotland from being taken out of the EU against the will of its people.

14:37

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I am pleased to be opening this debate for Labour. This is my first opening speech in this area of my portfolio. Previously, as a lead on rural affairs, food and the environment, I have often spoken about the importance of Europe to the delivery of policy in those areas. They are good examples of Scotland's positive relationship with Europe, and I will return to them later in my opening comments.

The first election that I voted in was for the European Parliament. Unfortunately I was—and continue to be—part of the minority of the electorate who takes part in those elections. Just over 33 per cent of the electorate took part in May

2014, and that was in a year when interest in elections in Scotland was high. Across Europe, the picture was not much better. Although turnout was higher than a third, which was our figure, it was still the lowest recorded turnout.

In many ways, Europe is high on the political agenda for the political classes, but it remains low for voters.

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): Will the member take a brief intervention?

Claire Baker: I ask the member to be brief as I am quite short of time.

Stewart Stevenson: Does the member recall that, when the UK entered the European Union in 1973, most of the major broadcasting and print media organisations had correspondents in Brussels? I understand that virtually none now does. Perhaps some of the responsibility lies there.

Claire Baker: I am pleased to say that I do not have much recall of 1973, but the member makes a fair point. It is not just down to politicians. It is also down to our society and our media to represent fairly Europe working for us.

I suggest that high on the agenda of reasons why people do not engage with elections is a lack of understanding of what Europe delivers for us in a modern world combined with a lack of confidence that Europe is working for the ordinary person.

We are seeing huge economic challenges across Europe. Our fellow Europeans in many economies are suffering levels of poverty and economic downturn that have not been experienced for many years. Many countries are seeing a crisis in youth unemployment, which leads to significant social problems and often depopulation, as those who can do so are leaving those countries for opportunities elsewhere.

To too many people, it looks as if Europe—the Parliament, the Commission and the Council of Ministers—is not responding. It is still often bureaucratic, slow to respond, driven from the centre and inflexible. Here is my first reference to my previous area of knowledge: the common agricultural policy takes up 38 per cent of the EU budget. That is a reduction on previous years, but it is still a significant share of Europe's support. During the recent reform process, attempts were made to increase the environmental delivery of the policy, to support rural economies, to deliver fairness across the member states and to have an increased focus on jobs and the economy.

However, progress in those areas has been slow, and I question whether the process is working in the public interest. The role that the

European Parliament played in those negotiations was important, as it was the first example of co-decision making, but change is slow and challenging. We need greater reform of the European Commission and its bureaucracy; of the European Parliament and its accountability; and of the economic model of the eurozone, which is, for too many economies, now imbalanced.

How do we ensure that we have a Europe that works more transparently in the interests of all its people? As many members will say this afternoon, Europe is hugely important for our economy—it seems to be one area in our proposals that we agree on.

Across the UK, approximately 3 million jobs are dependent on our membership of the EU, as are 200,000 companies and £200 billion-worth of annual exports, and £450 billion of inward investment that is tied to trade with those partners. In Scotland, we benefit from access to a single market with more than 500 million consumers, and Scottish exports to the EU account for almost 50 per cent of our international exports.

We must also recognise the benefits that we get from EU members who choose to live and work here. We in Scotland have a long tradition of welcoming and working with people from other countries. As a Fife MSP, I represent an area that has a long history of working with the Polish community in particular. We should recognise the contribution to our economy that people make when they come here, especially as we have an ageing population and need people to help to drive our economy.

That is not to ignore the challenges that can be presented. However, the BBC ran a report last week on immigration that presented a number of findings that politicians cannot ignore. Yes, we need welfare, housing and education systems that balance the needs of everyone, but the report showed that migrants contribute more to the economy than they use in resources. Many businesses I speak to, in the food, agricultural and textile sectors, could not operate without employees from EU member states. Migration brings huge benefits to our country: that is a fact of our economy, and of who we are.

I am sure that members in the chamber will disagree on various points during the debate, but those of us who believe that the European Union is a good thing and is beneficial to Scotland and the UK, and who support its founding principles and recognise that if it did not already exist, we would—in an expanding and globalised world—have to create it, need to support membership in a positive way.

Of course we need to work to improve the benefits of the EU and not deny the difficult times

that it is currently facing, but we must argue strongly that, ultimately, it is a positive union that contributes to our modern world and our economy. We should not underestimate the global challenges that are facing Europe. Other economies and continents with greater populations that are increasing their investment in education and enterprise and have growing markets and industries will all present economic challenges.

Labour's amendment recognises that future trade deals are important, but it reflects our position on the protection of public services in trade deals. By facing the increasing challenge of global competitiveness through working collectively, EU members will be in a stronger position than if they were working alone. We will be in a better position to get the best deals on trade, to tackle pollution and to take action on money laundering and corruption as well as in a number of other areas.

European co-operation is important in so many areas. So many of our modern challenges—for example, internet fraud, copyright crime and human trafficking—do not recognise borders. If we look back at the horsemeat scandal a few years ago and consider the complex food systems that we now have to deal with, we see that it was a prime example of addressing a problem through European co-operation.

Scotland, as part of the UK, can demonstrate how the European Parliament and the European Commission can be used for good. So many of our progressive social policies originated in the EU: for example, driving common standards for workers across the EU in maternity leave, paternity leave and working hours. Many of our environmental targets come from the EU—on biodiversity, air quality and water quality—and we must do more to deliver on those.

Scotland has ambitious targets in those areas, but in recent years we have not been meeting them. At present, the Commission is prepared to take legal action over air quality, given the lack of progress in that area across the UK. In those areas we have a responsibility to do more to deliver, and our actions will support the EU's credibility.

The European Parliament has championed new initiatives to reduce youth unemployment and is the focus for much debate on progressive working practices. Labour's amendment calls for that to be a central focus of on-going European activity. It was therefore disappointing last week to see Scottish National Party members of the European Parliament abstain on a vote to phase out precarious employment and tackle the exploitative nature of too many zero-hour contracts. That is the

kind of thing that Europe should lead on, and it was disappointing not to have the SNP's support.

Our amendment also states our opposition to the proposed cuts to horizon 2020 that the minister referred to. I raised my concerns with the minister last week and I am glad that he recognised that point. Scottish universities benefit considerably from that fund; it meets the objectives of economic growth and investment in research and we must do more to resist the cuts to it.

There are still concerns that, as things stand, the proposed changes that the minister referred to are not an appropriate funding mechanism for research and development and may hinder innovation across Europe. That is why Labour members in the European Parliament are looking to amend the proposals on horizon 2020.

This afternoon, we will not be supporting other parties' proposals. Encouragingly, all of them recognise the importance of EU membership. However, we do not support an in/out referendum as presented by the Conservatives. I do not believe that it would be in the interests of the people of the UK.

The SNP has attempted to put its case for a veto. I do not believe that that is a credible position. In September last year, Scotland voted to stay in the UK, with the full knowledge that there was the possibility of an EU referendum. We voted to be part of the UK and any vote on a national basis would have to be treated as such. It would have to be a collective decision by people living in the UK. Nicola Sturgeon claims that a referendum is inevitable, almost regardless of who wins the general election. That is not true; Labour does not support a referendum.

Humza Yousaf: Will the member take an intervention?

Claire Baker: I am in my final minute.

Labour does not support a referendum as we know that it will cause uncertainty for business. A referendum is not in the interests of the UK.

I look forward to the debate. We have different views across the chamber on referendums and on Scotland's place in the UK and in the EU but I hope that we do not miss the opportunity this afternoon to put forward the positive case for our involvement in Europe and to recognise not only the challenges that it presents but the opportunities and advantages that it offers us.

I move amendment S4M-12670.2, to leave out from "supports" to end and insert:

"believes that the best future for the UK is within the EU; highlights the many advantages that being within the EU brings to Scotland, including access to the single market and subsequent trading opportunities and employment that

this brings; acknowledges the social, cultural and educational benefits of continued EU membership; believes that the EU should have a clear focus on tackling youth unemployment and inequality across member states and opposes the proposed cuts to the Horizon 2020 fund; further believes that the EU should be taking a lead in tackling exploitative work practices, and recognises the need to protect public services in any trade negotiations; welcomes the proposals from the Smith Commission for improvement of the Concordat on the Co-ordination of European Union Policy Issues, which recognises the important role that Scotland has to play in negotiations on devolved policy matters; supports the reform agenda in the EU, and believes that the UK should lead on this as a strong member of the EU."

14:46

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I welcome the debate as it gives me the chance to dispel the myths and scaremongering that are coming from members on the Government benches about Scotland's membership of the European Union.

The debate also gives me the opportunity to once again reaffirm the commitment of Conservatives to making the EU work in the best interests of Scotland and the wider UK. That is the whole point—this club has to work for its members. That will only be achievable by reforming the EU through renegotiation with our European partners to create a new, favourable settlement for the UK and for the rest of Europe—to cut out red tape and excessive baggage for everyone, including new entrants, and to encourage growth and an end to stagnation.

When the Conservatives win the forthcoming general election with an overall majority and David Cameron is returned to Downing Street, we can begin the process of bringing about that necessary change. It has always been a cast-iron guarantee of the UK Government to then put to the British people a simple question—"Do you wish to stay in the EU on the basis of a reformed EU or do you not?" That referendum is likely to happen in late 2017.

If Conservative ministers achieve those reforms and transform the EU and the UK's relationship with it, David Cameron has stated that he will campaign for the UK to remain a member state. As a committed European myself, I will be joining the Prime Minister in that pro-EU campaign, but only if reform in the interests of Scotland and the UK has been delivered. Let us dispel SNP myth one: the majority of Conservatives north and south of the border are not anti-European; we simply want change in Europe, as do the British people. I am sure that the minister will accept that.

It is not only the UK that wants to see change. Countries across the EU, including Angela Merkel's Germany and the Netherlands, have argued that the EU in its present form is too

centralist and is not working for member states. Indeed, the Dutch phrase, "European where necessary, national where possible," shows the shift away from ever closer union. That phrase comes from one of the original six countries, which was originally so federalist, so another SNP myth that it is only the UK Government that sees EU reform as a priority is dismissed as well.

Christian Allard (North East Scotland) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

Jamie McGrigor: I have only six minutes, so I want to make progress.

The SNP asserts that Scotland has no appetite for a referendum on EU membership, despite the fact that polling has consistently shown that almost 60 per cent of Scots want a referendum, including more than 60 per cent of SNP voters. There is a trace of arrogance in the Scottish Government's motion, which suggests that it thinks, "We know best, so we won't trouble you with a direct say on EU membership." However, it is clear that the majority of Scots want a say.

Our amendment justifiably highlights the need for a referendum that is UK wide, that takes place on a one-person-one-vote basis and in which the question is decided by a simple majority, as in the 1975 referendum. Let us remember that, in the 1975 referendum, the SNP campaigned against continued membership of the common market, whereas the majority of Conservatives—myself included—supported our position in Europe.

The Government's motion turns that principle on its head, with its cumbersome double-majority proposal, which would split the UK into its constituent parts of Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland in the referendum question. The Government suggests that Scotland should not be forced to leave the EU even if the rest of the UK chooses to do so. It is ironic that the SNP should make a proposal of that nature. I do not recall it arguing in the referendum to break up the United Kingdom that, if another constituent part of the UK did not want to leave, separation would not happen.

As a member of the Parliament's European and External Relations Committee, I spent a considerable amount of time with colleagues conducting an inquiry into an independent Scotland's position in the EU. I will not rehash the arguments on whether article 48 or article 49 of the Treaty on European Union should apply. However, I will say that it was shown that an independent Scotland would not automatically be admitted as a member of the EU and, equally, that Scotland could not remain as part of the EU if the UK chose to leave it. The SNP position is simply untenable, and it is conjecture.

Members are probably united on the part in the Government's motion that speaks about the benefits to Scotland of EU membership through the single market. Access to consumers and businesses on the continent has obviously been of huge economic importance to Scotland. We are also probably united on the reference to the social, cultural and educational benefits of EU membership. To give one example, the benefit of objective 1 status to the Highlands and Islands was the construction of a number of causeways and bridges and other infrastructure projects, which have left a valuable legacy. I emphasise that those benefits were possible only as a result of UK membership of the EU. It is a pity that the Highlands and Islands no longer has objective 1 status.

The proposal for a 2017 referendum has come about for various reasons. Businesses in Scotland and in the rest of the UK find that the extent of European interference in their everyday life is sometimes excessive and that red tape can strangle creativity. People to whom I have spoken over many years continue to feel that the people who take decisions in Brussels are remote and removed from those who elected them, although that does not apply to every decision. There are concerns that the relaxed nature of European rules means that people arriving in the UK are allowed to claim benefits without having worked here. Although EU enlargement is welcome, it must not lead to unmanageable consequences for member states.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Please draw to a close.

Jamie McGrigor: I am just going to close.

For all those reasons and many more, the need for a referendum on EU membership will become more apparent in the next two years, during which the British people will take part in a debate on Scotland's and the UK's position in the EU.

I move amendment S4M-12670.1, to leave out from "role" to end and insert:

"influential position as part of the UK as an active and constructive member state; recognises the UK Government's track record of delivering positive change in Europe; notes the importance of the single market to the UK, which gives the UK economy access to 500 million consumers and 22 million businesses across the EU; acknowledges the additional social, cultural and educational benefits of EU membership for Scotland and the wider UK; welcomes the UK Government's commitment to negotiate a new settlement for the UK in Europe followed by an in-out referendum before the end of 2017; notes that no other mainstream political party has publicly given a commitment to give the UK electorate a choice in a referendum on EU membership; further notes that the 1975 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Economic Community was held on the basis of a simple one-person-one-vote system, and observes that the UK Government agreed with the Scottish Government to

legislate for a fair, legal and decisive referendum in Scotland with no additional requirements other than a simple majority of votes."

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the open debate, with speeches of six minutes or thereby.

14:53

Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP): In the past four years, as convener of the European and External Relations Committee, I have learned a lot about Europe, including a lot about its strengths. The basic principle of the EU is that it is a peacemaker, with a strong and positive corporate self-interest in ensuring the safety and protection of all the nations. There are weaknesses and sometimes tensions, and the transatlantic trade and investment partnership is a good example of that. I commend to colleagues the committee's report on that partnership.

The EU is a pragmatic creation. In spite of its huge size, the answers to challenging situations can usually be found. There is an underlying consensus that is not much discussed. It is just there because all the member nations want pretty much the same things—they want equality, fairness, tolerance, and our human rights to be protected and they do not want illegal wars—and they have an overarching European Parliament that upholds those values. That can be difficult, given some of the Eurosceptic MEPs who were elected in the most recent elections, some of whom have called for the human rights laws to be abolished.

The EU has another side: it is also a vast trading market of 500 million people and 22 million businesses. Scotland's substantial export markets are constantly building trade with our European partners. However, when it comes to the transatlantic trade and investment partnership, there are serious concerns to be addressed, with the protection of public services being paramount.

The EU is much more than a simple free trade association. The EU principles reflect those of the Scottish Government. We welcome the role that the EU plays in protecting the social welfare of its citizens, including people who need to claim benefits. We seek to influence the decisions that will impact on us daily. We want to work from within the EU, not be forced out by a right-wing, UK Independence Party-friendly Westminster Government. We know that Europe is where we need to be for trade, the free movement of people, our own human protection and the great cultural melting pot that is this bloc of nations, each with its unique background and history.

Last Wednesday night, I had the great privilege and pleasure of hosting the Latvian ambassador, who brought some of the most amazingly talented musicians to play some Rachmaninoff for us. However, they finished with their own rendition of “Loch Lomond”, which was the most beautiful piece of music that I have ever heard in my life.

Let us not forget the foundations and origins of Europe. Let us not forget the founder countries, which all tell their own stories. They are France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, the Netherlands and Germany. We do not have to go far to understand the reasons for the foundation of the EU.

I do not want an in/out referendum. The Scottish Government does not want one but, once again, we are being shoved into a battle that we do not need or support. I want changes in Europe but the mechanisms are already in place for us to work towards them. The existing treaties provide the framework. There is no need to try to renegotiate them now, no matter how big members want to appear in front of their colleagues at Westminster.

As is often the case, the EU institutions will not do much of their own publicity. The shrill voices of extremists—I use the word deliberately—will be as loud as they are daft, but Scots are not fooled by that nonsense. While David Coburn slings abuse at our Minister for Europe and International Development, he is happy to pick up the €5 million or so that he will collect for staffing, his salary and expenses but denigrate the institution that gives him that opportunity.

If we are to be forced into a referendum, we will demand that, as Scotland is one of the four nations that David Cameron has called on many occasions “this family of nations”—it was only a family of nations during the independence referendum and does not seem to be one now—in which each is an equal member, its decision will need to be the same as that of England, Wales and Northern Ireland for the vote to be carried. It is neither democratic nor legitimate to tolerate a situation in which one of the family imposes its will upon the other three. I am very disappointed that Labour will not back that very important right as an equal member of the said family of nations.

Members might remember the former president of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso. Everybody listened to him during the Scottish referendum and perhaps they should listen to him now. He said:

“What will be the influence of Britain, or the Prime Minister of Britain, if he was not part of the European Union? His influence would be zero.”

Before Mr Cameron sails off into the sunset with his union jack flying and his supporters from UKIP applauding his achievement, he needs to think very carefully about his job prospects as well as

those of the people of the UK. The sunset might well turn out to be an exit from the strong and protective arms of his much-valued family of nations.

15:49

Anne McTaggart (Glasgow) (Lab): I am pleased to contribute to this debate and to speak in support of Claire Baker’s amendment.

At a time when countries are fighting for their right to be part of Europe and clinging on to the European Union, the Conservative Party is threatening to pull Britain out of Europe. Although there is much debate about Britain’s place in Europe, we have to recognise that we are much stronger, and Europe is much stronger, if we work together. Membership of the EU gives us many benefits, and leaving the European Union would only be detrimental to that prosperity. Our relationship is a give-and-take one; its symbiotic nature is what allows such great progress. That partnership with the EU is necessary in order to solve the challenges that present themselves, which are best dealt with by working together.

Economically, EU membership allows access to a single market with millions of people and numerous opportunities for investment and increased competitiveness. Leaving that single market would not be in our best interests. It involves 3 million jobs, 25,000 companies, £200 billion in exports each year and £450 billion in investments. That is what we have to show for our ties to Europe.

We must welcome any changes that might be beneficial to the European Union, the United Kingdom and Scotland. The employment and social aspects in the “Annual Growth Survey 2015”, which was put to a vote in the European Parliament last week, failed to gain the necessary support as a result of the negative votes from Conservative, Liberal Democrat and UKIP MEPs, and abstentions on the part of the SNP and the Greens.

