

Would Scotland REALLY want to rejoin the EU after Brexit?

Nicola Sturgeon is currently attempting to create the momentum for a second Scottish independence referendum – alias “Indyref 2”. The 2014 referendum was described at the time as a “once in a generation” but Sturgeon said last Monday that because the UK voted to leave the EU but Scotland did not, there has been a “change in material circumstances” since 2014 that justifies a second vote. She wants to give Scottish voters the option “to follow the U.K. to a hard Brexit – or to become an independent country.”

“Scotland’s future will be decided not just by me, the Scottish government or the (Scottish National Party),” she said. “It will be decided by the people of Scotland. It will be Scotland’s choice. And I trust the people to make that choice.”

Some recent reports claim that the SNP’s plan for an independent Scotland now involve gaining access to the Single Market by rejoining EFTA rather than trying to rejoin the EU. No doubt we will know more after the party’s forthcoming spring conference this weekend, but given the activities of malign individuals like Tony Blair south of the Border, it is hard to believe that all Scots – and the SNP leadership in particular – have thrown in the towel as far as membership of the EU is concerned.

Perhaps, however, reality is beginning to dawn on at least some pro-remain Scots that rejoining the EU would be on massively disadvantageous terms because the country would not benefit from the opt-outs which successive British Prime Ministers the UK fought for and which the whole UK currently enjoys.

Were Scotland to overcome concerns in Madrid, which is worried

about the Catalan separatist movement, as a new state joining the EU, this would be its fate:-

(a) It would have to adopt the **euro currency** – although this can be deferred somewhat.

Furthermore, what currency would a newly independent Scotland use between leaving the UK and joining the EU? Would it use the euro unofficially like (say) Montenegro?

What is more, to join the Eurozone, Scotland's top-heavy public sector would have to be pruned as vigorously as in the "club Med" countries like Greece where many unemployed people no longer have access to the NHS and long-term unemployed households are on income of only 8.40 euros per day

(b) Scotland would not have the **derogations** which the UK presently enjoys. For instance, VAT would have to be added to food, children's clothes, books and house sales. The minimum rate would be 5 per cent. But much, much more would be required to make good the deficit left by the withdrawal of subsidies from England

(c) If there were a strong possibility of a yes vote, financial institutions, pension funds, mutual organisations, charities and other investors with members and clients in England would have a duty of care to protect them from currency risks, possible exchange restrictions and seizure of money from bank accounts (as happened in Cyprus), as an **independent government would quickly become financially desperate**. This would undermine the position of the considerable Scottish financial sector.

(d) Scottish **energy policy** has been based on selling overpriced "renewable" electricity to England and buying cheap, conventionally produced electricity in the other direction when the wind doesn't blow.

With the discrediting of the global warming myth, Independence would give England an excellent opportunity to discontinue the arrangement.

(e) The unkindest cut of all. There are already excellent English and Welsh **whisky brands** which could quickly be expanded and much reduce England's demand for Scotch whisky.

(f) The much smaller area of Scottish territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (Compared with those of the UK as a whole) would be shared among an unchanged number of **EU trawlers**, barred from English waters by Brexit.

All in all, the prospects for Scotland if it tries to re-join the EU do look bleak. It is hard to say how widely these negative impacts are known among the Scottish population – or indeed, by Scotland's politicians. As mentioned above, it is possible that the SNP's recent talk of looking at EFTA rather than EU membership may be due to their recognition of harsh reality of these disadvantages.

However, in the event of any attempt to whip up support for re-joining the EU by the SNP or anyone else, we believe the points set out above need to be widely publicised throughout Scotland. For anyone wishing to start the ball rolling, this helpful website gives a list of all Scottish newspapers, great and small.