

# PETITION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

*To challenge the loss of EU citizenship of 64 million people  
and to challenge the limitation of the rights all other European citizens as a result of BREXIT*

We, the undersigned, ask that the European Parliament should use its powers of inquiry and oversight to challenge the assumption that citizens of a country leaving the EU should lose their EU citizenship. Deprivation of citizenship is a measure of last resort, the risk of which should always be brought to the attention of individuals concerned who should have a right of appeal. Article 20 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union states that “*every person holding the nationality of a member state shall be a citizen of the Union*”, but is silent, as is the rest of the Treaty, on what should happen in case a Member State withdraws from the Union.

Can UK citizens be involuntarily stripped of their EU citizenship and European citizens in the UK of their rights?

- Voters were not warned in advance of this danger in case of a majority to leave the EU. This issue was not mentioned in the document sent by the government to every household nor was it an issue for either side in the referendum campaign. Loss of EU citizenship is a hidden by-product of the vote on 23 June 2016.
- Those most effected did not even have the right to vote in the referendum. Is the loss of EU citizenship acceptable when potential votes among 3.3 million European citizens resident in the UK and among 1.3 million from the UK, who were resident outside their country for over 15 years, were disenfranchised?
- There is no guarantee in a complex and unprecedented situation that European rights will be maintained, even for long-terms residents. There is a risk that European citizens directly concerned will become bargaining chips in negotiations under Article 50 behind closed doors between the leaving and the remaining States. What kind of agreement, if any, could emerge? European Limbo could replace EU citizenship.
- This does not only concern mobile citizens. There are far wider repercussions. The loss of citizenship applies to all UK citizens at home and is a threat to other citizens across the EU. Those less directly but still affected include those who travel, temporarily stay, work across borders either physically or digitally, and buy and sell in the EU.

We ask the European Parliament to hear those concerned. Should European citizens who planned their future and that of their children be stripped of a status they could reasonably assume should be kept for the rest of their lives? Is EU citizenship, which has been made a “fundamental status” in case law by the Court of justice of the EU so meaningless that it can just be swept aside?

We suggest that the European Parliament:

- organises a public inquiry:
  - with experts, including those in European and international law, on the acquisition and loss of EU citizenship;
  - designed to maximise the input from European citizens both from the UK and elsewhere.
- reports on which elements of current EU citizenship to maintain post-Brexit, on a reciprocal basis for EU citizens resident in the UK and for British citizens resident in the EU;
- examines how to breathe life into the concept of a Union founded on its states and citizens; and, further, to make proposals in the context of the Article 50 negotiations;
- secures acquired rights, as well as new rights, in a reformulation of the definition of EU citizenship in the TEU and TFEU when those treaties come to be revised so that, in future, EU citizenship is based not only on nationality but also on a common category of long-term residence.

In a more interconnected world this first transnational citizenship of the modern era was enacted to bring people together. As the only EU institution which is directly elected, the European Parliament has the responsibility to protect this uniquely European concept and the rights of all European citizens.