

Sturgeon maintains her indyref2 threat despite poll blow

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Nicola Sturgeon has refused again to remove her threat of a second independence referendum – despite a poll showing 60 per cent of Scots want her to do so.

At First Minister's Questions today, she was urged to formally drop the idea of returning Scotland to another divisive vote.

This morning, it was reported that six in 10 Scottish voters – including a large chunk of Yes supporters – do not want a referendum rerun.

That follows the SNP losing 21 MPs at last week's General Election.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said the First Minister was "in complete denial" on independence, particularly after putting it "at the heart" of her Westminster campaign.

Instead, Ms Sturgeon said she'd "reflect" on the result, but fell short of ruling out another vote altogether.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"The decisive majority of people in Scotland have no wish for a second independence referendum, and that includes many who voted Yes.

"The First Minister needs to take this off the table – or show herself to be in complete denial.

"The SNP's message on its referendum plan so far appears to be hunker down, attack anyone who asks for a bit of clarity, then hope none of us notice it pressing ahead regardless.

"Within hours of the Brexit vote Nicola Sturgeon pounced to threaten another referendum.

"Yet now, with independence under threat, she's saying it would be wrong to make such a knee-jerk decision.

"That's double standards of the highest order."

This morning, the Daily Record reported 60 per cent don't want another referendum:

<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/majority-scots-want-want-second-10624842>

Earlier this week, all Scottish Conservative MPs issued a statement telling Nicola Sturgeon to take independence off the table:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/06/new-mps-demand-sturgeon-faces-up-to-indyref2-reality/>

News story: Karen Bradley welcomes DCMS Ministers

The ministerial team is as follows:

Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP, Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport:

The Secretary of State has overall responsibility for strategy and policy across the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

The Department's main policy areas are:

- arts and culture
- broadcasting
- creative industries
- cultural property, heritage and the historic environment
- digital economy
- gambling and racing
- libraries
- media ownership and mergers
- museums and galleries
- The National Lottery
- Office for Civil Society
- sport
- telecommunications and online
- tourism

- broadband and mobile connectivity
- broadcasting
- creative industries
- cyber security
- data

- Digital Charter
- digital economy
- digital skills and engagement
- digital technology
- internet governance
- media
- online safety
- spectrum
- telecoms markets and resilience

Tracey Crouch MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport and Civil Society:

- gambling
- horse racing
- Office for Civil Society
- sport
- The National Lottery and society lotteries

John Glen MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Arts, Heritage and Tourism:

- arts
- culture
- heritage
- public libraries
- museums
- National Archives
- tourism

Lord Ashton of Hyde, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State:

- ceremonies
- DCMS business in the Lords
- First World War commemorations

RAF Typhoons on NATO Exercise in Hungary

Royal Airforce

Force Typhoons deployed to Romania have taken part in a major NATO exercise in Hungary.

Two

RAF Typhoons from 135 Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW) joined several NATO allies at Papa airbase in Hungary as part of

Exercise LOAD DIFFUSER 17. Deployed as part of a force of four aircraft to Mihail Kogalniceanu (MK)

airbase near Constanta in Romania, the two Typhoons were a huge hit with the Hungarian public.



Representing

the EAW, Paul, a senior RAF pilot, said:

"During the two days we were there we were

absolutely mobbed by a range of media who wanted to see our aircraft up close

and to learn what it was like to fly. It was a privilege to show so many VIPs

around the Typhoon, to answer all their questions, and to see how impressed they were."

The main purpose of the exercise was to test

and increase the interoperability of the various NATO partner air forces. As a

change from the Quick Reaction Alert duties that they had been carrying out in

Romanian since May, the Typhoons acted as 'Red Air' on 7 June to test themselves and their allies. Paul added:

"Playing as 'Red Air', pretending to be the

enemy, gave us the opportunity to fly against a range of aircraft that we would

not normally encounter. It was also a superb opportunity to show off how truly

capable and World-leading the Typhoon is."

Held from 22 May until 9 June, this was the biggest air exercise in Hungary in for many years. Alongside the Typhoons

were some 400 people from the air forces of Hungary, the United States, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia and the Czech Republic.



Explaining why the trip across the border from

Romania was so worthwhile, Paul explained:

"Exercises like this allow

us to fly in a range of roles with our NATO partners; essential to

strengthening relationships with allied and partner nations, helping to maintain joint readiness and interoperability, and to reassure European allies and partners".

