ANDREW MARR:
Well the European Elections will be the last big test of opinion in Scotland before the independence referendum in September, and Europe has loomed large over the campaign. Would an independent Scotland move seamlessly into the EU? The SNP says all this can be sorted out amicably after a Yes vote. Hmm. Well I’m going to be joined in Glasgow now by the party’s Deputy Leader and Scotland’s Deputy First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon. Nicola Sturgeon, welcome. Thanks for coming on.

NICOLA STURGEON:
Thank you, Andrew. Good morning.

ANDREW MARR:
Can I ask by talking about this poll in the Sunday, the Scotland on Sunday? Now I know you’re going to say it’s only one poll, but it does show a fall in the Yes campaign’s position. Have you noticed any lessening of support over the last few weeks or days?

NICOLA STURGEON:
No, on the contrary. As you say, it is one poll. We’ve seen fluctuations in that poll
already this year. There’s another poll in the Sunday Times today that puts the Yes vote at 47 per cent, so two very contrasting opinion polls. I think the really significant and interesting thing about the polls is the trend that we’ve seen over recent months. So if you look back to the latter months of last year, then we saw the Yes vote averaging out at round about the mid-30s. Now we’re seeing the average Yes vote being round about the mid-40s, so there’s been clear progress. We can think that progress is continuing, but of course we’ve got work to do and we’re going to work really hard over the remaining four months to persuade people in Scotland that we’ll be better off as an independent country.

ANDREW MARR:
Right. I mentioned Europe just now. Can I ask, has the Scottish Government had any private or public communications at all with the governments of Spain, Italy or France about re-entry to the EU after a Yes vote?

NICOLA STURGEON:
Well the Scottish Government talks to other countries’ governments all the time. I’m not going to go into the detail of those discussions, they’re private discussions, but what is very clear and what is also very understandable is that the governments of other countries don’t want to interfere in the democratic decision that the people of Scotland are going to take in four months’ time. But what I will say is that no government, including the government of Spain, has said or come even close to saying that they would look to veto the membership of an independent Scotland. We have today in another Sunday newspaper Labour’s lead candidate in the European Elections David Martin himself saying that he thinks Scotland as an independent country will be a member of the European Union. We won’t be forced to go into the euro, we won’t be forced to go in Schengen. And it’s that kind of commonsense that I think the majority of people in Scotland agree with.

ANDREW MARR:
And yet because you haven’t had any confirmation from these governments because they don’t want to interfere in the referendum, you can’t be sure what they will do after a Yes vote, can you?
NICOLA STURGEON:
Well you know if you look at Spain, for example, they’ve been very careful not to say they would veto a Scottish membership of the European Union. And a very important point here is that of course it’s in Scotland’s interest to continue to be a member of the European Union – we’re very positive about that – but it wouldn’t be in the interests of any other member state or indeed the interest of the European Union as a whole for Scotland to be outside of the European Union for a single second. And the comments that the President of the Commission, Barroso, made on your very programme have been widely criticised by many other European experts since he made those comments. In fact there was a debate amongst those vying to be his successor as President of the Commission just a few days ago when most of those candidates also seemed to be trying to distance themselves from those comments as well.

ANDREW MARR:
The Spanish Foreign Minister did say, however, that Scotland would “have to join the queue” for EU membership being a new state and a new legal entity after independence.

NICOLA STURGEON:
Well we set out very clearly the process by which we think the transition will happen and the timescale in which that can happen. Interestingly, the legal expert that the UK Government commissioned to do a legal opinion said that that timescale was realistic. The fact of the matter here, it’s in the interests of everybody – Scotland and the rest of the European Union – for that transition be smooth. And we see more and more people – including, as I said earlier, David Martin, Labour’s candidate, there’s a Liberal MEP quoted in the Sunday papers today saying something similar – that’s the commonsense argument that I think people understand and appreciate.

ANDREW MARR:
The Queen intervened, in a sense, not suggesting that people should vote yes or no, but saying it was very important for Scots to come together and heal the wounds. There have been wounds caused by this process. There’s been a lot of hot words said, a lot of accusations made. Are you convinced that whether Scotland votes to stay in
the union or to leave the union, that healing process can happen?

**NICOLA STURGEON:**
Absolutely. I mean we’re having a passionate and robust debate - I don’t think anybody can deny that – but it’s a fantastic debate in Scotland. We’re seeing people really engaged in it – public meetings up and down the country that are attracting hundreds upon hundreds of people. So this is a good, positive debate about the future of Scotland and what’s best for the future of Scotland. We’ve all got a responsibility, particularly those of us in leadership positions in the debate, to make sure the tone and the tenor of that debate continues to be positive. Of course after the referendum, we are one country and we will move forward together. That’s why we’ve made very clear if there is a Yes vote, we would take forward the negotiations on a Team Scotland basis. So those who are currently arguing for a No vote, we would invite them to be part of that Team Scotland approach and look to take expert opinion from a wide variety of sources. It’s very important that all of us campaign on that basis.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Because one side or another is going to feel very hurt and bruised after the result – either your side or the other side – and there’s going to have to be a lot of reaching out of hands in a way that hasn’t happened yet, isn’t there, to that extent?

**NICOLA STURGEON:**
Absolutely, and I would hope we can almost have that kind of approach in the campaign. We all believe very … very strongly in what we’re campaigning for. I believe that Scotland would be better off as an independent country, would be collectively better off and individually better off. I believe that strongly. I appreciate that those arguing on the opposite side of this debate are sincere in their beliefs as well. We’ve als…

**ANDREW MARR:**
You don’t regard them as traitors or less Scottish?

**NICOLA STURGEON:**
Absolutely not, absolutely not! Everybody in this debate wants the best for Scotland.
We disagree on how to achieve that. But I think if we all conduct ourselves properly in this debate, as I intend to do and as those on the Yes side intend to do, then you know I don’t think these wounds as you describe them need to occur at all. One of the criticisms I have of the No campaign is that it has been relentlessly negative, seeking to talk Scotland down, and I would hope that in the remaining months of this campaign they’ll raise their game as well.

ANDREW MARR:
If the worst from your point of view happens and you don’t achieve a Yes vote (*Sturgeon laughs*), would you expect, would you look to substantial extra devolutionary powers to the Scottish Parliament on tax, for instance?

NICOLA STURGEON:
Well I’m sceptical about whether the other parties will deliver that. That’s why or one of the many reasons I’m campaigning so hard for a Yes vote – because the only way to guarantee more powers to the Scottish Parliament is to vote Yes. We hear lots of vague words from the other parties who are on the No side about more powers, but we don’t hear anything very concrete. And, remember – I don’t remember it that clearly because I was fairly young – but Scotland was promised more powers if it voted No in the 1979 Referendum. All we got was eighteen years of a Tory Government. I don’t think we should take that risk again. We should guarantee more powers by voting Yes.

ANDREW MARR:
Nicola Sturgeon, thanks very much indeed for joining us this morning.

NICOLA STURGEON:
Thank you.

ANDREW MARR:
Thank you.

INTERVIEW ENDS