

Scotland's Place in Europe.

Response from Scotland In Union to a call for evidence from the House of Commons' Scottish Affairs Committee

Summary

- **Scotland's place in the EU is no different from that of any other part of the UK.**
- **In the EU referendum, people in Scotland voted individually, on a single question about the UK and EU, not as a block vote, and not on a question about Scotland.**
- **Scotland's prosperity depends on remaining an integral part of the UK.**
- **There should be an all-UK approach to negotiating our future relationship with the EU.**

1. Scotland In Union is a non-party movement, united around a positive view of Scotland within the United Kingdom. It is a not-for-profit organisation, with supporters from all shades of moderate political opinion. Our supporters hold a diverse range of views, but we are united in believing that staying together, and working together, with our neighbours in the rest of the UK is in the best interests of Scotland and the wider British people. SIU's activities inform debate on the question of unity in the UK: contributions to consultation papers, advertising campaigns, and publishing material on our website and in print. Scotland In Union aspires to make a positive and helpful contribution to civic society and to the development of the UK.

2. Scotland In Union took no side in the UK's EU referendum.

3. Scotland In Union notes the continuing support for the UK union in all parts of the UK. In Scotland, the decisive vote on 18 September 2014 confirmed Scotland's place in the UK union.

4. As a result of the 2014 referendum, Scotland's place in Europe is no different from that of any other part of the UK. We hope that the British people can unite around a desire for the UK to thrive and prosper after it leaves the EU; that the UK will continue to be European in the widest sense; and that the UK will support and encourage the EU as a continuing trading partner and ally.

5. In his comment on the launch of this Inquiry, the Chair of the Scottish Affairs Committee said that "62% of Scotland's population voted to remain". We believe this is an error. 62% of those who voted, voted to remain: about 1.6 million people, or 42% of those who were eligible to vote, while about 1 million people in Scotland voted to leave the EU. It is wrong to aggregate these votes into a single block vote and claim that "Scotland" voted one way or another. The fact is that 17 million British people voted to leave the EU, including 1 million who were resident in Scotland. We all voted as individuals within the UK, not as separate territorial blocks.

6. It is also an error to treat 1.6 million remain votes in Scotland as proxy votes for separation from the UK. Many who support Scotland's place in the UK also support the UK's membership of the EU. Many of those who voted to leave the EU also support the Scottish National Party and other separatist parties. The EU referendum question did not ask about the unity and territorial integrity of the UK. It would be wrong in principle to use the EU referendum vote as an excuse for further agitation to break up the UK. Many of SIU's supporters have told us that their own remain votes were UK votes, and that they are alarmed by the nationalists' attempts to use the EU referendum as a pretext for a separation campaign.

7. Scotland's largest trading partner remains the rest of the UK, and Scotland needs to be able to trade freely with the rest of the UK. The UK remains a highly integrated, and successful, economy and the prosperity of the Scottish people depends on remaining an integral part of that economy.

8. Scotland In Union therefore believes that an all-UK approach to negotiating our future relationship with the EU is the right one. This view is aligned with public opinion in Scotland, with polls consistently showing that people want to see what Brexit means first before possibly re-considering any other aspect of our constitutional arrangements.