

First Minister to make speech in London today



Later today the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon will make a speech as one of the keynote speakers at the Institute of Directors Annual Convention asking that the UK Government steps in to prevent a race to the bottom after the EU Referendum.

The event will be held in the Royal Albert Hall, where she is expected to address an audience of around 2000 people.

The theme of the convention is “Thriving in a Changing World”, with Ms Sturgeon talking about the implication of the UK wide vote to leave the EU.

She will say the stark inequalities experienced in communities across the UK were part of the reason many voted to leave, and will call on the UK Government to share the benefits of globalisation more equally. She will also talk about Scotland’s continued reputation as a good place to do business.

The First Minister is expected to say: “I’m very proud of the fact that Scotland voted so strongly to remain in the European Union. But I can’t ignore the fact that even in Scotland, a million people voted to leave. They did not think that that the European Union benefited them – they did not see advantages from free trade and free movement.

“That feeling was even more prevalent in other parts of the UK. There are many, many causes of the vote to leave the EU. For many people, they will have included entirely reasonable doubts and reservations about the EU. It is, after all, an imperfect organisation.

“But in part, Brexit was a product of a sense of disenfranchisement and disillusionment. It was borne of inequality, of feelings of powerlessness – of austerity budgets which hurt the public services and social safety nets that so many people depend on.

“And so one consequence of the referendum must be a new effort – which needs to be given real substance in the UK Government’s autumn statement – to ensure that the benefits of growth, of globalisation, are more fairly distributed. The UK Government has suffered one of its most significant policy reversals in generations – it can no longer ignore the social and economic cost of inequality and the impact of its misguided commitment to austerity.”