



Welcome to your first ECREU Newsletter of 2017

Anyone who has been involved in running clubs or groups will know that production of a newsletter can be an onerous task. It typically begins well, but enthusiasm declines rapidly as people run out of ideas, the files remaining empty as the next deadline draws ever near.

When we launched ECREU, we agreed that a freely available newsletter was key to spreading our message and keeping members informed. But we also agreed that we would only produce one when we had something worthwhile to say. I know newspapers come out every day, but they have large teams of journalists and global networks of correspondents and freelancers to help fill them.

Ours is just a very small volunteer team, so while we do our best to release our newsletter every month, it will not be produced to a deadline. This does give us a big advantage – many of the matters we are dealing with are the subject of on-going Government discussions and official committee meetings, so it is often the case that a week or so delay may actually provide the opportunity to bring you a critically important result while it is still news, rather than waiting another month to tell you.

Typically, something will occur the day after we release the newsletter, but we don't want to wait another month to tell you or fill your in-box with endless emails, so when we do get important news, we will post it on the ECREU Facebook page and put it on the News page of the web site. So please keep an eye on Facebook!

In November last year, we had a dossier of evidence accepted by the House of Lords EU Justice Sub-Committee. Only ECREU and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office had their evidence included in the subsequent Lords report to Government.

We were then invited to submit written evidence to the House of Commons Exiting the European Union Committee and have since been asked to help nominate a representative to attend in person to give oral evidence from British citizens in the EU.

The original request was made to 'Brits in Europe' and was taken up by Berlin Lawyer, Jane Golding who was a founding member of the group and also supports the ECREU team. We suggested Christopher Chantrey, Chairman 'British Community Committee of France', and working alongside support groups New Europeans, Brits in Europe, Bremain in Spain and Brexpat's - Hear our Voice, we now have a team of four witnesses.

We consider it very important that like minded groups work together when there is a common goal, a strategy which has now enabled ECREU to put your concerns to a very important Government Select Committee.

Dave Spokes - davespokes@ecreu.com

Please read on for Brian Cave's full report on the Select Committee.....

ECREU To Appear Before Commons Select Committee

As you know, ECREU is concerned with influencing the mind set of politicians of all kinds. We have been busily occupied with getting material together to influence the House of Commons Select Committee on exiting the European Union.

The arcane workings of the House of Commons are not that well understood.

Select Committees have the duties to oversee and question the work of ministers, secretaries of State, and their departments. They were introduced in the 1950's and are a powerful check on the work of Government. In my opinion they failed in the case of the Dept. of Work and Pensions under Iain D. Smith. They are not necessarily impartial.

At this crucial time, the Select Committee for watching over the activity of David Davis (Secretary of State for Exiting the EU) needs to be fed accurate material on the potential affect of Brexit on the Britons Abroad in the EU.

With very little notice the Select Committee called for an oral session with witnesses from ECREU and various other interest groups on January 18th. Our colleague, Jane Golding in Berlin has organised who goes and is in consultation with other groups on a similar trail. Christopher Chantrey OBE, Chairman of British In France and a consultant to ECREU will represent us. It was Christopher who used ECREU's data and members' personal concerns for his presentation to the French Assemblé Nationale last October.

We have taken part in a pre-planning conference call to agree the witness strategy and key messages. Roger Boaden has analysed the composition of the MPs on the Select Committee. It is chaired by Hilary Benn with nine MPs who have 'leave the EU' leanings and 12 for 'remain'. That looks good but many, perhaps all, MPs are likely to support the views of their constituency electorate, rather than their own inner feelings. So that makes our pleas tough going.

We understand that of ten Conservatives, eight are leavers and two remainers. So including Northern Ireland's DUP member, there will be nine leavers on a committee of 21. The remainers include five Labour, two SNP, two Conservative, one LibDem, one Plaid Cymru and one SDLP.

ECREU has already submitted written evidence which includes 38 pages of data and comments submitted by our 5,500 members. This evidence is the accumulated fears and concerns of the British Citizens Abroad.

The Committee hearing is on Wednesday 18th January, 9am until 12 midday and should be televised on Parliament TV.

Brian Cave

Members of the Select Committee appointed on 31 October 2016

| <i>Member</i> | <i>Party</i> |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Hilary Benn (Chair) | Labour |
| Alistair Burt | Conservative |
| Mr Alistair Carmichael | Liberal Democrat |
| Maria Caulfield | Conservative |
| Joanna Cherry | Scottish National Party |
| Mark Durkan | Social Democratic & Labour Party |
| Jonathan Edwards | Plaid Cymru |
| Michael Gove | Conservative |
| Peter Grant | Scottish National Party |
| Andrea Jenkyns | Conservative |
| Jeremy Lefroy | Conservative |
| Mr Peter Lilley | Conservative |
| Karl McCartney | Conservative |
| Mr Pat McFadden | Labour |
| Craig Mackinlay | Conservative |
| Seema Malhotra | Labour (Co-op) |
| Dominic Raab | Conservative |
| Emma Reynolds | Labour |
| Stephen Timms | Labour |
| Mr John Whittingdale | Conservative |
| Sammy Wilson | Democratic Unionist Party |

What is the point of all these surveys?

Buy something on the Internet, and there is a chance you will get invited to complete some survey or other. But what is the point of them and what happens to all the data we are providing for free?

Hopefully, the commercial Internet surveys are used to improve customer service or a product, but there are an increasing number which appear to be related to Brexit. ECREU is guilty of this, but we do it for a very good reason.

