

Nicola Sturgeon: A spirit of Scottish assertiveness will fight an extreme Brexit

The year ahead has the potential to be one of the most significant in Scotland's recent history. I believe that it will be a year in which a new Scotland continues to emerge – an emboldened, more confident and more assertive nation.

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West End history #dundeewestend

Hawkhill/Kincardine Street area : The photograph appears to be taken from the Trades College in Balfour Street and is looking towards Balgay Hill. At the bottom of and in the middle of the picture appears to be the junction of Kincardine Street with Hawkhill (Photo – Dundee City Archives) :



[Dawn Butler response to Toby Young resignation](#)

Dawn Butler MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities, responding to Toby Young's resignation, said:

"The Toby Young saga has further exposed Theresa May's total lack of judgement in appointing him and her weakness in refusing to sack him. She should have removed him from his post, not personally backed him at the weekend and sent a minister out to defend him in Parliament yesterday."

[What happened to the railway industry when fully nationalised?](#)

The railways were nationalised shortly after the war and stayed in public ownership until the 1990s under John Major. The track, stations and signals, the bulk of the assets, were renationalised by Labour early this century.

In 1950 BR employed 606,000 employees. They looked after a route network of 19,471 miles of track with 8487 stations. By 1967 owing to the sharp decline in rail travel and changing patterns of housing and population growth the network was down to 13 172 track miles with 3498 stations. The number of employees nearly halved over the 17 year period, to 318,000. Train travel which was more than fifth of land travel after the war slumped to 9.5% of the total by 1967.

Post 1968 the decline continued in staff numbers and in travel. The long fall in train travel as a proportion of total travel only altered following privatisation in the 1990s. Today there are 10,261 route miles and 190,000 employees, with 2500 stations.

There was no shortage of investment for much of the period. The railways were encouraged to shift from coal and steam power to diesel and electric. There was plenty of subsidy. Despite this, season ticket prices rose every year in real terms, as the railway struggled to get enough revenue to keep up with its fast growing costs. The railway dumped lots of cheap seats on the market for off peak and unpopular routes, whilst charging very high prices for peak offerings on well travelled routes.

The railway failed to keep many of its former passengers, and did not make a

compelling case to potential new customers. The nationalised railway failed , for example, to put in a short rail link from Heathrow, one of the world's busiest airports, to the mainline into London that passed nearby. It watched as London Transport put in a tube line extension instead, leaving passengers to use a route with many stops into the centre and with inadequate space for cases. The freight railway stopped competing for single wagon business, and failed to put in branch lines to the many new industrial estates which came to be located close to the motorway network instead.

There were many rounds of redundancies and job losses, many fare rises, and a permanent failure to reverse the decline of rail use for both passengers and freight. The advent of a more positive industry under the early years of privatisation reversed the downwards trend in travel and market share.

EU budget after 2020: new challenges need fresh money as cutting cohesion policy would be a risk to Europe's future

Decisions on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) must not ignore how the EU's structural and investment funds improve citizens' lives

□CoR President Lambertz and Commissioner Oettinger

With its [conference on the next MFF](#) on 8-9 January , the European Commission is stepping up work on its proposal for the EU budget after 2020, due to be presented in May. The President of the European Committee of the Regions, Karl-Heinz Lambertz, contributes to the debate, voicing regions' and cities' concerns about possible cuts to cohesion policy – Europe's main investment tool – and warning of the dangers of a centralised, divided and territorially blind European Union.

" Do we really want a Europe with less training for job seekers, less infrastructure for sustainable transport, less energy efficiency for social housing, less broadband for rural areas or less integration opportunities for migrants? ", asks Mr Lambertz. " If this is the solution to squaring the circle from the budget hole that Brexit and the new financial needs for defence, security and migration will leave, then the Union is wandering off in the wrong direction. "

" Thanks to the 2014 reforms, cohesion policy is an innovative policy that delivers results on the key challenges of today: jobs, competitiveness, climate change, energy and broadband ", stresses the CoR president, adding: "Investment in cohesion policy is an investment in citizens. Reducing cohesion policy would put the European construction at risk, broadening divisions between East and West, North and South, urban and rural communities. "

The CoR President also invites EU Member States to provide the financial resources the EU needs to respond to new urgent challenges such as defence, security, social policies and migration. This should include both increasing national contributions and removing current vetoes on the introduction of new own-resources tools such as taxes on polluting emissions, the activities of big web operators and financial transactions.

To those who argue that grant-based policies are no longer needed in Europe, Mr Lambertz points out the persistent fall in public investment in most Member States: *" The recovery of the EU's economies is an opportunity and a risk. If most citizens see the recovery only in media reports and statistics and not in daily life, their frustration will pave the way for a new wave of populism and nationalism. We need to invest to bring the benefit of our recovering economies to all, both in the stronger Member States and in the weaker ones. "*

#CohesionAlliance

To make the case for a stronger cohesion policy after 2020, the CoR, together with leading EU territorial associations, [launched the #CohesionAlliance](#): a grass-roots movement open to anyone who believes that EU cohesion policy must continue to be a pillar of the EU's future. Since its launch in October last year, the Alliance has continued to attract new signatories every day, including regional and local authorities, business associations, academia, trade unions and think tanks.

More information about the #CohesionAlliance initiatives, statements and position papers are available at <http://cohesionalliance.eu> .

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