

Statement by President Juncker, High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn on the referendum in Turkey

President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn issued the following statement today:

“We take note of the reported results of the referendum in Turkey on the amendments to the Constitution, adopted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 21 January 2017.

We are awaiting the assessment of the OSCE/ODIHR International Observation Mission, also with regard to alleged irregularities.

The constitutional amendments, and especially their practical implementation, will be assessed in light of Turkey’s obligations as a European Union candidate country and as a member of the Council of Europe.

We encourage Turkey to address the Council of Europe’s concerns and recommendations, including with regards to the State of Emergency. In view of the close referendum result and the far-reaching implications of the constitutional amendments, we also call on the Turkish authorities to seek the broadest possible national consensus in their implementation.”

The Government’s rhetoric on social mobility has not been matched by results – Angela Rayner

Angela Rayner MP, Labour’s Shadow Education Secretary, responding to a Teach First report that claims the country’s poorest parents have half the chance of getting their child into an outstanding primary school, compared to the richest ones, said:

“This is just the latest evidence that the Government’s rhetoric on social mobility has not been matched by results.

"Theresa May's only answer to the social mobility crisis is her discredited policy of new grammar schools, which by definition ignores the crucial early years of a child's life and does nothing to ensure all children go to a good primary school.

"It is clear that the Tories do not have the answers to the serious issues facing our schools, such as the crisis in recruitment and retention, super-size classes, and the unprecedented squeeze in school budgets."

[China's first cargo spacecraft Tianzhou-1 to be launched](#)



China's first cargo spacecraft Tianzhou-1 [Photo/Chinanews.com]

China's first cargo spacecraft Tianzhou-1 is to be launched into space between April 20 and 24, according to the office of China's manned space

program.

The cargo spacecraft was transferred with a Long March-7 Y2 carrier rocket from the testing center to the launch zone in Wenchang, southern China's Hainan Province, according to a statement from the office Monday.

The transfer took 2.5 hours.

"The completion of the transfer signals the Tianzhou-1 mission has entered its launching stage," the statement said.

Technicians have performed several tests during the assembling of the spacecraft and rocket since February.

In the following days, technicians will continue testing the spacecraft and rocket, and inject fuel before the launch, it said.

Tianzhou-1 is the first cargo ship independently developed by the country. It is expected to dock with the orbiting Tiangong-2 space lab and conduct in-orbit refueling.

The cargo spacecraft will also carry out space experiments, including one on non-Newtonian gravitation, before falling back to earth.

Employees in small businesses earned less than previously thought between 2010 and 2015 – Rebecca Long-Bailey

Employees in small businesses earned less than previously thought between 2010 and 2015

Analysis of government figures shows:

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Methodological revisions to the Average Weekly Earnings of employees in small businesses shows a downgrade in level of earnings between 2010 and 2015

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The Government's mishandling of the economy and mistreatment of small businesses has resulted in pay for employees being less than thought

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Between 2010 and 2015, the average revision downwards in the level of weekly earnings was 1.7 percent. This amounts to more than £2,000 over

that period less than previously thought,.

Rebecca Long-Bailey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, said:

"The latest revision to the methodology for calculating earnings for employees in small businesses shows that the level of earnings was less than previously thought during the period 2010 to 2015.

"Added up, between July 2010 to December 2015, earnings for the average employee in a small business were in fact over £2,000 less than previously thought. This is a further indictment of the Conservative's already terrible record of protecting the living standards of people in this country and their failure to recognise the experiences and requirements of small businesses."

Labour demand inquiry into Libor rigging scandal – John McDonnell

John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, has today written to the Chancellor, Philip Hammond MP, to demand the opening of a public inquiry into the scandal of Libor interest-rate rigging.

Interest rate rigging could have cost the public billions and public bodies affected are due compensation

New evidence uncovered by the BBC Panorama programme points to collusion between senior figures at the Bank of England and major banks to rig the critical "Libor" interest rate that trillions of pounds of financial products depend on.

And court transcripts, shown below, from the recent trial of bank staff accused of rigging Libor also show that the rigging of this crucial interest rate was known to regulators and Bank of England staff at least as far back as August 2005.

But with small businesses and public bodies dependent on loans and more complex financial products linked to the value of Libor, efforts to rig the interest rate could have cost the public billions. Schools, NHS hospitals and local authorities are all amongst those likely to be affected, particularly where

they had been sold more complex Libor-linked financial derivatives.

The Shadow Chancellor is asking for an immediate public inquiry into the rigging to establish who took the decision to apply this pressure, who was involved in its implementation, who was aware that this was taking place, and whether any impact assessment was undertaken at any point.

This is essential in establishing the scale of compensation due to public bodies from banks engaged in Libor rigging.

John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, said:

"The revelations this week of the possible pressure being applied by senior public officials on banks to rig one of the world's most important financial metrics demand an immediate response from this government. Continuing official silence from the Chancellor is not acceptable when confronted with this scale of rigging.

"It is essential that we clarify who took the decisions to rig the Libor index, and when, so that the schools, NHS hospitals and local councils that lost out can be paid the compensation that is rightfully due and public confidence in our banking system and official institutions can be restored."