Precarious employment situations, such as zero-hours contracts, affect nearly 1.4 million UK workers. The rights of the workers and supporting the favourable changes that the EU is trying to make for the good of the member states are important.

It is clear that the benefits of continuing our membership of the European Union are numerous. That close relationship with Europe is essential to both parties and it is undoubtedly crucial to our interests to stay part of that relationship.

It was suggested by the Smith commission that Scotland be allowed to have a greater influence

over UK policy positions with regard to Europe. With that in mind, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Angela Constance, represented the UK at the EU education, youth, culture and sport council in December last year. That direct engagement demonstrates that Scotland's voice plays an important role on European issues.

Our place in the world is not defined by being a part of Europe but it is strengthened by it. The key is to keep the United Kingdom in the EU and improve on the position so that we can maximise the progress that we—the UK and the EU—can make together.

There is no doubt that EU membership brings many advantages to Scotland. While the future of the United Kingdom undoubtedly lies within the EU, we need to be leading the way for an improved European Union rather than threatening to leave it. I believe that the EU should take the lead in issues such as tackling exploitative work practices and should recognise the need to protect public services in any trade negotiations. We in the Labour Party want to have those jobs across Europe, not just Scotland; we want fair working conditions in Scotland, UK and across Europe. The Labour Party is the party that backs those measures in the UK.

15:04

Christian Allard (North East Scotland) (SNP):

I start my contribution to this timely and important debate with a 1736 quote that is to be found in the diaries of a French minister, René de Voyer, who was the first person to use in writing the well-known expression, *laissez-faire*. He wrote, “*Laissez-faire*”—or let it be—

“should be the motto of all public powers, since the world was civilised ... That we cannot grow except by lowering our neighbours is a detestable notion! Only malice and malignity of heart is satisfied with such a principle and our national interest is opposed to it.”

That motto was also the essence of Adam Smith's thinking—although he supported not an economy free from Government interference, but free trade between nations as a condition of the growth of those nations.

Laissez-faire is only half of the motto. The other half is *laissez-passer*—the right of free movement, not only of goods but, more important, of people, which is at the heart of the European project that is the EU.

I believe that we are where Adam Smith would have liked the people of Scotland to be—at the heart of Europe, free to trade and free to set up businesses and work across the EU. That is very much needed. As Dennis Robertson said to the minister in his intervention, it is important that

small and medium-sized businesses are encouraged to work with the rest of the EU. Similarly, it is very important that our people are encouraged to live, work and participate all across the EU. It is important that we have not only the movement of goods, trade and businesses but the movement of people. It is how the EU is constructed.

I have found plenty of malice and malignity of heart in the debate about the European Union since I came to Britain. I was surprised about it. I find particularly detestable the notion that the UK cannot pursue its agenda to grow its own economy without rejoicing at its neighbours' economic failings. That is something that we find often on television and the press, especially in the UK and London media.

Failings are many in the UK, just like in other EU countries and the EU is not perfect, as the minister said in his opening remarks. However, I assure members that the attitude of ridiculing other nations of the EU when they have problems has never been reciprocal. On the contrary, I have found that people across the EU have great respect for the UK—a respect that some politicians undermine here regularly. When I say “here”, of course I do not mean in this Parliament.

Former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard was one of the first voices to express worry about that. He made it clear that if the UK was so desperate to exit the EU, the EU might be better without the UK. The truth is that for us to do well, we need our neighbours to do well. Instead of blaming the EU for our Westminster Government's shortcomings, we need our London-based politicians to change their tune. Our national interest, of the UK or Scotland, is in direct opposition to an exit from the EU—the so-called Brexit. In France, they call it *Le Brexit*, so famous is it.

The former head of the French Government made his views clear on that point. He said:

“British elites are afraid of the isolation that would result, that may weaken the City ... But the English bank is part paralyzing factors today, it is highly more speculative than others. It is a paralysis for real economy.”

That comment is the result of a constant attack on the EU. I do not know whether Michel Rocard agrees with the Scottish Government's double-majority proposal, but he made it clear that the problem is political, in London, not even with the people of England and certainly not with the people of Scotland.

Given my many years working in the fishing industry, I understand maybe better than most that the EU is far from perfect—again, as the minister said in his opening remarks. However, I point out that other EU countries have been a lot more

successful in negotiating at EU level than the UK has. For example, I welcome the Scottish Government proposal on fisheries. Yes, we should continue to move away from a centralised approach to fisheries management in favour of greater flexibility and the further delegation of powers to national and regional level. The member state should be granted further autonomy in relation to inshore waters to ensure the survival of Scottish fishermen's traditional fishing grounds.

It is not only about fishing but agriculture and migration from outside the EU. The Justice Committee is taking evidence on the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Bill. The horrific stories that we have heard of migrants coming from outside the EU would be a lot worse if we were isolated and not part of the EU. The free movement of people is so important.

I finish with a quote from not Adam Smith, but his contemporary Voltaire. Adam Smith kept a bust of Voltaire in his home—members will not find one in my office—and Voltaire knew what Scotland's place in Europe was when he said:

"We look to Scotland for all our ideas of civilisation".

Scotland's place in the EU is where we are today and it is what we all are. This EU migrant—this EU citizen—will vote for the Scottish Government's motion.

15:10

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): I welcome the debate and I thank Humza Yousaf—or, as I like to call him, the minister—for allowing Parliament this opportunity.

The motion and the amendments are somewhat revealing. The Labour amendment, which I am happy to confirm that we will support, sets out fairly the broad benefits as well as some of the specific areas of strength. It also rightly identifies the opportunities to improve things—not least through the Smith commission proposals.

The SNP motion has much of the same, and I very much welcome the conciliatory and reasonable tone that the minister adopted in his opening remarks, despite some of the siren voices on his back benches that perhaps encouraged him to do otherwise. However, the motion could not resist the dog whistle to its party's base at its end—a little like the Tories' amendment.

Jamie McGrigor's amendment achieves the twin feats of being factually incorrect and ideologically misguided. The UK Government does not demand treaty reform and an in/out referendum; that is a Tory Party demand. The Tories appear to be in a bind over UKIP and their long-standing internal divisions over Europe and as a result, despite Mr McGrigor's reassurance, they seem to be hell-bent

on driving the UK out of an economic, social and political union that has served us well for more than four decades. I agree that an in/out referendum is more meaningful than one that is based on the minutiae of a treaty change, but that policy is a sign of the weakness of the Tories and the Prime Minister. It is not a sign of strength nor, indeed, is it a sign of leadership.

As I said, the SNP motion is fine up to a point, but it lapses regrettably into playing the independence card towards the end. Let us be clear: the preferred option is not an in/out referendum. That route holds nothing for business or for safeguarding the hard-fought economic recovery that we are seeing, but if there is a referendum we will need all progressive voices to be united in support of keeping the UK, including Scotland, in the EU. Jamie McGrigor made one point in his speech with which I probably have some sympathy. Like him, I do not recall in the referendum campaign any suggestion of a double lock being offered to Orkney or Shetland in the event that Glasgow and areas of the central belt had dragged us out of the UK.

Christian Allard: Will Liam McArthur take an intervention?

Liam McArthur: No, thank you.

It is too easy to link the SNP's calls for a retreat from the UK to UKIP's and the Tories' calls for a retreat from Europe. There is a remarkable similarity in the rhetoric about so-called rule from London and rule from Europe—that the best people to make decisions about what happens in Scotland are the people in Scotland, and the best people to make decisions about what will happen in the UK are the people in the UK. I know that the minister will refute that charge and I accept his genuinely felt commitment to a pro-Europe agenda, but it highlights the scale of the SNP's task. The SNP is having to work all the harder to convince voters that its principal objective is to keep the UK in the EU, and that it does not secretly hope for Brexit, so that independence plans can thereafter be dusted down.

As I said during the referendum debate, UK exit from the EU is not in the interests even of an independent Scotland. Just ask Scotland's farmers. Farmers are not the only ones who benefit from our EU membership, nor are they the only ones to point out—with some justification—that the EU is far from perfect, but the economic benefits of membership are plain for all to see. It is the largest single market and incorporates two of our most significant trading partners outside the UK, in the shape of France and Germany. Scotland is a high-skill economy with an export focus, and the EU gives opportunities across a range of sectors, from food and drink to energy. We have seen Scotland profit from freedom of

movement: many Scots make up the 1.5 million UK citizens who live and work elsewhere in the EU. My now wife and I are evidence of that from our time spent in Brussels. Again, that benefits key sectors, from our higher education sector—which is attractive to others from throughout the EU who want to come and study here—to our tourism offering.

The Labour amendment fairly points to the benefits that are to be derived from initiatives such as horizon 2020, and the importance of that to industry and academia has been well underscored already, but the £2.5 billion that has been secured for small and medium-sized enterprise engagement picks up a point that was reiterated during the horizon 2020 event that was hosted by the European and External Relations Committee here in Parliament not so long ago.

Freedom of movement also illustrates the social dimension to our EU membership, which is further underscored by the benefits that are derived from structural funds, which represent recognition that the EU itself will be undermined if it is seen to benefit only some and not all. The Highlands and Islands have benefited from objective 1 status, but I remind Jamie McGrigor that it is testimony to the success of that programme that we are no longer eligible for it, because we have seen relative economic growth as a result.

The single market is not just about the survival of the fittest. It has always been recognised that there is a social dimension to the single market, and we have seen that through workplace reforms over many years, as Claire Baker said. Everything from environmental reform to cross-border collaboration in tackling crime demonstrates our ability to act collaboratively at EU level in order to meet objectives that cannot be met by individual nations alone.

Christina McKelvie was absolutely right to draw attention to the EU's role in being a force for peace. As people who have lived the experience of the world wars are now dying off, we risk losing sight of that fundamental purpose. We have travelled a remarkable distance since 1945, and even since the 1958 objective of using economic integration to bind in Germany's industrial base in coal and steel so as to make war if not impossible, then certainly a good deal more difficult. That is something that we should never underestimate.

The risks remain. We see that in the Balkan conflict and the Russian influence in Ukraine. We are not out of the woods. That is not to say that we are not uncritical of the EU. I bear the scars of fisheries council meetings, as Christian Allard does. The EU is guilty of mission creep and it has a tendency to want to micromanage, and national interests can often be dressed up as EU-wide interests. We must engage with the EU institutions

and partners on the need to improve. The Smith proposals give us a way of doing that, by improving the mechanisms at official and ministerial levels within the UK. John Swinney and Mike Moore are to be commended on the commitment and dedication that they have shown to that particular aspect of the Smith recommendations. We need to be vigilant and to ensure that that is now delivered in practice.

I welcome the positive tone of the debate in acknowledging the benefits that are derived from the EU and the commitment across the piece to be critical friends where that need be, and to improve the way in which the UK engages with the EU in the future.

15:18

Stewart Maxwell (West Scotland) (SNP): Scotland is often described as being on the periphery of Europe. Although that may be true in a geographic sense, our strong cultural, historical and political connection to Europe suggests otherwise. Indeed, it is impossible to understand Scottish culture or the development of our political system without an appreciation of our historic links to other European nations. We need only look at the quintessential markers of Scottish nationhood to realise that Scotland itself is a product of Europe and of our interactions with our European neighbours.

Today, we have a more formalised relationship with our European neighbours, and the legislation that we scrutinise in our committees and debate in this chamber is always considered within a European legal context. Clearly, Scotland has benefited greatly from its European interactions, and I believe that Scotland should continue to build on those connections as a constructive member of the European Union.

However, after being instructed that a no vote in last year's referendum was the only way to secure Scotland's participation in the EU, our EU membership and our ability effectively to influence European policy are now under threat from the Tory party. David Cameron's commitment to an in/out referendum on our EU membership threatens to undermine decades of European co-operation and the vital economic benefits of a single market that gives Scotland access to 500 million people and 22 million businesses across Europe.

It is the threat to Scotland's participation in the single market that I am particularly concerned about: I believe that removal of our EU membership would seriously undermine Scotland's long-term economic objectives. The EU accounts for nearly half of Scotland's international

exports, and in 2011 those European exports supported more than 336,000 jobs in Scotland.

It is difficult to understand how our withdrawal from the European single market would improve economic relations with Europe, particularly in light of the €985 million investment that Scotland currently receives from the European regional development fund and the European social fund. In reality, the loss of EU membership would not only threaten jobs; it would also undermine investment and our ability to create sustainable growth.

Putting aside economics for a moment, the threat of the UK Government's proposed EU referendum is a symptom of a more general rise in hostility against Europe from the Westminster elite. That hostility has also shown itself in the Tory threat to withdraw the UK from the European Court of Human Rights. That move would place us alongside Belarus as one of the few European states not to have ratified the European convention on human rights. We have also seen that hostility focused against migrants as the UK Government toughens its rhetoric against Europeans who wish to work hard and build a life in the UK. It is an unedifying spectacle to see UK parties tack to the right as a response to the siren calls from UKIP. It is essential that we continue to challenge the UK Government's politically motivated and illogical immigration rhetoric.

As the minister mentioned in his opening speech, University College London found that EU migrants contributed more than £20 billion to the economy between 2001 and 2011. Workers from EU 15 countries such as France and Germany contributed 64 per cent more in tax than they received in benefits, and migrants from newer accession states paid 12 per cent more than they received. That shoots down the argument that Jamie McGrigor used earlier about people coming here and taking benefits. The figures give the lie to that argument. European migrants make positive economic, social and cultural contributions to Scotland, and they deserve better than a Westminster political culture that is locked in a race to the bottom on immigration.

The clear difference in approach that we see at Westminster, compared with that at Holyrood, is indicative of the diverging political cultures of the two Parliaments. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the UK Government does not reflect the views of the people of Scotland and that it does not prioritise the Scottish position on a range of European policy issues.

Research by Durham University and the University of East Anglia concluded that although a majority of constituencies in England would vote to leave the EU, only four seats in Scotland would

vote to do likewise. Dr Hanretty of the University of East Anglia said that the findings show that

"Scottish views on the European Union are distinct from English views"

and that—I want to quote very carefully here—

"Even looking at constituencies just north of the border—areas that are by no means bedrocks of SNP support—you find a more favourable opinion of the EU than you do in the north of England."

Those findings show why it is essential that Scotland has a democratic safeguard against the threat of the UK Government's in/out referendum. I therefore fully support the introduction of a four-nation consent clause as part of any future EU referendum bill to ensure that the voices of the respective UK nations are respected.

We were told to vote no to be part of the family of nations. We cannot be a family if one particular member of that family can drag the other three members out of the EU. That is not a family of nations. Scotland cannot be dragged out of Europe against the wishes of the majority of people in Scotland.

I conclude by reaffirming the importance of the UK's European Union membership but say also that Scotland's interests would, ultimately, best be served by having our own voice on the European stage. The proposals that the Smith commission outlined, which would see greater Scottish Government and UK Government co-operation on European representation, are welcome, but there are still limitations to that approach. I know that I will not be alone in expressing concern about the UK Government's ability to represent accurately our interests on energy policy, fisheries and many other portfolio areas.

I look forward to the day when Scotland's voice is heard unimpeded at the top tables of Europe. Given the evidence from recent polling, that day might come sooner rather than later.

15:23

Michael McMahon (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab): I wish everyone a happy St Patrick's day.

As Jamie McGrigor said in his speech, many myths are peddled about the EU, but in my experience they come mostly from people who want Britain to leave it. In assessing our relationship with the EU, we should focus on the facts and the positives. I therefore welcome the debate, which allows us to do that.

Being a member of what is arguably the world's biggest marketplace provides huge advantages for both Britain and Scotland. We cannot afford to lose the ability to export goods and services across all of the EU without customs and other

barriers, because over half of our exports go to the rest of the EU.

UK membership gives access to a growing single market that is governed by a single set of regulations and which cuts costs and facilitates much greater potential trade. In total, 60 per cent of British trade is with other EU countries. That trade involves 700,000 companies across Britain and provides three and a half million jobs. Were Britain not in the EU, it would be on its own in a world of powerful regional trading blocs, including the North American free trade agreement. On our own, we would be isolated and unable to negotiate with the United States of America and China in the way that only the power of the EU can achieve for us. Those blocs would all have the advantages of large domestic markets in global trade negotiations, which would leave the UK at a comparative disadvantage.

The petty-minded Euroscepticism of the current and previous Conservative Governments has put us at a disadvantage when it comes to economic interaction with the wider world. We should stay and influence the EU, making it more democratic and increasing benefits for all EU member states and its citizens.

Most of the progressive legislation that we have on workers' rights has come from Europe: by acting in concert, European countries have to some extent avoided a race to the bottom on workers' rights. Why would working people want to jeopardise policies such as the working time directive, which is a key piece of health and safety legislation, by leaving the EU?

Unfortunately, as Claire Baker said, the SNP has, I am disappointed to say, refused to support some of those measures. An example of that is the vote that took place in the European Parliament which was aimed at addressing workplace exploitation by restricting and reducing atypical forms of employment. That vote on the employment and social aspects in the "Annual Growth Survey 2015" report failed to gain enough support because the Conservative, Lib Dem and UKIP MEPs voted against it, while Nicola Sturgeon's UK coalition of the SNP, Greens and Plaid Cymru abstained. Labour was left as the only UK party to support the calls on EU member states to combat precarious employment, such as zero-hours contracts. That shows once again that Labour is the only party that is genuinely standing up for workers' rights.

Primary among the myths that we hear is the one that tries to make people believe that the EU forces Britain to adopt laws on human rights that are contrary to British tradition. However, the rulings that right-wing politicians object to come from the European Court of Human Rights. That tribunal is not a part of the EU system; it is an

institution of the Council of Europe—an honourable British creation that predates the EU.

Those sceptics also argue that Britain's market is too valuable for the rest of the continent to ignore, so the British Government could negotiate a trade deal that would preserve all the advantages of membership in the single market without any of the political and financial costs. However, that ignores the *realpolitik* that although the UK is an important market for the rest of the EU, any free-trade agreement would have a price. For example, in exchange for access to the single market, Norway and Switzerland make major contributions to the EU's cohesion funds, and they have to adopt EU standards without having any say in how they are written. Also, Norway's net contribution to the EU budget is higher per capita than Britain's net contribution.

Britain would most certainly lose its influence in many international forums. By negotiating as one bloc in world trade talks, the European Union gives its members—the UK included—a powerful and united voice when they speak to China and the United States. If Britain exits, it loses that.

