

# EU Citizens' Rights Project - Scotland:

Information, engagement and research project for EU27 citizens in Scotland

September - December 2018

## Report and conclusions



Edinburgh 31.01.2019

## Summary of the project

**EU Citizens' Rights Project - Scotland** provides information, advice and support for EU27 citizens in Scotland and connects groups and organisations working with the community. We are a group of third sector workers, researchers, legal experts and volunteers. We want to inform EU nationals in Scotland about their rights, but also to promote awareness of their concerns and needs, particularly those raised by the likelihood of Brexit.

Throughout 2018, first with assistance from the European Commission Representation in Scotland and then thanks to the Scottish Government Brexit Stakeholders Engagement Fund, we conducted three series of events on EU citizens' rights attended in total by over 2,000 people, produced and distributed 16,000 [multilingual factsheets](#) on Brexit negotiations, launched a [multilingual website](#) for EU citizens in Scotland visited by nearly 10,000 users, and published a [research report](#) on EU27 citizens' needs in Scotland in the face of Brexit. The project has received positive feedback, from meeting participants, partner organisations and press alike (see Appendix for more detail). Apart from organising public sessions for EU27 citizens, we also engaged with a number of organisations to provide more specialist, multilingual sessions for particularly vulnerable groups of EU citizens. This report describes in more detail the phase of this project developed in September - December 2018 with the help of Scottish Government "Brexit Stakeholders Engagement Fund" and presents our recommendations for the future activities that may help engage with EU citizens in Scotland.

## Project in numbers

The Information, engagement and research programme for EU27 citizens<sup>1</sup>:

- 34,327 unique visits on the website
- 21,018 post reach on Facebook
- 8,147 views on Evensi
- 9,015 unique visitors on the website
- 2,025 followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- 1107 tickets booked for free public events
- 400 contributors to the research on EU citizens' needs
- 264 evaluation sheets returned
- 46 focus group members
- 7 public events
- 4 outreach events

---

<sup>1</sup> Data valid for 31 January 2019

## Information, engagement and research project for EU27 citizens in Scotland: Activities September - December 2018

### Background

In June 2016, the UK voted in a referendum (by a small majority) in favour of the UK leaving the European Union. The implications of this decision and the consequent Brexit negotiations between the UK government and the European Union (not concluded at the time of writing this report) may have a major impact on EU citizens' rights in the UK, who will no longer be protected by the 'freedom of movement' that allowed them to settle in the UK. This has resulted in uncertainty and anxiety among over 220,000 EU27 citizens' living in Scotland at the time<sup>2</sup>, as evidenced by the first phase of this project<sup>3</sup>.

The first phase of this project, developed in Spring 2018 with assistance of European Commission Representation in Scotland, consisted in 1) producing and distributing 14,000 copies of multilingual factsheets on Brexit negotiations, in English, Polish, Spanish and Romanian and 2) holding 4 information events for EU citizens in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Glasgow and Inverness in April and May 2018, attended by nearly 400 people. To promote the project and awareness of EU citizens' rights a Facebook page was set up. In 2,5 months it gained nearly 1,000 followers (in January 2019 it had nearly 2,000 followers). The project was widely reported on by local and national Scottish media, as well as by the community and multilingual media in the UK and in Europe (see Appendix). It had a lasting effect in the creation of an online community of EU citizens and a database of EU citizens' frequently asked questions. It was met with positive feedback and led to the launch of phase 2 of the project in Autumn 2019.

In the second phase of the project, with the continued assistance of the European Commission Representation in Scotland, 8 more events were delivered, and 2,000 more multilingual factsheets were ordered, this time also in Lithuanian and Latvian. The existing materials were updated to reflect on the developments in the EU-UK negotiations.

---

<sup>2</sup> See document "[EU and EEA citizens in Scotland](#)", a publication by the Scottish Government [DOA 09.01.2019].

<sup>3</sup> See reports from two first phases of the Project included in the Appendix.

