

UK urged to guarantee right of EU citizens to participate in post-Brexit local elections

Written by Martin Banks on 6 August 2019 in News
News

A campaign group that first raised the alarm about the “mass disenfranchisement” of EU27 citizens before the European elections in May has now called on the UK Government to guarantee their right to participate in post-Brexit local elections.



Photo credit: Press Association

These rights include the right to stand as candidates as well as the right to vote in elections in the UK to district and city councils, city mayors, police and crime commissioners and to the devolved legislatures.

Speaking in Oxford, Dr Ruvi Ziegler, chair of the group New Europeans UK, said, "It is not widely understood that, in addition to the EU treaties, the right of EU27 citizens to vote in local government elections is stipulated in domestic law."

New Europeans UK said it fears the UK Government could legislate to remove these rights if Britain leaves the EU.

RELATED CONTENT

- [MEPs investigate UK #DeniedMyVote elections scandal](#) [1]
 - [British MPs demand urgent probe into #DeniedMyVote scandal](#) [2]
 - [Scale of UK's European elections vote scandal "staggering", says campaign group](#) [3]
 - [MEPs up in arms as up to two million EU citizens denied vote in UK](#) [4]
 - [UK Electoral Commission under fire as citizens denied vote in EU elections](#) [5]
 - [Concerns over EU citizens denied a vote in UK after online registration shutdown](#) [6]
-

"We should be under no illusions. A government that, through its practices, has effectively denied the right to vote to over one million EU27 citizens in the May 2019 European elections is more than capable of disenfranchising them if the UK leaves the EU."

"The UK government must now clearly state that it has no intention of doing this, irrespective of the manner in which the UK may leave the EU," Dr Ziegler added.

In a move that has alarmed campaigners, the UK has already started to negotiate arrangements on voting rights with EU Member States.

The implication is that the UK may in future only allow citizens of those EU Member States with which it has secured bilateral agreements to vote in local government elections, leading to mass disenfranchisement.

"It is not widely understood that, in addition to the EU treaties, the right of EU27 citizens to vote in local government elections is stipulated in [UK] domestic law" **Dr Ruvi Ziegler, chair of New Europeans UK**

"Removing the right to vote from EU27 citizens from any Member State would send a very negative and divisive message to people who have made the UK their home", Dr Ziegler said.

"Being able to vote means being able to feel part of the community, being able to contribute, being treated as an equal."

New Europeans is calling on the UK Government to "clearly state" that it will guarantee the voting rights of all EU27 citizens in the UK unilaterally.

In an letter to UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, New Europeans said: "We call on you to make clear [that] your Government will not take steps to strip EU27 citizens of their current entitlement to vote and stand in elections in the UK."

In the absence of such a statement, the group told this website that it fears that many EU27 citizens in Britain will assume they will lose the right to vote and fail to take part in the annual electoral canvas.

“If EU27 citizens remove themselves from the electoral register under the misapprehension that they are no longer eligible, we could see a similar scandal on the scale of #DeniedMyVote,” said Dr Ziegler.

In Scotland, the power to determine voting eligibility in local government elections is devolved to the Scottish Parliament, where the government has recently tabled the Scottish Elections Bill proposing to extend the franchise to all non-UK citizens who reside there.

“The Government should take a leaf out of the Scottish Government’s book and show that it believes in fairness, equality and inclusion.”

“This is an opportunity for the UK Government to show that it is serious about making all EU27 citizens feel welcome and valued in the UK,” Dr Ziegler said.

About the author

Martin Banks is a senior reporter at The Parliament Magazine

Tags

[Brexit](#) [7]

[EU Election 2019](#) [8]

[Foreign Affairs](#) [9]

[Justice and Rights](#) [10]

Categories

[Climate Crisis](#) [11]

[International Relations](#) [12]

[Public order, justice and rights](#) [13]

[Society and welfare](#) [14]



The

Parliament Magazine is a Dods Group plc title

Site Sections

- [Home](#)
- [Content](#)
- [Policy](#)
- [Magazines](#)
- [PM+](#)
- [Thought Leader](#)
- [Climate Crisis](#)
- [Editorial Calendar](#)
- [Policy Events](#)
- [Event Coverage](#)
- [MEP Awards 2019](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Services

[Dods PeopleDods](#)
[MonitoringDods](#)
[ResearchDods](#)
[EventsDods](#)
[Training](#)

Media & publishing titles

[Politics HomeThe](#)
[HouseThe](#)
[Parliament](#)
[MagazineHolyrood](#)
[Total PoliticsPublic](#)
[Affairs NewsCivil](#)
[Service](#)
[World](#)
[PublicTechnology](#)
[Training](#)
[JournalDods](#)
[Parliamentary](#)
[CompanionVacher's](#)
[Quarterly The](#)
[European Union and](#)
[Public Affairs](#)
[Directory](#)

Dods events

[Westminster](#)
[BriefingDigital](#)
[Health & Care](#)
[ScotlandMEP](#)
[AwardsThe Skills](#)
[SummitScottish](#)
[Public Service](#)
[AwardsPublic Sector](#)
[Procurement](#)
[SummitPublic](#)
[Sector ICT](#)
[SummitCyber](#)
[Security](#)
[SummitCyber](#)
[Security](#)
[2017Training](#)
[Journal Awards](#)

Partnership events

[The Health and
Care Innovation
ExpoCivil Service
LiveCivil Service
AwardsChief
Nursing Officer for
England's
SummitWomen into
LeadershipThe
Youth Justice
ConventionSocitm
Spring
ConferenceNHSCC
Annual Members'
EventDods at Party
Conference](#)

[Privacy PolicyTerms & ConditionsAdvertisingSponsorship Subscriptions](#)

Source URL: <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/uk-urged-guarantee-right-eu-citizens-participate-post-brexit-local-elections>

Links

- [1] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/meps-investigate-uk-deniedmyvote-elections-scandal>
- [2] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/british-mps-demand-urgent-probe-deniedmyvote-scandal>
- [3] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/scale-uks-european-elections-vote-scandal-staggering-says-campaign-group>
- [4] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/meps-arms-two-million-eu-citizens-denied-vote-uk>
- [5] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/uk-electoral-commission-under-fire-citizens-denied-vote-eu-elections>
- [6] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/concerns-over-eu-citizens-denied-vote-uk-after-online-registration-shutdown>
- [7] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/brexit>
- [8] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/eu-election-2019>
- [9] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/foreign-affairs>
- [10] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/justice-and-rights>
- [11] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/climate-crisis-0>
- [12] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/international-relations>
- [13] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/public-order-justice-and-rights>
- [14] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/society-and-welfare>

