



The EU position on Citizens Rights

By now, we will all be very aware of the UK Government's response to the EU's proposals for protecting citizens rights, both in the UK and Europe. The UK government, supported by certain sections of the media, has created the belief that its offer is 'generous' and 'serious' and that it is for the EU to reciprocate. In the reality, we all know that the EU published its proposals in May, so the UK offer can only be seen as a response to the EU.

This newsletter is dedicated mainly to an analysis of the two offers and what they really mean to us - the citizens most directly affected. The following is from our Brian Cave, who has campaigned tirelessly for our pensions rights and to keep the right to vote on the matters that affect us regardless of where we may live or how long we have lived there.....



In May this year, The 27 EU States produced its Position Paper on citizen's rights, long before Theresa May's pronouncement. You should read it because immediately one can see that it is perceptive of the fears of the British Citizens in Europe and of those EU Citizens in the UK. A copy can be downloaded from this link: <https://goo.gl/izxRYt>

It is interesting to compare the EU document with that of Theresa May's Government. The EU document goes to four pages and it covers the issues in detail. That which I find most welcome is the reference to the EU regulations which give us the protection of equal treatment as the native nationals. For the pensioner, this is EU reg. 8003/2004. This means that pensions and healthcare would be guaranteed.

The EU report was enhanced after representations for our Coalition of citizen's groups, British in Europe, to better reflect the detailed concerns so effectively represented by our members, and thanks to the understanding and support of the EU, all was looking positive. Now, the United Kingdom itself could be the spanner in the works.

The EU suggests that the European Court of Justice should be the arbiter of any agreement based on this Position Paper, something that annoys the UK Government. It suggests that all Citizens caught up in this affair should be issued with a declaration of the Right to be a permanent resident of the EU with rights of free movement, to work and live like any other citizen in the EU.

The UK Government's response on 26 June – a 15 page document would seem to promise all that one might wish and seems to have taken on board all the EU comments. But it states that all these rights will be covered by UK law rather than the European Court of Justice. That does not suggest the permanency afforded by EU law – One does not want the government to agree to something and then be able to change it later at will.

Under the UK proposals, all displaced nationals will need some form of document to demonstrate their acquired rights. The UK will call this 'settled status' for EU residents in the UK. There would surely also have to be some kind of ID card or 'Residence Card' for UK citizens in the EU to ensure easy passage through border controls. Some sort of EU citizenship was proposed by some MEPs

Major criticisms seem to arise over possible effects on families where members are moving between States and especially in and out of the UK. One awaits comments from the EU MEPs and the Commission.

My thoughts here are not just for those who may or may not be affected. They also come from personal experience. My own family members are deeply affected by all this chaos. My Dutch son in law has moved to Berlin - can my daughter (his wife) follow him after Brexit? Can he go back to UK? Similar complications and others must be worrying many families. So even we at ECREU may be sharing the same concerns as you, our member.

My own daughter's position here in France could be in the balance with illness in the family which makes me think of the many elderly people supported by the Attendance allowance in Europe. What happens to them?

We try to do something about it making use of our personal contacts, knowledge and experience. You can be just as effective by supporting our appeals to write to MPs. Three or four of us writing to MPs we know personally will help, but some 9,000 members all writing at the same time will have real impact. ECREU needs you!

Brian Cave - briancave@ecreu.com

ECREU's Roger Boaden worked for 30 years at Conservative head office. Here he recounts some personal experiences with previous Prime Ministers and draws comparison with the current regime.....

Confessions of a Conservative

Exactly 30 years ago last month, on the evening of 11 June 1987, I was escorted up to the private flat inside 10 Downing Street. I joined Denis and Margaret Thatcher to wait for the call to take Mrs T to Finchley for the closing stages of the count in her constituency. As I sat down, Mrs T asked, 'Roger dear, would you like a cup of tea, I was about to make some.' I immediately said yes, and DT, as we knew him, told me to join him in the kitchen to have our tea, as he wanted to talk to me about the prediction I had brought with me.

For several years, I had worked with colleagues inside Conservative Central Office to undertake a massive 'number crunching' exercise matching voting figures from several years of local election results, plus two General Elections, current private polling data, and together with detailed demographic data taken from Census statistics. The massive computer exercise produced the result a short time before I went to No.10. I told Mrs T she would have a majority of 103!

As we drank our tea, Mrs T disappeared into the sitting room. Minutes later she returned dragging a large black sack behind her, and began stuffing papers into it. DT demanded to know, 'What the hell are you doing woman?' Mrs T smiled, 'I thought I should clear some of these papers, in case we might not be back.'

