

ECREU meets the Lords

Last month, we were contacted by the House of Lords asking if we could provide a representative from ECREU to appear before the its Home Affairs Sub-Committee to discuss reciprocal healthcare.

As our Roger Boaden is particularly well versed in healthcare, he was immediately 'volunteered'. He was joined by Christopher Chantrey, Chairman of the British Community Committee of France, at the session which took place in Westminster on October 18th. You may have seen it on Parliament TV. If not, you can catch up from [THIS LINK](#)

Here is Roger's summary of the meeting.....

When the invitation first came in for ECREU to give evidence to the Home Affairs sub-Committee of the House of Lords EU Select Committee, I was determined we needed to make the trip, as it presented an ideal opportunity to get some important messages to our legislators.

Along with Christopher Chantrey, we knew there was limited time available to, so I went prepared with a number of points I wanted to get across. My first was the make-up of ECREU - 9,570 signed-up members, with 61% being retired, but with 82% placing healthcare at the head of their list of priorities.

I also pointed out that at least two-thirds of all UK Citizens living in the EU are working or running their own businesses. The sub-Committee was particularly concerned with reciprocal healthcare, so that had to be the main focus for us both.

The European Health Insurance Card – EHIC - came up several times. I was able to use figures I had obtained from a Freedom of Information request, which showed that less than 5% of all UKinEU Citizens had an EHIC issued by the NHS. So the idea which David Davis put forward on the Andrew Marr Show that he had agreed that all Brits in Spain would have one, showed just how little he knew about the EHIC.

Since 2006, the NHS has issued 57 million EHIC to UK Citizens in the UK, but only 236,000 to UKinEU.



Most of the Peers on the sub-Committee were very concerned about what would happen to reciprocal healthcare in the event of a 'no deal' scenario. It came up so many times, that both Christopher and I literally ran out of time to answer all the points, which was a real surprise for us both. When asked about the consequences, I could only answer 'horrendous', and was asked to submit more information in writing.

So in that context, I appeal to you for some information...

First, for all those working in their respective countries and making contributions to the local social security systems. You are entitled to an EHIC. If you have one how did you get it?

Did you: (a) receive it automatically; (b) have it included in your National Health Card in the country where you live; or (c) have to apply for it?

Second, I am seeking case studies focused on children. This example illustrates perfectly what I am looking for:

My daughter has just turned 18 and is enrolled at a Dutch university as an EU-student. She receives a living grant from country of residence, France, and is a British citizen. She relies upon her French-issued EHIC card (as we are active in France) to provide health cover while temporarily resident in NL. It is likely she will be at the university for 5 years - until she is 22. Given that her rights to EU citizenship will be removed in that time and that her rights to residency in France may or may not be confirmed as she passes 21, how will her healthcare rights be affected? She is, of course, applying for French nationality but there will be other students for whom this is more difficult. Should we really be encouraging our next generation to apply for another nationality to safeguard their right to healthcare?

more.....

I appreciate that many sons and daughters will not have yet reached the age of my example, but you, as a parent, will be aware of plans going forward and how those may be restricted after Brexit. Those same sons and daughters may already be aware themselves - I know my 15-year-old granddaughter has begun to express some pretty strong views. It would help to be able to use your name, and any other details you are prepared to let me have. It's possible that the best of any case studies we submit, may be included in the report the House of Lords will eventually publish, so your details may appear in print.

Third, WASPIs - Women Against State Pension Inequality.

During the Winter Fuel Payment battle, I was very aware of a number of elderly widows, whose incomes were perilously close to penury. Women without a full pension of their own, and having lost their husband's pension, were finding it very hard to make ends meet. In very many cases, they also had underlying healthcare issues, and so a 'no deal' scenario could be devastating for them. I would welcome any comments we can consider for inclusion.

Back for More...

We have another opportunity to influence the Lords when British in Europe Chair, Jane Golding gives evidence on Citizen's Rights to the The House of Lords EU Justice Sub-Committee on Tuesday 31 October 2017 at 10:30 (UK time).

I have been working with Jane and other members of the BiE team to prepare for the hearing which will also be taking evidence from Nicholas Hatton of 'the3million', Dr Dimitrios Giannouloupoulos of 'Britain in Europe' and Dr Kirsty Hughes from the University of Cambridge.

You can watch the session from [THIS LINK](#) or catch up later if you miss it.

..... or you can see more information from Parliament TV from [THIS LINK](#)

Roger Boaden - roger.boaden@wanadoo.fr

Pain in Spain

We have watched the unfolding events in Cataluña with dismay. Being in the Region of Valencia we have some understanding of the fervour of the Catalans.

However, to be British and living in Cataluña at this moment is like having a double dose of chronic uncertainty. To be British in Spain on Brexit Day 29 March 2019 gives us some security by virtue of Spain's membership of the EU and the protection of EU law. To be British in Cataluña on that day will give UK citizens there nothing. No protection from Britain, nor Spain, nor the EU.