Many of the arguments for retaining Britain's place in the European Union are similar to the arguments for retaining Scotland's place in Britain. Just as Scotland's interests are in Britain, Britain's interests are clearly in Europe, so we should follow the path to where our interests lie. Just as Scotland recently voted with practical good sense to remain part of Britain, Britain should determine similarly, based on reality and not myths, to remain part of the EU.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There is a modest amount of time available for constructive interventions, should anyone want to make them. You have six minutes or thereabouts, Mr Mason.

15:29

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): I will have to judge whether any interventions are constructive.

My first vote, as an 18-year-old, was in June 1975, on membership of the European Economic Community. I remember definitely voting for being in the EEC.

I see Europe as a family of nations, and we are part of that family. It would be strange to be in Europe but not in the European Union. That is the situation that Norway finds itself in—bound by many of the decisions but with no real voice, as Mr McMahon described. Let us remember, as Liam McArthur put it well, how successful the EU has been in one of its core objectives—to prevent further wars in Europe, which had been part of all our ancestors' lives for many centuries.

One of the problems that the UK has in deciding any constitutional issue is that it has no constitution—at least no constitution in the sense in which virtually all grown-up democratic countries have written constitutions that include provision for changing the constitution and making major decisions, such as whether to enter or leave the EU.

Far be it from me to criticise the wonderful UK, but in that regard at least it has a major flaw. Mind you, having mentioned one major constitutional flaw in the UK, another one immediately comes to mind: the House of Lords. We are quite used to saying that it is undemocratic, as if that was normal but, for other modern democratic countries—certainly European countries—having one chamber unelected would be anathema. Why is that relevant here today? Because there is no democratic check on the House of Commons.

The Government's motion proposes that each of the four parts of the UK should have to vote no to the EU before the UK could leave. A similar result would be achieved if the UK had a second chamber that was elected and whose membership consisted of 25 per cent for England, 25 per cent for Scotland, 25 per cent for Wales and 25 per cent for Northern Ireland. Then, a 75 per cent majority for such a major constitutional change would provide a democratic brake on any English Government.

I spent two years of my life living in London and three years in Nepal. In those places, I worked in two separate international charities. I worked with many different European people, as well as with folk from outside Europe. Of all the nationalities that I have worked with, I feel most close to the Dutch—despite the fact that I do not have any of their language. Scotland has a huge amount in common with the Netherlands, and with other countries for that matter. We are both relatively small countries. We both have a strong maritime history. We have a similar religious mix of reformed and Catholic churches.

As Mr McMahon put it, the UK is really too small to compete on the world stage with large countries such as the United States, China, Russia and India. We need to work together as a European family.

Another reason why the UK is too small is to do with our export industries, including whisky, food and drink, and specialist engineering. A market of 64 million is too small to grow companies for the world stage. The EU has a market of some 500 million. Through it, we get better trade agreements for selling worldwide.

Some people would say that we have failed to grow companies based in Scotland and that we have failed to keep key sectors in public

ownership. I ask myself: is that a fault of the EU or a fault of the UK? I suggest that, in both those cases, the fault lies with the UK. Other EU countries have not privatised rail, electricity and so on, and they have been much better at keeping local companies local, as is the case with manufacturing in Germany.

Are our businesses and jobs safer in the EU or in the UK? It seems clear to me that the UK is the bigger risk, with its desire to sell anything for a quick buck, whereas several other European countries are better at taking a long-term view and investing for the future.

Another strength of the EU has been its confederalist approach, with subsidiarity lying at the heart of decision making. That contrasts with the UK, which has had a very centralist approach—it has conceded only the minimum of devolution and done so reluctantly, when forced to do so.

Liam McArthur: I will try to make my intervention as constructive as possible. I am interested in the point that John Mason makes about the similarity among our European partners. Does he agree that France is one of the most centralised societies and economies in the European Union and that it has been a driver of much of what has happened at an EU level?

John Mason: From my knowledge of France, I agree that the country is very centralised. Although I am arguing more for the EU as one institution, rather than its constituent parts, I take Liam McArthur's point.

As Michael McMahon mentioned, the EU has often taken a more progressive approach than the UK on issues of concern to Scotland, such as the working time directive, financial regulation, caps on bankers' bonuses and immigration. On the latter, Scotland is short of people and we need more in order to grow our economy.

To go back to Liam McArthur's point, small countries are respected more in the EU than they are in the UK. For example, smaller countries get proportionately more MEPs in order to counterbalance the big countries. In Germany, France, the UK, Italy and Spain, it takes more than 800,000 people to get one MEP, but in Denmark, Ireland, Austria and Finland, it takes less than 500,000. That is the kind of practical arrangement that Christina McKelvie mentioned, where the EU is much better than the UK. The EU takes into account population and recognises the importance of the individual state. In fact, the United States does that as well. In the UK, though, that does not happen, and we have a rigid legalistic approach, in which we insist that every MP should represent the same number of registered voters. If we

followed the European model, Scotland would have more MPs at Westminster.

There are many other examples of how small countries in the EU can punch above their weight and club together to counteract the bigger countries. We can see clearly that smaller countries feel safer in the EU and see the EU as a good protection against traditionally predatory larger neighbours. In that way, Scotland can feel safer there.

I am Scottish first but European second. I am very happy to be both and I want it to continue that way.

15:36

Hanzala Malik (Glasgow) (Lab): I am pleased to take part in today's debate on Scotland's place in Europe. I have always seen the advantages for Scotland from being in the United Kingdom as part of the European Union. The EU single market allows for easy access to trade, education and support in developing our economy and society. The European Union is an exceptional partner in development. With the proper relations, our partnership with Europe can assist with many issues that face our nation.

However, there is a lack of strategy on improving Scotland's ability to draw funds into the third sector, develop infrastructure and support industry. I strongly encourage the Scottish Government—in fact, I demand it—to take a stronger role in guiding and supporting our third sector and private industry to apply for European funds. At the European and External Relations Committee, I have brought up the need for better access to European support and grants, but I have yet to see progress from the Scottish Government on that.

Our relationship with Europe is not without its issues. Scottish universities have raised concerns over the planned diversion of €2.7 billion from horizon 2020—the European Union's main research fund—to a new European stimulus fund that is officially called the European fund for strategic investments. Scottish and other United Kingdom research institutions have benefited a great deal from the horizon 2020 fund and the resulting grants from the European Research Council. What discussions has the cabinet secretary—or the minister—had with UK colleagues on counteracting that near-sighted decision on the EU's part?

As I said, I greatly support Scotland's membership of the EU through the UK, and I want that relationship to develop further. However, many organisations in Scotland do not apply for or have failed to get EU funding. I again call on the Scottish Government to identify officials,

organisations and agencies that can guide the third sector and private industry through the maze of the funding system, because it is their right to apply for such funding. I look forward to the minister commenting on that.

Such funding has consistently been underspent, and we in Scotland have consistently missed out on opportunities to get our fair share of funding. I am concerned about the EU's concentration on giving new member states opportunities, and I am worried about the organisations and communities in Scotland that have received no funding. History can be cruel, but it can also be kind. It would have been kind if we had been able to consistently apply for and utilise the opportunities that Europe has offered us, and it is cruel that we have not been able to do so. I hope that we can find ways of redressing that.

Two of the biggest areas in which we have missed out on opportunities are our infrastructure and our communications sector. Because most of Scotland is rural, many people could benefit from good communications and good infrastructure facilities. Europe could have helped us with that. The fact that the EU has reduced its budget for internet facilities is damaging.

I will be interested to hear from the minister how he can help us to organise support for the third sector, which is crucial given the scenario of shrinking resources that we face in Scotland. Many of my constituents in Glasgow come to me daily to complain that funding has been reduced or even stopped. We have lost opportunities in the past, and I hope that we will not lose them in the future. I am more than happy to support the minister in trying to redress the situation.

15:42

Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP): As my colleague Stewart Maxwell said at the start of his speech, Scotland may well be on the fringes of Europe geographically, but in terms of our natural resources and what we bring to the table, Scotland is very much at the heart of Europe. We are a small country with about 1 per cent of the population of the European Union, but we bring to the table huge resources in fishing and renewable energy potential; we have world-class food and drink products; and we make a contribution that is well beyond our size in science, medicine and innovation.

If Scotland were pulled out of Europe against our will, it would be as much of a disaster for our European friends as it would be for us. The scandalous thing about that prospect is that none of it is Scotland's doing. It has all come about because of the failure of England's political parties to persuade ordinary people in that country that

the European ideal brings more benefits than drawbacks. That failure has allowed extreme elements—fuelled by a hysterically anti-European media that is all too ready to peddle the message on behalf of those extremists—to fill the credibility gap. It has come about because England's political parties feel compelled to appease that anti-European agenda rather than take it on and expose it for what it is.

It is not acceptable for a Prime Minister to talk up the idea of a family of nations one minute then tell us that we will all do what England decides on Europe the next. In that context, how on earth can any Scottish parliamentarian support Scotland being pulled from the heart of Europe on the back of such a negative and regressive political agenda elsewhere? Scottish MSPs and MPs of all parties must stand up for Scotland if Scotland decides to stay in the European Union and England decides to leave.

That scenario can happen only if the Tories get back into power because Labour cannot defeat them, even by aping them as best they can, sticking to the same spending plans and voting with them to cut another £30 billion from public spending. The real test will come if the Tories form the next Government and fail to get the changes that they claim they want Europe to agree to. In those circumstances, the prospect of the UK Government recommending leaving Europe would be real and the consequences for Scotland would be dire.

Membership of the European Union gives Scotland direct access to a market of 500 million citizens, the world's biggest economy and more than 20 million businesses. More than 300,000 jobs in Scotland are associated with exports to the EU, which accounts for almost half of our international exports. More than 150,000 citizens from other member states live, work or study here, and many thousands of Scots do so throughout Europe. Most of that would be thrown into chaos and the consequent damaging effect on jobs and Scotland's economy would be catastrophic.

Many of those who have given evidence at the European and External Relations Committee and from across Europe have said that their clear hope is that the UK does not leave Europe. That perhaps applies to none more so than Ireland, which is celebrating St Patrick's day—I say Lá Fhéile Pádraig sona daoibh, or happy St Patrick's day to everybody. Taoiseach Enda Kenny has spoken publicly of his hope that the UK remains in Europe but has nevertheless recently set up a new department to look at the issues that would arise for Ireland as a result of a possible UK exit. On the negative side, there would be border control issues to resolve, but some also look to the fact that more than 250 foreign banks that have their

European bases in London might consider moving to Dublin—or Scotland, of course, under different circumstances. Some view that as a positive outcome of a UK exit but, on balance, the Irish hope is very much that the UK stays in Europe.

I suppose that it is technically possible for the UK to operate outwith the key strategic priorities in Juncker's 10-point strategy for Europe, but it is hard to see how a UK that was outside Europe could develop alternative and possibly competing strategies on things such as the digital single market or the €315 billion investment plan. Who knows? The UK might end up with its own brand of TTIP or a UK TTIP. None of that is impossible, but it is unlikely that any positive impacts that an isolated UK achieved would have anything like the success of a pan-European approach to some of those matters.

I am certain that Europe needs to connect with its citizens in a more direct, simple and easy-to-understand way than it does at the moment. Eurobabble is a language that is hard for ordinary people to understand, and the quicker Europe realises that and does something about it, the better. From looking at the EU and Commission's public-facing websites, we could be forgiven for thinking that they were designed by officials for the amusement of academics. They need to simplify their communication methods with the public and make Europe easier to understand for citizens, through showcasing the many positive stories that there are to tell.

Should there ultimately be an in/out referendum on Europe in which England votes to leave but Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland vote to stay in, the UK must respect the mandates of this so-called family of nations and stay in. Any move to force Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland out of Europe against the wishes and best interests of the people there will inevitably trigger a constitutional crisis that will be more serious than the question of membership of the European Union. At that point, the will of the Scottish people will be the sole determinant of our future.

15:49

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): In the same way as others did, I campaigned in the 1975 referendum that Harold Wilson called to solve internal political difficulties in the Labour Party, which was then the party of government. The result was a yes vote. My party took a position against because of the sell-out of the fishing industry but, for my part, I was always firmly on the yes side and voted accordingly with a heavy heart, knowing that I was disagreeing with my party.

Of course, 1975 was not the start of the story. The UK joined the then European Economic Community in 1973 under a Tory Prime Minister, but things go somewhat further back than that. A UK member of Parliament who had been a prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials was the moving spirit behind the European convention on human rights. Winston Churchill was the Prime Minister who took the UK into that, and he was a proud signatory to the convention when it came into operation on 3 September 1953.

Of course, it goes back further than that. In 1320, when Scotland sought to protect its independence, it was to the Pope in Rome that Scotland wrote, because the Pope was not simply the head of a church; he also had a key secular role in co-ordinating international relationships. Scotland is no stranger to Europe and has no distant connection with it. Scotland has always had an intimate connection with Europe.

Jamie McGrigor and others derided the idea of four-nation consent, saying among other things that it would be inconceivable for different parts of the UK to go different ways. However, that is to neglect what has already happened. In 1982, Greenland—an autonomous country within Denmark—voted to leave the EU, and by 1985 it successfully did so, despite having that relationship. I do not commend that approach, because I would wish to stay in Europe, but Greenland's choice was to go. The example shows that it is entirely possible for there to be different decisions and different effects even within a single existing member state.

Jamie McGrigor also seemed to imply that Spain should withdraw access to benefits from the nearly 1 million UK citizens who live in that country.

Reference has been made to Norway and Switzerland. For a while, one of my nieces lived in Norway—and commuted daily to Sweden to work, I may say, never showing her passport or anything else at a European boundary, which I thought was quite interesting. There is certainly increasing disquiet in Norway, first at the economic contribution that it requires to make to the European Union as a price for being in the European Economic Area, but also at its having to be bound by the rules of the European Union while having no say in how they work.

We heard someone say that France is substantially more centralised than the UK. I think that that will come as a great surprise to many people in France. Gabriel Chevallier's satirical novel of 1934, "Clochemerle", which was made into a successful TV series in 1972, was all about the local mayor wanting to build a new—forgive me, Presiding Officer; this is literally what he said—pissoir in the town square, and to this day

there is considerable local authority in the towns and villages of France. Indeed, in the real life Clochemerle—Vaux-en-Beaujolais—the mayor is there every Thursday for two hours while she takes her lunch and eats her sandwiches; in that tiny little village, she is there. France is a far less centralised country than we might imagine if we listen to some people in this debate.

I turn to the amendments. For the most part, I could find myself being relatively comfortable with the Labour Party's amendment, but it fails to understand the reality of the UK's engagement with the European Union when it states at the end:

"believes that the UK should lead ... as a strong member of the EU."

The one thing that the UK is not is

"a strong member of the EU."

The UK has never, to this day, properly engaged with the internal workings of the EU. The moment the Irish got in in 1973, they sent their people across, they got into the grass roots and they were involved in the very early stages of formulating European policy. The UK has always waited until the policy has been formed before saying, "This winna do—we've got to change it", by which time it is too late. I suspect that, if the UK had engaged properly, the EU would now be operating in a way that would satisfy many of Jamie McGrigor's colleagues who are less sympathetic to the idea of the EU—leaving aside its operation—than he is.

In conclusion, I was interested to hear that the Tories are essentially saying, "Let the people speak." Article 3 of protocol 1 of the ECHR, on elections, means that we have to have democracy. A majority of the UK's legislators are unelected, so we are in breach of that protocol. I would love to have a referendum on the House of Lords, and I suspect that I know how it would turn out: perhaps that is why the Tories will not have one.

15:55

Cara Hilton (Dunfermline) (Lab): One of the founding principles of the European Union back in its early days as the European Coal and Steel Community was the commitment to

"the equalisation and improvement of the living conditions of workers".

While Europe can often seem distant from our daily lives, the reality is that we have the European Union to thank for many of the rights and freedoms that we enjoy every day. Rights such as paid holidays for all; equal pay for women; equal rights for part-time workers; maternity rights from day 1 and statutory maternity leave for up to a year; and safer workplaces and action to tackle working hours are all real benefits that make a real difference every day.

We have a single market that allows Scottish businesses access to 500 million people, with one set of rules on issues of common concern, rather than 28 sets of rules. The EU allows Scots to live, study or work anywhere within it and has helped to keep the peace in Europe for 70 years.

While Europe makes a real difference to our lives, the turn-out at European elections is low, as Claire Baker highlighted. There is a growing disenchantment across Europe with European institutions that often appear to put markets before people and which seem remote and detached from the lives that people lead.

However, in the UK—despite the best efforts of some sections of the tabloid press—support for remaining in the EU is now on the increase; according to YouGov, it has risen steadily since 2012, particularly among women and voters in Scotland and in London. That is an encouraging sign for those of us who believe that Scotland's role is at the heart of Europe.

Scottish Labour's amendment calls on the EU to focus on tackling inequality and exploitative working practices, and highlights the importance of focusing on measures to protect our public services in trade negotiations, which is particularly topical in light of the current debate on TTIP.

If the European vision is to prosper, it must be about offering hope and opportunities for its citizens, ensuring that globalisation works for working people and guaranteeing that, alongside jobs, there are decent rights.

Christian Allard: Will the member give way?

Cara Hilton: No, thank you.

One of the most pressing challenges that we face, not just in Scotland but across the EU, is equal pay and the continued gender pay gap that means that, on average, women in Europe are paid 16.2 per cent less than men. Yet, in a recent debate on promoting greater equality, which included agreeing action to reduce the gender pay gap, combat violence against women and promote paid paternity leave, the UK's Tory MEPs voted against taking action, revealing once more that, when it comes to making life fairer for working people in the UK, the Tories choose not to act. That comes as no surprise from a party that chooses to offer tax breaks to millionaires and to ignore tax avoidance while ordinary families the length of the UK pay the price of austerity. Scottish Labour knows that we only succeed in Scotland when working families succeed. We cannot rebuild our economy based on low wages and temporary and insecure work.

The Tories' actions, both in Europe and at home, show exactly why Scottish families cannot afford another Tory Government, which is what we

will get if the SNP has its way and the Tories are the largest party in May.

It is not just Tory MEPs who are letting down hard-working families in Europe. One of the biggest issues facing the UK is tax evasion, and tackling that problem is one of Scottish Labour's top priorities. Tax evasion costs European Governments €1 trillion a year, or €2,000 for each and every one of us. That is more than the budget deficits of all member states combined, more than Europe spends on healthcare each year and four times what we spend on education. Yet, in a vote in the European Parliament, SNP MEPs joined UKIP and the Tories and refused to support action to fight tax evasion, tax fraud and aggressive tax avoidance.

