

Today's figures demonstrate the failure of the Tory Government's industrial strategy – John McDonnell

John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, commenting on today's manufacturing and trade figures, said:

"Today's figures demonstrate the failure of the Tory Government's industrial strategy.

"UK manufacturing output has shrunk for the second consecutive month and our trade deficit, on both goods and services, has widened for the second consecutive month, getting 2017 off to a particularly worrying start.

"It is becoming increasingly clear that the Tory Government's rhetoric on its industrial strategy isn't matched by reality.

"Only Labour, with a proper industrial strategy, and a plan for a high-investment, high-skill and high-wage economy will deliver the trade and export opportunities of the future."

News story: Review of methods for coffee bean authenticity testing

Why is coffee authenticity an issue?

Coffee is one of the most widely traded tropical products at a global level. Arabica and Robusta are the most popular varieties with Arabica generally favoured by discerning coffee drinkers. With a high market value and commercial importance coffee is in the top 10 products most at risk of food fraud. Fraud takes a variety of forms:

- adulteration of coffee with cheaper materials such as coffee husks, chicory, cereal grains, woody tissue, cocoa or soya beans, acai berries or exogenous sugars

- substitution of the more expensive Arabica with cheaper beans.

Where should you start analytically checking the coffee supply chain?

This problem has been tackled by the Government Chemist's team at LGC and the Institute of Global Food Security in Queen's University Belfast. Distilling the results of a number of studies in scientific literature, Laura Tweed, Prof Duncan Thorburn Burns and Dr Michael Walker have produced key instructions for probing the authenticity of coffee.

Common adulterants

Most of the common adulterants can be detected by chromatography of marker carbohydrates as detailed in standard methods (BS ISO 24114 and BS 5752-15) with the help of chromatograms of authentic coffee/ adulterant mixtures. Looking at DNA with Real-Time PCR is a viable alternative to chemistry-based methods.

Geographic origin

Claims for specific coffee bean geographic origin can be checked by identification of discriminant molecular markers, although these are not as yet available for all coffee growing areas. A method using solvent extraction and Fourier Transform infrared spectroscopy, FTIR, has the advantage that the FTIR spectra for authentic dichloromethane extracts are freely available online.

Coffee bean species

Discrimination between Arabica and Robusta species in coffee samples is possible via the marker compounds kahweol and 16-O-cafestol, predominant in Robusta. Determination of the latter by nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy has the advantage of speed and relative simplicity.

Kopi Luwak

The most intriguing coffee authenticity problem is posed by Kopi Luwak, coffee beans harvested from the faeces of the palm civet cat. The processing of the beans in the digestive tract of this cat indigenous to Indonesia contributes to Kopi Luwak's mystique and price. Although proof of identity of Kopi Luwak has been made more difficult by the possibility of mimicking the effect of the cat's gut on beans through the use of microorganisms and enzymes, discriminant markers identified by gas chromatography combined with mass spectrometry (GC-MS) has proved successful. The question as to whether or not any residual civet cat DNA can be detected on ground roast coffee can be detected remains unanswered.

The review

The [full paper](#) contains outline experimental details and references to the key studies so that any laboratory wishing to check coffee in the supply chain can make a good start.

Reference

Thorburn Burns D, Tweed L & Walker MJ. Ground Roast Coffee: Review of Analytical Strategies to Estimate Geographic Origin, Species Authenticity and Adulteration by Dilution (2017) Food Anal Methods.

DOI:[10.1007/s12161-016-0756-3](https://doi.org/10.1007/s12161-016-0756-3)

[Press release: Four NI charities for women and girls to receive UK Government funding](#)

Minister Kris Hopkins today visited one of the charities, Autism NI, which supports individuals with Autism and their families and campaigns to raise awareness of Autism within wider society. The other organisations benefiting from the new tranche of money are Mid Ulster Women's Aid, Foyle Women's Aid and HomeStart North Down.

The news of final funding confirmation follows last week's announcement by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt. Hon. James Brokenshire MP, that four projects based in Northern Ireland were set to benefit from the Fund. The scheme is set up to help create a fairer, shared society for women across the United Kingdom.

At Autism NI's South Belfast base this morning at the start of Autism Awareness Month, Minister Hopkins donned a blue tie in support of the organisation's 'Wear It Blue' campaign which encourages supporters to wear blue clothing for the day to increase awareness of autism and fund-raise for the charity.

