

The Scottish Independence Referendum

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This contribution will discuss the background to, and the conduct of, the referendum on Scottish independence which took place on 18 September 2014, in which there was a turnout of 85% and which resulted in a 55% to 45% vote in favour of remaining in the United Kingdom. It will explain the legal foundation for the referendum in the context of the United Kingdom's unwritten constitution and the importance of the 'Edinburgh Agreement' between the UK and Scottish Governments on the conduct of the referendum. There will be a discussion of the franchise (which enabled EU citizens and young persons aged 16 and 17 to vote in the referendum), of regulation of campaign activity and of the key issues which influenced voters: (1) the question of a currency union with the rest of the United Kingdom; (2) questions over Scotland's future membership of the European Union and (3) citizenship and borders. Finally, there will be an explanation of the reaction of the United Kingdom Government and pro-union politicians and of the nationalist movement in the aftermath of the referendum result.