

Minority Ethnic Matters Overview

MEMO+ is an occasional series of briefing papers on topics of interest to minority ethnic communities in Scotland. It is produced by the [Scottish Council of Jewish Communities](#) in partnership with [BEMIS - empowering Scotland's ethnic and cultural minority communities](#), and is supported by the [Scottish Government](#).

“Scotland’s Future” Scottish Government White Paper on Independence: International Relations

On 18 September 2014 there will be a referendum in which voters will be asked the question, "Should Scotland be an independent country?", and the Scottish Government has produced a White Paper to explain its proposals for the way in which an independent Scotland would be governed.

A White Paper is a document produced by the Government that sets out details of their proposed future policy on a particular subject. It is not a consultation and does not set out alternatives, but only gives details of the Government’s intentions. This White Paper does not, therefore, provide an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of Scotland becoming an independent country, and it does not discuss what should happen if Scotland remains in the UK.

This MEMO+ is one of a series that summarises the main points of the White Paper. Other issues cover Scottish Government proposals for:

White Paper: General Info	Education & Employment	Health & Wellbeing
Culture & Communications	Energy & Resources	Immigration & Asylum
Defence & Security	Environment & Agriculture	Justice
Economy & Finance	Equality & Human Rights	Third Sector & Civic Society

Background

At present, international relations are reserved, that is, the responsibility of the UK Parliament, so matters concerning Scotland’s relations with other countries are decided in London, not in Scotland. However, the Scottish Government believes that UK Government foreign policies have not always reflected Scottish priorities. The White Paper proposes that if Scotland were to become an independent country, it would be able to negotiate bi-lateral agreements with other countries about trade and other matters, and would become an active member of the European Union, the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank, NATO, and other major multi-national organisations.

Passports

The Scottish Government believes that, if Scotland were to become an independent country, Scottish citizens would not need a passport for travel to England, Wales, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, and the Republic of Ireland.

Embassies

The White Paper proposes that, if Scotland were to become an independent country, the Scottish Government would establish a network of embassies, initially in 70-90 countries. In some cases, these embassies might share premises with the embassies of other countries, including the rest of the UK. The most important role of Scottish Embassies would be to develop commercial opportunities for Scotland, but they would also engage with local governments, promote Scottish culture, oversee Scotland's international development activities, and provide consular services to Scottish citizens.

Scotland and the British Isles

The Scottish Government believes that independence would remove many of the tensions that currently exist between Scotland and the rest of the UK because of political differences over reserved matters such as welfare. However, it believes that Scotland's most important diplomatic relationships would continue to be with the rest of the UK and Ireland, and that independence would not affect many other relationships between Scotland and the rest of the UK, so that "the social union, made up of connections of family, history, culture and language, will have every opportunity to flourish and strengthen."

Scotland and the European Union

Although the European Union (EU) does not have any standard membership procedures for countries that gain their independence from an existing EU member state, the Scottish Government believes that, since Scotland currently has membership as part of the UK, an independent Scotland would immediately become a member in its own right due to the principle of "continuity of effect".

The White Paper also proposes that, if Scotland were to become an independent country, it would not be part of the Eurozone, because the currency would continue to be the Pound Sterling, and that the Bank of England would continue to be the central bank for Scotland as well as the rest of the UK.

Scotland and the Rest of the World

The Scottish Government believes that independence would give Scotland a stronger voice on world affairs, and greater opportunities to develop trade and investment.

International Aid and Development

The Scottish Government proposes that, if Scotland were to become an independent country, it would:

- ensure that Scottish Government policies do no harm to developing countries, do not undermine international development aims, and, where possible, contribute to international development success;
- initially spend 0.7% of gross national income on international development, rising to 1% over time;
- work to ensure that Scottish export policies do not create "unjust" debt for developing countries, and support moves to establish Scotland as an international centre for debt arbitration;
- ensure that gender equality is enshrined in all of its development work.

[Click here](#) and [here](#) for more details about Scottish Government proposals about International Relations.

Useful Links

- **White Paper: Scotland's Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland**
 - Full Document <http://82.113.138.107/00439021.pdf>
 - Summary <http://82.113.138.107/00439013.pdf>
- **Scottish Government Q&A about International Relations**
<http://www.scotreferendum.com/topic/international-relations-and-external-affairs/>
- **Scotland in the European Union**
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00439166.pdf>
- **Scottish Government referendum website**
<http://www.scotreferendum.com/>
- **UK Government Scotland Office referendum website**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/topics/scotland>
- **Yes Scotland** (Campaign for Scottish Independence)
<http://www.yesscotland.net/>
- **Better Together** (Campaign for Scotland to remain part of the UK)
<http://www.bettertogether.net/>
- **BBC Scottish independence: Referendum library**
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-21618252>



The **Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC)** is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland. It advances public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture and community, and also works in partnership with other organisations to promote good relations and understanding among community groups and to promote equality. (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438) <http://www.scojec.org/>



BEMIS is the Scottish national Ethnic Minorities led umbrella body, supporting, empowering, and building the capacity of minority third sector community organisations. As a strategic partner with Government, it is proactive in influencing the development of race equality policy in Scotland, and helps develop and progress multicultural Scotland, active citizenship, democracy, and Human Rights Education at the Scottish, UK, and European levels. <http://www.bemis.org.uk/index.html>



The **Scottish Government** is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and social justice for all those who live in Scotland. **One Scotland** is the Scottish Government campaign designed to tackle racism. It aims to raise awareness of racist attitudes, highlight its negative impact and recognise the valuable contributions that other cultures have made to our society – and make Scotland no place for racism. <http://www.scotlandagainstracism.com/>