



What the future holds

Das Referendum zur Unabhängigkeit Schottlands hätte beinahe die 307 Jahre währende Union mit England und Wales beendet. Viele Fragen sind noch offen. medium

The question was simple: should Scotland be an independent country? In last September's independence referendum, more than two million Scots, or 55 per cent of voters, answered that question with a loud "No!" The result was clear: Scotland would remain part of the United Kingdom.

What of the 1.6 million Scots who voted *for* independence, though? Far from hiding in a dark corner, they have responded to the UK government's post-referendum edicts — including plans for multibillion pound cuts in assistance for the working poor — with mass demonstrations across Scotland. Clearly, the pro-independence movement is not just going to fade away.

For the winning side — the pro-UK voters — things have become complicated. In Scotland, the Labour Party is the only big UK party that really matters. After all that hard campaigning against independence, Labour politicians in the Scottish Parliament are talking like nation-

alists, complaining of being too tightly controlled by the party's London headquarters.

In Scotland, attention has now turned to "the vow". Made just before the referendum by the three main UK parties, "the vow" is a promise to give more powers to the Scottish Parliament. Unfortunately, it seems that nobody had actually agreed on what "the vow" meant. A commission has been created to hear proposals ranging from partial control of taxation to "devo max", an expression that means "having full autonomy other than in the areas of defence and foreign affairs".

The new powers will most probably become law after the British general election in May. But "the vow" has raised a difficult issue for the UK government. English populists wonder why Scotland should gain new powers of self-governance when English issues continue to be decided by MPs from around the UK.

The question of "English votes for English laws" — or "EVEL" — has been discussed ever since the Scottish Parliament was established in the late 1990s. It's a fair question to which there is no easy answer. Should Scottish MPs' voting rights in the UK parliament be limited? Or should England have its own parliament, representing a huge 84 per cent of the UK population? Could this mean independence for Scotland by another route?

The days when Scottish politics were considered a provincial distraction from the "real action" at Westminster are over. It seems that this small but politically awakened nation has everything to play for right now. If Prime Minister David Cameron and his Conservative (Tory) Party win May's election, there could well be a referendum on the UK's future in the European Union. And Scots are unlikely to be taken out of the EU without a fight. But that's another story. For better or worse, Scotland is still part of the UK — at least for the time being. ■

billion ['bɪljən]	Milliarde(n)
cut [kʌt]	hier: Sparmaßnahme
distraction [dɪ'strækʃən]	Ablenkungsmanöver
edict ['i:dikt]	Edikt, Erlass, Verordnung
fade away [ˌfeɪd əˈweɪ]	dahinschwinden
foreign affairs [ˌfɒrən əˈfeəz]	auswärtige Angelegenheiten
matter ['mætə]	wichtig sein, zählen
MP (Member of Parliament) [ˌem 'pi:] UK	Abgeordnete(r)
other than [ˌʌðə 'ðən]	außer, ausgenommen
partial ['pɑ:ʃəl]	teilweise
post- [pəʊst]	nach-
raise [reɪz]	hier: aufwerfen
taxation [tæk'seɪʃən]	Besteuerung, Steuerveranschlagung
unlikely: be ~ to [ˌʌnˈlaɪkli]	werden wohl kaum
vow [vaʊ]	Schwur, feierliches Versprechen

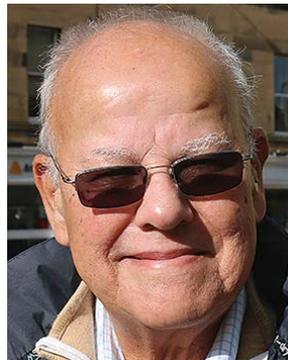
Lorraine Mallinder asked people in Edinburgh, Scotland:

Will Scotland be better off staying in the UK?



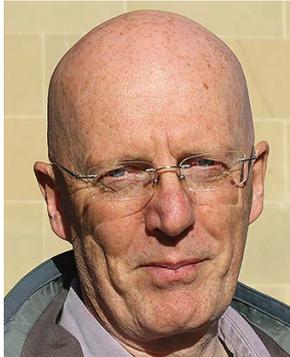
**Alice Cahill, 20,
economics student**

I think that, as an economy, we are stronger together. I think a lot of Scotland's jobs are sort of interlinked with the UK, so that would [have been] a problem if they had broken up.



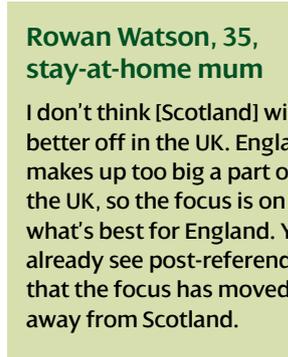
**Douglas Wilson, 82,
retired**

If the Tories bring up the [EU] referendum, ... Scotland will be saddled with being withdrawn from the EU. ... And that's why I voted yes, because I felt that the Scottish government was pro-Europe.



**Kevin Parsons, 63,
retired**

I'm just happy to see the two countries still together. I think it's been so long since we've been joined together; if it hadn't been for the common good, it would have split apart long before now.



**Rowan Watson, 35,
stay-at-home mum**

I don't think [Scotland] will be better off in the UK. England makes up too big a part of the UK, so the focus is on what's best for England. You already see post-referendum that the focus has moved away from Scotland.



**Lynne Ford, 33,
hairdresser**

If I'm being honest, I think we're better off in the UK. The world is in a terrible state right now, and I think to rip our union apart wouldn't have been a good idea. We work better together. Dare I say that?



**Owen Edwards, 32,
bicycle mechanic**

Most of the MPs running the UK are more right wing than we are in Scotland. As a result, Scotland is suffering. A lot of public services here aren't doing as well as they would be if Scotland had independence.

**John Morton, 44,
chef**

I would have loved an independent Scotland, but I was afraid what would happen with taxes, inflation, savings, pensions — I was totally petrified, to be honest. Independence would have cost us too much.



**Melissa Richards, 43,
unemployed**

It depends on who you are and what you do. I rely on welfare, so I won't be better off. From a business point of view, it's a different story. The gap between rich and poor will always be greater if we're part of the UK.



better off: be ~ [ˌbetə 'ɒf]	besser gestellt sein
dare: ~ say [deə]	zu behaupten wagen
interlinked [ˌɪntə'lɪŋkt]	verkettet
petrified ['petrɪfaɪd]	versteinert, gelähmt
right wing [ˌraɪt 'wɪŋ]	rechts, rechtsorientiert

rip: ~ sth. apart [rɪp]	etw. auseinanderreißen
saddled with ['sædld wɪð]	belastet mit
split apart [ˌsplɪt ə'pɑ:t]	hier: sich trennen
withdrawn: be ~ [wɪð'drɔ:n]	zurückgenommen werden, ausgedeutert werden