While zero-hours contracts are an increasing problem across Scotland, leaving more and more families unable to plan from one week to the next, SNP MEPs, rather than take action, again sat on their hands and abstained, as Michael McMahon highlighted.

Humza Yousaf: Cara Hilton is going through a roll-call of MEPs who voted on the amendment that she is talking about. Does she know that David Martin MEP voted against it?

Cara Hilton: David Martin made an error, which was corrected—

Members: Oh!

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order, please.

Cara Hilton: SNP MEPs made a conscious decision not to sign up to action on exploitative zero-hours contracts. That mirrors the position that SNP MSPs have taken in the chamber today, so I am quite astounded that the minister raised that issue at all. SNP MEPs sat on their hands and abstained, leaving Labour as the only UK party to support calls on EU member states to combat zero-hour contracts.

We hear a lot of hot air in this place from the SNP about the party being on the side of working people, but time and time again SNP members sit on their hands and make excuses rather than take action to improve the lives of hard-working families. The message is clear: there is only one party that will stand up for workers' rights, and that is the Labour Party. We will not abstain when it comes to taking action for working people.

One area that Europe must focus on more is that of tackling child poverty, and the upcoming reforms in the EU give us the opportunity to push children and their rights up to the top of the European political agenda.

A recent Save the Children report highlights the fact that the number of children at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Europe has risen by almost

1 million in recent years to a staggering 27 million children—poverty that does not just leave children hungry or cold, but which robs them of their dreams, their hopes and their rights, as enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Much more needs to be done by every single member state to put children's rights at the centre of the European Union's work and to fight the unacceptable reality of child poverty right across Europe.

The best future for the UK is within the European Union but we need to work to reform the EU to make it more relevant to people's lives. We need to ensure that when there is an opportunity to take action at the European level to protect and enhance the rights of Scottish families, we take it.

People need to see the difference that being a member of the EU makes every day. Europe's future will only be secure if we put the fight for social justice back at its heart.

In Europe—and here in the UK—we achieve more together than we do apart and we must do all that we can to ensure that Scotland and the UK are at the heart of Europe, shaping its future, rather than retreat into the narrow, nasty isolationism and often blatant racism promoted by UKIP.

16:02

Roderick Campbell (North East Fife) (SNP): This debate occurs against the backdrop of a UK general election, and with Eurosceptic parties on the rise elsewhere in the UK—and, to a lesser extent, in Scotland—the political narrative is becoming ever more insular and isolationist, as Willie Coffey said earlier.

However, research that was conducted by YouGov in August 2014—and referred to in a report by the renowned think tank Chatham House that was published in January—showed that voters in Scotland would vote to stay in the EU. According to that survey, the only other area in the UK that would vote to stay in the EU was London. The survey also found that Scottish voters are more pro-European, more supportive of overseas development aid and more likely than English voters to say that ethics should play a role in foreign policy.

The Chatham House report concluded that

“Heightened scrutiny over the position of an independent Scotland within the EU”

during the referendum period may have driven Scottish voters to consider the value of EU membership, which resulted in a move to a more pro-EU viewpoint.

According to the research, the Scottish public has largely positive associations regarding the benefits of EU membership, such as protection of citizens' rights and peace and security, while the negative associations are bureaucracy and loss of power, with perhaps a very mixed position on the question of freedom of movement and the limitations on that.

The YouGov survey results showed that Scots would vote to remain in the EU by a 2:1 margin, with 59 per cent of Scots saying that they would vote to stay and only 24 per cent indicating that they would vote to leave, while the rest of the UK would—albeit narrowly—vote to leave the EU.

I know that other, more recent polling evidence suggests a tighter situation, but I think that it is accepted by most commentators that, at the very least, Scotland is less Eurosceptic than the rest of the UK.

Liam McArthur: I thank Roderick Campbell for taking my intervention. He will be aware of the BBC Scotland survey that was carried out last week in relation to attitudes towards immigration. There is not a direct read-across, of course, but the attitudes to immigration north of the border and south of the border were remarkably similar. I think that that perhaps gives the lie more to what Stewart Maxwell said than to what Roderick Campbell is saying, but it does not indicate the divergence that Roderick Campbell has alluded to.

Roderick Campbell: Different polls produce different results, but I think the BBC poll has been criticised by some people in relation to what was meant by immigration. We will keep that debate for another time.

It is certainly not beyond the realms of possibility that the rest of the UK would vote to leave the EU and that Scotland would vote to stay in the EU. It would be indefensible for us to be taken out of Europe against our wishes. I reassure my colleague Liam McArthur that I am not aware of anyone in the SNP who somehow believes in or secretly wants a British exit from the EU.

Should a bill on an EU referendum be tabled, it would be right and proper for a simple amendment to be in play requiring all four constituent nations to vote for withdrawal. We need proper protection against any constituent nation being removed from the EU against its will. As many members have referred to, during the referendum campaign, many unionist campaigners talked about a family of nations, but it cannot be a family of nations if one of those nations can be taken out of another union against its will. It is not just the SNP that believes that. The proposal was also commended by Carwyn Jones, who agreed that it was “worth considering”. He warned:

“If the UK leaves the EU on the basis of English votes, it would trigger a constitutional crisis the likes of which we have not seen.”—[*Record of Proceedings, National Assembly for Wales*, 4 November 2014.]

We cannot risk our place in the EU by pandering to those who would take us out of it against our will.

Although I realise that the EU is not perfect and that its institutions must reconnect with citizens across the EU, I believe that we can achieve reform and improve EU policy without changing the treaties. The emphasis must be on reform. It is important to note that the UK Government’s balance of competences review has to date shown little progress on the issue of repatriating competences from the EU to national Governments. If anything, the review has illustrated how the UK has benefited from the current situation. That is rather at odds with the Conservatives’ intention to use the findings as a basis from which to renegotiate the terms of the UK’s membership of the EU.

Membership of the EU is vital to securing Scotland’s interests and provides the best international framework for Scotland. We benefit from the world’s largest economic and trading area, which is capable of competing with the most advanced economies in the world. We have access to a market of 500 million people and 22 million businesses across the EU, and approximately 336,000 jobs in Scotland are dependent on exports to the EU. Therefore, to withdraw would be disastrous for our economy and would put jobs at risk.

It is not just the SNP that recognises the risks of leaving the EU and the downside of a referendum. Vince Cable, a Liberal Democrat colleague of Mr McArthur, has said:

“The prospect of a referendum and possible exit from the EU is deeply unsettling for businesses trading in the European single market, from the car industry to financial services”.

I could not agree more. To ensure that Britain trades successfully in the modern world, it must stay in the EU. It is clear that the UK and Scotland would not be taken seriously by the Americans or the Chinese if we were isolated from our European neighbours. Steve Odell, chief executive of Ford of Europe, has said:

“I would strongly advise against leaving the EU for business purposes, and for employment purposes in the UK.”

The EU is not simply a trade association. It strengthens peace, security, justice and prosperity across Europe and we are enriched by the free movement of peoples across the EU. EU migrants have made a positive contribution to the UK in economic and cultural terms. The negative rhetoric on EU migration is hugely concerning, particularly

as the indications are that migrants who come to our country to work contribute far more to the country than they take out, as Mr Maxwell referred to.

We need to ensure that Scotland’s voice is heard within the EU. With others, we are pushing to ensure that any economic benefits from TTIP cannot be at the expense of our NHS or other public services. That is why the SNP is pushing for a double lock to be enshrined in TTIP that would explicitly exempt the NHS from its scope and respect the devolved responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament.

The Smith commission report states that the UK Government should

“recognise the need to reflect fully the views of the other devolved administrations when drawing up any revised governance arrangements in relation to Scottish Government representation of the UK to the EU.”

We do not yet know what that will mean in practice—the devil will be in the detail—but we will follow with interest the bill that comes from the Smith commission proposals as it passes through the Westminster Parliament.

Scotland’s interests are best served by being in the EU, not out of it.

16:08

Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP): Europe is complex. I sometimes wonder whether the complexity of Europe in people’s minds means that, when it comes to the election of our MEPs, people stay at home. In the referendum, 85 per cent of people went to the polls, because they were energised and excited and they had something that they believed that they could take part in. For many, Europe seems to be somewhere else, which is strange because we are European. An attitude has grown up in the UK that the UK is a stand-alone within Europe. We need to try to shift that.

As a member of the European Union, we are extremely fortunate because, apart from the economic advantages that many members have mentioned, there is a cultural aspect, which interests me.

When we look at the migrants who are coming into our country, schools and universities, we see an embracement of Europe in its wider context, especially from our younger people. I smiled when Murdo Fraser said at committee a few weeks ago, “Who, in this modern day, speaks French?” Well, apart from Mr Allard, the French and many other people, a lot of children in the playgrounds are speaking French, German or Spanish.

When I consider that cultural embracement of languages, I feel quite embarrassed because I

struggle with English never mind any other language. My colleague John Mason said that he has a love of the Dutch but fails to be able to speak the language. Is that something that happened within the UK and the Scots? Have we not embraced the ability to speak different languages? We need to try to push that forward because, if we are to be successful—we are successful to some degree—to internationalise our products and to take them to the European market, we need to engage and to be able to speak the language of Europe.

Stewart Stevenson: Een schip op het strand is een baken in zee. That is a Dutch saying that a ship that is stranded on the beach is a warning to the sailor. Perhaps that is the Dutch capturing in their language exactly the position that the UK will be in. If the UK leaves, that will warn everyone else of the dangers and promote cohesiveness in the EU.

Dennis Robertson: I always appreciate interventions from my friend and colleague Stewart Stevenson.

The opportunities exist for us to embrace the cultural aspect of Europe and to ensure that our young people take the opportunities that are before them.

We often hear about the oil and gas industry, especially in the north-east of Scotland. Some people say that there is a crisis. There is no crisis. The problem is that there will be a skills shortage that could impact on the industry and its future. However, if our young people embrace migration and the free movement that we have, we can be very successful. Our fishing industry relies heavily on people coming from other countries. Poor lowly Ross County Football Club has brought many Spanish people to Inverness to follow its goalkeeper, who seems to be keeping the team away from the relegation zone—just.

Scotland remains part of the UK and we need to ensure that, when we engage in Europe and the European Parliament, Scotland's voice, knowledge and expertise are heard. When Richard Lochhead goes to Europe, we should listen to his voice, knowledge and expertise on fishing and agriculture. He knows the industry and would be respected in Europe. It is time to recognise the importance of having Scottish ministers at the top table in Europe. The UK Government needs to consider who has the knowledge and can best serve not only Scotland but the UK when it comes to negotiations.

I am proud to be a Scot and a European. I am proud of the fact that we embrace people from all parts of the world and, certainly, Europe. I am delighted about Italian cuisine, which I love. I also love French cuisine. Mr Allard makes a wonderful

beef bourguignon, although he has yet to bring it to my table. In Europe, we have a wonderful aspect that we can embrace and we should embrace the culture.

When it comes to the European elections, we should be saying to people on whose doors we knock, "This is your opportunity to have your voice heard again." It is important. We should not get back into a situation of sitting on our hands during elections. I am looking forward to the general election, in which I believe that the Scottish voice will be heard in the UK Parliament, perhaps in a way that will influence our direction in Europe. I sincerely hope that that is the case.

However, let us put one myth to rest. We are European. When Jamie McGrigor says that the SNP has many myths around our situation within Europe, he is misinformed. We are European and I believe that we will remain in Europe because, unlike Jamie McGrigor, I am not sure that Mr Cameron will be Prime Minister after the general election.

16:16

Jayne Baxter (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): Since joining in 1973, the UK's place in the European Union—or the European Economic Community, as it was known then—has been a topic of political debate across the country. There are many views on that, but I believe that Scotland has clearly benefited from being part of the EU, and will continue to do so in the future.

I want to focus today on the benefits that EU membership can bring to Scotland and on the influence that Scotland can have on the future direction of the EU. The EU is hugely important to Scotland's economy. Some 40 per cent of foreign direct investment into Scotland comes from firms that are based in EU member states. In the other direction, the EU is where nearly 50 per cent of Scotland's international exports go. Hundreds of thousands of jobs in Scotland are directly and indirectly reliant on our being part of the EU. EU competition law ensures a level playing field for our businesses when operating on the continent. The European regional development fund and the European social fund deliver around £700 million in funding to Scotland. Tens of millions of that will be spent on social projects and economic development in Fife, helping people there get back into work, enhancing our economic competitiveness and developing our environment and our resource efficiency, all while improving social inclusion.

Take, for example, West Fife Enterprise. The organisation was set up in the wake of the closure of coal mines across west Fife. One of the key local leaders at the time was councillor—later

MSP—Helen Eadie. It has worked hard for nearly 30 years to help people in Fife improve their life and work opportunities. It works closely with more than 200 companies that operate in Fife, shaping the vocational training that West Fife Enterprise provides. That approach not only helps people who need support in gaining new skills and jobs, but also helps local companies to find new employees with the skills and knowledge that they need to grow their businesses.

West Fife has received nearly £2 million from the European social fund and the European regional development fund for a number of projects in the past 10 years or so. With direct support for that and many other projects, as well as the indirect economic benefits of being part of the European Union, it is abundantly clear that our continued membership of the EU is good for Fife. The same can be said for any part of the country, whether it be the east end of Glasgow, which receives millions from the social fund and the regional development fund each year, or the financial district of Edinburgh, which benefits from the free movement of goods and services within the EU.

The economic benefits extend beyond the EU's borders. The European Union has negotiated trade agreements with countries all over the world. It gives us a stronger voice on the international economic stage because, in 2010, the 27 member states of the EU accounted for more than a quarter of global GDP.

However, the benefits are not purely economic. More than 150,000 EU citizens are resident in Scotland. Citizens of other EU member states enrich Scotland and add to our multicultural society. Students from the EU make our colleges and universities even better, and Scottish students benefit from being part of exchange schemes like Erasmus, which allow them to experience new learning environments and different cultures. Tens of thousands of Scottish people live in other EU countries, encountering new cultures and picking up skills and expertise that they bring back home. We all benefit from that.

Our beaches are maintained to standards that are set by the EU. We benefit from Europe-wide standards on consumer protection. In Fife and across Scotland, we have untold numbers of farmers and rural workers who benefit from the common agricultural policy and the open market across the entire continent for their produce. We work together across Europe on climate change.

The EU provides important protections to workers, guaranteeing employee protections not just for Scottish and British workers but for those in countries with far less advanced worker protection schemes across the continent.

Recently the EU capped charges for the use of mobile phones when roaming across the EU. The European Parliament hopes soon to go further and abolish the charges outright. Similarly, the European Parliament recently voted in favour of capping credit and debit card transaction fees, a move that would save British businesses nearly £0.5 billion a year. On those and hundreds of other similar issues, being part of the European Union makes business and ordinary people's lives easier.

We are part of the European arrest warrant. According to the European Commission, prior to the European arrest warrant's introduction, extradition procedures took on average one year to complete. That has now been cut to an average of 48 days. That, alongside a multitude of arrangements designed to maximise cross-border co-operation on policing, means that Police Scotland and the Crown Office are able to investigate crimes more easily and prosecute them more effectively. We are able to co-operate on transnational issues such as human trafficking with ease.

That is not to say that the EU has no flaws. There is a constant need for reform and refinement, but it is not good enough to seek to leave an enduring and powerful political, economic and social union because it is imperfect. The solution to those flaws is to seek to fix them, not abandon the whole process.

We often congratulate ourselves on how pro-European the people of Scotland are. That is a mistake. We must continue to argue the case for staying in the EU. We must highlight the benefits that derive from our continued membership and the potential losses that would arise if we left, but we must also say what being in the EU says about us. It shows that we want to be open to the world and part of things that are bigger than ourselves. We want to co-operate with others and not close ourselves off. We want to contribute to the world and influence global affairs.

Scotland's place in the EU is at its heart. We benefit from the economic and social union inherent in the European Union. We all enjoy the direct and indirect benefits of our continued membership. Being a part of the EU is a powerful statement about our place in the world and how we view ourselves.

We should use our place in the EU to press the case for action on inequality and on vital issues such as youth unemployment. That would be of far more practical help to the people of Scotland than the partisan and divisive agendas that others seek to pursue.

We should ensure that we do everything we can to protect and strengthen our position in the EU. It

is clear that our voice is amplified on the world stage by our continued membership of the EU and is amplified within the EU itself by our continued membership of the UK.

16:22

Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP): In 2012 this Parliament hosted an exhibition of the Wallace letters, which included the Lübeck letter, which is considered to be one of the few artefacts remaining with a connection to Wallace. It was written in 1297 and stated that Scotland was ready to trade with the ports of the Hanseatic League.

That is just one example of Scotland reaching out to trade with our European neighbours, as we do now as enthusiastic, engaged and committed members of the European Union, and it was aye thus.

Scottish links to Europe, ancient and modern, can be found across the whole of the European Union. Bruges, for example, was one of the great commercial centres of Europe and at one point most of the wool being exported from Scotland to the rest of Europe went through its ports. A community of Scottish merchants settled there more than 700 years ago.

Bruges today holds the College of Europe, which was the first university to offer studies in European affairs. The Scottish Government funds scholarships to that institution to this day. That is another example of how Scotland's prosperity over the centuries has been bound with the ability to trade, travel and work in Europe.

Just as Scots have always worked and lived in Europe, now 160,000-odd people from other EU states have chosen to live and work in Scotland. As has been detailed in many of the speeches this afternoon, they make a massive contribution to Scotland's economy and culture.

Those European connections are an essential part of who we are. Scotland has always been a nation that looks outwards to its neighbours in Wales, England, Ireland, Northern Ireland and the other nations of Europe. We also welcome visitors to our land. Indeed, it is that that has led historian Tom Devine to describe us as a "mongrel nation". When I reflect on that, I realise that it means that I am a Scottish citizen, a British citizen and a European citizen. However, if this Scottish citizen embraces a European citizenship, but is told that being a British citizen makes that impossible, that is a personal conflict for me, and for our whole nation. Those who cannot see that it would be a constitutional conflict have their heads in the sand.

Liam McArthur mentioned the second world war. In 1946, Winston Churchill made a famous speech in Zurich, which helped to inspire early pro-

European attitudes following the second world war. He said that a stronger European partnership would

"make the material strength of a single state less important. Small nations will count as much as large ones and gain their honour by their contribution to the common cause."

