

7<sup>th</sup> June 2011

PRESS RELEASE – POLL ON INDEPENDENCE IN SCOTLAND

## **Background**

In August 2007, the SNP published a white paper on Scotland's future, containing the bill which would authorise a referendum on Scottish independence and setting out a proposed ballot paper. Using our omnibus, Scottish Opinion Survey, TNS-BMRB conducted a poll at that time to establish how the Scottish electorate would respond to the two options specified if such a referendum were to be held at that time. This poll was then repeated periodically over the next 2 years to monitor any changes in public opinion.

Almost 4 years on, the debate continues and has been heightened considerably by the success of the SNP in winning an outright majority in the Scottish Parliament election in May 2011 and declaring that a referendum will be held during the course of this Parliament. Against this background, TNS-BMRB has run its first independence poll under the new administrative set-up, using the same question as before to maintain trend data. While it is recognised that this poll does not take into account other options relating to increased powers for the Scottish Parliament and the fact that these might be included in a future referendum in the light of latest thinking, it does provide a stark measure of how attitudes towards independence per se have moved since the SNP first came to power in 2007 and announced their intentions in this direction.

## **Method**

A sample of 1022 adults aged 18+ was interviewed face-to-face in-home in 71 constituencies across Scotland over the period 25<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2011. To ensure the sample was representative of the adult population of Scotland, it was weighted to match population profile estimates in the analysis.

Respondents were asked:

The SNP have outlined their plans for a possible referendum on Scottish independence in future. If such a referendum were to be held tomorrow, how would you vote?

SHOW SCREEN

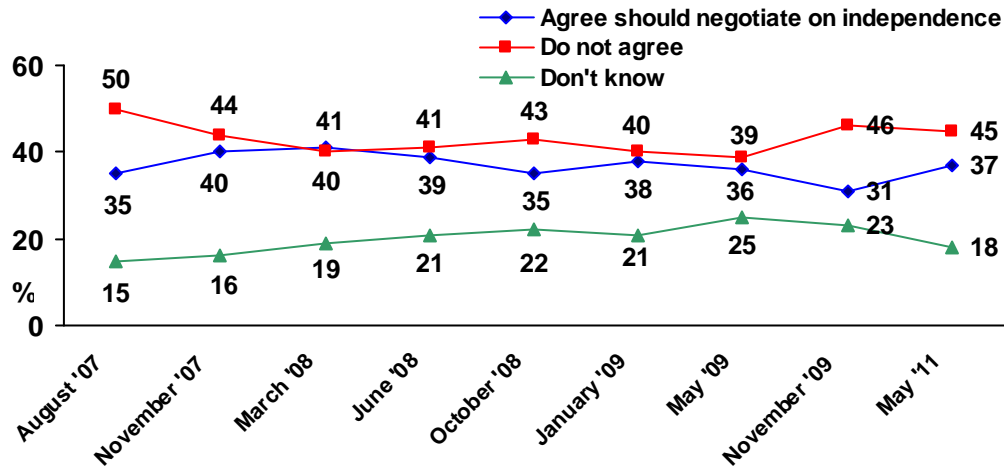
I AGREE that the Scottish Government should negotiate a settlement with the Government of the United Kingdom so that Scotland becomes an independent state.

I DO NOT AGREE that the Scottish Government should negotiate a settlement with the Government of the United Kingdom so that Scotland becomes an independent state.

(Don't know) – not shown on screen

## Findings

Data tabulations have been supplied separately. The main findings are outlined below.



On the headline level, it would appear that the independence cause has received a boost from the SNP's recent election victory. Yet, while support for the independence option has indeed increased by 6% since November 2009, it should be noted that the latter figure was the lowest to date in the series of polls and the latest reading simply marks a return to levels recorded in the first half of 2009. There has been no real increase in support for independence since this series of polls was started in 2007. In addition, the latest recovery has been drawn largely from the undecideds, with opposition to independence remaining firm since November 2009. Overall, then, the findings and longer term trend data suggest that the success of the SNP in the recent election does not herald any significant increase in support for independence generally at this stage and their decision not to rush into an early referendum is well-founded.

Demographically, only younger 18-34s and the lowest SEG (DEs) were more inclined to support than oppose independence. Support generally declined with age and increased down the socio-economic scale. Women were also less in favour than men, although more women also remained undecided. Geographically, perhaps surprisingly, support was strongest in the West and weaker in the East and North, which may reflect the inroads made by the SNP in the West of Scotland recently.