The data we collect when you fill out our joining form goes to demonstrate the real worries we have for our future lives. It has already been used by the House of Lords in its report to Government, 'Brexit Acquired Rights', while our survey in December concerning Life Certificates has given Roger Boaden more evidence for his work to disprove the DWP's assertion that it could not make Winter Fuel Payments on a regional basis because it did not have expat citizen's postcodes.

Apart from the fact that DWP sends out the forms using our full addresses, 85% of the people we surveyed had received the form and no fewer than 99% had entered their postcode on it. So more proof that DWP has been less than honest in its dealings with Parliament and its citizens.

This month, we are launching another ECREU survey, this time to measure how many expat citizens can't vote because they have lived outside the EU for more than fifteen years and what proportion of them would vote given the opportunity.

Wars have been fought over the freedom of citizens to elect governments. Barely 100 years since women fought to get the vote, one wonders just what bizarre thinking was behind an unjust and grossly unfair law preventing citizens of our modern, civilised country from having a say in their government,

Please help strengthen our arguments for restoring voting rights by completing our very simple on-line survey. A link is at the end of this article.

Equally important is our effort to dissuade MPs, Peers and those in power, of the widely held view that we are all 'wealthy expats who can afford to live in a Mediterranean climate', an image created by press quotes from IDS and not helped by TV programmes such as 'Bargain Loving Brits in the Sun'.

Two other groups, Conservatives Abroad and the Brussels and Europe Liberal Democrats, have launched their own surveys to collect the real data about expats which will then be used to influence their MPs and – we all hope – correct the misperceptions.

We are non-political, but these organisations offer a direct route to their MPs, so it is in all our interests that we support their efforts. If a group connected with Labour or any other party does the same, we will gladly work with them!

So please help by taking a few minutes to complete these three surveys now. You can find the web site pages by clicking the blue links below, or copying and pasting them into your web browser:

ECREU voting survey: www.ecreu.com/survey-years.html
(Also from link on our web site Home page)

Conservatives Abroad: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XQQ7HR6>

Europe Liberal Democrats: <https://beld.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/brits-in-the-eu-views-on-brexit>

***If you are reading this newsletter and you are not an ECREU member,
you can still complete the surveys, but please consider joining us today. It's FREE!***

Click the logo for our facebook page.....



What future in Italy?

In Italy the future looks grim. As widely predicted, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's referendum on constitutional reform was defeated and he duly resigned, having unwisely linked his own future to the result.

A transitional government under Paolo Gentiloni, the former Foreign Minister, has been put together, with the urgent tasks of implementing the rescue of the major bank, Monte dei Paschi di Siena, and passing a new electoral law, in preparation for elections this year, which may take place as early as April. The inexperienced, anti-Euro "Cinque Stelle" movement of comedian, Beppe Grillo, is expected to do well.

Gentiloni is the Italian politician who understandably took offense at Boris Johnson's silly remark that Britain would get a good deal in Brexit, since Italy needs Britain as an export market for its Prosecco!

If, despite this, any members of ECREU in Italy have contacts in the world of Italian politics and the media and can see any opportunities for explaining the plight of British citizens living in Italy and making them more widely understood here, please get in touch.

Denise Hope: contact@ecreu.com



Spanish, British or both-ish?

The common perception is that Brits in Spain are all retirees, and so the big issues post Brexit are pension uplift and healthcare. Not necessarily so....

There are many who migrated to Spain to work in various sectors of industry and commerce, law, finance and medicine. Many more who came to make a life in Spain turned their hand to running shops and bars, rental businesses, estate agents, accountants, farmers, HR consultants and therapists.

Their children have been brought up in Spain, speaking Spanish. But they hold British passports and British nationality. Until Brexit this was not a problem. The right of residence was through Britain being a member of the European Union. Now, many are concerned about dual nationality after Brexit as Spain does not currently recognise dual British/Spanish nationality but the UK does.

Apparently, some British nationals living in Spain hold both nationalities. The Consulate says that to renounce British citizenship in the eyes of the UK, you must apply to the UK government authorities and pay a fee. If you have not done this, then when you tell the Spanish you've renounced your British nationality that is only in the eyes of the Spanish authorities and not the British unless you've actually been through the process of renouncing your citizenship in the UK.

The Consulate recommends that British nationals wanting to take out Spanish nationality should enquire with the Spanish authorities exactly what process is required in order to comply with the terms of renouncing your British nationality. If British nationals want to know the implications of holding both nationalities in Spain they should contact lawyers who specialise in that area.

The Consulate says it is important that British nationals are aware that if they take out Spanish nationality, only in exceptional circumstances do they provide consular assistance to British nationals holding dual citizenship if they are in the country of their other nationality.

Therefore, in normal circumstances, a British national resident in Spain who takes out Spanish nationality would be considered a Spanish national by both the Spanish authorities and the Consulate while in Spain even if they hold Spanish and UK passports.

Note: lawyers here in Spain specialise so it may not be a good idea to use your local lawyer! There are those who specialise in citizenship and migration law in Spain and regularly process applications from British nationals for Spanish nationality.

Margaret Hales



Thanks to Cartoonist Nicholas Whitmore for this take on Micheal Gove MP

At the time of writing this newsletter, ECREU has 5,412 members living in 24 EU countries:

| | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------|
| Austria | Hungary | Malta |
| Belgium | Denmark | Netherlands |
| Bulgaria | Germany | Poland |
| Cyprus | Greece | Portugal |
| Czech Republic | Ireland | Romania |
| Estonia | Italy | Spain |
| Finland | Latvia | Sweden |
| France | Luxembourg | United Kingdom |

Need to contact someone at ECREU?

If an email address is not shown in this newsletter, please email to: contact@ecreu.com

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