

Scottish Environment LINK EU Referendum Challenge



We have entered a period where the UK's membership to the EU and the broader issues of governance which this is linked to are a key focus of political debate across the UK, including Scotland.

Our Challenge

As the voice of environmental non-government organisations in Scotland, Scottish Environment LINK challenges both In and Out campaign representatives to demonstrate how their preferred option will best deliver on the aspirations we think are essential for our future, outlined in the section below.

The UK's membership to the EU is a critical governance issue that should not be seen in isolation from the substantive economic, social and environmental issues that are central to our future. The debate around the UK's EU membership needs to address how each outcome will make a difference towards tackling the urgent issues we are facing such as combating climate change and the loss of biodiversity in Scotland and beyond.

Scottish Environment LINK is committed to pursuing an ambitious environmental agenda irrespective of the EU referendum outcome. However, to allow citizens to make an informed decision, campaign representatives for the coming referendum need to provide robust arguments as to why their position offers the greatest hope of achieving sustainable development and environmental justice. We will publish the replies received on our website¹ to help inform citizens' views ahead of the EU referendum vote on 23 June 2016.

We want to live in a world...

...where we measure the success of our society intelligently

Economic, social and environmental success should be equally valued and measured in terms of their long-term sustainability and our living within environmental limits. We want to escape from the position where economic 'growth' is given primacy. Our prosperity should be related to the common wealth of the planet we live on.

...where we are successfully tackling climate change, and using a precautionary approach to all development

Average temperatures have to be kept below dangerous levels and our country should play a leading role in the delivery of this aim. We need to learn from climate change, damage to the ozone layer, and other environmental near disasters, that a precautionary approach to economic, social and environmental development is needed and that the consequences of development are weighed with great care.

...where our natural and built environment benefits people's health

Our natural and built environments should promote good health amongst the people of our country. Threats to health due to environmental degradation should be prevented and a strong appreciation of the diverse benefits to physical and mental health that come from an unpolluted, accessible, high-quality natural environment and a built environment that promotes activity and well-being should be recognised and maximised.

¹<http://www.scotlink.org/eureferendum/>

...where the uses we make of our land, seas and air are integrated and sustainable

People should at the same time be able to enjoy and explore the world around them; carefully utilise the riches and benefits of the land, sea and air; and protect and enhance the ecosystem we share with all other forms of life.

...where we protect and enhance our ecosystems and all the species in them

The importance of all the species that share our land, sea and air needs to be appreciated. We want to see a focus on the manifold benefits of protecting and enhancing the fullest possible biodiversity and action to halt the ongoing loss of biodiversity in every country across the world.

...where we value and nurture our landscape and cultural heritage

Landscape, both around our immediate communities and the more distant and remote, should be seen as a vital asset for every citizen and for all of society. Our rich cultural heritage must be protected and nurtured within such a landscape.

...where decisions are taken as close to people as possible involving all stakeholders

In line with the principle of subsidiarity, decisions should be taken at the nearest appropriate and practical level, and engage all possible stakeholders in assessing the long-term economic, social and environmental benefits and consequences.

...where openness and public participation are central features of our governance

The methods and processes of government at all levels should be open and properly transparent and, as a matter of course, include genuine representatives of our communities of place and interest.

...where we learn from, and play our part in, the rest of the world

We want to live in a country that is outward looking, internationalist, co-operative and ready to learn from other nations, societies, and states – and ready to share our ideas, successes, and the lessons from our mistakes, with the rest of the world. We want our country to implement international obligations properly, and our attitudes and behaviours to be set in full awareness of the global ecological impact of our lives and activities.

Our Referendum Challenge is supported by the following member organisations:

Butterfly Conservation Scotland	Plantlife Scotland	Scottish Wildlife Trust
Froglife Scotland	Ramblers Scotland	Whale and Dolphin Conservation Scotland
Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust	RSPB Scotland	Woodland Trust Scotland
Nourish Scotland	Scottish Badgers	WWF Scotland
Planning Democracy	Scottish Countryside Rangers' Association	
	Scottish Wild Land Group	

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's environment organisations facilitating and enabling informed debate, information-sharing, discussion and joint action.

Our 36 member organisations have cumulatively over 500,000 individual members, and represent a range of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

LINK assists communication between member bodies, government and its agencies and other sectors within civic society. Acting at local, national and international levels, LINK aims to ensure that the environment is fully recognised in the development of policy and legislation affecting Scotland.

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