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SCOTLAND AT THE CROSSROADS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

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ABSTRACT: Scottish Independence Referendum will take place on 18 September 2014. There would be only one question during referendum: “Should Scotland be an independent country? The reform of devolution established by Scotland Act 2012 is sometimes overlooked by observers as too little too late. The most principal issues of the referendum will be: economy, oil resources, currency, defense and European Union. Main doubt around referendum is whether Scotland would be better economically after Independence. Scotland’s position within the EU is likely to be shaped more by any agreements between the parties than by pre-existing principles of EU law.

Doubts about Scottish membership in the EU have to be viewed in the context of the referendum on the UK’s membership in the European Union, that will take place if the Conservative Party wins the 2015. British political class have always behaved differently towards the European integration than continental elites. The importance of the European dimension of the Scottish Independence Referendum was proved by Panelbase poll in May 2013.

I. SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM

Scottish Independence Referendum will take place on 18 September 2014. Some observers point out that this date is not a coincidence – it is in close proximity to the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn¹

¹ The Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 was one of the most famous Scottish victories during wars against England.

and 2014 Commonwealth Games. There would be only one question during referendum: “Should Scotland be an independent country? Scottish First Minister – Alex Salmond had originally wanted different version of this question: “Do you agree that Scotland should be an independent country”, but many experts, like Robert Cialdini², commented that it is biased in favour of a yes vote. Salmond, also without success, tried to put forward the third option – different than independence and status quo – into the referendum ballot (enlargement of the devolution called often “devo-max”)³. A notion devo-max was coined in 2011 and quickly popularised by the media to describe full fiscal autonomy for Scotland. This notion follows examples of Spanish region of Catalonia, which possess a high degree of economic autonomy but without a full independence.

The foundation to Scottish Independence Referendum was created on the 15 October 2012 when Alex Salmond and David Cameron signed the “Edinburgh Agreement”. Both governments agreed that the referendum should have a “*clear legal base, be legislated for by the Scottish Parliament, be conducted so as to command the confidence of parliaments, governments and people and deliver a fair test and a decisive expression of the views of people in Scotland and a result that everyone will respect*”⁴. Entitled to vote in this referendum will be inter alia: British citizens who are residents in Scotland; other Commonwealth citizens who are residents in Scotland and citizens of the 27 other European Union countries who are resident in Scotland. Scottish Parliament also extended voting rights in this referendum to 16 and 17 year olds. The referendum will be overseen by the UK Electoral Commission, that has already put limits for spending and duration of the official campaign. Electoral Commission was designed to have responsibility for: commenting on the wording of the referendum ques-

² *Scottish referendum: is the SNP's question fair?* “The Guardian News Blog”, <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/reality-check-with-polly-curtis/2012/jan/26/scottish-independence-snp> (accessed: 25.10.2013).

³ S. Maxwell, O. Edwards, *Arguing for Independence: Evidence, Risk and the Wicked Issues*, Luath 2012, p. 83.

⁴ *Agreement between the United Kingdom Government and the Scottish Government on a referendum on independence for Scotland*, Edinburgh 15.10.2012, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00404789.pdf> (accessed: 25.10.2013).

tion, registration of campaigners, designating lead campaign organisations, regulating campaign spending and donations, giving grants to lead campaign organisations, publishing guidance for permitted participants, reporting on the referendum process, the conduct of the poll and the announcement of the result⁵. The strongest groups representing both sides are “Yes Scotland” and “Better Together”. “Yes Scotland” has the support of two parties represented in the Scottish Parliament – the Scottish National Party, the Scottish Greens and three independent Members: Margo MacDonald, Jean Urquhart and John Finnie (former SNP Members). It is led by Blair Jenkins who has never been a member of any political party and worked as a Head of News and Current Affairs at both STV and BBC Scotland. “Better Together” lately has created extra units: “Forces Together”⁶ emphasising the importance of the British Army and “Rural Better Together” aimed at the farmers.

