



Activities in and around ETTW

No 16 – March 2018

I. News from Board and Working Groups

ETTW Board meeting 7 March 2018

Administrative matters

The ETTW Board met on March 7th to discuss mainly administrative matters – the financial situation and the 2018 budget – and prepare the conference later the same day on education for expats (see the resumé below). As almost all other NGOs the ETTW is going through a difficult time financially which is why our sources of income and our strategy of activities were discussed. Most importantly the progress of the ETTW online voting campaign (see below).

Brexit consequences

The consequences of Brexit for European Expatriates are of increasing importance as the date of departure for Great Britain moves closer. The complex situation of expatriate citizens from other EU countries in the UK and that of British citizens in other EU countries was discussed. Especially as far as authorities' respect of expatriates' rights as European citizens and, for some, their rights under the British Commonwealth are concerned the Board decided to focus on the following points:

- health care and health insurance for future residents
- recognition of exams and diplomas
- the rights of European expats to social security and protection after 2019.

The ETTW will follow the next steps of the negotiations closely (see below).



After the meeting all Board attended the conference on education for expatriates, “Providing Education for European Expatriates – A joint Challenge for EU and its Member States”, hosted by the European Committee of the Regions.

The date of the next Board meeting and ETTW general assembly was advanced to May 28. The meetings will be held in Brussels.

Contact: Steen Illeborg, Secretary General; steen.illeborg@mail.com

Education for European Diasporas – a joint challenge for EU and its Member States

In continuation of its Board meeting on March 7, the ETTW organized a conference on education for citizens living abroad hosted by the Committee of the Regions, which brought together European Institutions, Member States, ETTW members, NGOs, European schools and schools abroad.

The purpose of the meeting was to raise awareness of the importance of education for expatriates and their children and how to improve the cooperation between the different parties through mutual inspiration and a first exchange of good practices.

The conference was chaired by Dr. Raymond Xerry, President of ETTW. M. Csaba Borboly, rapporteur for education at the European Committee of the Regions which hosted the conference, stressed the importance of balanced mobility between countries and regions, ensuring a good education for all and avoiding a systematic brain drain.

For the European Commission, M. Michael Teutsch underlined, that the conference was timely as, at the request of the Heads of State, the European Commission was preparing a recommendation on the ‘*European Education Area*’ in which learning, studying, and conducting research would not be hampered by borders.



On behalf of the Board, M. Pierre Mairesse presented the *main challenges* identified by ETTW. One of them, and not least, is the paradox that while education is a national competence and the mobility of citizens a European competence, the education of children of mobile citizens in Europe is not higher on the European agenda.

Four key priorities for ETTW were discussed:

Two presentations followed, one from Mrs. Pia Solmer for Danes Worldwide, the other from Mrs. Els Duffhues for NOB (Network voor Nederlands onderwijs Wereldwijd) on their best practices regarding the learning of the mother tongue and the knowledge of the culture of the country of origin. **'How to preserve one's roots'**, a top priority for ETTW members as illustrated by the debate, should be treated by the European institutions.

Mrs. Lieselot Declercq of D-Teach (Flanders) presented distance learning and online tools to achieve this goal. Cooperation at European level in this field could be particularly relevant.

Another priority for ETTWs members is the lack of **recognition of grades/diplomas/qualifications** which does appear at the end of upper secondary education (e.g. with an IB baccalaureat), and the lack of automatic recognition of diplomas. The Benelux agreement demonstrates that it is feasible.

In a highquality presentation, Mrs. Karine Henrotte for Swedes Worldwide, spoke about problems related to the loss of talent in many countries (**'Mobility of talent-yes, loss of talent-no'**) inviting to develop targeted home coming policies and a European policy to attract talents and to avoid unnecessary brain drain.

This conference would not have been complete without reflecting on **the key role of schools abroad**, presented by M. Giancarlo Marcheggiano for the European Schools, and by Mrs. Raphaëlle Dutertre from AEFÉ for the French network. Interesting were the initiatives to give more opportunities to parents and children, via the local schools.



To have a policy, it is necessary to have a good knowledge of the situation: ETTW therefore invited Eurydice (<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/Eurydice/>) to complete the *inventory of schools and education services abroad* that ETTW has produced.

