

Europe Day – a day to say yes?



Well, according to the Yes Scotland campaign it certainly is.

People from a range of EU countries and now living in Scotland came together today to voice support for a Yes vote in next year's independence referendum. Citizens from countries such as Poland, Italy, France and England gathered in Edinburgh to say why they want Scotland to stay in the EU – and why independence is the best way to guarantee it.

Olga Uflewski, who works in a coffee shop, said:- 'As a Polish Scot living in Glasgow I want Scotland to remain in the European Union. That's why I'm voting Yes next year. Westminster's isolationist agenda is damaging to Scotland and is putting our EU membership at risk.

'The fact is that Westminster is failing to protect our national interest in Europe. On employment protection, on cross border crime, on agriculture, on financial regulation, on fisheries – Scotland's distinct needs and priorities are being ignored.

'The only way to guarantee our future in Europe and safeguard our interests is for Scotland to represent herself on the European and international stage.'

Europe Day marks May 9, 1950, when the then French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman presented his proposal on the creation of an organised Europe, to help maintain peaceful relations between European countries. This proposal, known as the 'Schuman declaration', is considered to be the act that created what is now the European Union.

Today retired Post Office worker Jack Howarth, originally from Manchester but who now lives in Edinburgh, said:- 'Scotland has so much to offer. With our first class universities, our natural resources, our renewable technologies, our world leading research and our skilled workforce we've got what it takes to make a valuable contribution to both Europe and the world.'

Italian-born Toni Giugliano, Yes Scotland's community groups adviser, said:- 'Next year the people of Scotland will have the opportunity to choose between isolation and participation in Europe. Over the past 40 year we have been on the edges, never shaping the European debate, but simply reacting to it.'

'And while Westminster casts doubt over our future in Europe, the Irish Republic holds the EU Presidency – a small nation setting the agenda for 500 million Europeans. An independent Scotland, too, should and could have a strong voice in Europe.'

Photo Bill Fleming