The reform of devolution established by Scotland Act 2012 is sometimes overlooked by observers. Act amended the Scotland Act 1998 and made provision about the functions of the Scottish Ministers. Scotland Act broadened the range of fiscal autonomy of the Scottish institutions⁷. Still it may be considered as too little too late. It concerns only the income tax, Scottish institutions will not be actually able to utilize the new rights before 2015 and exercising this right would make Scottish tax system one of the most complicated in the world. SNP backed the Scotland Bill, but pointed out that it had been “bypassed by events” and strongly limited⁸.

So far there have been no opinion polls showing majority support for Independence bigger than 1%. Support for independence among voters is relatively high among males, mostly aged 18–25 and from economically deprived areas. These findings varied depending on research company – these made by Panelbase are usually showing the highest levels of support for independence and lowest levels of undecided comparing to Ipsos Mori

⁵ Ibidem, section 12.

⁶ <http://bettertogether.net/blog/entry/forces-together> (accessed: 25.10.2013)

⁷ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/scotland-act-2012-available-online> (accessed 30.09.2013).

⁸ *Scotland Bill becomes Scotland Act (2012) after Royal Assent*, BBC News Scotland, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-17903145> (accessed: 25.10.2013).

or Scottish Social Attitudes Survey. The outcome of the referendum is still not settled, especially after taking into account astonishing rise of support for Scottish National Party before the last election. However, at least until now, the momentum has been with the opponents of independence⁹.

Table 1. Scottish Independence Referendum. Voting intentions in 2013

| Organisation | Date | Yes | No | Undecided | Difference |
|---------------------------|----------|-----|----|-----------|------------|
| YouGov/Times | 16/09/13 | 32 | 52 | 13 | -20 |
| ICM/Scotsman on Sunday | 13/09/13 | 32 | 49 | 19 | -17 |
| Panelbase/Sunday Times | 05/09/13 | 37 | 47 | 16 | -10 |
| Panelbase/SNP | 28/08/13 | 44 | 43 | 13 | +1 |
| TNS BMRB | 27/08/13 | 25 | 47 | 28 | -22 |
| YouGov/Devo Plus | 22/08/13 | 29 | 59 | 10 | -30 |
| Angus Reid | 16/08/13 | 34 | 47 | 17 | -13 |
| Panelbase/Sunday Times | 24/07/13 | 37 | 46 | 17 | -9 |
| Panelbase/Sunday Times | 16/05/13 | 36 | 44 | 20 | -8 |
| Ashcroft | 09/05/13 | 26 | 65 | 10 | -29 |
| Ipsos-MORI/Times | 05/05/13 | 31 | 59 | 10 | -28 |
| Ashcroft | 02/05/13 | 30 | 56 | 11 | -26 |
| TNS-BMRB/Herald | 02/04/13 | 30 | 51 | 19 | -21 |
| Panelbase/Sunday Times | 22/03/13 | 36 | 46 | 18 | -10 |
| TNS-BMRB/Scottish CND | 28/02/13 | 33 | 52 | 15 | -19 |
| Ipsos-MORI/Times | 09/02/13 | 34 | 55 | 11 | -21 |
| Angus Reid/Mail on Sunday | 01/02/13 | 32 | 47 | 20 | -15 |
| Panelbase/Sunday Times | 22/01/13 | 34 | 47 | 19 | -13 |
| Angus Reid/Sunday Express | 04/01/13 | 32 | 50 | 16 | -18 |

Source: <http://ukpollingreport.co.uk/scottish-independence-referendum> (accessed: 25.10.2013).