This time the information events were held not only in English, but also in Polish, Romanian and Slovak, reflecting communities' needs, voiced during the previous series of meetings. The sessions were held in Lerwick, Livingston, Dundee, Perth and Ayr in September and October, and the specialist sessions in translation were held in Edinburgh (Polish) and Glasgow (Romanian, Slovak) in the same period. In total, around 500 EU citizens attended these events. The feedback gathered during this phase informed the strategy for another phase of the project, delivered with help of the Scottish Government in September - December 2018.

## Activities September - December 2018

### Information events

As part of this phase, the EU Citizens Rights Project - Scotland delivered 7 public events for EU27 citizens in 6 locations across Scotland: Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Motherwell, Dundee and Inverness. The locations were chosen because of high demand for this type of events in local EU citizens' communities. The additional event in Edinburgh (making the total of events 7 rather than the originally proposed 6) was organised after the complete sellout of the first event in the capital. Overall, nearly 650 EU citizens attended our events in this period<sup>4</sup>. The total number of tickets booked for the events was 1107, with even more people registered on the waiting lists.

The events were held in English and lasted about two hours. They consisted in three parts. First, a legal expert described the current status of the Brexit negotiations, to highlight the context of the information session. In the second part, the current proposals on the UK's government EU Settlement Scheme were described, highlighting the administrative procedures the EU nationals will be likely to go through, and the rights of EU citizens. This was followed by a Q&A session, which lasted about an hour. During the events, attendees could collect multilingual factsheets produced by the project and information materials from partner organisations, including information on EU citizens' voting rights, right to access education and public services, right to travel and others. Speakers usually included the Chair of the Project,

---

<sup>4</sup> As the events are manned by volunteers and attendees are free to come and go during the events, collecting exact numbers is often difficult. The same is true for collecting feedback sheets.

advocate Mark Lazarowicz, speaking about the Brexit negotiations, and a solicitor from our partner Drummond Miller Solicitors delivering the presentation on the EU Settlement Scheme. Some sessions were assisted by Kenneth Campbell QC. Links with more potential volunteer speakers, especially with the Legal Network Centre, have been established.

#### Other events

The EU Citizens' Rights Project - Scotland is delivered in the spirit of collaboration, as we believe that engaging existing migrant groups and third sector organisations is key for successful reachout to vast groups of EU citizens. For that reason the Project delivered a number of sessions in collaboration with other organisations. These were events of two kinds: outreach events for particularly vulnerable groups of EU citizens and networking events for groups working with them. At these events, EU Citizens' Rights Project was usually only providing a speaker, rather than organising the whole of the session, or was simply participating in a consultation session. In total 6 such events were delivered, including a networking event by EU Citizens' Rights Project in Edinburgh, an outreach event with ELREC (Edinburgh, a session in Italian and Bangla), two outreach sessions in Aberdeen with No Recourse to Public Funds Partnership (in English, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Russian and Lithuanian), an outreach event with Outplay Ltd. in Dundee, and an event with ESOL students in Dundee. EU Citizens' Rights Project members additionally participated in consultation sessions on Brexit organised by SCVO<sup>5</sup>, the Civil Society Brexit Project<sup>6</sup> and others<sup>7</sup>.

#### Feedback from the events

During the public events organised by our project, attendees were asked to fill in evaluation sheets. The questions included data about the attendees (their nationality, approximate date of arrival to Scotland, links to EU27 community), collected mainly to inform the organisers of the profile of the attendees. Additionally, attendees were asked to name their main concerns about

---

<sup>5</sup> 25 October 2018, "EU settlement scheme consultation event" at Hayweight House, Edinburgh.

<sup>6</sup> 5 December 2018, EU Citizens' Rights after Brexit, Atlantic Quay, Glasgow.

<sup>7</sup> Including networking events for the third sector workers, participating in e-meetings of the 3million group and others.

Brexit, which helped to extend the FAQ database and informed our research project (discussed in more detail in next sections of this report). Attendees were asked to evaluate the events, indicating whether they a) “learnt a lot” b) “learnt a bit” or c) “learnt nothing new” during the events and to indicate if they found the events a) “useful” b) “hard to say” c) “useless” (see the table below). This distinction was made based on an assumption that a well-informed EU citizen may attend the event and learn only a few pieces of new information, but still find the event useful, in terms of confirming their previous findings and receiving support from expert speakers. Likewise, a misinformed EU citizen might have learnt many new facts at an event, but find the new information not really useful (e.g. because of they way the information was presented or lack of response to their specific query). Attendees were also asked to indicate what could be improved about the events.