Dr. Raymond Xerry concluded that the objectives of the conference had been achieved (raising the awareness in European Institutions, discussing key priorities, improving cooperation through mutual inspiration), and thanked the Committee of the Regions and the participants for interesting presentations and debates. The conclusions are on the ETTW website <https://euromonde.eu/>

Contact: Pierre Mairesse pierre.mairesse1@gmail.com

The ETTW online-voting campaign

The ETTW online-voting campaign that was launched in October 2017 to promote internet voting for European expats in Member States and in European elections is still on-going. But to make significant impact via awareness raising events across Europe, we need to be more successful in getting support and visibility to the crowdfunding campaign attached to it.

To be able to vote online in the future we hope you will continue to share our campaign through your own network on social media and/or support our campaign by donating here

<https://eurominde.eu/blog/want-to-vote-online-in-the-future>

Our dedicated hashtag is [#myvotecounts](#)

Contact: Steen Illeborg, Secretary General; steen.illeborg@mail.com



II. News from Member Organisations

L'Union Francophone des Belges à l'étranger

Belgian nationality for life

The Belgian Council of Ministers has approved some important amendments to the Nationality Act. Anyone who wants to become Belgian will therefore have to successfully complete the entire course of civic integration.

Moreover, from the age of 18, Belgians abroad will be able to remain definitively Belgian, which will avoid them unpleasant surprises later.

Each year, a growing number of Belgians emigrate to foreign countries. Between 2010 and 2015 they averaged 35,000 per year. At the end of December 2016, no less than 442,189 Belgians were registered abroad. This bill provides these Belgians living abroad and their children with the guarantee that they will keep Belgian nationality for life if they have at least expressed their implicit desire for it.

Currently, persons born abroad with at least one Belgian parent still have to make a declaration before their 28th birthday, in order to maintain their Belgian nationality if they have another nationality. This declaration takes place about 1,400 times a year. However, it often happens that people are surprised when it suddenly appears that they have lost their Belgian nationality for failing to make this declaration.

The new law will also ensure that the right of nationality is harmonized with European and international obligations.

Contact: Christian Bauwens L'UFBE; christian.bauwens@ufbe.be



Swedes Worldwide

Celebrating 80 years as an organisation

This year, Swedes Worldwide will celebrate its 80 years anniversary in connection with the yearly Summer Programme that takes place in August, 20-21. There will be seminars and a gathering of all former Swedes of the World and lots of celebrations. More details will follow in our next edition in June.

This year's conference is called "*Sweden in the World and the World in Sweden - challenges for our common future*". The main speaker is Ambassador Jan Eliasson, Chairman of the Governing Board of the Stockholm International Peace Research and the moderator is Henrietta Flodell - Sweden's youth representative to the UN with a focus on sustainable development. In addition to a conference, we will also hold our annual meeting and a lunch at the Grand Hôtel, when we award the prize to the 'Swede of the Year' 2018. Especially for this particular anniversary, all previous winners are invited. We will also host an ombudsman meeting, which will take place on August 21. More about the jubilee, the program and how to buy tickets will be published later this spring. Look out for news on our website, in social media as well as in our newsletter.

National elections 2018

September 9 is the date for Parliamentary elections in Sweden and all Swedish citizens who have once been registered in Sweden have the right to vote. Swedes Worldwide is working to make as many expats as possible vote and is running a campaign during Spring and Summer stuffed with practical information and inspiration to make this as easy as possible.

There are 660.000 Swedes living abroad, which represents a rather important group if you think of them as a constituency in Sweden! Last election however, only 32% used their right to vote. The Government is now promising increased opening hours at the embassies and better information to make Swedish citizens abroad go to the polls.

Contact : Karin Ehnbohm-Palmquist, Secretary General; karin@sviv.se



III. News from Partner Organisations and other Sources

Brexit- progress on citizens rights

An [agreement on citizens' rights](#) in the negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the EU has now been reached. This will hopefully provide certainty about the future to millions of EU citizens and their families in the UK and in the EU.

The overall objective of the Withdrawal Agreement with respect to citizens' rights is to *provide reciprocal protection for Union and UK citizens*, to enable the effective exercise of rights derived from Union law and based on past life choices, where those citizens have exercised free movement rights by the specified date.