The most principal issues of the referendum will be: economy, oil resources, currency, defense and European Union. Main doubt around referendum is whether Scotland would be better economically after Inde-

⁹ See <http://ukpollingreport.co.uk/blog/archives/category/scotland> (accessed 30.09.2013).

pendence. The Barnett formula has resulted in public spending per capita being higher in Scotland than England. Independent Scotland would inherit large part of UK's public debt. Moreover, the credit rating and borrowing rates of an independent Scotland would be probably much worse than before. Some reports claimed Scottish banks would have assets worth more than 1,200% of gross domestic product (more than Cyprus and Iceland during the onset of crisis). As report of UK's government states: The Scottish banking sector would be exceptionally large compared to the size of an independent Scotland's economy, making it more vulnerable to financial shocks than it is as part of the larger UK¹⁰. Fundamental to Scottish plans would be getting oil and gas revenues – SNP estimates that 80–90% of North Sea oil and gas fields will be inside Scottish territorial waters after independence. Over the past five years the average annual tax revenue from oil and gas has been £9.4bn. This represents only 1.7% of onshore tax revenues for the UK in 2011–12 but 20% of onshore tax revenues for Scotland¹¹.

Salmond's policy is to retain the pound, but joining a formal currency union with London would need agreement with Whitehall. Moreover, at the moment all new countries accessing European Union do not have "opt-out" rights from euro. Salmond has tried to compare an independent Scotland with the Isle of Man – which has its own currency pegged to sterling and retained AAA credit rating¹². Currency issue is really important as by George Osborne calculations 30% of Scottish good and services

¹⁰ Chief Secretary to the Treasury, *Scotland analysis: Financial services and banking*, Londyn 2013, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/200491/scotland_analysis_financial_services_and_banking_200513.pdf (accessed: 25.10.2013). The main conclusion of this analysis is that (p.10): "Scotland has a strong and vibrant financial services industry. As part of the UK, firms and individuals benefit from a world-leading financial services sector and a large, integrated domestic market for financial services, with clear and effective arrangements for protecting consumers. This position would be put at risk if Scotland were to become independent, fragmenting the market and the bodies that have been put in place to protect customers".

¹¹ House of Lords, Select Committee on Economic Affairs, *The Economic Implications for the United Kingdom of Scottish Independence*, London 2013, paragraph 80.

¹² *Independent Scotland can keep pound and get AAA rating, Salmond predicts*, "The Herald" 15.07.2013.

are exported to the rest of UK (comparing to only 5% in the reverse direction). SNP also insists on removing all the UK's nuclear weapons, based near Glasgow – that could cause a lot of instability, as army reports show that there is no other place in UK which could serve as a base for this kind of weapons.

II. SCOTLAND IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The concept of independence in Europe may sound paradoxically and poses a challenge to the conventional perception of nationalism as a phenomenon and a political movement with specific purposes¹³. To explain the functioning of the regional parties such as the SNP, which, on the one hand, are looking for opportunities to create a new statehood and, at the same time, anticipate political and economic related to membership in the European Union for the newly created State restrictions, there is a need to extend the understanding of the concept of nationalism. Above mentioned paradox has a virtual character – in times of globalization and transnational integration expectations of nationalists, which previously could be realized only in the form of a sovereign State, now are fulfilled through the establishment of a different form of a territorial political organization.

The attitude of the Scottish authorities will be of fundamental importance in this context. If the only aim is to quickly settle such detailed aspects of institutional presence of Scotland in the EU as the number of members of European Parliament chosen in Scotland or the number of weighted votes in the Council of the European Union, it will increase the likelihood of “rapid” option. As Jo Murkens rightly points out, the attitude of Scotland and the attitude of potentially opposing member states can be related to each other¹⁴.

¹³ A. Ichiro, *Scottish Nationalism and the Idea of Europe: Concepts of Europe and the Nation*, Edinburgh 2004, p. 110.

¹⁴ J. Murkens, *An independent Scotland would need to apply for EU membership and would be compelled to adopt the euro*, <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/39558/> (accessed:30.09.2013).