'Good God, woman, Roger has just told you your majority will be 103, of course we'll be back.' 'Denis, you know I don't trust these polls, and I want to be safe to be sure.'

I didn't always agree with Mrs T, but I had the greatest of respect for the fact that she said what she meant, and meant what she said.

Contrast this with Theresa May who says one thing and does something else. For many months, she has called for 'a guarantee of rights for EU Citizens living in the UK'. Last week she said she wanted EU Citizens to stay, but went on to deliver a document which said something quite different.



The UK Government paper says in effect: we don't give a damn about whatever rights you may think the EU gave you, or however long you have lived here, you will have to make a claim to stay here under UK rules and laws, not EU rules and laws. If your claim is successful, we will grant you the new status of 'settled status', but if you don't claim, we will deport you. Oh, and by the way, you lot over there on the mainland, we demand you reciprocate for our folk who have chosen to live over there with you.

That is the central message from the paper Theresa May defended last week in the House of Commons, and for us as UK Expatriates in the EU, it has increased the worries I already have because of the Referendum vote.

I'm proud of the fact that six Prime Ministers and former Prime Ministers could know me as Roger - Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan, Alec Douglas Home, Edward Heath, Margaret Thatcher, and John Major. All called me Roger on many occasions.

Right now, I'm feeling confused and betrayed with this hypocritical situation, and after 61 years since I joined the Young Conservatives, I'm not sure I can be a Conservative anymore!

Roger Boaden - roger.boaden@wanadoo.fr

Spain fights for Brits while Britain threatens to desert its own citizens



Officially there are 296,600 British people living in Spain, legally and registered. A briefing in May by Spain's state secretary for EU affairs and obtained by the online POLITICO laid out some of the country's specific Brexit concerns.

Spain is home to more British citizens than other EU state, and is the only country where the number is higher than the reciprocal figure of its nationals in the UK. The 296,600 Britons living in Spain (some estimates put that figure three times higher) provide a vital source of income for some Spanish coastal areas that make a living out of tourism.

By contrast, around 130,000 Spaniards currently live in the UK which creates tensions which are beyond our control. The briefing says 'Spain attaches particular importance to the question of the process to be applied by the British authorities [to Spanish citizens] to prove the periods of residence.' The document calls for a 'transparent' and 'agile' method that recognises documents issued by the authorities of the country of origin [i.e. Britain]. This was before Mrs May's so called 'fair and serious' offer which states that EU citizens in the UK will be required to register again!

The briefing also states that Spain will defend extending the agreement for EU citizens who have been living in the UK (and for Brits in the EU) for over three months, with the full agreement applying to permanent residents (those living abroad for over five years). This is good news.

Madrid expects trouble with London when it comes to thrashing out the details. "We are under the impression that the British side is putting on the table too many requirements," said Spain's foreign minister, Alfonso Dastis. "We want it to be easier."

If we British are not registered legally (residencia, health via S1 for pensioners, Spanish national insurance for non pensioners etc) then the future for their time in Spain is even more uncertain than the rest of us, as is the situation of those who stay in Spain for up to six months.

BBC and ITV reporters have been visiting Spain, Malaga and Alicante - their favoured venues - producing footage of bowls clubs and expat bars, pruned roses and beach loungers. And this despite the fact that most Brits in Spain are in employment.

Sadly the 60% who work here are generally avoided by the reporters. Even the Guardian has photos of sun drenched beaches, but there is interest in the fact that purchases of houses in Spain by Britons fell from 21% of all those bought by foreign buyers in 2015, to 19% in 2016. Others tell of an influx of 'Brits beating Brexit' and arriving during the spring of this year.

I appeared on BBC Breakfast and BBC Sunday Politics last month along with husband Gerald, Laura Hillstead living in Teulada Moraira and a councillor from the town hall. We put forward our now well documented messages: How we need aggregated pensions, freedom of movement to work and recognition of qualifications, how Brexit condemns the young, and the utter nonsense about 'no deal is better than a bad deal'. Plus, of course, why does the British government care less about us than other nationalities. Isn't the responsibility of a British government to look after its citizens?

Lobbying, informing politicians about our situation is vital. Our sister organisations in Spain have been visiting the Madrid Government, making presentations about the issues. They have also met the leaders of the other political parties. Others have been lobbying British MPs and MEPs through the social media and other friends have been persuading local Spanish councils to send petitions of support for the British population to the various levels of government in Spain. All these activities are by volunteers acting on behalf of YOU.

Of those 296,600 in Spain, ECREU in Spain now has 1,421 members. When officials want to know about our organisation they always ask 'How many members do you have?'. They need to see significant representation if our appeals are to be taken seriously.

