

# Brexit and EU citizens' rights project – Scotland:

## Report and conclusions



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### I. The summary

“EU Citizens Rights Project – Scotland” is an advice and information programme directed at citizens of the European Union in Scotland. The aim is to inform this group, which consists of over 200,000 Scottish residents, of their rights up to and after Brexit. As part of the project, 14,000 multilingual factsheets were produced and circulated among Scottish migrant communities, offline and online. In addition, in April and May 2018, four public consultation and awareness events were held in four Scottish cities. At the meetings, legal, social service and policy experts addressed the public’s concerns about Brexit. The events were attended by almost 400 EU citizens of different nationalities. The project received the attention of local and national media outlets in Scotland and Poland, and raised public awareness about EU citizens’ rights up to and after Brexit. The project was delivered by Public Policy Events, an NGO registered in Scotland, with support from a range of organisations. It received funding from the European Commission Office in Scotland.

### II. The project

#### 1. Background and the project's aims

The project was prepared and implemented between February and May 2018. According to the official data, over 200,000 European citizens lived in Scotland at this time<sup>1</sup>. In the aftermath of the

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<sup>1</sup> Source: “EU and EEA citizens in Scotland”, online publication of the Minister for International Development and Europe in the Scottish Government (2018). DOA: 17.05.2018, link: <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/europe/eu-citizens/>

Brexit referendum and subsequent negotiations between the UK and European Union, their legal status in the UK was, and still is at the time of writing this report, likely to change. The details of this change have still not been confirmed, but the official announcements by the UK government and EU Brexit negotiators suggest that some form of registration of EU citizens living in the UK will start as early as in the autumn of 2018.

The pace and possible scope of changes have created uncertainty among EU nationals living in the UK. The purpose of this project was to provide this group with simple and verified information on their legal status and their citizens' rights. In particular, it presented the current state of Brexit negotiations, the provisional arrangements concerning the future so-called “settled status” for EU citizens in the UK, the expected time frames for Brexit and application processes, as well as services currently available to EU nationals seeking legal or social help.

The project was aimed at EU nationals from all 27 EU countries. The major migrant groups targeted were especially from the Polish, Spanish and Romanian communities, who form the biggest groups of recently arrived EU migrants<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Organisers and partners

The project was delivered by Public Policy Events, a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland. It is a non-profit, non governmental organisation. A key partner for the project, providing legal speakers for each outreach event, was Drummond Miller Solicitors, a nationally leading immigration law firm. The project was also supported by a range of partner non-governmental, governmental and private organisations, including those working directly with EU migrants in Scotland. Partner organisations helped with outreach and some of them provided information stalls for the public awareness events. The list of partners includes, among others:

**Migrant organisations:** New Europeans, Welcoming, Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council – ELREC, West Of Scotland Regional Equality Council – WSREC, Grampian Racial Equality Council – GREC; Migrants Scot, Polish Cultural Festival Association, Feniks. Counselling, Personal Development and Support Services Ltd, Polish Aberdeen Association, Cosmopolita Scotland, Orgullo Migrante, Highland Multicultural Friends.

**Non-governmental organisations:** Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Trade Unions, Shelter Scotland, Centre for Scottish Public Policy.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: “People born in the European Economic Area living in Scotland, online publication of the National Records of Scotland” (2017). DOA: 17.05.2018, link: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/demo-cen-profiles/scotland-eea-profiles.pdf>.

**Governmental institutions:** The Romanian Consulate in Edinburgh, The Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Edinburgh, The Consulate General of Germany in Edinburgh, Portuguese Consulate-General in Manchester, The Honorary Consulate of Poland in Inverness, the Honorary Consul of Romania in Inverness.

**Private Companies:** Drummond Miller Solicitors, Emito.net – UK's Polish Community Online.

## 2. Project actions

### 2.1. Producing multilingual factsheets on Brexit

Part of the project consisted in producing multilingual factsheets with basic information on Brexit. The text was delivered on a voluntary basis by the project organiser, Mark Lazarowicz, after consultations with the European Commission Office in London. The factsheets contained information on the most recent “common understanding” between the British Government and European Union concerning Brexit, including a summary of the future “Withdrawal Agreement”, explication of the “settled status” and the time frame of the negotiations. The text was then translated into three languages of migrant groups identified as biggest among recent EU migration: Polish, Spanish and Romanian. The factsheets were designed in blue and yellow, official EU colours, by a third party. They were then published online as PDF files on the Public Policy Events website, circulated among partner organisations via e-mails and promoted online on the project social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter). The factsheets were also printed in 14,000 copies, and distributed by the project volunteers and partners from third party organisations, before, during, and after the project events.