If Scotland attempts to gain a special treating – exemptions from the application of European rules, even similar to these previously conferred to the United Kingdom, a classic accession procedure will become more probable. The situation of the Scottish authorities is difficult as they have created quite unconstrained image of Scottish membership during electoral campaigns. For example, as mentioned before, governing SNP has made a promise to keep the pound sterling in the framework of the Monetary Union with London, which would require the consent of the United Kingdom after secession, and the opt-out clause in the accession treaty, as in the case of Denmark. This is not realistic, especially as in the current accession criteria, the adoption of common currency is mandatory (though, of course, the timing depends on the level of specific economic parameters). All states that have become new member of the European Union after 2004 are legally obliged to adopt Euro without any kind of opt-out clauses. It is hard to imagine that there would any room for negotiation for Scotland in this area, especially when for instance Italy would have to leave the EU if the chose to leave the Eurozone.

Similar is the situation with the famous British rebate. Currently the inhabitants of Scotland are ones of its biggest beneficiaries in the United Kingdom. In accordance with the report of the House of Commons¹⁵, according to calculations in 2008 and 2009, on average a resident of Scotland is a net contributor to the budget of the European Union at the amount of 16 pounds. In the case of the abolition of the rebate after the secession, this amount would rise fivefold (to 92 pounds). The British rebate is today a large controversy in Europe, there are suggestions of its total elimination, and it is difficult to expect that postulates to enlarge it to a newly created Scottish State would meet with a favourable reaction of the other Member States. Exclusion of Scotland from the rules of Schengen seems to be more probable, both United Kingdom and Ireland use the opt-out privilege. Scotland is in specific situation, it will share the land border with the only one country and that can have a beneficial effect¹⁶. It is not clear whether

¹⁵ House of Commons Library, *Scotland, Independence and the EU*, London 2011, <http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN06110> (accessed: 30.09.2013).

¹⁶ I. McLean, J. Gallagher, G. Lodge, *Scotland's Choices: The Referendum and What Happens Afterwards*, Oxford 2013.

Scotland will be looking for the extension of the British Protocol to the Charter of fundamental rights (which also Poland exercises). The bigger controversy would be created by the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the field is still important for Scotland, and the existing conditions laid down since in the 70s are not fully satisfactory¹⁷. It would be possible here to be able to invoke the case of Malta, which was able to gain the specific conditions for its fisheries in 2004.

Putting into doubt the declarations about Scottish independence made by the Scottish National Party (SNP), it must be pointed out that the procedure of leaving the European Union by citizens of Scotland seems similarly unclear. For forty years Scots have been exercising the rights and obligations under Community/EU law, Scotland has implemented hundreds of regulations, and Scottish companies have been active participants of the European trade¹⁸. At this level of integration in different areas coming back to the state before 1973 seems impossible.

Scottish National Party went through complete evolution starting from Eurosceptic positions. They became almost a Euroenthusiastic party during the 1980s. Some researchers pointed out short period of moderating enthusiasm at the beginning of 2000s¹⁹.

SNP's stance towards European Union is a full membership with exemptions, such as Euro opt-out. Most likely, the rest of UK (rUK – state created from UK after Scottish Independence) would be considered the continuator of the UK and Scotland as a new state. All the rights and obligations of UK would be transferred to rUK. For years SNP insisted that Scotland would have automatic entry into the EU when gaining independence. It was based on the view, that Scotland has been a part of EU and implementing its laws for 40 years, so it would be unfair to treat

¹⁷ House of Lords, *Progress of the Common Fisheries Policy: 21st Report of Session 2007–08, Vol. 2: Evidence*, London 2008, p. 28.

¹⁸ I. McLean, J. Gallagher, G. Lodge, *Scotland's Choices...*, op.cit.

¹⁹ V. Tarditi, *The Scottish National Party's changing attitude towards the European Union*, SEI Working Paper No 11, EPERN, Working Paper, No 22, <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=sei-working-paper-no-112.pdf&site=266> (accessed: 30.10.2013).