264 anonymous participants returned the sheets. Out of 242 who answered the first question, over 96% indicated they learnt new information - 127 said that they “learnt a lot” and 107 that they “learnt a bit” during the events. Only 8 attendees indicated that they “learnt nothing”. Similarly, out of 212 who answered the second question, only 4% did not find them useful, i.e. 172 attendees found the events “useful”, 34 indicated it was “hard to say” whether the sessions were useful or not and only 6 found them “useless”. Many those who chose the latter two options clarified that it was “only the UK government” who could change that, as not enough information on Brexit and EU citizens’ rights in the future has yet been announced. These encouraging notes, together with some jocular comments and “thank yous” were often included in the answer to the “what can be improved” question.

Public Event Evaluation - Excerpt				
How much did you learn?			Was the event useful?	
"learnt a lot"	127		"useful"	172
"learnt a bit"	107		"neither nor"	34
"learnt nothing"	8		"useless"	6
Total:	242		Total:	212

As EU Citizens’ Rights Project was not the organiser of the specialist outreach sessions, the possibility of collecting feedback at these sessions was limited and sometimes completely

beyond our means. However, when the feedback was collected, it was highly positive. For example, participants of the Aberdeen outreach sessions, belonging to particularly vulnerable groups (facing multiple barriers, such as homelessness, unemployment, limited language skills), were asked to provide feedback by choosing to award either a smiley face or a frowning face to the event. 100% of the feedback returned was positive (26). Additionally, comments reported to us by our third sector partner organisations included:

*It was really interesting and very useful. It was really well set up with the interpreters and the speaker<sup>8</sup> was very helpful. It was good to see clients who often don't engage in such events, but whom this information is vitally important, attend and leave more informed.*

Third sector volunteer

*We have been chatting with those who attended the event at the Belmont on Monday and feedback has been incredibly positive.*

Third sector worker

*'Thank you for the event. It was very helpful to me and the interpreter very good.'*

(...)

*'I know I need to apply for settled status in March next year.'*

(...)

*'I am not as worried now I know what I need to do.'*

Clients

The very positive feedback, even in direct response to call for critical remarks, high interest rate in the events among the public and the press<sup>9</sup>, and encouraging remarks from our partner organisations confirm the ongoing need for organising similar events and the success of our formula. Some feedback from the English sessions included requests for simplifying the presentations and providing handouts with summaries for the attendees, as well as delivering more sessions in general and more specialist sessions in particular (for students, pensioners or

---

<sup>8</sup> The Chair of the Project, Mark Lazarowicz

<sup>9</sup> See the Appendix.

non-English speakers). However, at the same time some partner organisation pointed out that similar events for hard-to-reach groups should be organised as close to the Brexit date as possible, due to the dynamic nature of UK-EU negotiations. For this reason, and considering multiple requests which land in our e-mail and Facebook inboxes, we hope to continue the project and events in the future, and prepare more materials, providing there is funding for such activities. We say more about this in the “Recommendations” section of this report.

#### Citizensrightsproject.org website

In order to provide access to information and promote reliable sources of information as widely as possible, the Project has set up a multilingual website, under the domain name [www.citizensrightsproject.org](http://www.citizensrightsproject.org). The need for such an online resource was voiced multiple times during our events and by the participants of our research project. Launched in mid-November, the website was met with warm feedback and promoted in social and traditional media. In December 2018 alone, [www.citizensrightsproject.org](http://www.citizensrightsproject.org) was visited by 5,399 unique visitors with 24,803 unique views and it is estimated that over 10,000 people referred to it in the period November-January<sup>10</sup>.

The multilingual website provides information (through links or commissioned by project) on citizens’ rights; access to public services; business, education, and skills opportunities; language services; participation in the public life and the democratic process. The variety of materials include downloadable factsheets, online videos, explainers and online guides. The website highlights sources of support and information available for EU27 citizens in Scotland, links to relevant NGOs, publicises ongoing updates about Brexit developments affecting EU27 citizens in Scotland, and provides links and information about how EU27 citizens can participate in public life and the democratic process. The website provides information in a number of EU27 languages; currently in English, Polish, Spanish, Romanian, Greek and Italian. The website was delivered by the staff member funded for this project along with commercial web designers.