**Outcomes:** The factsheets were popular among the public and partner organisations, and over 10,000 printed copies were distributed in 8 weeks across Scotland, including cities like Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Inverness, Stirling, Perth, Kirkcaldy, and others. About 3,000 leaflets may still be distributed among EU citizens at possible future events, should the project receive any additional funds. The links to the PDF versions of the leaflets are provided at the end of this report.

### 2.2. Public awareness and consultation events on EU citizens rights

Another part of the project was organisation of public consultation and awareness events. Their purpose was to interact directly with concerned citizens and open the floor to the public. The events consisted of two parts: drop-in clinics with information stalls on public services provided by the project's partner organisations, and Q&A expert panel on Brexit and EU citizens' rights, that

presented basic facts about the negotiations, declarations on the “settled status” and Brexit time frames. Each event lasted 3 hours, with 1.5h provided for the expert panel and the Q&A session. Four events were held in total: in Inverness (14.04.2018), Edinburgh (28.04.2018), Aberdeen (30.04.2018) and Glasgow (02.05.2018), cities known to have a considerable migrant population. Two of the events (Inverness, Edinburgh), were held on Saturdays and two (Aberdeen, Glasgow), on weekdays after work.

The expert panel consisted of Mark Lazarowicz, the project organiser and immigration lawyer, who provided a short introduction on Brexit; a chairperson from a migrant organisation; a legal expert from Drummond Miller Solicitors; and a speaker from the local community (local council representative or a charity organisation). Guest speakers included Joanna Zawadzka from the Polish Cultural Festival Association, Dorota Peszkowska from Emito.net, Barbara Love and Craig Wilson from the SCVO, Andrew McVey, leader of the Edinburgh City Council, and Christian Allard, an EU citizen and local councillor in Aberdeen. More details on the partner organisations may be found above in the “Organisers and partners” section.

**Outcomes:** The attendance and interest in the events were very high, and, as attested by personal exchanges after the events and comments left on the project's social media channels, the content of the events was considered valuable by the attendees. The Aberdeen and Edinburgh events were fully booked, with 80 people attending the Aberdeen event, and 120 attending the Edinburgh event. Similarly, the events in Glasgow and Inverness were popular among attendees, with 100 and 70 people attending respectively. Another success was the national diversity of the attendees, some of whom agreed to share information on their nationality. According to this data, we may estimate that about 25% of the attendees were Polish; around 15% were British, Scottish or Irish; around 10% were German, Italian, French or Spanish respectively; the remaining 20% consisted of migrants from the Portuguese, Greek, Lithuanian and Romanian communities.

### 2.3. Outreach, marketing and creation of an online EU citizens community

Given the limited funds, the outreach for the project was mainly delivered by social media advertising and networking with relevant agencies. The project was also covered by the media. The Facebook page for the project was set up in mid-March. With help of multilingual volunteers, it advertised the events and multilingual factsheets in different EU languages and in relevant migrant groups on Facebook. Two of the four events were additionally boosted by paid Facebook advertising. The page also provided a platform to share news on legal developments of the EU-UK Brexit deal and in a bit over two months it gathered an online community of 915 EU citizens in Scotland (data from 17.05.2018). Similarly, the project's Twitter account was used to advertise the events and liaise with relevant institutions.

The project was covered by BBC Radio Scotland, Herald Scotland, Scottish Legal News, Polish Press Agency and Inverness Courier, among others, as well as migrant outlets in the UK, in particular Emito.net, the biggest website of the Polish community in Scotland, Cosmopolita Scotland, its equivalent for the Scottish Spanish community, and Roscotin.eu, a webportal supported by the Romanian Embassy in the UK. Links to the publications may be found at the end of this report.