Scotland as a “new country”²⁰. Some negative signals from EU institutions and member-states led to quiet modification of SNP’s position – it now claims that Scotland outside European Union is not impossible anymore, but rather inconceivable. Nicola Sturgeon – Salmond’s deputy – argue that if there was a gap in Scottish membership more than 150,000 EU citizens who live in Scotland would face questions about their status. Present stance of SNP is that EU would adopt a simplified procedure for the negotiations and SNP hope that it could be completed between the referendum in 2014 and the planned independence in 2016. But is doubtful whether EU’s 28 members will agree to Scotland’s accession during such a short time, particularly after hearing opinions from other states last year. Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel García-Margallo stated that an independent Scotland would have to “*join the queue*” for EU membership. Irish Minister of European Affairs, Lucinda Creighton, stated that “*if Scotland were to become independent, Scotland would have to apply for membership and that can be a lengthy process*”²¹.

European Commission is afraid of showing any kind of support for secession . Jose Manuel Barroso confirmed the view of Romano Prodi that “*a newly independent region would become a third party with respect to the Union and the treaties would, from the day of independence, not apply any more on its territory*”²². But as Commission spokesman stated – it is not an official statement of EU, as such can be only published after formal question from the member state. There are no doubts that Scotland would fulfill the entry qualifications of EU. At the same time doubts about formal status of Scotland would give UK and EU strong leverage in both kind of negotiations – about independence and EU membership. All the privileges enjoyed by the Scotland as a part of UK (i.e. fishery, budget rebate) probably would not last after independence. Moreover, other member states suffering from robust regional movements like Spain may be strongly

²⁰ See T. Czapiewski, *Kształtowanie się systemu politycznego Szkocji*, Szczecin 2011, pp. 205–217.

²¹ S. Johnson, *Ireland: Independent Scotland faces lengthy wait for EU membership*, “Daily Telegraph” 26.01.2013.

²² A. Roxburgh, *Scotland’s EU bombshell? It’s bunkum from Barroso*, “The Guardian” 20.03.2013.

motivated to obstruct Scottish accession and not create an appealing precedence for i.e. Catalonia. As Article 49 TEU requires: “*The conditions of admission and the adjustments to the Treaties on which the Union is founded, which such admission entails, shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the applicant State. This agreement shall be submitted for ratification by all the contracting States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements*”²³.

Some difficult questions would be related to implications of secession for rUK within EU. Surely it would involve reduction in the UK’s number of MEPs and probably change UK’s voting weight within the Council of the European Union. There is no evidence to back the opinion that rUK might have to re-apply to the EU²⁴. The hardest to determine is the effect secession would have to UK’s position and influence in the EU.

The only alternative to the EU that Scotland has is membership of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and European Economic Area (EEA), which is the choice Norway has made. It has some obvious advantages, like access to EU’s markets and without such a disadvantage like fulfilling all EU’s accession requirements. It must be added that access to the internal market of EU has its price – accepting all EU’s regulations concerning this area without any real possibility of influencing its shape. It would make Scotland’s position in the EU much weaker than it has currently as a part of the United Kingdom²⁵. It would also undermine all declarations of Alex Salmond about being active and influential in the global arena. As J. Murkens sums up – “*EEA/EFTA membership is neither attractive nor realistic*”²⁶ and the wisest strategy for Scotland would be to keep “*a low profile and go for smooth and rapid acceptance by the EU, or it*

²³ Dziennik Urzędowy Unii Europejskiej, 2010/C 83/01, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:083:SOM:PL:HTML> (accessed: 30.10.2013.)

²⁴ D. Furby, *Scottish independence and EU Accession*, “Business for New Europe” March 2012, pp. 7–9, http://www.bnegroup.org/images/uploads/publications/files/In_Depth_-_Scottish_Independence_and_EU_Accession_-_BNE_March_2012_1.pdf (accessed: 30.10.2013).

²⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 2–3,

²⁶ J. Murkens, *An independent Scotland would need to apply for EU membership and would be compelled to adopt the euro. British Politics and Policy at LSE* (08.11.2011) Blog Entry, <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/39558/> (accessed: 30.10.2013).

could enter negotiations in a spirit of confrontation and re-negotiate the terms of membership”²⁷.