My heart goes out to the thousands of fellow Brits in Cataluña.



... and some good news

Alfonso Dastis, the Spanish Foreign minister, was on the Andrew Marr show on 22 October. During the interview he said that if there was 'no deal', the British in Spain would be welcome to stay after Brexit.

It is good to know that even with these extraordinary times in Cataluña, the Spanish Government is still thinking about us. However, it is all the other rights which concern us, especially if we are a young family working and contributing to our Spanish pensions.

What we would really like is for the Spanish Government to agree that we can vote and stand as a candidate in local elections, and that we are allowed to hold dual nationality with Spain. Now those would be a great gesture!

Meanwhile many more thousands of us are being denied the vote back in the UK as our 15 years run out.

Margaret Hales - margarethales@ecreu.com

Latest from.....

Disappointment after last round

British in Europe, the coalition of UK citizens' groups, says Britons across the EU fear that the Prime Minister's promise to secure citizens rights is nowhere near being fulfilled.

British in Europe chair, Berlin based lawyer, Jane Golding said: "Following the results of the round today, we are increasingly worried that those negotiating about our rights are simply unable to deliver what Mrs May promised in her Lancaster House speech and Mr. Barnier promised us in May.

"We feel let down. In the UK party politics seem to be taking priority over people, with renewed talk of no deal."

After the fifth round the Brexit negotiations, there has been no progress on the fundamentals: free movement for UK citizens in the EU and no real move on settled status for EU citizens in the UK or on the scope of economic rights and professional qualifications. And yet, just twenty days ago in her much-vaunted Florence Speech, Theresa May said:

".....it has been, and remains, one of my first goals in this negotiation to ensure that you can carry on living your lives as before. I am clear that the guarantee I am giving on your rights is real."

"In fact, we are no further forward than we were after the referendum last year so how can we believe that?", Jane Golding added. "There is now a very real fear that the UK may crash out with no deal., and that we will be thrown under the Brexit bus.

"On top of that, Theresa May admitted herself two days ago on LBC that she had no idea what would happen to us in this case - despite repeatedly claiming that it was her priority to protect our rights. And it is deeply disappointing to hear Michel Barnier talk about free movement for UK citizens in the EU as part of the future relationship when our livelihoods and families depend on these rights now."

PR exercise?.....

When ECREU's Roger Boaden gave evidence to the House of Lords committee (page one), he told them of a meeting after Round 4 when BiE was told that when the EU27 asked, '..... what about the Florence speech?' they were told: "Well, what Theresa May actually meant by that was xxx." This caused 'huge disappointment.'

We can't help thinking the PM's message is just a PR exercise following her recent trips to Brussels. Citizens rights should have been resolved months ago when the EU first offered to preserve current rights. It was the UK which moved the goal posts by introducing 'settled status'.

Cash offer.....

In Cologne last month, British in Germany, held a Brexit information evening in collaboration with the British Embassy. Many of British attending the evening wanted to hand over cash to cover the expenses of those making the presentation and were asking how they could make a regular pledge to the work of our Coalition of groups, British in Europe.

Daniel Tetlow of British in Germany and the BiE coalition team said: "There was even an offer from a professional musician to hold a fund raising concert in Cologne, evidence that there are many people who feel ready and willing to give support both financially and through volunteering."

BiE provides the means for us to be represented at the highest levels in Government and with Brexit negotiating teams. This means a large amount of travel and some not inconsiderable personal expense. Then - of course - there is the ever present worry that at some stage we may need to take some form of legal action.

So if you have any ideas, or existing or business contacts that might consider to supporting our joint efforts, please email Daniel this link: daniel.tetlow@britishineurope.org

Maidenhead, Slough and Windsor

We recently sent a news release to a new media mailing list which included a journalist who works for the Maidenhead Advertiser.

Our story was too general for him, but he come back ask if ECREU had any members in EU countries who used to live in Maidenhead, Slough or Windsor and who would be prepared to talk about the impact of Brexit on their lives.

So if you used to live in the Maidenhead Advertiser circulation area, please get in touch. Your story can be anonymous if you prefer. Please email me at: davespokes@ecreu.com

.....and from Germany

A member in Germany is anxious to talk to UK citizens who are familiar with the process of retiring there. Brexit has put a huge question mark over their plans and this particular query concerns impending retirement at 63 after 45 years of work, so if you can offer any advice, again, please email me at: davespokes@ecreu.com and I will put you in direct touch.

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
Spain - spain@ecreu.com
United Kingdom - georgetownsend28@gmail.com
ex-Forces - briankemp@ecreu.com

At the time of writing this newsletter, ECREU has 9,625 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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