Direct outreach for the project included the participation of project representatives in a number of events, including opening of the IberDocs festival in Edinburgh, leafleting across four cities, a meeting with EU migrants during a Leith Conversation Cafe in Edinburgh (22.04) and participation in the European Commission's Europe Day in Glasgow (09.05). The direct outreach should continue in June, with a New Europeans meeting planned for 20.06.2018.

**Outcomes:** The project now possesses a significant network among migrant, charity, governmental and public policy agencies operating in Scotland and around the UK, with the most relevant partners listed in the "Organisers and partners" section above. The project gathered international recognition and helped to raise general awareness about the EU migrants' rights and concerns. Another outcome of the project was creation of an ever-growing social media community.

### III. Outcomes and conclusions for the future

Given the high interest in the project showed by the EU citizens as well as migrant and other third sector organisations and the press, it may be concluded that the project answered important public needs and should be continued. Multilingual information factsheets were eagerly picked up and distributed, both in the printed and the electronic versions. The events were attended in great numbers, and received positive feedback, in person and through social media channels. The project gathered international recognition. Attendees of the events are now better informed about their citizens rights and know where to look for verified information on the development of the Brexit negotiations. Awareness about the EU citizens concerns was also raised among the general public, thanks to the coverage by national Scottish media. Last but not least, the project has created an online community of EU citizens.

However, members of the EU community and agencies working with them expressed a demand for more events, to be held both in new locations and again in the same cities at later dates. What is more, a limited attendance by members of some communities, e.g. Romanian, Latvian and Lithuanian citizens, possibly indicates a need to organise events targeted at specific migrant groups as well, with the presence of interpreters.

The “EU citizens rights project” is well equipped to deliver more events, as it now has a thriving network of supporting organisations, it has gained recognition among the EU citizens in Scotland, and still has some marketing and outreach materials (information factheets) at its disposal.

It is strongly recommended that the project’s Facebook page is continued, as it became a point of contact for many EU citizens who are interested in their rights. The Facebook page may provide a platform to answer some of the most frequently asked questions about Brexit. The organisers are currently looking for funding that would allow them to maintain the Facebook page and organise more events.

#### IV. Appendix

- PDF files with factsheets in English, Polish, Spanish and Romanian:  
<https://publicpolicyevents.com/eu-citizens-rights/>
- Links to the EU Citizens' Rights Project Facebook and Twitter pages, where you can also find pictures from our events:  
<https://www.facebook.com/EURightsProject/>  
<https://twitter.com/CitzRights>
- BBC Radio Scotland “Good Morning Scotland”, radio interview (at 2hr 20 mins)  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0b11c4r#play>
- “Meetings to be held for EU migrants in Scotland who are fearful about Brexit” – press release published by Herald Scotland  
[http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/16130763.Meetings\\_for\\_EU\\_migrants\\_in\\_Scotland\\_fearful\\_about\\_Brexit/](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/16130763.Meetings_for_EU_migrants_in_Scotland_fearful_about_Brexit/)
- “New project to give EU citizens across Scotland opportunity to find out about their rights after Brexit” – press release published by Scottish Legal News  
<https://www.scottishlegal.com/article/new-project-give-eu-citizens-across-scotland-opportunity-find-rights-brexit>
- (PL) Article by the Polish Press Agency, published by rmf24.pl:  
<http://www.rmf24.pl/raporty/raport-wybory-w-wlk-brytanii/brexit/news-szkoccy-aktywisci-polacy-potrzebuja-wsparcia-wobec-brexitu,nId,2569318>
- Articles in Polish, Spanish and Romanian migrant outlets  
[http://www.emito.net/artykuly/brexit\\_nowy\\_projekt\\_informacyjny\\_dla\\_obywateli\\_ue\\_w\\_szkocji\\_2229757.html](http://www.emito.net/artykuly/brexit_nowy_projekt_informacyjny_dla_obywateli_ue_w_szkocji_2229757.html)  
[http://londynek.net/wiadomosci/article?jdnews\\_id=50643](http://londynek.net/wiadomosci/article?jdnews_id=50643)  
<http://www.mojawyspa.co.uk/artykuly/35169/Brexit-Szkocja-Polacy-w-Szkocji-prawa-imigrantow>

<http://cosmopolitascotland.org/derechos-inmigrantes-ue-escocia-brexit/>

<http://roscotin.eu/>