Summarizing, as stated by James Crawford and Alan Boyle in report “Opinion: Referendum on the Independence of Scotland – International Law Aspects”: “Scotland’s position within the EU is likely to be shaped more by any agreements between the parties than by pre-existing principles of EU law”²⁸. Still, formal and political doubts should be seen in a present context. SNP is looking to maintaining ties with Europe because of the fear of becoming European periphery and on the grounds of economic benefit. These assessment could not be true in a few years’ time²⁹. Particularly, as the conditions of possible Scottish membership are unknown. Official site of “Yes Scotland” campaigning states that “The Scottish Government proposes to agree the terms of Scotland’s continued membership of the European Union between the date of the referendum, and the proposed date of independence in March 2016”³⁰.

Eventually, doubts about Scottish membership in the EU have to be viewed in the context of the referendum on the UK’s membership in the European Union, that will take place if the Conservative Party wins the 2015 General Election. Salmond argues that Scotland’s place in Europe is in danger not because of Independence referendum, but because of the Westminster’s Eurosceptic stance and increasing results of UKIP in the English elections³¹. Conundrum created by two referendums in such a short time and in some way overlapping, led constitutional expert Alan Trench to suggestion that it would be better to call for a postponement of the Scottish referendum.

The importance of the European dimension of the Scottish Independence Referendum was proved by Panelbase poll in May 2013. Asked “how

²⁷ Ibidem.

²⁸ See https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/79408/Annex_A.pdf (accessed 30.09.2013).

²⁹ B. Jamieson, *EU vote brings more uncertainty*, “The Scotsman” 16.05.2013.

³⁰ <http://www.yesscotland.net/answers/what-about-european-union> (accessed: 25.10.2013).

³¹ S. Johnson, *Alex Salmond accuses David Cameron of ‘double dealing’ over EU and Scottish referendums*, “Daily Telegraph” 3.07.2012.

would you be likely to vote in next year's Scottish independence referendum if the UK was looking likely to vote to withdraw from the EU?", 44% of respondents answered that they would vote Yes, equal to 44% of respondents who were likely to vote No. In the same poll asked about voting in the referendum without any provisions about EU only 36% answered Yes³².

III. BRITISH EUROSCEPTICISM AS A FACTOR IN THE SCOTTISH REFERENDUM

From the very beginnings in the postwar period attitude to the European integration has been a destabilizing factor for British political parties—to a greater extent for each party than for the whole party system. This was so because the dividing line was not between but within political parties. A large part of the most important political and personal disputes in British politics had its origins in differences in attitudes towards the development of the European integration³³.

British political class always behaved differently towards the European integration than continental elites. Since Churchill, continental Europe has been just the last of the three circles of International cooperation—the first two were the Commonwealth of Nations and widely understood circle of English-speaking countries, which meant particularly Atlantic cooperation³⁴. Targeted development of European integration from the perspective of the United Kingdom was interpreted more as expanding (territorially) than deepening (competences). British ideal of the European Union is closer to free trade zone than the transnational political entity nearing a federation. Consequently, membership in the European Union was always

³² See <http://www.panelbase.com/news/TheSundayTimesScottishPollTables190513.pdf> (accessed 30.09.2013).

³³ L. Dorn, L. Dittmer, *The United Kingdom as an outsider to the EU*, Potsdam 2008, pp.17–20; S. Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Vol. II: From Rejection to Referendum, 1963–1975*, London 2012, pp. 366–370.

³⁴ H. Young, *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair*, Londyn 1998, pp. 21–23.

judged from the pragmatic point of view – specific gains or losses for British citizens. United Kingdom has lacked politicians treating the European project as a value itself, which is so frequent on the continent.