To remain relevant, the website needs regular updates, not only in the “news” section, but also to its multilingual database, which in some cases requires help of multilingual volunteers. More

---

<sup>10</sup> The data for November was not collected.



recommendations about maintaining the website are presented in the Conclusions section of this report.

Brexit and EU citizens in Scotland: Impacts, challenges and support needs. Research report

In order to improve understanding of EU citizens' needs ahead of Brexit, we launched a research project. The aim of the report was to identify the needs and concerns of EU27 citizens in Scotland in the period leading up to Brexit, and during the transition period thereafter. The preliminary findings and recommendations were presented to central and local government, other key decisions makers, and to Scotland's civic society more generally at a public event in Edinburgh on 10 December 2018, and the final report will launch in January 2019.

The study, entitled "Brexit and EU citizens in Scotland: Impacts, challenges and support needs" was led by an independent researcher, Dr Paulina Trevena. The report was based on research conducted from 31 October to 28 November 2018. The study involved 7 focus group discussions and 5 consultations carried out as part of our information and advice meetings in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Motherwell. Altogether around 800 people contributed to the research (predominantly EU citizens, but also some EEA citizens and representatives of the third sector of various nationalities). This included 46 focus group participants and 243 contributions to questionnaires.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, the Author drew on data related to Brexit from another recent research project which involved focus group discussions and individual interviews. The results of the 10 December consultation have also been incorporated in the report.

The recommendations from the report included solutions backed by the Scottish Government, such as setting up a multilingual website for EU citizens in Scotland (as done by this Project, with financial help of the Scottish Government) and launching a collaboration with the Citizens Advice Scotland network (a scheme announced by the Government on 18 December 2018, 8 days after the presentation of the preliminary research report). Some other recommendations included launching a large scale information campaign, organising more information events, setting up second-tier advisory services and ensuring financial support for translation services. Detailed findings and recommendations may be found in the report (for link, see Appendix).

## Conclusions and recommendations for the future

These conclusions and recommendations are drawn from first-hand experiences of working with EU citizens in Scotland in the year 2018, feedback from evaluation sheets and the research report mentioned in the previous section.

Highly positive feedback from our information sessions, as well as written requests and conclusions from the research project, leave no doubt for a continuing need to provide more information sessions to EU citizens in Scotland, both in English and in other EU languages.

Sessions in English, although often frequented by EU citizens with some degree of understanding about Brexit, have proven to 1) increase knowledge of EU citizens' rights among the public 2) serve as an occasion to dispel dangerous myths or misunderstandings around Brexit and EU settlement scheme 3) provide support for anxious EU citizens 4) serve as an opportunity for engagement with relevant networks and disseminating reliable sources of information.

Outreach sessions in other languages help to reach more vulnerable groups of EU citizens and as the Brexit date approaches, more and more partner organisations are keen to engage in their organisation. As marked previously, some potential partner organisations were hesitant to organise sessions prematurely, because they work with extremely hard-to-reach clients who face multiple barriers in accessing public services, such as: 1) limited knowledge of English 2) no trust in public services 3) limited literacy skills, including digital literacy 4) no access to digital tools 5) difficult financial situations, including homelessness, unemployment or precarious employment; all of these limit their ability to deal with new administrative burdens. For this reason, these vulnerable clients would require detailed explanations and a hands-on approach. As the EU Settlement Scheme pilot is now open to public<sup>11</sup>, our Project with its networks is now uniquely placed to provide in-depth sessions and produce detailed, simplified materials on the application process for this client base, as requested in the feedback sheets, providing there is funding for such developments.

---

<sup>11</sup> See announcement on the page "EU Settlement Scheme pilot: applicant eligibility", <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-settlement-scheme-pilot-applicant-eligibility> [DOA 31.01.2019]

Another vital source of valuable information for EU citizens is our multilingual website [www.citizensrightsproject.org](http://www.citizensrightsproject.org). As it has now been promoted by and recommended by our partners, including third sector organisations and local governments, it is already an important point of information for EU citizens and requires further work to remain functional; technical support, more multilingual materials and new commissions, and quality checks, only some of which can rely on volunteer work to remain error free.