Scotland has made and makes a great contribution to the European cause. There is no doubt that my preference would be that we do that as an independent nation, but nonetheless, as a member of the family of nations of the UK, we continue to make our contribution to Europe.

Dennis Robertson: Does Clare Adamson agree that although Scotland makes an important contribution to Europe, Europe makes an important contribution to Scotland?

Clare Adamson: I concur absolutely. It is a two-way street; an exchange of ideas, influence and trade that has served Scotland and the rest of Europe well over the centuries.

In my time in this Parliament I have been greatly honoured to witness small nations take the presidency of the EU: Denmark, Lithuania and, notably, Ireland, which concluded the negotiations on the EU's finances up until 2020. Those small nations are similar in size to Scotland and they have taken a pivotal role in Europe. We should continue to play our role as a small nation within this family of nations.

We find ourselves in a very Eurosceptic position. Margaret Thatcher made a speech in Bruges that seemed out of kilter at the time. It was Eurosceptic, which was unheard of in the EU. Unfortunately, the rhetoric from some Conservatives and UKIP has led us to a much more Eurosceptic position than existed then. Thatcher was arguing not that we should come out of Europe, but that we should change the way in which Europe works. Now, with David Cameron's proposal to hold an in/out referendum, we find ourselves in a position that seems alien to Scotland and that very few politicians in this country would argue for in any circumstances.

I appreciate that in his speech Jamie McGrigor talked of his pro-European stance, but unfortunately that is not the rhetoric that is coming through during this election campaign. I take no pleasure in this, but I will quote from David Coburn's written evidence to the European and External Relations Committee. He said:

"UKIP and its anti-establishment, anti EU FDD Group allies have been highly successful in highlighting and warning Scottish business, Agriculture, Fisheries and the Scots in general of damaging European directives issued by an out of touch oligarchic unelected Commission supervised by a eunuch European Parliament."

Challenging and intemperate language from Mr Coburn—and not for the first time. That is what is

driving the call for an in/out referendum on Europe. It is not the position that Jamie McGrigor laid out this afternoon.

I hope that Scotland will embrace the opportunities of a renegotiated position in Europe; one that could reinforce public trust in the EU's governance and its ability to improve materially the lives of people in relation to what it can do on workers' rights, as many of my Labour colleagues have mentioned today. There is also an opportunity to prioritise economic policies that stimulate sustainable growth and to have social policies that ensure that everyone can benefit from that growth and improve their country. There is also an opportunity to complete the as yet incomplete dream of a big European project that will bind us absolutely. If we look at some of the challenges of global warming, we see that perhaps there is an opportunity to have a renewable energy grid across Europe, which could interlink out countries even more, through a great European project of the type that has come up over the years.

I, for one, want to stay in Europe.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith): We turn to closing speeches. I call Cameron Buchanan.

16:30

Cameron Buchanan (Lothian) (Con): It is ironic that I have never heard the SNP members speak so much about family, when not long ago they were voting to leave a different family. Anyway, I would like to thank members for their contributions to this afternoon's debate, and to support my colleague Jamie McGrigor's amendment.

It is clear that all of us across the chamber value Scotland's and the wider UK's ties with Europe, and that is very much to be welcomed. Having spent time at the Sorbonne in Paris, and with my exposure to Europe's rich tapestry of culture and language through past business activities, I can certainly agree that there is an intrinsic cultural, social and economic value to Scotland's interactions with our friends across the continent.

We must nevertheless accept that many people throughout the United Kingdom feel that the European Union must change. It is fair to say that it is not the same institution that the UK chose to join in 1973, or that the UK electorate voted two to one to remain part of in 1975.

Stewart Stevenson: The Conservative amendment refers to negotiating

"a new settlement for the UK".

Would that involve treaty change? If it involves treaty change, would that not lead to countries such as Ireland that can allow treaty change only through a referendum in their countries having a veto over any negotiations that the UK may undertake?

Cameron Buchanan: I thank Mr Stevenson for that comment. It is not just a treaty change. We are trying to alter some of the petty rules that we have got in the European Union. There are too many petty rules, and we have not yet defined the negotiations, although we know what the petty rules are.

The European Union today is too bureaucratic and too undemocratic. It is known more to the general public for unnecessary interference than for the positive benefits that membership brings, such as the single market and free trade. The creep of EU red tape continues, while ever-closer union looms large at the expense of our national sovereignty.

Since 1975, the geopolitical environment has changed. We have experienced one of the worst economic crises in living memory. Forty years have passed since the British people last had a say on the EU and that is simply not good enough. That is why the Conservatives have committed to negotiate a new settlement—not a treaty—for the UK in Europe, followed by an in/out referendum before the end of 2017.

Christian Allard: Will the member take an intervention?

Cameron Buchanan: Certainly. Bien sûr.

Christian Allard: I thank the member for taking an intervention. I would like to ask whether Mr Cameron Buchanan will help me on one particular matter. We have been talking about having a referendum to take Britain out of the EU. We had a referendum last year in which I participated, as did many EU migrants. Will we participate in that referendum or not?

Cameron Buchanan: Our referendum is not to take Britain out of the EU. It is to renegotiate the terms—

Christian Allard: Will I get a vote?

Cameron Buchanan: Of course you will.

Christian Allard: Can you ensure that?

Cameron Buchanan: I cannot. It is not my—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order. Mr Buchanan, are you taking another intervention? If not, I cannot allow conversations across the chamber.

Cameron Buchanan: I am sorry.

That is why the UK, in 2013, launched a campaign to cut EU red tape. In the first year alone, that campaign brought about savings to UK businesses of more than £200 million. Further reforms, potentially worth up to £500 million to UK businesses, are still being implemented.

Further, as part of the cut EU red tape campaign, the UK Government supports the adoption of a common sense filter for all new European Commission proposals, called the COMPETE principles. It is also out to put a stop to the practice of gold plating, ensuring that Government does not go beyond the minimum requirements of EU law when implementing EU directives, unless it is clearly in the UK interest. Those are a few examples of the many things that we are trying to do to reform the EU.

The Conservatives have cut the EU budget for the first time in its history. We got Britain out of eurozone bailouts and we protected our rebate. The Conservatives have campaigned to end the travelling circus of the European Parliament decamping from Brussels to Strasbourg once a month, which reportedly costs £928 million over a seven-year cycle. The Conservatives have a track record on change in Europe, but we are going further than that: we want the UK's membership of the EU to have a popular mandate, and we want to serve the best interests of the British people.

Forty years ago, the referendum on the European Community was held on the basis of a simple one-person-one-vote system. The referendum on independence last year had no additional requirements other than a simple majority of votes. To suggest additional terms such as a double majority that could potentially prevent the UK from leaving the EU even if three out of the four constituent parts had voted in favour is not democracy in action. That is not a popular vote, and according to the recent Chatham house-YouGov survey, it is not what the people of Great Britain want. Some 60 per cent of the public are now in favour of a referendum and only 24 per cent are opposed to it.

My hope is that together we can bring about the necessary reforms to change the European Union for the better. It is for the British people from all corners of the United Kingdom to decide whether they wish to stay in it. Either way, the Conservatives will respect that decision.

I will vote in favour of Jamie McGrigor's amendment.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I remind members that everyone who has participated in a debate should be in the chamber for the closing speeches. I was about to say that I noted that Hanzala Malik was not in the chamber and that I

would be grateful for an explanation of that, but I have just seen him enter the chamber.

16:36

Claire Baker: As I said in my opening speech, that was my first speech in our European team as such with committee members and MSPs who have an interest in Europe. I have found the debate very interesting and encouraging, with largely positive contributions.

As a literature graduate, I very much welcomed Christian Allard's cultural comments and the Dutch from Stewart Stevenson, which managed to entertain us.

Members have covered a wide range of issues, including workforce issues. Michael McMahon described the workforce benefits that have successfully been fought for in the EU and more that we need to do on that.

Cara Hilton talked about tackling tax avoidance and the greater role that the EU can play in that.

Christian Allard talked about the need for co-operation and highlighted trafficking as an important angle. In a modern world, we need to work in co-operation to solve those problems.

Many members have talked about the need for the EU to be less remote and more engaged with its electorate. Dennis Robertson described the feeling of remoteness very well and gave a good description of the role of culture, our languages, performances and human relationships to better improve our engagement with Europe.

There are three different proposals before us, which I imagine will not gain much cross-party support across the chamber at decision time. That is a pity, because it appears that there is much that we agree on. Europe is positive for Scotland and good for our economy, being part of the Union brings us positive social and cultural benefits, and there is much that we can learn from each other.

Last year, I went to the first rural parliament conference in Scotland. We have seen that model working well in Europe to the benefit of rural communities.

We have a long history of trade with and movement in Europe. Our modern institutions support those relationships in a way that looks to bring fairness and prosperity to Europe.

In many ways, we are in a strong position in Europe, notwithstanding the comments that were made—I am afraid that I cannot remember which member made them—about the current Conservative Government's approach to Europe. The Conservatives certainly have a different history of Europe. They are not enthusiastically

European, although that is not universal in that party.

I believe that Nick Clegg has represented the UK Government only once in Europe, in the early phases of the coalition. Sometimes I imagine where we would be now if that had continued.

Notwithstanding that, we have strengths in Europe. By continuing to have the pound rather than the euro, we have the advantage of our own currency while we retain full access to the single market.

It is important that we make a strong case for staying in the European Union. The costs of leaving the Community, which we have been part of for more than four decades, far outweigh any outcomes that we would get in return. It is vital that we play a full part in the future of an organisation that was founded to oppose aggression between states.

We should ensure that Britain continues to have an impact on Europe in the best way possible. As Christian Allard described, free movement in the European Union allows Scottish people to move, live, work and study throughout the countries that are part of the EU as well as allowing other EU citizens to come to Scotland. That is vital for the growth of the country as well as Europe as a whole. Shutting ourselves out of the opportunity to move freely throughout much of Europe would be detrimental not only to those who benefit from coming to Scotland and the UK, but to our citizens who benefit from the opportunities that other parts of Europe offer.

Christian Allard: The member talks about the EU migrants who come to this country and contribute to society. One of the great contributions that we migrants can make is that we are allowed to vote, which I and many others did in last year's referendum. Would the Labour Party support my voting in the referendum that the Conservative Party wants?

Claire Baker: Is the member asking about voting rights in a possible referendum on the EU?

Christian Allard: Yes. Would I have the right to vote?

Claire Baker: I do not support a referendum. I hope that, after May, we will have a Labour Government and there will be no referendum.

Christina McKelvie talked about the transatlantic trade and investment partnership. I was pleased to have the SNP's support earlier this year when it joined Labour and the Greens to protect the NHS from private incursions by US healthcare providers. It is imperative that the NHS is exempt from any trade agreement.

Trade agreements are important. We want to get the benefits from an increasingly global marketplace and we need to seek new opportunities. If we do not take the opportunities, other countries and markets will. However, member states across the EU will have concerns about what impact TTIP could have on their public services. We in the UK must not accept the inclusion of the NHS in it.

This morning, the European and External Relations Committee published its report, "The implications of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership for Scotland." The committee conducted an in-depth inquiry into the issue and I will take time to look at its conclusions, but I welcome the focus on the protection of the NHS.

In this morning's media, the minister talked about a Eurosceptic Westminster. Stewart Maxwell wrapped up all the UK parties together in that regard. That misrepresents parties' positions on Europe to suit a nationalist narrative. Labour, the Liberals and the Greens are not Eurosceptic.

Stewart Maxwell: I was talking specifically about the Tory Government and its policies. I think that I made several explicit references to the Tory party. I did not mention Labour once. I am sorry that the member took that view, because that is not what I intended.

Claire Baker: I accept Stewart Maxwell's response. I thought that, in talking about a Westminster elite, he had wrapped up the parties together, but I appreciate that clarification.

Yesterday, the First Minister was in London calling for Welsh voters to vote for Plaid Cymru and for English voters to vote Green. The consequence of that would not be that Britain dances to UKIP's tune, but that it dances to the Conservative's tune for the next five years. It would also guarantee an in/out referendum that most people in the chamber do not want to see.

Stewart Maxwell and Willie Coffey made some points that looked to rerun aspects of last year's referendum. I know that some members were disappointed with the referendum result, but the majority of people voted to stay in the UK. Members were right to say that the debate suggested that people in Scotland want to stay in Europe. The vote showed that the arguments around EU membership, the strength of the UK as the member state and the retention of the rebate and other UK benefits won the day. However, the SNP's case on Europe at the time was neither credible nor supported by a significant majority of EU experts. It did not have the support of the decision makers, who repeatedly highlighted the difficulties of securing the agreement of 28 member states. That was the key thing.

Those MSPs who sounded as though they were positively looking forward to an in/out referendum, which would cause a constitutional crisis, should reflect on last year's reports about Fiona Hyslop's concerns over the price of Scotland leaving the EU and negotiating its own membership—those concerns were glossed over in the subsequent white paper. That was last year. We must move on to the circumstances presented to us.

As Liam McArthur said, the Smith commission made proposals for strengthening Scotland's role in the UK and the EU. Good practice is in place. Last December, Angela Constance attended and spoke at both the employment, social policy, health and consumer affairs council and the education, youth, culture and sport council as the sole UK representative. At last December's agriculture and fisheries council, key Scottish objectives were secured. I was much encouraged by the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment's positive report to the European and External Relations Committee on Scotland's EU engagement through the UK.

Of course, there have been weaknesses—Lord Rupert Ponsonby, the seventh Baron de Mauley, leading on fishing negotiations when Richard Lochhead was there is a case in point, and I was critical of that decision at the time. We must learn lessons from such examples. However, if we improve Scotland's role in the UK delegation, as I believe that the Smith proposals will do, Scotland will carry influence as one of the larger member states. Let us improve our working relationships but retain the advantages that come from the UK's membership of the EU.

Liam McArthur gave a fair analysis of the problems with the double-majority proposal. As I said earlier, I do not think that that proposal is credible. It would be similar to a majority making a decision in last year's referendum but those in a local authority area being able to veto it. Scotland voted to stay in the UK last year in the knowledge that there could be an EU referendum, and we chose to continue to make decisions in such reserved areas together.

This has been a wide-ranging debate. There has been some rehashing of old arguments and rehearsal of future ones and, with our different proposals, we will not find much agreement at decision time. However, there is much more agreement than disagreement in the chamber. Rod Campbell set out some of the positive arguments, including supportive comments from businesses about the importance of the UK's role in Europe.

We have a task before us to continue to strengthen the UK's membership of the EU and to win the arguments, not just economic but emotional. The EU is a union built around the

desire for peace and co-operation. We have a responsibility to tell our story of Europe—both its history and its future—and to continue to play a positive part in it.

16:46

Humza Yousaf: In my opening speech I should have welcomed the fact that Claire Baker is making her first opening and winding-up speeches for Labour in her new role. She did so very well and very succinctly and got to the heart of many issues. As she said, and as many members have reflected, this has been a good positive debate about the benefits of the EU. I do not know whether similar debates in other Parliaments and Assemblies across these islands would be as positive as this debate in the Scottish Parliament has been. I commend all members for that.

There has been a supportive approach, and I am encouraged that there is broad agreement around the Scottish Government's EU priorities. Members of the European and External Relations Committee have questioned the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs and me on those priorities, and during those meetings I have found broad agreement, which I am pleased has been reflected here in the chamber.

I will pick up on a few of the points that have been raised. All of us have said that Scotland's relationship with the European Union has been about more than just trade and investment; there is also a social purpose to it, in respect of reducing inequality and fighting poverty.

I had better respond to comments that were made by Claire Baker and Anne McTaggart—and possibly by Cara Hilton and Michael McMahon—regarding voting by SNP MEPs. I had a look at the matter that was mentioned. First, it was not a legally binding vote by any stretch of the imagination—the vote was on an own-initiative report. The reason why SNP and Green MEPs and the rest of the group to which Labour MEPs belong voted against the proposal—or abstained, in our case—was that the definition of “atypical labour” could include lone parents on part-time contracts, for example. Interpretation was the problem. Generally speaking, all of us will look towards the European Union to ensure that fighting inequality and reducing poverty are at the heart of the matter.

I am greatly heartened by the level of support that members have shown for Scotland's continued membership of the European Union and the real benefits that we get from it—not just access to the half a billion European consumers and businesses, but more than that.

Liam McArthur and other members made a good point about structural funds. Perhaps we are

not good at delving down and making them relevant to what they actually mean to people. There is the €985 million that has been mentioned by various members. Add to that the match funding from the Scottish Government, which takes the amount up to €1.9 billion. What does that actually mean? What does it do for the people whom we represent? Examples include the European structural funds funded Ayrshire youth employment service, which so far has created 1,250 job opportunities in Ayrshire and has benefited from about £1.6 billion of funding.

Dennis Robertson: The minister is outlining many of the positive aspects of being in Europe—and there are many. Why is it, then, that people seem to be disengaged when it comes to voting in European elections? We have these absolutely positive benefits of being members of the European Union, but we do not seem to be getting that message across. Who is failing?

Humza Yousaf: We all bear responsibility. That goes back to the point that I was just trying to make, which is that if we do not translate the positive benefits of European membership into what they mean for people's everyday lives, why would people be interested? On top of that, in our EU reform agenda we have said clearly that the European Union should be tackling issues that matter to people—the mass youth unemployment across the European continent being one example.

Liam McArthur: I hope that this comment will be helpful. In response to Dennis Robertson's legitimate concern, it does not help that member states across Europe have track records of going along to Council meetings, signing up to inevitable compromise agreements and then tearing apart the agreement that they have signed up to in order to protect themselves from criticism on the aspect of the compromise that their citizens are slightly less enamoured with.

Humza Yousaf: Who would have thought it? Politicians playing politics. However, that can happen, and I agree with Liam McArthur that it is not helpful.

Scotland will continue to have the opportunity to bid into a range of EU competitive funding programmes. Scottish universities have managed to win €572 million of funding over the period 2007-14. To give members a sense of scale, that represents more than 1.3 per cent of the entire EU research budget. I would like to reassure Claire Baker and others who have raised the issue of the reduction of horizon 2020. We do not want to see any further reduction there, but we hope that academic and research institutions will benefit as a result of the Juncker investment package.

I understand Hanzala Malik's point about third sector organisations trying to tap into EU funding, but it was slightly unfair of him to say that no progress has been made. I have recently spoken to Hanzala and other members of the European and External Relations Committee about the funding portal that Scotland Europa has created, for the exact reason that he mentioned. The beta version of that funding portal has been launched; it will become a one-stop shop for information on the 40 or so EU funds that are currently available to organisations in Scotland. It will also provide information on projects that are currently running or are completed that involve Scottish partners, as well as information on project partners.

