

## Minority Ethnic Matters Overview

*MEMO+ is an occasional series of briefing papers on topics of interest to minority ethnic communities in Scotland. It is produced by the [Scottish Council of Jewish Communities](#) in partnership with [BEMIS - empowering Scotland's ethnic and cultural minority communities](#), and is supported by the [Scottish Government](#).*

## “Scotland’s Future” Scottish Government White Paper on Independence: Third Sector and Civic Society

On 18 September 2014 there will be a referendum in which voters will be asked the question, "Should Scotland be an independent country?", and the Scottish Government has produced a White Paper to explain its proposals for the way in which an independent Scotland would be governed.

A White Paper is a document produced by the Government that sets out details of their proposed future policy on a particular subject. It is not a consultation and does not set out alternatives, but only gives details of the Government’s intentions. This White Paper does not, therefore, provide an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of Scotland becoming an independent country, and it does not discuss what should happen if Scotland remains in the UK.

This MEMO+ is one of a series that summarises the main points of the White Paper. Other issues cover Scottish Government proposals for:

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| <a href="#">White Paper: General Info</a>    | <a href="#">Education &amp; Employment</a>    | <a href="#">Health &amp; Wellbeing</a>   |
| <a href="#">Culture &amp; Communications</a> | <a href="#">Energy &amp; Resources</a>        | <a href="#">Immigration &amp; Asylum</a> |
| <a href="#">Defence &amp; Security</a>       | <a href="#">Environment &amp; Agriculture</a> | <a href="#">International Relations</a>  |
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### What are “Civic Society” and the “Third Sector”?

The terms “Civic Society” and “Third Sector” are often used interchangeably, to refer to organisations that are not part of government, and are not a business. They include organisations that represent the interests and values of different sectors in society, such as representative bodies of minority ethnic communities, faith communities, disabled people, the LGBT community, as well as social enterprise and other not-for-profit organisations that provide a range of services to the community, often with the help of a large number of volunteers. Some, but not all of these organisations are registered charities.

## **The Scottish Government's relationship with Civic Society and the Third Sector**

The White Paper proposes that, if Scotland were to become an independent country, laws would be introduced during the transition period to require the first Scottish Parliament in an independent Scotland to convene a Constitutional Convention, to consult on, debate, and draft a written consultation. The Scottish Government believes that Civic Society organisations enable the voices of Scotland's diverse communities to be heard in public debates, and therefore proposes that the Constitutional Convention would involve not only politicians, but also civic society organisations, together with business interests, trade unions, local authorities, and others.

The Scottish Government believes that the Third Sector plays a key role in supporting Scotland's diverse communities and in the delivery of public services, and has said that, if Scotland were to become an independent country, it would be committed to supporting the development of a "capable, sustainable and enterprising Third Sector".

### **Charities**

Although the regulation of charities is already devolved – that is, decisions are made by the Scottish and not the UK Parliament – responsibility for matters affecting charities such as corporation tax exemptions and reliefs, and Gift Aid, are reserved to the UK Parliament.

The Scottish Government proposes that if Scotland were to become an independent country:

- the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator would continue to liaise with the Charity Commission, which regulates charities throughout the rest of the UK, to ensure that there is effective but not onerous regulation for charities that operate in both jurisdictions;
- The Scottish Government would review tax policy, and consider changes that would encourage more people to donate to charities.

[Click here](#) for more details about Scottish Government proposals about the Third Sector and Civic Society.

### **Useful Links**

- **White Paper: Scotland's Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland**
  - Full Document <http://82.113.138.107/00439021.pdf>
  - Summary <http://82.113.138.107/00439013.pdf>
- **Scottish Government referendum website**  
<http://www.scotreferendum.com/>
- **UK Government Scotland Office referendum website**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/topics/scotland>
- **Yes Scotland** (Campaign for Scottish Independence)  
<http://www.yesscotland.net/>
- **Better Together** (Campaign for Scotland to remain part of the UK)  
<http://www.bettertogether.net/>
- **BBC Scottish independence: Referendum library**  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-21618252>



The **Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC)** is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland. It advances public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture and community, and also works in partnership with other organisations to promote good relations and understanding among community groups and to promote equality. (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438) <http://www.scojec.org/>



**BEMIS** is the Scottish national Ethnic Minorities led umbrella body, supporting, empowering, and building the capacity of minority third sector community organisations. As a strategic partner with Government, it is proactive in influencing the development of race equality policy in Scotland, and helps develop and progress multicultural Scotland, active citizenship, democracy, and Human Rights Education at the Scottish, UK, and European levels. <http://www.bemis.org.uk/index.html>



The **Scottish Government** is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and social justice for all those who live in Scotland. **One Scotland** is the Scottish Government campaign designed to tackle racism. It aims to raise awareness of racist attitudes, highlight its negative impact and recognise the valuable contributions that other cultures have made to our society – and make Scotland no place for racism. <http://www.scotlandagainstracism.com/>