The
RAF aircraft deployed to Romania are part of the UK's contribution to reassurance measures to ensure the operational capability of NATO's eastern flank. The enhanced Air Policing mission demonstrates NATO's flexible capabilities and readiness, underlining the commitment of Allies to each other.

Editor: Sqn Ldr Toby Watkins

Images: Sgt Neil Bryden

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Secretary of State Pays First Visit to RAF in Romania

The Defence Secretary has today visited Royal Air Force personnel deployed to Romania as part of the NATO Southern Air Policing mission in the country.

The
detachment of four Typhoon fighter jets from 3 Fighter Squadron has been based
in Mihail Kogalniceanu Airbase in south east Romania since May. Deployed for
up
to four months, they are working alongside the Romanian Air Force to police
the
skies over the Black Sea.

Noting the
partnership between the United Kingdom and Romania, Sir Michael said:

*"The UK is
stepping up in its support for NATO's collective defence from the north to
the
south of the alliance. Through this deployment, RAF planes will be ready to
secure NATO airspace and provide reassurance to allies in the Black Sea
region."*

The Southern

Air Policing mission is the first time that NATO has deployed aircraft to the
reassure allies in the Black Sea region, with the UK being the first country in
rotation.

The visit

was part of a 2-day tour of Romania on 14 and 15 June which also included
Exercise NOBLE JUMP based at the Training Centre in Cincu where a thousand
British soldiers are taking part in the NATO military exercise.



Defence

Minister Gabriel Les was also present at the airbase where he in turn
addressed
the gathering of British
and Romanian Air Force personnel, saying:

*"We have great appreciation for the deployment
of Royal Air Force aircraft in Romania as part of the process to implement
the
Action Plan for increasing NATO's operational capacity and as part of our
Strategic Partnership".*

*"The
presence in Romania of the Typhoon aircraft, which are some of the very best
fighter aircraft, is an excellent opportunity for joint training and action
and
contributes to increasing air defence capacity for reaction and deterrence
as
well as to strengthening interoperability between the two military forces".*

The EAW

comprises four Typhoon aircraft from No. 3 (Fighter) Squadron from RAF
Coningsby in Lincolnshire supported by around 150 personnel drawn from
stations
across Britain.

Southern Air

Policing is part of NATO's Assurance Measures introduced in 2014 to
demonstrate
the collective resolve of Allies, the defensive nature of NATO, and to deter
Russia from aggression against Allies.

The RAF aircraft deployed to Romania are part of
the UK's contribution to reassurance measures to ensure the operational
capability of NATO's eastern flank. The eAP mission demonstrates NATO's
flexible capabilities and readiness, underlining the commitment of Allies to
each other.

Editor: Sqn Ldr Toby Watkins

Images: Sgt Neil Bryden

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Busy Easter gives Industry confidence boost for the summer

37% of businesses reported that they had seen an increase in visitors with 42% reporting the same level of visitors as in 2016. Attractions and activity operators performed particularly well, with 57% welcoming more visitors than Easter last year.

Caravan and campsite operators also fared well, with 46% seeing a boost in the number of visitors compared to the same period in 2016.

Most sectors have taken more profits so far in 2017, compared with the same period last year. Overall, 34% of businesses reported seeing higher profits, with 41% reporting the same as last year.

With a sound Easter as a good foundation for the year, the summer looks to be bright, with 87% of businesses expecting to see more or the same level of visitors as last year during the peak season.

Most (85%) respondents are confident about how their business will perform over the summer. This has been helped with many reporting an increase in advance bookings. Some serviced sector accommodation reported that they were fully booked, with advance bookings taking over the last minute booking trend of recent years.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

“I’m delighted that the industry are feeling confident for the season ahead and that the combination of fine weather and a later Easter boosted efforts to attract visitors to Wales and resulted in an increase in visitors during Easter this year. An increase in advance bookings also gives the industry confidence for the months ahead and shows that people are committing to their holiday in Wales sooner than in previous years. The tourism industry in Wales is in a strong position. In 2016 the total number of visits to Wales – taking into account tourism day visits, international visitors as well GB overnights visits – was 15% up – which builds on the previous successful years. We will continue with our campaign

work for the summer as we celebrate Wales' Year of Legends."