Hanzala Malik: Perhaps I was a little unfair. It is just that I feel very passionate about the third sector and our small companies. Rather than just a one-stop shop, I want to see officers on the ground, supporting people to do the job. At the moment, that is missing.

Humza Yousaf: I refer Hanzala Malik to Scotland Europa, which does an excellent job in that regard. It has a number of organisations. However, there is always more that we can do and I am happy to reflect on that. As he will know, the Brussels office is very hard working, as are Scottish Development International and other partners.

The benefits that flow from European Union membership—be it the talent pool that migration to Scotland brings, the economics or the free trade—are not advanced by arguing for the status quo. We all agree that things need to change and that a degree of reform is needed.

Jamie McGrigor: Dennis Robertson made a very good point about the apathy of EU voters. I think that that apathy stems from a feeling that there is little that individuals can do to change things in Europe. If, as he says he does, the minister agrees that there should be reform, is it a good thing that the Conservative Party is pushing for reform in the things that come out of Europe that are not beneficial, rather than in the things that are beneficial?

Humza Yousaf: It is interesting that the Conservatives' own review of the balance of competences—which looked through departments with a fine-tooth comb with regard to their relationship with Europe and whether there is a need for reform—found that the balance is just about right. Jamie McGrigor started his speech earlier by saying how pro-European he is, but then spent the next six minutes telling us everything that is wrong with Europe. I could almost hear the grinding of his teeth as he was doing so. The point is that where reform is necessary, it will not be achieved by holding a gun to Europe's head.

The EU needs to show that it means business by tackling the bureaucracy that Jamie McGrigor mentioned and by having a root-and-branch review of existing regulatory burdens. The REFIT programme is therefore welcome, with the caveat that it must not lower any environmental standards, and so on. As Jamie McGrigor talked about reforms, I waited to hear what reforms he wants to be made. The Conservatives have yet to produce a list of their top three reforms and an indication of whether they would require treaty change.

Michael McMahon was good in highlighting the alternatives to membership of the EU, which could be extremely dangerous. He mentioned Norway and Switzerland and said that membership of the European Free Trade Association would be unacceptable, because it would mean that Europe would be running our country, but we would not be able to have any say in Europe. As he was making that point, I could hear the voice of the late great Margo MacDonald—we fully agree that the best place for Scotland is within the European Union, as is the case at present.

We hope that there will not be an in/out referendum on membership of the EU. We do not support the holding of such a referendum, but if there is one we do not have to wait for it in order to argue for the benefits of the EU. We have never argued that there should not be a vote for all people of the UK. In the Scottish independence referendum, nobody seriously argued that everybody across the UK should get a vote, because it was a vote for the Scottish people.

Christian Allard: On behalf of all the people from the EU who, like me, voted in last year's independence referendum, in the unlikely event that David Cameron is elected and a referendum is held on whether to get out of the EU, will the minister push the Westminster Government to ensure that we will have a vote, too?

Humza Yousaf: We do not want a referendum, but we feel that if one is held Christian Allard and others like him should not be disenfranchised.

A decision to come out of the EU could have potentially devastating impacts on our economy, on the migrant communities who live here and on the academic sector. In this family of nations in which we are supposed to have an equal voice in the UK, it would be unimaginable for Scotland to be somehow dragged against its will out of the EU. That would be totally unacceptable. That is why our motion simply says that Scotland should have an equal voice. It would be quite incredible were we to find ourselves at 5 o'clock in a situation in which, although the Labour First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, says that the proposal that Scotland should have an equal voice is worth

considering, the Labour Party in Scotland votes against it.

Claire Baker *rose*—

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The minister has 10 seconds left.

Humza Yousaf: I hope that members across the Parliament will vote to give Scotland an equal voice in the European Union and that they will not allow us to be dragged outside the EU against our will. Let us continue to make the case for Scotland—and, indeed, the UK—to remain in the EU.

Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body Motions

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of motions S4M-12625 and S4M-12626, in the name of Liam McArthur, on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, on amendments to the Scottish Parliament salaries scheme and the reimbursement of members' expenses scheme. I call Liam McArthur to speak to and move the motions.

16:58

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): On behalf of the SPCB, I am pleased to move two motions on the Scottish Parliament salaries scheme and the reimbursement of members' expenses scheme. The first motion seeks to make an amendment to the salaries scheme that will break the current link between MSPs' salaries and the salaries of MPs, which are in turn determined by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority. The amendment will replace that link with a new mechanism that will directly link MSPs' salaries to future public sector pay rises in Scotland.

The second motion seeks to extend the existing transitional arrangements on the employment of family members up to 31 July 2016 in line with the original intention of the McIntosh recommendation. That follows the extension of the current parliamentary session from four years to five years to avoid a clash with the forthcoming United Kingdom general election.

I move,

That the Parliament-

- a. in exercise of the powers conferred by section 81(1) and (5)(b) of the Scotland Act 1998
 - (i) confers functions on the Parliamentary corporation (the SPCB) to pay salaries to members in accordance with the Scottish Parliament Salaries Scheme (the Scheme) annexed as Annex 1 to this Resolution;
 - (ii) confers other functions on the SPCB as specified in the Scheme; and
 - (iii) approves the Scheme;
- b. determines that the Scheme shall come into effect on 1 April 2015;
- c. rescinds, with effect from 1 April 2015, paragraph a. of the Resolution of the Parliament of March 21 2002 conferring functions as specified in the Scottish Parliament Salaries Scheme (SP Paper 554) on the SPCB and approving the Scheme (the Resolution); and that part of the Resolution which directs the SPCB to pay on or after 1 April 2002 the salaries stated in that Scheme.

Annex 1

THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT SALARIES SCHEME

1. (1) In this Scheme-

"the Act" means the Scotland Act 1998;

"general election" means an ordinary or extraordinary general election for membership of the Parliament held under section 2 or section 3 of the Act;

"Schedule" means the Schedule to this Scheme; and

"year" means a year starting on 1st April.

(2) For the purposes of this Scheme, a person who is a member of the Parliament immediately before the Parliament is dissolved shall be treated-

(a) if he or she continues to hold office by virtue of section 19(2) (term of office of the Presiding Officer and deputies) of, or paragraph 1 of Schedule 2 (term of office of members of the Parliamentary corporation) to, the Act, as if he or she were such a member until the end of the day on which he or she ceases to hold such office; and

(b) if he or she does not fall within sub-paragraph (a) but is nominated as a candidate at the subsequent general election, as if he or she were such a member until the end of the day on which the election is held.

2. (1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2) and paragraphs 5 and 7, there shall be payable to every member of the Parliament a salary at the yearly rate specified in Part 1 of the Schedule.

(2) For any period during which a salary is payable to a member of the Parliament under section 4 of the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009 (salaries of members of the House of Commons) or pursuant to a resolution of the House of Lords relating to the remuneration of members of that House, or under section 1 of the European Parliament (Pay and Pensions) Act 1979 (remuneration of United Kingdom MEPs), the yearly rate of the salary payable by virtue of this Scheme to that member for that period shall be reduced by two-thirds.

(3) The salary payable by virtue of this paragraph to a member of the Parliament shall be payable from 1 April 2015 and, for any member elected after that date, for the period beginning with the day on which he or she is declared to be returned as a member of the Parliament and ending with the day on which the member ceases to be a member of the Parliament.

3. (1) Subject to paragraphs 5 and 7, in addition to any salary payable by virtue of paragraph 2 -

(a) there shall be payable to a member of the Parliament holding the office of Presiding Officer a salary at the yearly rate specified in Part 2 of the Schedule in relation to that office; and

(b) there shall be payable to a member of the Parliament holding the office of deputy Presiding Officer a salary at the yearly rate specified in Part 2 of the Schedule in relation to that office.

(2) The salary payable by virtue of this paragraph to a member of the Parliament holding any such office shall be payable from 1 April 2015, and for any member elected to such office after that date, from the date of that election, for the period during which he or she holds that office.

4. (1) Subject to paragraphs 5 and 7, in addition to any salary payable by virtue of paragraph 2, there shall be payable from 1 April 2015, or where appointed to such office after that date, the date of appointment,

(a) to the holder of any office specified in Part 3 of the Schedule a salary at the yearly rate specified in relation to that office in Part 3 of the Schedule, and

(b) to the holder of such other office as the Parliamentary corporation may determine, a salary at the yearly rate determined by the Parliamentary corporation, for the period during which such office holder holds that office.

(2) If the holder of the office of Lord Advocate or Solicitor General for Scotland is not a member of the Parliament, the yearly rate specified in relation to that office in Part 3 of the Schedule shall be increased by the amount of the yearly rate of salary that would be payable to him or her by virtue of paragraph 2 if he or she were a member of the Parliament.

(3) The salary payable by virtue of this paragraph to the holder of any office specified in Part 3 of the Schedule shall be payable for the period during which he or she holds that office.

5. Subject to paragraph 8, for each year starting from 1 April 2016 any salary payable by virtue of the Scheme shall be amended to reflect any increase in the index for the mean annual earnings of public sector full time workers in Scotland as provided for by the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings produced by the Office of National Statistics, or such other index as the Parliamentary Corporation may from time to time deem appropriate.

6. (1) The yearly rate specified in this Scheme in relation to any salary payable by virtue of the Scheme shall be taken to be the maximum amount so payable in any year and accordingly-

(a) notwithstanding the provisions of this Scheme as to any such rate, the salary so payable in any year may be of a lesser amount than that so specified; and

(b) where any period, or part of a period, for which a salary is payable under this Scheme is less than a year, the maximum amount of salary so payable for that period, or part of that period, shall be a proportionate part of the yearly rate.

(2) Any salary payable by virtue of this Scheme shall be paid by the Parliamentary corporation.

(3) A person to whom any salary is payable by virtue of paragraphs 3 or 4 shall be entitled to receive only one such salary, but if he or she is the holder of two or more offices in respect of which a salary is so payable and there is a difference between the yearly rate of salaries payable in respect of those offices, the office in respect of which a salary is payable to him or her shall be that in respect of which the highest salary is payable.

7. (1) For any period during which a member of the Parliament is imprisoned, the salary payable to that member by virtue of paragraph 2(1) shall be reduced by 90%.

(2) For any period during which a member of the Parliament holding the office of Presiding Officer or deputy Presiding Officer is imprisoned, the salary payable by virtue of paragraph 3(1) shall be reduced by 90%.

(3) For any period during which the holder of an office to whom a salary is payable by virtue of paragraph 4(1) is imprisoned, that salary shall be reduced by 90%.

8. (1) The Parliamentary corporation may, at such intervals as it deems appropriate, make arrangements to review and determine the salaries payable under paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 and, in consequence of a review, shall determine the salaries payable.

(2) In discharging its function under sub paragraph (1), the Parliamentary corporation shall obtain advice on salary levels from such person or persons as it deems appropriate and, in relation to the review of salaries payable by virtue of paragraph 4, shall, in addition, consult the First Minister.

(3) In determining the salaries to be paid in consequence of a review in accordance with this paragraph, the Parliamentary corporation shall have regard to any recommendations made to it by the person or persons referred to in sub paragraph (2).

Schedule

PART 1

Salary of members

Yearly Rate of Salary

£

59,089

PART 2

Salaries of Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officers

<i>Office</i>	<i>Yearly Rate of Salary</i>
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£

Presiding Officer	44,406
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Deputy Presiding Officer	27,816
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PART 3

Salaries of members of the Scottish Government and junior Scottish Ministers

<i>Office</i>	<i>Yearly Rate of Salary</i>
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£

First Minister	85,598
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Lord Advocate	58,013
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Solicitor General for Scotland	41,951
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Member of the Scottish Government other than the First Minister, the Lord Advocate or the Solicitor General for Scotland	44,406
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Junior Scottish Minister	27,816
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That the Parliament, by virtue of sections 81(2) and (5)(b) and 83(5) of the Scotland Act 1998:

1. amends that part of paragraph (iv)(b) of the Resolution of the Parliament of 12 June 2008 as amended by the Resolution of Parliament of 24 March 2010, relating to provision for termination payments to members' staff who are close family members of the member (as defined by Section 9.1.1 of the Scheme) where the costs of employing such close family members is reimbursed in accordance with Section 3 of the Scheme and termination of the employment of such close family members on or before the 31 July 2015 is due to the effect of paragraph 3.1.8 of the Scheme as inserted by the amending Resolution, and paragraph (v)(i), by deleting "31 July 2015" and inserting instead "31 July 2016".

2. amends that part of paragraph (v) of the Resolution of the Parliament of 12 June 2008 as amended by the resolution of the Parliament of 24 March 2010, relating to the transitional arrangements for entitlement to the reimbursement of staff costs under Section 3 of the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme in respect of close family members (as defined by Section 9.1.1 of the Scheme) whose employment by a member commenced

before 1 April 2010 which provides for that entitlement to end not later than 31 July 2015 by deleting "31 July 2015" and inserting instead "31 July 2016".

The Presiding Officer: The question on those motions will be put at decision time.

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): There are five questions to be put as a result of today's business. I remind members that, in relation to the debate on Scotland's place in Europe, if the amendment in the name of Claire Baker is agreed to, the amendment in the name of Jamie McGrigor will fall.

The first question is, that amendment S4M-12670.2, in the name of Claire Baker, which seeks to amend motion S4M-12670, in the name of Humza Yousaf, on Scotland's place in Europe, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)
 Hilton, Cara (Dunfermline) (Lab)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McMahan, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahan, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (Ind)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)

Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

Abstentions

Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 33, Against 63, Abstentions 14.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S4M-12670.1, in the name of Jamie McGrigor, which seeks to amend motion S4M-12670, in the name of Humza Yousaf, on Scotland's place in Europe, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (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)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hilton, Cara (Dunfermline) (Lab)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (Ind)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 14, Against 96, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S4M-12670, in the name of Humza Yousaf, on Scotland's place in Europe, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

Against

Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)
 Hilton, Cara (Dunfermline) (Lab)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (Ind)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 63, Against 47, Abstentions 0.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament supports Scotland's place in the European Union (EU) and its role as an active and constructive member; recognises the importance of the EU single market, which gives Scotland access to 500 million people and 22 million businesses across the EU; further recognises the additional social, cultural and educational benefits of EU membership; highlights the importance of ensuring that Scotland can make a contribution to EU policy-making, particularly in light of the recommendations of the Smith Commission, to support the work of the Scottish Government to deliver sustainable growth, address long-standing inequalities and protect Scotland's public services; understands the importance of protecting Scotland's EU membership, and welcomes the Scottish Government's double majority proposal, which would prevent Scotland from being taken out of the EU against the will of its people.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-12625, in the name of Liam McArthur, on amendments to the Scottish parliamentary salary scheme, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament-

a. in exercise of the powers conferred by section 81(1) and (5)(b) of the Scotland Act 1998

(i) confers functions on the Parliamentary corporation (the SPCB) to pay salaries to members in accordance with the Scottish Parliament Salaries Scheme (the Scheme) annexed as Annex 1 to this Resolution;

(ii) confers other functions on the SPCB as specified in the Scheme; and

(iii) approves the Scheme;

b. determines that the Scheme shall come into effect on 1 April 2015;

c. rescinds, with effect from 1 April 2015, paragraph a. of the Resolution of the Parliament of March 21 2002 conferring functions as specified in the Scottish Parliament Salaries Scheme (SP Paper 554) on the SPCB and approving the Scheme (the Resolution); and that part of the Resolution which directs the SPCB to pay on or after 1 April 2002 the salaries stated in that Scheme.

Annex 1

THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT SALARIES SCHEME

1. (1) In this Scheme-

"the Act" means the Scotland Act 1998;

"general election" means an ordinary or extraordinary general election for membership of the Parliament held under section 2 or section 3 of the Act;

"Schedule" means the Schedule to this Scheme; and

"year" means a year starting on 1st April.

(2) For the purposes of this Scheme, a person who is a member of the Parliament immediately before the Parliament is dissolved shall be treated-

(a) if he or she continues to hold office by virtue of section 19(2) (term of office of the Presiding Officer and deputies) of, or paragraph 1 of Schedule 2 (term of office of members of the Parliamentary corporation) to, the Act, as if he or she were such a member until the end of the day on which he or she ceases to hold such office; and

(b) if he or she does not fall within sub-paragraph (a) but is nominated as a candidate at the subsequent general election, as if he or she were such a member until the end of the day on which the election is held.

2. (1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2) and paragraphs 5 and 7, there shall be payable to every member of the Parliament a salary at the yearly rate specified in Part 1 of the Schedule.

(2) For any period during which a salary is payable to a member of the Parliament under section 4 of the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009 (salaries of members of the House of Commons) or pursuant to a resolution of the House of Lords relating to the remuneration of members of that House, or under section 1 of the European Parliament (Pay and Pensions) Act 1979 (remuneration of United Kingdom MEPs), the yearly rate of the salary payable by virtue of this Scheme to that member for that period shall

be reduced by two-thirds.

(3) The salary payable by virtue of this paragraph to a member of the Parliament shall be payable from 1 April 2015 and, for any member elected after that date, for the period beginning with the day on which he or she is declared to be returned as a member of the Parliament and ending with the day on which the member ceases to be a member of the Parliament.

3. (1) Subject to paragraphs 5 and 7, in addition to any salary payable by virtue of paragraph 2 –

(a) there shall be payable to a member of the Parliament holding the office of Presiding Officer a salary at the yearly rate specified in Part 2 of the Schedule in relation to that office; and

(b) there shall be payable to a member of the Parliament holding the office of deputy Presiding Officer a salary at the yearly rate specified in Part 2 of the Schedule in relation to that office.

(2) The salary payable by virtue of this paragraph to a member of the Parliament holding any such office shall be payable from 1 April 2015, and for any member elected to such office after that date, from the date of that election, for the period during which he or she holds that office.

4. (1) Subject to paragraphs 5 and 7, in addition to any salary payable by virtue of paragraph 2, there shall be payable from 1 April 2015, or where appointed to such office after that date, the date of appointment,

(a) to the holder of any office specified in Part 3 of the Schedule a salary at the yearly rate specified in relation to that office in Part 3 of the Schedule, and

(b) to the holder of such other office as the Parliamentary corporation may determine, a salary at the yearly rate determined by the Parliamentary corporation, for the period during which such office holder holds that office.

