

Welcome to the first ever newsletter for **British in Germany**, the group dedicated to protecting the rights of British citizens in Germany during and after any kind of Brexit. As a coalition member of British in Europe, we're proud to stand for an open, inclusive, British-European identity – and we're determined to make sure that both UK and EU citizens' voices are heard in the ongoing Brexit negotiations.

It's a big task and the next six months up until October 2018 are crucial – so we need all the help we can get! If you'd like to **join up, volunteer or donate**, check out the information at the end of this newsletter.

The fight isn't over on citizens' rights – it's only beginning!

While the mainstream narrative right now may be that citizens' rights were all wrapped up in the first stage of negotiations, that's not the reality.

The reality is that we're all still in limbo, because the deal in December was not a final legally binding agreement and citizens' rights have not been ring-fenced. And, of course, the principle that 'nothing is agreed until everything is agreed' applies to citizens' rights, as well.

Equally, while December's common understanding between the EU and the UK may have been enough for the European Parliament to accept that sufficient progress had been reached to allow talks to progress, their [13 December resolution](#) recognised that there are still a number of major questions that are yet unanswered.



- Are Brits in the EU going to lose their **free movement** across the EU after Brexit?
- Will other countries in the EU27 also recognise our **qualifications**?
- What happens to **future partners** if we want them to come and live with us in Germany? Or if we want to go back and live with existing or future partners in the UK?
- And what happens to our **residence rights** if we leave Germany for a sustained period?

To keep these issues at the top of the agenda, British in Europe and EU citizens' rights group the3million put together [a report](#) analysing the positives and negatives of the UK and EU's current 'common understanding', which they presented to the European Parliament in Brussels on the 1 February.

Along with BiE and the3million, British in Germany are working hard to make sure neither the EU nor the UK government can pretend that the issue of citizens' rights is done and dusted.

Myth-busting: the majority of Brits in the EU are of working age

The truth about the agreement so far is that, for many of us, it **simply doesn't fit the reality of our lives here in Germany**. Nor does it measure up with the situations of millions of us – either EU citizens in Britain or Brits in the EU – who need assurances that our professional achievements, careers, businesses and personal lives will be protected after Brexit.

At an information evening for British nationals in Germany held at the British Embassy in Berlin on 13 Feb, Jane Golding, chair of British in Europe and co-founder of British in Germany, reminded the British Ambassador and representatives of the UK government of some important stats: **around 80% of the 1.2 million British people living in the EU are of working age**, with more than 370,000 between the age of 30 and 49.



This shows just how urgent it is to make sure rights like **EU-wide free movement** and mutual **recognition of qualifications** are secure: they're essential to many people's livelihoods.

In her speech following the Ambassador, Jane said agreements on technical issues like social security and pensions had been “all very positive for the group of us who are not economically active or are retired,” but that there had been “less good news in the common understanding for the nearly 80% of us who work.” You can watch her speech in full [here](#).

What next? Campaigning to keep our rights intact



So, “sufficient progress” has been made to move on to the second stage of Brexit negotiations – but despite our campaigning, the current agreement on rights has not been ringfenced.

In other words, nothing is agreed until everything's agreed, and a no deal scenario has not been ruled out.

Now, an absolutely crucial phase of talks is just beginning, and we're planning to step up the

pressure on EU, UK and German politicians to make sure our rights don't fall by the wayside. To do that, we need your help.

To date, British in Germany has achieved a lot in a short space of time. Since the beginning of this year, we've:

- **Adopted a new funding model:** In March 2018, BiG will become an official voluntary association ('Verein') in Germany, which represents a huge step forward in helping us fund and sustain our campaigning activities. We're now delighted to be accepting donations from supporters of our work, as well as donations for British in Europe, which is responsible for our core advocacy work across the EU and in the UK. [Click here](#) to donate to BiE via Paypal, bank transfer or cheque.
- **Had high-profile meetings with German politicians:** On 5 and 30 January, British in Europe and representatives from BiG had meetings with the German Brexit lead Peter Ptassek and other foreign ministry officials. Herr Ptassek acknowledged there were more questions than answers on Citizens' Rights so far, and discussed a new registration system for UK citizens in the EU – as well as the thorny issue of wider freedom of movement for Britons in Germany.
- **Set out key parts of our strategy for the year ahead:** At BiG Berlin's meeting on 29 January, we set out some of our key priorities, plans and objectives for 2018. These include:
 - Increasing UK/EU and regional German lobbying
 - Reaching out to business and private enterprise
 - Broadening our outreach efforts to reach all German cities with more than half a million people over the next three months
 - Drawing up a full 2018 communications strategy

Now, to make our voices carry more weight in Germany, we're keen to widen our community even further – bringing on board UK citizens from all parts of the country. Please [get involved](#) in whatever way you can, to help make sure our voice is heard over the crucial coming months.