David Cameron – Prime Minister of the United Kingdom – in the first period of his government tried to downplay the significance of European issues in the British political agenda. He spoke about the European obsession of certain politicians. Two interrelated phenomena forced a strong response Cameron. Firstly, from the end of 2011, Cameron has had to deal with the revolt of backbenchers within the Conservative Party about the issue of the European Union. Secondly, both the results of surveys in recent years and the outcome of the last election to local government, suggested a stable trend of increasing support for the Eurosceptic UKIP at the expense of support for the Conservative Party.

Political project, which Cameron prepared in response to the growing problem, has two dimensions. The first is the commitment to carry out the referendum on the United Kingdom's membership in the European Union in 2017, if the Conservative Party wins the next general elections to the Parliament in 2015. The second is slowly revealed vision of the European Union reform. Both dimensions have points in common – referendum on membership will concern new conditions of membership, negotiated by the United Kingdom, in accordance with the provisions of the reform. The weakness of Cameron's leadership is so significant that backbenchers coerced change of the legislative programme for 2013 and voting over referendum law to deprive Prime Minister of possibility to change previous decision during next term. This proposal was a private member's bill and adopted seamlessly.

Euroscepticism of British society should not be overestimated. Electoral success of UKIP had broader sources than the disappointment with the EU – only 60% of the UKIP supporters declared unequivocal support for the United Kingdom leaving the EU. It seems that UKIP's success has rather been the result of disappointment with the political class. Trend to characterize UKIP as radical nationalists seems similarly wrong. Comparing the British polls with those carried out in other member states (France, the Netherlands) it appears that the lack of confidence in the EU institutions is similarly high. What's more, partly as a result of the way the

media cover the subject, the British have a distorted image of the EU, greatly overestimating real costs of EU administration and the amount of British contribution. The EU has become emblem for the process of increasing weakness and ineffectiveness of public administration and the problem of immigration³⁵.

As the process of European integration increased in intensity in the last 50 years, Europe has changed the environment in which the further intensification of the decentralization processes of the United Kingdom. These amendments created both the specific “capacities” (window of opportunity according to the terminology of John Kingdon)³⁶, and to a certain extent, determine the characteristics of these processes. Research carried out by Paolo Dardanelli³⁷ in Scotland showed that the main cause of the different results of the devolution referendums between 1979 and 1997 was the progress of European integration. During referendum, according to Dardanelli, the attitude of the Scots was determined, paradoxically, by their view on the issue of Scottish independence and European integration has reduced concerns over independence.

Increasing integration and the specifics of functioning of an international organization which European Union formally is, manifested in the introduction of the concept of supranationality, have reconstructed the concept of independence³⁸. Even in the Polish political discourse definitions are getting less precise, and in the context of Scotland, it means, among other things, the problem with distinction between ‘devo max’ (maximum devolution)³⁹ and independence combined with leaving sev-

³⁵ *Labour and the Europe. Playing with fire*, “The Economist” 10.11.2013; P. Kellner, *Worried Nationalists, Pragmatic Nationalists and Progressive Internationalists – Who might win a British referendum on Europe?* http://ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR_UK_paper.pdf (accessed: 13.10.2013).

³⁶ J. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, Crawfordsville 2011, p. 195 and subsequent.

³⁷ P. Dardanelli, *Democratic Deficit or the Europeanisation of Secession? Explaining the Devolution Referendums in Scotland*, „Political Studies” 2005, Vol. 53.

³⁸ J. Ruzkowski, *Wstęp do studiów europejskich. Zagadnienia teoretyczne i metodologiczne*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 264–266.

³⁹ S. Johnson, *Alex Salmond: Devomax instead of independence is very attractive*, “Daily Telegraph” 2.07.2012

eral categories of links with the United Kingdom (including national defence affairs). In this perspective, European integration can be seen as an ally in undermining concepts essential for a modern state – sovereignty, territory or nation⁴⁰. Also, it allows to build a new, unique vision for the future, that is situated between secession and simple decentralization.

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⁴⁰ M. Keating, *European Integration and Nationalities Question*, “Politics & Society” 2004, Vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 367–388.