(2) If the holder of the office of Lord Advocate or Solicitor General for Scotland is not a member of the Parliament, the yearly rate specified in relation to that office in Part 3 of the Schedule shall be increased by the amount of the yearly rate of salary that would be payable to him or her by virtue of paragraph 2 if he or she were a member of the Parliament.

(3) The salary payable by virtue of this paragraph to the holder of any office specified in Part 3 of the Schedule shall be payable for the period during which he or she holds that office.

5. Subject to paragraph 8, for each year starting from 1 April 2016 any salary payable by virtue of the Scheme shall be amended to reflect any increase in the index for the mean annual earnings of public sector full time workers in Scotland as provided for by the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings produced by the Office of National Statistics, or such other index as the Parliamentary Corporation may from time to time deem appropriate.

6. (1) The yearly rate specified in this Scheme in relation to any salary payable by virtue of the Scheme shall be taken to be the maximum amount so payable in any year and accordingly-

(a) notwithstanding the provisions of this Scheme as to any such rate, the salary so payable in any year may be of a lesser amount than that so specified; and

(b) where any period, or part of a period, for which a salary is payable under this Scheme is less than a year, the maximum amount of salary so payable for that period, or part of that period, shall be a proportionate part of the

yearly rate.

(2) Any salary payable by virtue of this Scheme shall be paid by the Parliamentary corporation.

(3) A person to whom any salary is payable by virtue of paragraphs 3 or 4 shall be entitled to receive only one such salary, but if he or she is the holder of two or more offices in respect of which a salary is so payable and there is a difference between the yearly rate of salaries payable in respect of those offices, the office in respect of which a salary is payable to him or her shall be that in respect of which the highest salary is payable.

7. (1) For any period during which a member of the Parliament is imprisoned, the salary payable to that member by virtue of paragraph 2(1) shall be reduced by 90%.

(2) For any period during which a member of the Parliament holding the office of Presiding Officer or deputy Presiding Officer is imprisoned, the salary payable by virtue of paragraph 3(1) shall be reduced by 90%.

(3) For any period during which the holder of an office to whom a salary is payable by virtue of paragraph 4(1) is imprisoned, that salary shall be reduced by 90%.

8. (1) The Parliamentary corporation may, at such intervals as it deems appropriate, make arrangements to review and determine the salaries payable under paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 and, in consequence of a review, shall determine the salaries payable.

(2) In discharging its function under sub paragraph (1), the Parliamentary corporation shall obtain advice on salary levels from such person or persons as it deems appropriate and, in relation to the review of salaries payable by virtue of paragraph 4, shall, in addition, consult the First Minister.

(3) In determining the salaries to be paid in consequence of a review in accordance with this paragraph, the Parliamentary corporation shall have regard to any recommendations made to it by the person or persons referred to in sub paragraph (2).

Schedule

PART 1

Salary of members

Yearly Rate of Salary

£

59,089

PART 2

Salaries of Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officers

<i>Office</i>	<i>Yearly Rate of Salary</i>
	£
Presiding Officer	44,406
Deputy Presiding Officer	27,816

PART 3

Salaries of members of the Scottish Government and junior Scottish Ministers

<i>Office</i>	<i>Yearly Rate of Salary</i>
	£
First Minister	85,598
Lord Advocate	58,013

Solicitor General for Scotland	41,951
Member of the Scottish Government other than the First Minister, the Lord Advocate or the Solicitor General for Scotland	44,406
Junior Scottish Minister	27,816

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that S4M-12626, in the name of Liam McArthur, on the reimbursement of members' expenses scheme, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament, by virtue of sections 81(2) and (5)(b) and 83(5) of the Scotland Act 1998:

1. amends that part of paragraph (iv)(b) of the Resolution of the Parliament of 12 June 2008 as amended by the Resolution of Parliament of 24 March 2010, relating to provision for termination payments to members' staff who are close family members of the member (as defined by Section 9.1.1 of the Scheme) where the costs of employing such close family members is reimbursed in accordance with Section 3 of the Scheme and termination of the employment of such close family members on or before the 31 July 2015 is due to the effect of paragraph 3.1.8 of the Scheme as inserted by the amending Resolution, and paragraph (v)(i), by deleting "31 July 2015" and inserting instead "31 July 2016".

2. amends that part of paragraph (v) of the Resolution of the Parliament of 12 June 2008 as amended by the resolution of the Parliament of 24 March 2010, relating to the transitional arrangements for entitlement to the reimbursement of staff costs under Section 3 of the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme in respect of close family members (as defined by Section 9.1.1 of the Scheme) whose employment by a member commenced before 1 April 2010 which provides for that entitlement to end not later than 31 July 2015 by deleting "31 July 2015" and inserting instead "31 July 2016".

A9 (Average-speed Cameras)

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):

The final item of business today is a members' business debate on motion S4M-12163, in the name of Mike MacKenzie, on average-speed cameras on the A9. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament welcomes the recently published performance data regarding the average speed cameras on the A9, which suggests that, since the cameras were introduced, the number of drivers speeding has reduced from around one in three to one in 20 and that examples of excessive speeding are down by 97%; understands that there is no evidence of drivers taking diversions or using so-called rat runs to avoid the cameras; believes that their introduction has resulted in an increase in journey time reliability to and from Inverness, and considers that both the cameras and the HGV speed limit pilot on the A9, which have been put in place ahead of the dualling of the road, have been a success and have led to more responsible and safer motoring.

17:05

Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): I have had a particular affection for the A9 since I helped to build part of it during the long, hot summer of 1976. It was a massive improvement on the previous road, but few people predicted back then that Inverness would grow at the rate that it has and become such an economic success story; few people predicted that the road would have to carry the amount of traffic that it now does; and few people could have imagined how fast and powerful modern vehicles would become.

Three years later, in the summer of 1979, my grandparents were killed in a road accident that involved both alcohol and excessive speed on the part of the driver of the other vehicle. I therefore have first-hand knowledge of the devastating effect of road traffic accidents on families. Ever since, I have had a heightened awareness of road safety.

That is why I am so pleased that this Government has introduced a lower alcohol limit for drivers, it is why I am pleased that this Government continues its focus on improving road safety, and it is why I am pleased that this Government continues to improve the quality of our road infrastructure, because the design and quality of our roads are, in themselves, important components of road safety.

That is also why I am pleased that the A9 average-speed cameras scheme is proving to be successful, with speeding cases reducing from one in three to one in 20 and excessive speeding down by 97 per cent. There is no question but that

speed is a significant factor—perhaps the most significant factor—in serious and fatal accidents.

However, it is not just the implementation of the A9 speed cameras that is important. Important, too, is the way in which it has been done. The Scottish Government has followed an evidence-based approach, looking closely at examples from other countries and the experience from the average-speed cameras on the A77. The Scottish Government has also consulted widely, most obviously with the wide group of stakeholders that make up the A9 safety group, including Transport Scotland; Police Scotland; the Highland, Tayside and central Scotland safety camera partnerships; Highland Council; Perth and Kinross Council; BEAR Scotland; the Road Haulage Association; the Freight Transport Association; the Federation of Small Businesses; the Confederation of Passenger Transport; the Institute of Advanced Motorists; Stagecoach; the Scottish Council for Development and Industry and others. The proposals and the strategy have therefore been informed by all of that opinion.

In keeping with its overall strategy, the Scottish Government has looked closely at how the scheme is operating, and it continues to do so, analysing the data carefully as it becomes available. That is why we know that the results after the first three months are so encouraging.

However, this is not just a question of encouraging safer and more responsible driving. It also goes hand in hand with the commitment to complete the dualling of the A9 between Perth and Inverness by 2025. This Scottish Government is the first to give a commitment to dualling the A9—the biggest transport project that Scotland has ever known, with a cost of around £3 billion.

As a member of the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee, I was delighted to learn how well the Queensferry crossing project is progressing, as it is both on time and below budget. I am even more pleased to learn that the anticipated savings are allowing the early progression of some of the first phases of the A9 dualling project. That is a great example of success building on success, and great credit is due to Transport Scotland. That is what good government, working hand in hand with competent Government agencies, looks like.

On Friday, I drove from Edinburgh to Inverness, for much of the journey on the A9, on a day of blue skies and silver sunshine. There was some snow still on the hills, and more on the mountains. I drove through that enchanting landscape with vista after vista opening up before me, through a landscape where the road signs conjured up much of Scotland's history, from Killiecrankie to Culloden. It was a very pleasant journey, made at a good average speed through smoothly flowing

traffic. Slowing down a bit can add a little quality to our lives, as well as improving safety.

The Press and Journal has helpfully produced a survey that suggests that the public are happy with the average-speed cameras on the A9. However, I must finish by condemning those politicians who have seen the issue as a bandwagon on which to jump. I am thinking in particular of Danny Alexander, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, who has blown on some slight embers of discontent, hoping to fan them into a bonfire merely as a means of opening up an assault on the SNP Government.

There is no place in Scotland for that kind of irresponsible and shameless politics. It is time for Mr Alexander to get behind the Scottish Government's efforts to improve safety, and stop playing politics with this important issue.

17:12

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):

I congratulate Mike MacKenzie on bringing to the chamber tonight's very important debate. He revealed to us that he used to work on the A9. I do not know whether he is considering offering his services to Transport Scotland to help with the dualling of the A9, but I am sure that, if he makes a request, the whips' office will consider a couple of years of respite for him.

I will focus on road safety, as a road safety campaigner. As Mike MacKenzie said, the A9 has acquired an almost mythical infamy: even people who have never driven on the road are well aware of the notorious A9 and how dangerous it seemingly is. Of course, one death on Scottish roads is one too many, which is why road safety is vitally important, and why we as politicians must do all that we can to support the police and other agencies to make our roads safer.

In 2010, for example, 208 people were killed on Scotland's roads, 1,960 were recorded as seriously injured and 11,156 suffered slight injury. Most of the casualties were travelling in cars, but more than 2,000 were pedestrians; more than 800 were motorcyclists; and more than 700 were pedal cyclists.

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

David Stewart: In one second—I will just finish this point.

There were 1,375 child casualties, of whom four died.

Stewart Stevenson: I wonder if the member might care to look at his number for those who have been killed on our roads. On these benches,

we seemed to hear the figure 2008, but I think that it is a tenth of that.

David Stewart: The key point is that the figures are declining, which is a good point that we can all unite behind.

What concerns me is that fatality numbers are highest among young adults, who account for 22 per cent of fatalities on Scottish roads in the past five years despite the fact that 16 to 24-year-olds make up only one tenth of the total population.

As members will know, there is particular concern in the Highlands and Islands and in the north-east, where there is a disproportionately high death rate among young drivers.

The police tell me that—as Mike MacKenzie pointed out—speed is the biggest contributory factor to road casualties. More than half of the drivers who are killed die in collisions on country roads, and of course the risk of collision rises the faster a driver travels. For example, at 25 per cent above the average speed, a driver is about six times more likely to have a collision than a driver who is travelling at the average speed.

The direct cost of road accidents involving deaths or injuries in Scotland is approximately £3 billion a year but every pound spent on safety camera enforcement is a £5 saving to the emergency services.

Having been a driver myself for more than 40 years—and being a veteran of the A9 Inverness to Perth route in particular—I feel that I have some experience to offer the chamber with regard to this particular route.

Few issues have been raised as frequently by motorists in relation to the A9 as the previous 40mph speed limit for heavy goods vehicles. That is why, in December 2012, I jointly launched a campaign with HGV driver Conor McKenna to have a pilot increase of the speed limit for HGVs on the A9 from 40mph to 50mph.

My motivation in setting up the campaign was purely to try something different—to try something that would perhaps reduce driver frustration. My logic was that if HGVs travelled faster by 10 mph—at 50mph—all traffic would increase speed to an acceptable and appropriate level and there would be less of an inclination to carry out dangerous overtaking.

There is also quite an interesting climate change issue that Mr Stevenson might be interested in. The haulage industry tells me that an HGV being driven in a higher gear, at 50mph, emits less than an HGV being driven at 40mph in a lower gear. Therefore, there is a boost in relation to tackling climate change if HGVs increase their speed, which seems counterintuitive but is correct. Members will be aware that the pilot was

introduced during October last year, along with the A9 average-speed cameras.

Since March 2010, I have been heavily involved in road safety at every opportunity. Alas, time does not allow me to talk about the graduated driving licence scheme, but I thank the Scottish Government, which has been very supportive in relation to that reserved issue. I have made attempts, by having meetings with United Kingdom ministers, to try to ensure that we introduce that scheme in Scotland. It would result in a reduction of 21 deaths among young drivers and a saving of £80 million. I would welcome the minister's views on that in his closing speech.

I thank Mike MacKenzie for the opportunity to have this excellent debate and I congratulate him on the work that he does on road safety.

17:17

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I congratulate Mike MacKenzie on securing the debate and thank him for bringing the motion to Parliament. Like David Stewart, I am a regular user of the A9 and the road is very important to my Perthshire constituents. However, people from across Scotland will have an interest in the safety of the road and what can be done to improve it.

It is essential that the Scottish Parliament debates issues that are important to the people of Scotland and I can think of few subjects that have generated as much commotion and heat as the question of average-speed cameras on the A9. The number of people who are members of online campaign groups that call either for the removal of the speed cameras or for speedier dualling totals nearly 30,000. Clearly, it is an issue that is very much in the public eye, and it is not going to go away.

When the A9 average-speed cameras were first suggested, I was generally open to the idea. Anything that can be done to improve road safety on Scotland's most dangerous road should be encouraged. However, I was strongly of the view that the speed cameras could be introduced only in tandem with an increase in HGV speed limits to 50mph on the single carriageway stretches. That case was vigorously put by people in the chamber—David Stewart among them—and by campaign groups outside the Parliament, including the road hauliers. I am pleased that the Scottish Government listened to those voices and brought in the pilot speed increase. I understand that it is working very well and that the feedback has been very encouraging.

We are six months on from the average-speed cameras going live, as Mr MacKenzie's motion indicates, so what now? I fear that Mike MacKenzie is being a little bit premature in

celebrating success. One thing is clear: speeding has been reduced. That fact is almost indisputable. However, is the road safer as a result? I am not so sure. Scarcely a week goes by when I do not open the pages of *The Courier* or *The Press and Journal* and read about yet another serious crash or another deadly near miss.

Just two weeks ago, we saw yet another tragedy—a horrible double fatality on the Perthshire section of the A9 near Dunkeld as a result of a head-on collision. We do not know all the details, and we should not speculate, but sadly we continue to see people die on the A9 and we continue to see near misses.

The week before last, a video of a dramatic near miss close to Blair Atholl went viral—almost every major Scottish news outlet ran a story on it. Even the New York *Daily News* featured a different near miss from the previous week in its online edition. That is global recognition for Scotland, but of entirely the wrong kind.

Proponents of average-speed cameras claim that reducing speeding has ultimately made the road safer, but that assumes that speed is the primary factor in accidents on the A9. As has been mentioned time and again, road layout and driver frustration are responsible for a large percentage of collisions on the road. Therefore, until we have a full year of evidence and accident statistics, it is too early to celebrate the success of the average-speed cameras. The A9 is an important tourist route, and road traffic levels, and therefore the propensity for accidents, are much higher during the summer months than in the winter. Therefore, if Mr MacKenzie will forgive me, I believe that we cannot rush to judgment on the issue and that we need to wait until we have gathered more evidence. I hope that the Scottish Government will resist the urge to install more average-speed cameras on roads across Scotland until we have concrete full-year results and a proper opportunity to scrutinise them.

I strongly believe that, in creating transport policy, the Scottish Government should consult the people who use the road—the drivers—and those who live in the vicinity. Taking into account their views is a must. I am pleased to note that Transport Scotland is having a public consultation on the proposed Dalwhinnie junction and I ask it to take a similar approach if it is considering rolling out average-speed cameras to other trunk roads across the country.

Members are united in their desire to see the A9 lose its reputation as Scotland's deadliest road. I hope that average-speed cameras are part of the cure, but we cannot make a judgment on that today. We will be able to do that only in due course. In the meantime, I still believe that the only long-term solution is a fully dualled road and I urge

the Scottish Government to press ahead with its dualling plans.

17:22

Dave Thompson (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP): As has been said, we all know that the A9 average-speed cameras have been a resounding success. I agree to an extent with Murdo Fraser that all the evidence is not yet in, but we have sufficient evidence to show us that the scheme has been successful to date. Although accidents continue, which is of course tragic, I hope that the level will remain lower than was the case before the speed cameras were introduced. As has been said, the system, which cost £3 million, has been credited with cutting the number of people speeding on the A9.

I believe that the road is now much safer. Like other members, I have driven on the road. I have been driving on it since the mid-1960s when I passed my driving test in, I think, 1967. I remember travelling from Lossiemouth to Edinburgh on the old A9: it took seven hours, and was nose to tail the whole way. A big chunk of the road runs through Badenoch, which is an important part of my constituency. Three times over the years, I have been very fortunate to avoid head-on collisions with various vehicles when going round corners or driving at night. Somehow or other, I managed to get into a layby that just happened to be there at the right time when someone was coming towards me. That has happened to me three times, and I hope that it does not happen again, because I am not sure that a layby would be there the next time. I am very aware of the dangers of the A9.

It is encouraging that the Government listened on the issue of heavy goods vehicles. Several members have said that they made representations and campaigned with others, as I did. I met the then Minister for Transport and Veterans, Keith Brown, and his officials and made a strong case to them that the limit had to be increased, because it would have been an absolute disaster if the average-speed cameras had come on and we had left the HGV limit at 40mph. That would just not have worked and would have created an awful lot of frustration, so the 50mph limit was crucial. If members drive on the A9 now, they will find that they are driving at around 54mph or 55mph for a lot of the way if they come up behind an HGV. That is perfectly acceptable because it is possible to get by the HGVs on the dual carriageway stretches and even at some of the two-plus-one stretches, which I am not keen on.

However, the average-speed cameras have not been without their detractors. As Mike MacKenzie said, the Lib Dems in particular seemed to have a

strange logic, teaming up with anyone who had anything negative to say about the cameras. Thankfully, they have stopped their silly posturing as the evidence comes through to show that the scheme is working.

We need to consider the matter more broadly. Mike MacKenzie mentioned the introduction of the new drink-driving limit, for which I campaigned from 2007 until, eventually, we wore the Westminster Government down and forced it to devolve the setting of the limit to us. That took more than five years but the Scottish Government acted within about five months once it had the power. I was pleased about that.