Please tell your friends about ECREU. Lets gather more members. Be active yourself. Write to your MP. Use Facebook and other social media to spread the word. To those smug Brits who smile and say 'It will all be OK' tell them the truth. We British people need protection under the law to continue to live here in Spain as we did before Brexit.

Margaret Hales - spain@ecreu.com

Our man in UK

Anyone could be forgiven for assuming support groups such as ECREU are for UK citizens living in the EU, but we do have many numbers still living in UK.

Some have second or holiday homes in the EU, while others still hope to move permanently or retire here despite Brexit. Of course, there is nothing new in this. The British have been settling in foreign countries for years, long before the EU came into being. The British Community Committee (BCC) which represents the British Community in France was founded way back in 1937. (Its Chairman, Christopher Chantrey, is a member of the ECREU team.)



But Brexit has opened up a whole raft of worries that their dreams may be dashed. So we now have a coordinator, George Townsend, in the UK to act as a central contact for all our UK resident members. George spends roughly equal time between homes in UK and Greece, so he can identify with the issues facing those in a similar position.



His working life included time as an HGV driver covering Europe and the UK, as a transport manager for other haulage companies and operating his own distribution company alongside a business buying and selling frozen food. He has been retired for 12 years.

“I have also been a sailor, semi -professional footballer, motor-cycle racer, nightclub doorman, debt-collector, Trade Union officer, local politician, (failed), and local Government Officer, which means that I have worked in the bureaucracy industry for some years. Since retiring, I built a house in Crete, but am still domiciled in the UK where we have a house in Bristol.

“I believe that now the Brexit negotiations have started, there is a glaring omission in the detail concerning the UK citizens who have holiday homes or second homes in countries that are in the EU and have not acquired citizenship or residency in their chosen countries. I fall into this category which must be monitored and addressed.

George can be contacted at georgetownsend28@gmail.com.

In almost every Newsletter we appeal to you to write to your MP on some matter or another. We cannot over emphasise the importance of this.....

Using our personal contacts does get results, but we all know that Peers and MPs tend to react if they are bombard by messages from the public. It is only then that they tend to stand up in either House and tell the world what the electorate really thinks.

So here we go again - this time we appeal to all 9,000 plus members to write now...

Let's make our Government listen....

We all know the shortcomings of the UK Government's first attempt at documenting its proposed plans for securing our rights. It is very clear that even after months of campaigning, official reports, select committee hearings and advice from within, those who produce this stuff still have no real understanding of the impact of what they are proposing.

Well, this is your chance to make an real impression. In earlier newsletter, we reported that ECREU is part of British in Europe, a coalition of support groups from across the EU. Lawyers in the group helped by our Roger Boaden have analysed the UK proposals and produced a 12 page document which puts a real perspective on the issues.

Key players on the Brexit programme have already seen the document, but it is vital that it gets in front of all Peers and MPs. We have already sent it to more than 392 MPs, but if all our 9,000 plus members also write, there is much more chance they will take notice and who knows - actually begin to understand our concerns.

The 12 page document can be downloaded from this link: <http://goo.gl/7AYyxF>

Please email your MP or every MP you can think of telling them they really should read it. Copy and paste the link into your email.

In the words of Roger Boaden: “We believe this is a very important document which spells out the deep concerns many UK Citizens have about their Government's attitude. There is so much in the UK Government's own proposals which could place our acquired rights under threat.”

A full list of MPs and Peers is available from this link: <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/>

Do you live in Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia or Sweden?

If so, can you help us respond to a request from officials at embassies who advise that a crucial factor in support of our arguments will be the level of representation we can demonstrate within individual countries of the EU-27.

So, if you are in touch with or aware of any existing groups for UK Citizens local to your region or country, please help by putting them in touch with us at ECREU via the Contact page on our web site.

It would also be helpful to know if there are any social media groups such as Facebook for UK citizens in your country and if not, whether you might be able to set one up, or if you personally could help in any way which will help with the focus on the concerns of all UK Citizens in Bulgaria.

We are now in a critical phase in the Brexit process and with your help, we are sure we can be more effective in securing our rights for the future.

Please tell your British friends about ECREU!

Do you have a story or any news from the country where you live?

If so, please let us know. We can't guarantee everything will appear, but we will do our best.

Please email to: contact@ecreu.com

Need to contact someone at ECREU?

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

Belgium - belgium@ecreu.com
Italy - italy@ecreu.com
Netherlands - netherlands@ecreu.com
Spain - spain@ecreu.com
United Kingdom - georgetownsend28@gmail.com
ex-Forces - briankemp@ecreu.com

At the time of writing this newsletter, ECREU has 9,264 members living in 28 EU countries:

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

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Editor: Dave Spokes - davespokes@ecreu.com

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