

Brexit Steering Group member expresses worry over citizens' rights post-Brexit

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News

Danuta Hubner has spoken about her ongoing fears for the rights of EU citizens in the UK and Britons in Europe after the UK has exited the bloc.



Photo credit: European Parliament Audiovisual

Senior Polish MEP and member of Parliament's Brexit Steering Group (BSG) Danuta Hubner has told this website that her "personal worry" is not only the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement provisions on citizens' rights in the UK.

"Unfortunately, on the EU side this is not at all clear because there is not a coherent level of protection of UK citizens' rights in individual Member States."

“It is not at all obvious that there is sufficient coordination and monitoring from the side of the European Commission. The European Parliament has never got full information about this aspect.”

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She added, “Are there sufficient assurances? I am convinced there is good faith, will and commitment. But what will matter after transition is the enforcement and coherence.”

At a meeting last week, the BSG once again stressed the need to protect citizens’ rights in the Withdrawal Agreement.

It highlighted six aspects of the UK’s EU Settlement Scheme including: Attribution of pre-settled and settled status; the independence of the Independent Monitoring Authority; Possible consequences for EU citizens who fail to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme before the application deadline; Absence of a physical document; Measures to address the situation of vulnerable citizens and the applicability of settled status rights to all EU citizens who have not also sought British citizenship.

Meanwhile, MEPs have this week approved changes to the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) to include support for workers that would be affected by the UK’s withdrawal from the EU without an agreement.

“Are there sufficient assurances? I am convinced there is good faith, will and commitment. But what will matter after transition is the enforcement and coherence”

Danuta Hubner MEP

The EGF finances active labour policies such as reskilling of individual workers, career advice, training, relocation allowances or business start-ups.

So far, EU governments could only apply for EGF financial support for workers and self-employed persons who have lost their jobs due to globalisation or an economic crisis.

The change approved by Parliament specifies that redundancies and self-employed persons whose activity has ceased as a result of “significant repercussions” on business models, growth and employment caused by the withdrawal of the UK from the EU without an agreement should also fall within the scope of the EGF.

The legislation was adopted by 516 votes against 23 and 17 abstentions.

The change to the regulation will apply from the day after the EU treaties cease to apply to the UK if there is no Withdrawal Agreement in place. However, this regulation will not apply if an agreement is

concluded by the date of the UK's withdrawal.

Lithuanian Socialist MEP Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, rapporteur on the issue, said: “EGF has been operational since 2007 and has helped many workers who have been made redundant to find a new job. This fund works very well. We have to do our utmost to prepare for any possible negative effects that our companies and workers may suffer from due to a no-deal Brexit.”

Member States and the European Parliament must approve all EGF applications. Once approved, the EU pays 60 percent and Member States pay 40 percent.

About the author

Martin Banks is a senior reporter at The Parliament Magazine

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