Minister Hopkins said:

"I am delighted to extend my congratulations to Autism NI on their success in the latest round of Tampon Tax funding – and indeed to all four local charities that will benefit from a total of £451,411. The money will support projects that will have a real and vital impact in improving the lives of disadvantaged women and girls throughout Northern Ireland.

"It has been truly inspiring to see first-hand the important work of Autism NI and its impact on the lives of individuals with autism and their families.

“Currently over 6,900 children are diagnosed with Autism in Northern Ireland and this number is increasing steadily. At a time when voluntary and community groups in Northern Ireland face concerns and challenges due to the current political situation, statistics like these – and the real lives of the people and families behind them – vividly underscore the importance of having devolved institutions up and running and serving the whole community.”

Autism NI CEO Kerry Boyd added:

“I am delighted that the Tampon Tax Fund has supported such a significant project for the Autism community in Northern Ireland. Many girls with Autism are not diagnosed until later in life and therefore miss out on critical intervention support at an early age. This project aims to bridge that gap through tailored support for females living with Autism so they can fulfil their full potential in life and also give them a voice to advocate their own needs.”

The money will help Autism NI remove barriers for Autistic girls within the home, school and community environments to support achievement, enjoyment and full participation in a society that respects their rights.

Press release: HS2 launches hunt for station designers and Euston development partner

The winning bidders will work with High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd to develop and refine the detailed plans for three brand new stations, at Birmingham Curzon Street, Birmingham Interchange and London’s Old Oak Common, as well as a major expansion of London Euston.

The stations will welcome tens of thousands of passengers every day from all over the UK, providing easy and accessible onward connections to local transport, airports and connecting rail services as well as step-free access from street to seat. In total more than 170,000 new jobs are expected to be created in the wider development areas surrounding the four stations.

A separate contest, also launched today, will seek a Master Development Partner to advise on, and later take forward, development opportunities for new homes, offices and retail space above and around the revamped London Euston. The winner will work with HS2 Ltd, Network Rail, the station design contract winner and local authorities to deliver a unified plan to unlock the full potential of the area.

This comprehensive approach has the potential to deliver up to 21 hectares of development space as well as improving accessibility and creating new public and green spaces across the wider Euston site.

Welcoming the launch of the competition, Transport Minister Andrew Jones said:

The search for design teams to produce plans for new stations and world-class amenities for London Euston, Old Oak Common, Birmingham Interchange and Birmingham Curzon Street stations is a major step towards making HS2 a catalyst for growth across the country. The winning bidders will need to ensure the stations provide the best possible customer experience. There are also huge opportunities for development near all the HS2 stations. HS2 Ltd is progressing its search for a partner to deliver new homes, shops and offices around Euston station once the core HS2 work is complete.

HS2 Ltd Commercial Director Beth West said:

We're looking for the brightest and the best from across the industry to help us deliver one of the most tangible legacies of the HS2 project – three brand new stations and a major expansion of London Euston.

All four present unique challenges and opportunities for the winning bidders. Together we will deliver world-class designs that help unlock wider local regeneration opportunities and provide unparalleled levels of accessibility, ease and convenience for the travelling public.

Commenting on the development at Euston, HS2 Ltd Commercial Development Director Tom Venner said:

Euston has been the gateway to the nation and the nation's capital for over a century. HS2 provides the opportunity for it to continue that role into the next century – and for the local community to be proud of that role. Together with our development partner, we aim to redevelop Euston in a way that will make it not just the nation's hub, but London's as well, the heartbeat of both the nation and the capital, fit for the 21st century and beyond.

David Biggs, Managing Director, Network Rail Property said:

Network Rail welcomes the opportunity to create a new London destination at Euston mirroring its neighbour King's Cross and St Pancras where our investment in the station acted as a catalyst,

bringing inward investment and regenerating the whole area into a thriving new London quarter.

The HS2 terminal at Euston will have a similar effect, it will become the initial focus for the wider regeneration of the station and surrounding area with an opportunity to create a new vibrant commercial and residential district in the heart of London with fantastic connectivity to the rest of the UK and Europe.

Bidders for the station designs and the Euston Master Development Partner are expected to be shortlisted in the summer, with contracts signed early next year. The station design work will be split into four packages.

Press release: Minister Ellwood statement on death sentences in Gaza

I strongly condemn the three death sentences carried out in Gaza on 6 April. This decision reflects a worrying trend of increasing use of the death penalty in Gaza.

It is the long-standing position of the UK to oppose the death penalty in all circumstances. We have repeatedly called for the de facto authorities in Gaza to respect the Palestinian Authority's moratorium on implementation of the death penalty.