Last but not least, as the negotiations between the UK and EU have not been concluded at the time of writing more support, EU citizens' needs may change in near future. For this reason maintaining and furthering existing links with EU citizens' and groups and organisations working with them, remains important for monitoring the situation.

The Project hopes to maintain and develop its activities, with a possibility of establishing more links with other third sector organisations.

## Appendix

- New multilingual EU Citizens' Rights Project website with resources on EU citizens' rights:

<http://citizensrightsproject.org/>

- "Brexit and EU citizens: Impacts and support needs" - research report

<http://citizensrightsproject.org/research/>

- PDF files with factsheets in English, Polish, Spanish, Romanian, Lithuanian and Latvian, produced in the earlier stages of the Project:

<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>

- Report on EU Citizens' Rights Project, Autumn 2018:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qfE0HI0bVfyHHeEtizOcCQQ4Eo17CWZJ5trNpP4Nchc/edit?usp=sharing>

- Report on EU Citizens' Rights Project, Spring 2018:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TK7ZOb2jLzvm5Vaannwg3f6BXf0BPC7WSUDAz7FnbTY/edit?usp=sharing>

- "[EU and EEA citizens in Scotland](#)," publication by the Scottish Government [DOA 09.01.2019]
- "[Brexit day concerns for Scots EU citizens 'at peak'](#)," The National mentions our report on EU citizens' rights, 27.01.2019
- "[EU nationals in Scotland feel insecure about future](#)," publication about our research report by Third Sector News, 25.01.2019
- [Group aims to offer Brexit support](#), Third Sector News, 17.12.2018
- "Jakie masz prawa? Nowa strona dla obywateli UE w Szkocji dostępna po polsku," publications about the website in Polish community press, 17.12.2018

[https://londynek.net/wiadomosci/article?jdnews\\_id=56136](https://londynek.net/wiadomosci/article?jdnews_id=56136)

<http://polemi.co.uk/informacje/szkocja/wazne-ruszyla-specjalna-strona-internetowa-w-jezyku-polskim-dla-polakow-na-wyspach-wejdz-i-sprawdz-30438>

- [“Insight: Scots at the sharp end of Brexit’s white paper immigration crackdown.”](#)  
publication mentioning our Project in The Scotsman, 18.12.2018
- [“Scottish Government sets up scheme to support EU citizens staying after Brexit,”](#) press release mentioning our Project, publication by The National, 8.10.2018
- [EU Citizens Rights Project Scotland Information Session in Ayr](#) - video on YouTube
- “Big turn-out for Brexit talk” - article in Dundee Courier, 01.10.2018 (.jpg file)

so many  
involved.  
ages have

ave been  
rtnership  
ting and  
eas, skills

refugees

ork could  
with new  
nths.

et art is  
ndee and  
y inspired  
round the

id Reform  
we asked  
ere.

## BIG TURN-OUT FOR BREXIT TALK



**Around 50 people attended the free event on Saturday**

Anxious EU citizens packed out an event organised to shed light on their rights following Brexit.

The event, organised by Public Policy Events, with financial support from the European Commission Office in Scotland, was

- [EU Citizens Rights and Brexit in Good Morning Scotland](#), BBC Radio Scotland, 18.09.2018 – 36 minutes in, Dorota Peszkowska, Project Co-Ordinator chips in a few words about our initiatives and EU citizens concerns
- [“Talk on EU citizens rights after Brexit to take place”](#) - Daily Record, 17.09.2018 — an invitation to our information session in Livingston

- [‘Valuable’ guidance on EU citizens’ rights](#) – a report from our Shetland session, Shetnews.co.uk, 05.09.2018
- [Visitors aim to reassure EU citizens over Brexit](#), Shetland Times, 25.08.2018 (pdf)
- [EU Citizens Rights Project goes to Shetland](#) — radio interview with the Project Chair, Mark Lazarowicz, BBC Shetland, 02.09.2018, listen 19 minutes 6 secs in