

The Scotland I look forward to

Hopes for the future by Alyn Smith MEP

"May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears." – Nelson Mandela

When Scotland goes to the polls tomorrow morning we will face a choice of profound importance, and it has gladdened my heart to see so many people engaging, often for the first time.

I hope as many of the people of Scotland as possible choose to contribute to this and that the voters will make that choice not out of fear or uncertainty, but upon the basis of hope. Most importantly the hope that it is possible to build a better Scotland for the future. As a Member of the European Parliament representing all of Scotland since 2004 I've been travelling the length and breadth of the country and seen the country change. There is no question we have a right to choose whether we want to be independent, and have the wherewithal to be a success. The only question that remains is whether we shall.

What has become obvious throughout this campaign is the rise of interest in politics which must be applauded and encouraged at every opportunity. Participation is the bedrock of any democratic country and the declining turnout in elections is of constant concern. If, as predicted, a turnout of over 80% occurs it will illustrate that people will engage with politics when they feel that the issues effect their daily lives.

The key challenge for politicians of all sides is to learn this lesson and harness the enthusiasm and hope that has been built up during the campaigning of the past year. The grassroots campaigns that have sprung up across Scotland in

support of Yes, such as National Collective, Women for Independence, Polish for Yes and many more will need to be supported and nurtured. This is bigger than politics, parties and politicians, the people of Scotland are in charge.

Scotland has come a long way, and we remain on a journey. Even the No parties have accepted that change, more powers in Scotland, is needed and wanted. A Yes vote will allow us the tools to build the nation.

Submitted by [Alyn Smith MEP](#)