News in Brief

30.08.17: British Embassy Brexit Open Evening Düsseldorf in cooperation with British in Germany at the Intercontinental Hotel Düsseldorf. Speakers were Daniel Tetlow and chair Rex Stephenson from BiG, Consul General Rafe Courage supported by Philippa Saunders First Secretary at the British Embassy. The venue allowed 80 NRW citizens to attend and was very over-subscribed. We are still looking to establish a BiG group in Düsseldorf if there are any volunteers.

28.09.17: BiG/British Embassy Brexit Open Evening Cologne held in the Cologne Anglican Church for local British residents. Speakers were Daniel Tetlow and chair Rex Stephenson from BiG and Nick Leake Deputy British Ambassador. A BiG citizens group in Cologne has subsequently been established with Mark Peirson at the helm. They are presently looking for more members and support. Contact the group via info@britishingermany.org with the subject heading 'Cologne BiG group'

Upcoming Events

02 Mar: British in Stuttgart Brexit event. 5:30pm-8pm at Cafe le Theatre Bolz Straße 6, Stuttgart, 70173

15 Mar: Nuremberg British in Bavaria launch meeting. More details to be announced on BiG website in coming days.

21 Mar: British in Bonn First Meeting. Email Philip Sloan for details: p.sloan@iubh.de

TBC: Planning underway for an information evening for Brits in the Frankfurt and Rhein-Main area, dealing with post-Brexit rights and dual nationality. Interested? Then email info@britishingermany.org with your name, town, and details of any networks you communicate in that might help publicise the event further.

15.11.17:

BiG/British Embassy held an open information evening in Sennelager/Paderborn with over 300 serving British military personnel and veterans attending.



Daniel Tetlow and Rex Stephenson spoke on behalf of BiG along with Rafe Courage British Consul General and Pete Godwin, Civil Secretary, HQ BFG. There were lots of concerns raised about the residential status of former BFG (British Forces Germany) once they are disbanded at the end of 2019. There are presently around 8500 military personnel and families still living in Germany. A BFG/British in Germany group has subsequently been set up to represent the future citizens' rights of BFG, and BiG is liaising with the Embassy Military Attaché, the British Ministry of Defence and BFG Comms and Secretariat in Germany. For more information contact big_paderborn@roy-mcintosh.de

11.01: Maria Noichl MEP gives her view on Brexit:

At a British in Bavaria event held in Munich this January, SPD MEP Maria Noichl gave the European Parliament's view on Brexit and citizens' rights. Maria insisted that protecting citizens' rights was a priority for the European Parliament, but added that some diminution in rights for British citizens in the EU would be "unavoidable". In response to questions from attendees, she promised to follow up on the issue of freedom of movement in the EU27 for Brits after Brexit, as well as the possibility of some form of EU citizenship.



17.01.18: Netherlands-based Brits instigate landmark citizens' rights court case:

Debbie Williams, chair of Brexpats Hear Our Voice, and four other Britons resident in the Netherlands appeared in an Amsterdam court with barrister Jolyon Maugham to ask a Dutch judge to put 'preliminary questions' about the status of UK nationals post-Brexit to the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU). This is a landmark case on the question of whether British citizens in the EU will lose their EU citizenship. At present, the Dutch state is appealing the judge's decision to refer the questions to the CJEU.



You can read more about the case [here](#).

23.01.18: UK Honorary General Consul meets Brits in Hamburg:

The energetic folks at British in Hamburg hosted their fourth successful event last month – a meet and greet with the UK Honorary Consul Nicholas Teller, at The Brainery, Hamburg. The event pulled in a crowd of around fifty people who were interested in finding out more about the latest developments on citizens' rights after Brexit. Tom Clark (pictured), part of the British in Hamburg team, gave attendees an update on the current agreement, while John Heaven, another British in Hamburg member, led the Q&A with Nicholas Teller.



01.02.18: the3million and British in Europe head to Brussels:

Following the publication of the joint agreement on citizens' rights before Christmas, the3m and BiE headed to Brussels to present [their report](#) on the outstanding issues at the European Parliament's hearing on citizen's rights – and to send a message that the issue was far from settled.

In a forceful address, Jane Golding, chair of BiE, told parliamentarians: "Now is the time to be reinforcing the fundamental nature of EU citizenship not weakening it." You can watch Jane's speech in full [here](#).





04.02.18: British in Europe gets the ‘youth vote’: Following a unanimous steering committee vote, Young European Voices has become the first group to officially affiliate with British in Europe – giving BiE an important link to a growing pro-EU youth campaign. “We are delighted to welcome Young European Voices as our first officially affiliated group,” said BiE outreach coordinator Debbie Williams. “It is particularly important for us to represent young people as they will be the age group most affected by Brexit.” More affiliates are expected to be announced very soon.