The speed cameras and the drink-driving limit are road safety issues. Safety must always be our top priority. I thank the Scottish Government as it gets the dualling of the A9 under way. That is happening now. Members will see real progress from now on and, within 10 years—if not less than that—the A9 will be fully dualled, which everybody in the chamber will welcome.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Due to the number of members who still wish to speak in the debate, I am minded to accept a motion under rule 8.14.3 of standing orders that the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes.

Motion moved,

That, under Rule 8.14.3, the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes.—[*Mike MacKenzie.*]

Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Dave Thompson, to be followed—

Dave Thompson rose—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No. I beg your pardon. I call Liam McArthur, to be followed by Stewart Stevenson. You have had your turn, Mr Thompson.

17:27

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): It was not Dave Thompson's worst speech, but I do not want to listen to it again, Presiding Officer.

I join others in congratulating Mike MacKenzie on bringing the debate to the Parliament. I acknowledge his hitherto unremarked-upon connection with the A9, but I notice that he did not claim credit for the part of the A9 that he was responsible for helping to build.

It is clear that the experience that Mike MacKenzie has, arising out of personal tragedy, underscores his personal commitment to road safety and reducing the alcohol limit for driving. That is to be commended, but the political attack that underlies the motion and, perhaps, the debate

was betrayed in the peroration to his speech. I do not necessarily see it as Danny Alexander's role—or the role of any MP, for that matter—simply to get behind the Scottish National Party.

There are undoubtedly concerns about the implications of average-speed cameras and they cannot simply be dismissed as reckless. More than 3,000 highlanders, including local business groups, have called on the Scottish Government to do away with average-speed cameras, and there is a debate to be had.

Murdo Fraser made a valid point about the data that we have seen. It would be foolish of any of us to leap on it and draw conclusions at this stage.

Mike MacKenzie: I hope that Mr McArthur agrees that, although the data might not be absolute, definitive proof, it is nevertheless encouraging.

Liam McArthur: The Minister for Transport and Islands said back in January:

"After only three months of average speed camera operation, police injury accident figures are not available.

A longer period is required to evaluate safety performance—typically three years before and after in the case of road safety schemes."

The minister has put on record some of the caution that is to be adopted when approaching the figures.

The Minister for Transport and Islands (Derek Mackay): Will the member give way?

Liam McArthur: The minister will have an opportunity to respond to my comments, and those of others, when he winds up.

What the figures do not show is what has happened with regard to reckless overtaking. They do not show whether that has increased or whether driver frustration has increased. Most importantly, they do not include important analysis of safety on the road, despite what a number of SNP MSPs have said.

Dave Thompson: Will the member give way?

Liam McArthur: No—we have already heard from Dave Thompson.

Business groups have raised concerns about the implications of average-speed cameras for journey times. I do not imagine that they can simply be dismissed as somehow being reckless. There is a considerable amount of work to do, particularly to analyse the period when the road is most heavily in use—over the summer months, as Murdo Fraser said. That will be illuminating.

I congratulate Mike MacKenzie on securing the debate and thank him for allowing us to express our views. As a regular user of the A9 who has constituents who are also regular users of this

north-south artery, I remind the Parliament and the minister that the road does not stop at Inverness. An important chunk of it between Inverness and the north coast often appears to get overlooked in debates about safety on and the dualling of the A9.

I will conclude by joining the universal chorus of support for dualling the road as a means of removing its reputation as the most dangerous road in the country. As the next photo call at the side of the A9 comes up, I also note that, after at least eight years, we still have not seen the countless billions that have been provided by the UK Government, and by the Liberal Democrats' involvement in the UK Government, being deployed on the dualling of the A9.

17:31

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): I thank Mike MacKenzie for the opportunity to debate this important subject. I declare an interest, in that I am a member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists. I also declare that I had no hand whatsoever, that I am aware of, in building the A9, although when I was a transport minister, I was involved in the relocating of 41 colonies of wood ants as a result of a small improvement. They are doing very well, by the way.

Have safety cameras that measure average speeds changed behaviours and reduced lawbreaking? The answer, with the benefit of a few months' experience, has to be yes. Have accidents and the numbers killed and seriously injured been reduced? Again, conditionally and provisionally, the answer is yes.

We need to think about what people who say that we should not have average-speed cameras are actually saying. They are saying that, although we have a law that sets the speed limit, we do not want to enforce that law. Why are we choosing not to enforce that law, among all other laws? Because it is a matter of personal convenience and arrogance on the part of those who wish permission, unsupervised and unenforced, to break one of our laws. If the law is wrong—one could argue that it is and that the speed limit is not the right one—there is a way to deal with that. However, putting other people's lives at risk while doing that is not on—not in any way whatsoever.

I very much welcome the improvements that we are seeing in the layout and engineering of the A9, and the dualling of the road all the way to Inverness will be of great benefit. In the distant past, I lived in Fife and had a girlfriend who lived in Inverness, and members can be absolutely sure that I was familiar with the road. My family used to travel from Fife to Sutherland for our summer

holidays every year for many years. That used to be a 12-hour journey, on the previous incarnation of the A9.

Today's A9 is different from the one before, and the next generation will be different again. However, we will not engineer out all the accidents and issues on the A9 by dualling it. Parliamentary answers to Murdo Fraser show that, in every year about which he asked questions, the M8—which is a motorway and a dual carriageway—had a higher rate of accidents per kilometre than the A9.

We do not find ourselves addressing just engineering. I absolutely support Dave Stewart's efforts, which focus on driver education and graduated driving licences. Members will have heard before that I am a private pilot. In flying, people do not simply pass their test and get the right to go off and do everything—it does not happen that way. They cannot fly at night, fly out of sight of the ground or fly in clouds. They cannot fly multi-engine planes, planes with retractable undercarriage or planes with variable pitch prop. If people want to do those things, they have to learn and acquire the skill and get the endorsement that they have done the needful. When we pass a test, be it as a pilot or a driver, we do not suddenly and magically acquire the experience that will enable us to cope with everything that we will meet during our career in charge of a vehicle; that has to be learned.

We have to look at whether there are ways in which we can sensibly help people to make progress safely. I do not speak for my party on the matter, but I very much support the idea that we should have graduated training. I accept that that affects young people in particular, and in rural areas—such as I represent—there are particular challenges, because the car is an important transport vehicle for young people. However, we can do it and I think that we have to look at it further.

Frustration, on the A9 or any other road, is never an excuse for creating an accident or the possibility of an accident. We cannot imagine just that engineering solves the problem; we have to look at the drivers as well. We do not have all the powers to do that, but I hope that there will be willingness from elsewhere to help on that.

17:36

John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Ind): I, too, commend Mike MacKenzie for bringing this important issue to the chamber. I have enjoyed the speeches thus far.

One of the purposes of Government is to provide a safe transport system for its citizens, so I certainly commend the efforts of the Scottish Government with regard to the A9. Those efforts

are undertaken with other agencies including local authorities, Transport Scotland and others. Why does it do that? It is a good thing to do, but it is also a very cost-effective thing to do.

A lot of people have talked about supporting dualling. I add my support to dualling—but dualling of the rail line, which would be far more cost-effective than the obscene sum of money that has been spent on the A9.

I looked for references on the Scottish Government's website. There is an excellent document on there, which I commend, called "Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2020". I will not quote the statistics in it—many members have quoted statistics, Dave Stewart among them. I commend Mr Stewart's work on young drivers and the challenge there, to which members have referred.

We must remember that the statistics are about real people who have families and neighbours and who live in communities. In those communities there is a coalition of voices in support of efforts to stop the carnage that was taking place on the A9. As members have said, the road safety cameras are but one mechanism that is being used for that.

The framework that I mentioned has some wonderful phrases in it and some wonderful chapters—for example, "Encouraging a Drive for Life culture", which is what we need to encourage, and "Reducing the tolerance of Risk on roads". We know that risk taking is a factor and that, of course, the largest factor is irresponsible driver behaviour.

Mike MacKenzie talked about slowing down and adding to quality of life, which is an important factor, and is good for the planet, too. There are also rights: we must uphold the right of all road users to expect to travel safely, which was not the position in the past.

I have been involved in road building in the past—although not the A9—but I think that I am alone in having dealt with incidents on that road as a police officer. Those incidents ranged from minor to serious incidents. I recall being sent as a dog handler to see whether there had been a pillion passenger on a motorcycle, and being told to ignore the leg that was lying in the road further along. That is the sort of thing that not just police officers but other emergency services workers have to deal with. I am in support of anything that can be done to reduce the carnage.

Indeed, shortly after I was elected, I wrote to the Scottish Government and was told that introducing average-speed cameras was not feasible. If it was not feasible at that time, it is certainly feasible now and I welcome the fact that they have been introduced, because results from elsewhere, for example on the A77, are compelling, and the

anecdotal experience that we have heard is positive. It is not about road design; it is about irresponsible driver behaviour and the most common facet of that is speed.

There has been brief mention of irresponsible elected representative behaviour, which I cannot let pass without saying that my MP, Danny Alexander, certainly has not represented me in the way that he has talked about the issue. A lot has changed since I was in the police service.

Something else I found on the Government website this afternoon is called Klang: The Road Home. I do not know whether the minister will tell us about Klang, which I knew nothing about. It was launched on 16 February and is a smartphone app to encourage road safety, to be used by young people.

Mary Scanlon: It is of no use to you, then.

John Finnie: I am told that Klang is of no use to me.

Of course, what is for me is another app that the Scottish Government has put in place—the road safety cameras. It is a hands-free app: we just need to stick to the law, as Stewart Stevenson said. We are not there yet—there is still irresponsible driver behaviour, but road safety cameras contribute to making things better and I, for one, welcome them. I thank Mike MacKenzie for bringing the debate to the chamber.

17:40

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands (Con)): I congratulate Mike MacKenzie on securing a debate on one of the most significant roads—and certainly the most dangerous road—to the Highlands and Islands. It is a credit to Mr MacKenzie that he recognises that. I know that the SNP has pledged to dual the A9 from Perth to Inverness, but when will that happen?

I wish to declare an interest, in that I often drive the A9 from Edinburgh to Inverness and beyond. Some years ago I was caught by the A9 average-speed cameras beyond the Forth road bridge while on my way to a funeral in Perth. I still maintain that I was in a queue of cars that were all going too fast but, nonetheless, I paid the penalty and took the points.

The A9 is part dual carriageway and part two-lane road, which is a recipe for danger, especially for tourists who are used to driving on the right-hand side of the road. I remember well the words of Lord Burton, who was roads convener of the old Inverness County Council—now that was a council. He always maintained that the road had been built with dualling in mind and he was always furiously indignant that the preparations had never been taken forward. It should have been dualled

much earlier. When we look at motorways in Spain, France and Italy and the multiple-lane highways all over the United States, we realise the poverty of the condition of roads in the north of Scotland.

Dave Thompson: Can Jamie McGrigor remind us who Lord Burton railed against, regarding dualling the A9, back in those days? It was certainly well before the SNP Government came into power, so it must have been the Tories, Labour or the Liberals. Does Jamie McGrigor remember who it was who did not dual the A9 then?

Jamie McGrigor: No—I have to say that I do not remember who it was. Lord Burton was always very pro-dualling, as far as I knew. Our Governments—Conservative Governments—produced many more good roads in Scotland than any other Government, so there you are.

I will always agree with any scheme that reduces injuries and fatal accidents, but such schemes can never be used as an excuse to delay the essential dualling of Scotland's main backbone road: the A9.

17:43

The Minister for Transport and Islands (Derek Mackay): Road safety is of paramount importance to this Government and we are committed to reducing casualties and saving lives on roads across Scotland, including the A9. A lot of expertise on the issue has been brought to the table in the debate, along with personal experience and understanding that each accident is a tragedy for all those involved. As transport minister, I am informed every time that there is a fatality on any road in Scotland, which does not make pleasant reading, because of course lying behind each fatality is a family or community affected. That is the level of seriousness with which we approach the subject.

I, too, congratulate Mike MacKenzie on securing the debate and David Stewart for the way in which the Labour Party has engaged very helpfully in it. Even Murdo Fraser, a man renowned for his balance and modesty, contributed to the debate and engaged in the debate with an open mind. That is fair, and it is better than the closed-minded approach of some who have engaged in the debate outwith this chamber in a more opportunistic fashion.

As well as the loss of human life, there is the cost of the disruption that is caused by accidents. I commit again to the Government seeing through the dualling work on the A9 at a cost of an estimated £3 billion by 2025. That is 80 miles of work in quite challenging circumstances, but that commitment is strong, and I have to say that it is a

first for a Scottish Executive or a Scottish Government to commit to those works. We will complete them as quickly as we possibly can.

Education and driver behaviour are important, and we will continue to support educational campaigns led by the road safety partnership to address issues such as inappropriate driver behaviour, including excessive speed, close following and unsafe overtaking, which contribute to a significant proportion of road accidents generally. We will do that in partnership. A range of other works is going on, not just the deployment of the average-speed cameras, but works such as new lining and signing, vegetation clearance, high-profile visible policing and targeted education campaigns.

A key point is that the average-speed cameras have been deployed based on evidence and at the points on the route with the highest accident records. Some people have called the cameras money-generating schemes, but they are not. They are about safety and they are deployed where they make the biggest difference, and the evidence tells us that they are making a difference.

In the spring of last year, 78 per cent of members of the public who were asked for their views anticipated that such cameras would be "effective" or "very effective" in making the route safer. Recent surveys and polls, such as that published in *The Press and Journal*, have suggested that a majority of people think that they are having a positive impact on driver behaviour. Fifty-six per cent of those surveyed by *The Press and Journal* felt that the average-speed cameras have had a positive effect.

I take Murdo Fraser's point about public opinion, but I would argue that public opinion has moved as the experience has been that the cameras make a difference on the ground. The evidence from the stats that we have from the first performance figures show that excessive speeding is down, and that is often the bane of journeys between Perth and Inverness. It has been reduced by 97 per cent, and speeding overall is down from one in three vehicles to one in 20. Change of that magnitude reflects significant improvements in driver behaviour.

I have been comprehensive in my response, and I would say to Liam McArthur that we need to look at accident statistics as well. However, the figures that we have tell a positive story about how speeding has come down. I believe that the incidents and the disruption caused are also falling. Despite comments to the contrary, traffic is not diverting from the A9 on to other roads. The A9 is very much open for business, and there is better journey time reliability. I accept that there has been a slight increase for some in the average

journey times, on a scale of between three and 14 minutes, but I believe that that is a price worth paying for a safer road.

Liam McArthur: Can the minister comment on the way in which the figures are able to disaggregate the implementation of the speed cameras from the introduction of roadworks at key sections on that road?

Derek Mackay: A level of analysis would be required there, but what is pretty consistent when we look at the stats that were provided in the briefing for today's debate is the correlation between the installation, or even perceived installation, of the average-speed cameras and the reduction in speeding. I do not think that it is any coincidence.

Questions have been raised about further deployment of average-speed cameras in other parts of Scotland. We do not have any plans to satisfy the members who have raised that issue by deploying average-speed cameras to any new area as an isolated road safety measure, but where there are further major construction works, we will judge on a case-by-case basis whether they should be deployed as part of the package.

The measure has clearly worked on the A9, where the number of drivers being detected and prosecuted for speeding offences has fallen eightfold. That clearly illustrates the effectiveness of average-speed camera systems and the fairness of their operation. Far higher enforcement levels have been delivered than were previously possible, and much higher compliance levels have been provided than other methods have provided.

We will embark on further educational campaigns not just about the A9—although the A9 will be focused on, as well—because many of the educational messages are relevant the country over.

It is right that the Government listened to what was said on wider speed limits in the Highlands and specifically on the HGV issue as part of that package.

We have a clear commitment around dualling.

David Stewart: I appreciate the work that the Government is doing on the speed limit increase to 50mph for HGVs and that it will need some years to analyse the results of that. However, I understand that there have been changes in the speed limits in England. Will evidence from England be analysed in looking at a wider roll-out?

Derek Mackay: We will consult closely and look at the evidence from south of the border in England. At this stage, there is only a consultation on the HGV speed limit increases. The Government is not convinced that a blanket increase would be the right thing to do, but we will

look very closely at the consultation and the evidence that is produced if there is implementation. We are not convinced that the evidence is established that there should be a blanket increase across the roads of Scotland, but we will give the matter careful consideration.

On the question of consultation with local communities, of course we want to consult. We want to get the plans, proposals, consultations and road orders correct. That is why so much time is taken up in the preparation for the dualling work, which has been broken down to 12 phases to ensure that the dualling is properly planned and that we engage with local people on what the engineering solutions will look like.

Mr Finnie was absolutely right on Klang. I had the pleasure of launching that app for young people to engage in road safety in a way that they enjoy. That is so much the case that I cannot get my hands on my iPad because my sons now want to play that very popular Scottish Government road safety game. It has been very well received.

On a more serious note, engagement with communities is absolutely vital.

I want to finish on the politicisation of the matter. Some have focused more on electioneering than on the safety of their constituents. Apparently, Danny Alexander calls me part of the "Edinburgh elite". I have been called many things in politics, but certainly not part of any elite or Edinburgh based.

I would not ask Danny Alexander as the constituency MP to get behind the SNP; I just ask him to get behind road safety in the interests of his constituents, because surely they are paramount. I think that Liam McArthur is a gentleman. Maybe he is the token Liberal Democrat and apologist for Danny Alexander today, but if the Liberals were so keen on dualling the A9, I wonder why they did not do anything about it when they were in office for eight years or, indeed, when the Chief Secretary to the Treasury was reducing the capital budget in Scotland. There are ways in which Danny Alexander could have helped with the dualling of the A9, but he has failed to do so.

Jamie McGrigor: I remember very well our ex-colleague John Farquhar Munro, who was a well-known Lib Dem MSP, suggesting that the dualling should go as far as Wick.

Derek Mackay: I commend the member for trying to get me to extend the dualling commitment beyond the current limitations, but the £3 billion commitment within 10 years and 80 miles of challenging road network are ambitious enough. However, we will, of course, look to extend as resources allow. I congratulate the member on making that bid.

Danny Alexander should stop the political posturing, look at the evidence and recognise that public opinion has moved. Safety has to be paramount. It is not about getting behind the SNP; Danny Alexander has been getting at the SNP. That should stop, and we should get on and work in partnership to make all our roads, particularly the A9, safer.

Once again, I commend Mike MacKenzie for bringing this very important debate to the chamber.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I thank you all for taking part in this important debate.

Meeting closed at 17:54.

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e-format first available
ISBN 978-1-78568-186-8

Revised e-format available
ISBN 978-1-78568-202-5