

# Statement by the First Minister



The First Minister flew to Edinburgh during the night and made his way to the city centre where he spoke to a Yes campaign party at Our Dynamic Earth. The First Minister is photographed in Linlithgow earlier in the week where he was campaigning with the Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop:

*“Thank you Scotland for 1.6 million votes for Scottish independence. Our friends in the Highlands of Scotland are still to speak, so the final results aren’t in but we know that there is going to be a majority for the No campaign.*

*It’s important to say that our referendum was an agreed and consented process and Scotland has by majority decided not at this stage to become an independent country. I accept that verdict of the people and I call on all of Scotland to follow suit in accepting the democratic verdict of the people of Scotland.*

*But I think all of us in this campaign say that that 45 per cent, that 1.6 million votes, is a substantial vote for Scottish independence and the future of this country. Let us say something which I hope that unites all campaigns and all Scots. I think the process by which we have made our decision as a nation reflects enormous credit upon Scotland. A turnout of 86 per cent is one of the highest in the democratic world for any election or any referendum in history. This has been a triumph for the democratic process and for participation in politics.*

*For example, the initiative by which 16 and 17 year olds were able to vote has proved to be a resounding success. I suspect that no one will ever again dispute their right and ability*

*to participate fully and responsibly in democratic elections.*

*So we now face the consequences of Scotland's democratic decision. Firstly, Clause 30 of the Edinburgh Agreement is now in operation. On behalf of the Scottish Government I accept the results and I pledge to work constructively in the interest of Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom.*

*Secondly, the unionist parties made vows late in the campaign to devolve more powers to Scotland. Scotland will expect these to be honoured in rapid course. Just as a reminder, we have been promised a second reading of a Scotland Bill by the 27th of March next year and not just the 1.6 million Scots who voted for independence will demand that that timetable is followed but all Scots who participated in this referendum will demand that that timetable is followed.*

*I'll be speaking to the Prime Minister shortly after this statement but can I return thirdly to the empowerment of so many Scots entering the political process for the very first time. It is something that is so valuable it has to be cherished, preserved and built upon.*

*I've said before many times in this campaign that the most moving things I saw was the queue of people in Dundee two or three weeks ago patiently waiting to register to vote. Most of them for the first time ever deciding to participate in the democratic process. Today in Inverurie I met a 61 year old lady just coming out of the polling station who had never voted before in her life. I met a soldier, a former soldier, who hadn't voted since he left the army some 24 years ago. And these people were inspired to enter democratic politics by the thought that they could make a difference in building something better for the country.*

*These are people who all of us as we campaigned have met and been inspired by. And all of us are a part of all of that experience that we have encountered. Whatever else we can say*

*about this referendum campaign, we have touched sections of the community who've never before been touched by politics. These sections of the community have touched us and touched the political process. I don't think that will ever be allowed to go back to business as usual in politics again.*

*So friends, sometimes it's best to reflect where we are on a journey. 45 per cent, 1.6 million of our fellow citizens voting for independence, I don't think that any of us whenever we entered politics would have thought such a thing to be either credible or possible.*

*Today of all days as we bring Scotland together let us not dwell on the distance we have fallen short. Let us dwell on the distance we have travelled and have confidence that the movement is so broad in Scotland that it will take this nation forward and we shall go forward as one nation. Thank you very much."*