Any EU citizen who arrives in the UK before December 2020 will be allowed to stay on the same terms as currently exist, with their rights enshrined in law. The same applies for UK citizens in Europe. The only outstanding issue is how the agreement is legally policed and which court has ultimate jurisdiction. Such governance issues have yet to be agreed in any area of the Brexit deal.

This means there will be no change to the status of EU citizens living in the UK while the UK remains in the EU. In addition, the UK government has also agreed that EU citizens and their families arriving during the implementation period, from 30 March 2019 to 31 December 2020, will be able to stay on the same terms but will need to register if they choose to stay for longer than 3 months.

In summary, the agreement reached for EU citizens and their families implies:

- People who, by 31 December 2020, have been continuously and lawfully living in the UK for 5 years will be able to apply to stay indefinitely by getting 'settled status'. That means they will be free to live in the UK, have access to public funds and services and go on to [apply for British citizenship](#).



- People who arrive by 31 December 2020, but won't have been living lawfully for 5 years in the UK when it leaves the EU, will be able to apply to stay until they have reached the 5-year threshold. They can then also apply for settled status.
- Family members who are living with, or join, EU citizens in the UK by 31 December 2020 will also be able to apply for settled status, usually after 5 years in the UK.
- Close family members (spouses, civil and unmarried partners, dependent children and grandchildren, and dependent parents and grandparents) will be able to join EU citizens after exit, where the relationship existed on 31 December 2020.
- EU citizens with settled status or temporary permission to stay will have the same access as they currently do to healthcare, pensions and other benefits in the UK.

Source :

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/665869/Joint_report_on_progress_during_phase_1_of_negotiations_under Article 50 TEU on the United Kingdom s orderly withdrawal from the European Union.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/665869/Joint_report_on_progress_during_phase_1_of_negotiations_under_Article_50_TEU_on_the_United_Kingdom_s_orderly_withdrawal_from_the_European_Union.pdf)

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/33458/23-euco-art50-guidelines.pdf>

IV. Interesting Reading

European Commission proposes a European Labour Authority

Over the last decade, the number of mobile citizens, people living and/or working in another Member State, has almost doubled to reach **17 million** in 2017. The European Labour Authority, presented by the European Commission



on March 13, will help individuals, businesses and national administrations to get the most out of the opportunities offered by free movement and to ensure fair labour mobility. The objective of the Authority is three-fold:

First, the Authority will provide information to citizens and business on opportunities for jobs, apprenticeships, mobility schemes, recruitments and training, as well as guidance on rights and obligations to live, work and/or operate in another Member State of the EU.

Second, the Authority will support cooperation between national authorities in cross-border situations, by helping them ensure that the EU rules that protect and regulate mobility are easily and effectively followed.

Today, an extensive body of EU legislation regulates the free movement of workers and a number of such rules are being amended and modernised, such as for *the coordination of social security systems across the EU* and issues like posting of workers in the context of service provision.

The priority is not just to make these rules fairer and fit-for-purpose but also to make sure that they can be correctly applied and enforced in a fair, simple and effective way in all economic sectors. For instance, the Authority will help improve information exchange, support capacity building among national authorities and assist them in running concerted and joint inspections. This will strengthen mutual trust between actors, improve day-to-day cooperation routines and prevent possible fraud and abuse of rules.

Third, the European Labour Authority will be able to provide mediation and facilitate solutions in case of cross-border disputes, such as in the event of company restructuring involving several Member States.

The European Labour Authority will be established as a new decentralised EU agency and, subject to the completion of the EU legislative process, should be up and running in 2019. To facilitate the establishment of the Authority and make sure it is rapidly up and running once created, the Commission is also setting up an advisory group composed of key stakeholders to look into the practical aspects of the future functioning of the Authority.



These initiatives are part of the roll-out of the **European Pillar of Social Rights**, which was jointly proclaimed at the [Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth in Gothenburg in November 2017](#).

Further information: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-1624_en.htm

V. Upcoming Events

20-21 August 2018 Swedes Worldwide Summer Programme, Stockholm

Contributions to ETTW News Service from Member organisations and Partners are welcome to the ETTW News Editor: Ylva Tivéus ylva@tiveus.eu

Next edition: June, 8 with deadline for contributions June, 4 c.o.b.