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Figures revealing Scottish trade in 2016 highlight the vital importance of the UK single market to business north of the border, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

Scotland's trade with the UK single market continued to be almost four times more valuable than trade with EU countries.

Official statistics from the Scottish Government showed that 61 per cent of Scotland's trade is with the UK single market, while 17 per cent goes to other EU nations.

Trade with countries outwith the EU rose from £10 billion in 2015 to more than £17 billion the following year, accounting for 23 per cent of Scotland's trade.

Shadow economy secretary Dean Lockhart said that particular improvement showed there were opportunities for Scotland in the context of Brexit.

However, overall trading volumes for Scotland in 2016 declined by five per cent.

These trade figures are the latest indication of Scotland's economy failing under the SNP.

Scottish Conservative shadow economy secretary Dean Lockhart said:

"These figures confirm that far and away our most important market is the rest of the UK.

"Scotland's priority must therefore be to deepen our trading partnership within the UK single market to ensure we all benefit.

"The SNP is so obsessed with Brexit it is in danger of ignoring the opportunities for growth offered by our own internal marketplace.

"And with exports to the rest of the world on the rise, the SNP would do well to realise the decision to leave the EU offers as many opportunities as it does challenges.

“The overall decline in Scotland’s trade in 2016 is real cause for concern.

“After last week’s figures showing that Scotland’s economy grew by only 0.2 per cent, these trade figures are another indication that this anti-business SNP government is harming growth, jobs and our economy.”