13.02.18: British Ambassador faces tough Qs at Embassy info evening: In conjunction with the British Embassy in Berlin, BiG held an information evening with British Ambassador Sir Sebastian Wood to give Brits a chance to quiz the UK government on their rights after Brexit. Around 400 people attended, with questions largely centring on dual nationality and continued free movement in the EU27. BiE and BiG Chair Jane Golding also made a speech, in which she highlighted the urgent outstanding citizens’ rights issues that remain following the pre-Christmas agreement.



Acknowledging that the UK Government had offered EU citizens in the UK a lifetime right of return in exchange for EU-wide free movement for Brits – an offer that has not yet been taken up by the EU - Jane demanded that this offer remain on the table in the coming months.

To watch the British Ambassador and BiE Chair Jane Golding’s speeches in full, click [here](#).



23.02.18: British in Germany launches first BiG / British Forces Germany Paderborn Meeting in North-Rhein Westphalia: 51 serving and retired military and their families turned up to discuss the issues they are facing in light of Brexit, with a Q&A video link-up with BiG co-founder Daniel Tetlow. The majority of those that attended intend to stay in Germany post-Brexit and they discussed some issues that are specific to British serving and retired military in Germany, as well as pensions, future residency rights and dual citizenship.

The group decided to set up a BiG British Forces Germany Paderborn group and communicate via WhatsApp. Roy McIntosh will be announcing the next BiG BFG Paderborn meeting shortly. For more information or to support Roy in the organisation of BiG Paderborn, please contact him at: big_paderborn@roy-mcintosh.de

23.02: Bill to give British expats 'votes for life' passes second reading: An estimated five million Britons abroad are one step closer to receiving lifelong voting rights in UK elections after a Bill promising UK citizens votes for life passed its second reading in the Commons. The [Overseas Electors Bill](#) was brought forward by Conservative MP Glyn Davies and should gain the support of the government, given their manifesto promises made in both the 2015 and 2017 General Elections.



Under current law, British citizens who have been abroad for fifteen years are more are unable to vote in UK elections. In June 2016, this rule meant that many Britons in Europe were barred from voting in the Brexit Referendum - despite the fact that they would be directly impacted by the outcome.

Call for web designers, fundraisers and interns !



The British in Germany website needs a new look – and we need people with web design skills to make that happen. Is there someone out there who can help us build a site that will attract and hold attention, route visitors quickly to the information they need and keep them coming back for more?

We're now also looking seriously at what funds we can raise quickly to support BIE our BIG campaigning. If

you know of anyone with strong fundraising skills and experience we'd love to hear from them.

We also have to sadly say goodbye in April to Elvira, our fantastic intern, so if you know of any future interns or places we can advertise for our next intern, please let us know and we will send you details. (Thank you Elvira for getting us off to such a great start this year!)

And then for general campaigning and lobbying we have a whole variety of needs. If you can spare a few hours each week, please get in touch. Speak to the leaders of your local BiG group and take a look at our Working Groups Tasks and Targets internal document to get an idea of what our priorities are for the coming months.

Contact: info@britishingermany.org for all the above or just a chat about how you could get involved.

Want to join British in Germany? Or donate?

We're at a crucial time in the Brexit negotiations – and experience has told us that our campaigning, events, advocacy and pressure on British, European and German authorities does work. To help us keep citizens' rights at the top of the agenda – and to share your ideas and skills with us – please get in touch by filling in the contact form [here](#).

You can also [donate](#) to support the ongoing work of British in Europe. As the head of our coalition group, BiE has been driving the core of our advocacy work with both the EU and UK authorities over the past year. BiE is the only citizens organisation with direct consultative status and now, as new Brexit negotiations get underway, the group has an incredibly important role to play in spearheading and shaping the discussion on citizens' rights – A one-off or regular monthly donation could really help in making a difference. [Click here](#) to donate via bank transfer, cheque or PayPal.

Or if you wish to donate to your local British in Germany group we are presently opening a BiG Sparkasse account. Please contact: daniel.tetlow@britishineurope.org with the subject heading 'pledge' for the necessary information.

Got news for the BiG Newsletter?

Are you putting on an event for UK citizens in your city? Have you had meetings with your local politicians about Brexit and citizens' rights? Are you campaigning to highlight citizens' rights issues after Brexit? If you have any news to share for the next British in Germany newsletter in April or you'd like your upcoming event to be included in our calendar, please ask the leader of your group to put it up on Slack newsletter channel or contact Imogen Goodman direct at: info@britishingermany.org with the subject line: BiG Newsletter.

And finally, many thanks to Imogen Goodman who has given many hours of her time to putting this first BiG newsletter together.