



Activities in and around ETTW

No 17– June 2018

I. News from Board and Working Groups

ETTW Board meeting 28 May 2018

At the meeting, our President, Raymond Xerri reported from an important series of meetings on diaspora policies. *'The Annual Diaspora Forum – Diasporas as Partners for a development in a Globalized World'* has been organized by The Parliamentary Network on Diaspora Policies of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the International Organization for Migration. After a series of meetings in 2017 and 2018 - with the participation of the ETTW President - the Forum has now adopted its Final Statement.

ETTW's new website and Facebook profile

During the last year ETTW has developed a new facebook profile and revamped its website <https://euromonde.eu> . At the Board meeting our consultant Yanina Trubchanka from *Y-N Partners* highlighted the following elements:

- the new website is user friendly and easy to administer
- it can be easily linked to the social media
- it promotes the ETTW newsletter and other messages - including the i-voting campaign material prominently and registers new subscribers
- its design is adapted to all screens and devices

Member associations were invited to actively use the site for communicating and advocating events and messages of general interest and to publicize more information about their activities and experiences via ETTW.

As a result of our new facebook profile, a closed facebook group will be established to facilitate exchange of viewpoints and best practices on expatriate policy among members.



It was agreed to establish a contact group between member organizations' webmasters to encourage and facilitate better usage of the new web site.

Key issues of attention in member organizations

Members discussed how the current attention on migrants and refugees determines policies, rules and regulations concerning expats. This means hard work for expat organizations to influence governments and politicians in order to counter the negative tendencies. The areas of family reunification, taxation and unemployment benefits were mentioned among the top priorities.

Another theme which received attention and comments from all Board members was the ongoing cooperation between public officials and diplomats abroad and volunteers from organizations such as the ETTW member associations. Both positive and negative examples were mentioned and it was agreed that this item should figure as a theme in one of the coming Board meetings.

Education for young expatriates

The conference "*Providing Education for Expats – A Joint Challenge for EU and its Member States*" which ETTW co-hosted with the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) on March 7th was a success. Participation was higher than what had been expected and, more importantly, the right organizations, partners and institutions were there.

The board agreed to organize a *follow-up session next year* which could go into more detail with some of the most important subjects – such as summer schools and e-learning for expatriates. [More about the conference further down.](#)

Finances and priorities.

As is the case for other NGOs, ETTW has a strained economy. Two points were up for discussion. Whether to relaunch the crowdfunding campaign for internet voting, which - although operationally a success - had not had the desired effect in terms of donations. The other urgent consideration was how to find a solution to the ETTW's troubled financial situation, which is



characterized by rising administrative expenses without any corresponding rise in fees and contributions.

First the Board reassessed ETTW's priorities as reflected in our priority paper *Towards a Coordination of European Expatriates Policies – Supporting the Mobility of European Citizens*. The Board found no reason to change or limit the points made in the policy paper, but reconsidered its operational priorities stressing the two currently most important items - **education and diaspora policies**.

The Board found that the *internet voting* campaign had been useful and in correspondence with the priorities of expatriates. But it had been seriously impeded by the debate on hacking, data protection and voter manipulation. The Swedish example -mentioned in connection with the Swedish general elections in September-, demonstrates that the subject still has the attention of expatriates, and, given that the European 2019 election campaign will start immediately after the summer break, it was agreed that the issue should not be neglected and that the campaign material should be sought reused. It was also agreed that the crowd funding campaign would not be relaunched at this point.

The two major expense items – *office rent and meeting costs* – should be addressed and it was agreed to explore the possibility of sharing our office facilities with similar organizations, and to reduce the number of statutory meetings. At the same time the offer from our two Belgian member organizations to use their premises for such meetings was accepted with great appreciation by members.

The Board agreed to recommend to member organizations that they accept an extraordinary payment to cover the current deficiency.

The next Board meeting was scheduled for **November 22** in Brussels.

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Reports from ETTW Working Groups

Follow-up of the ETTW conference on education

The conference on March 7 (*‘Providing education for European Diasporas – A joint challenge for EU and Member States’*) fulfilled its two objectives, namely to raise ETTW members' concerns to the European Institutions and to allow the exchange of good practices between participants.

This was made possible by the commitment of the ETTW members and the quality and diversity of the speakers. The conference has also attracted the interest of associations that are not members of ETTW from Netherlands, Poland and Bulgaria.

Several actions are ongoing to assure the follow-up of the conference:

- The European Commission has just proposed a set of actions in the context of ‘European Education Area’, with a set of recommendations to the Member States for the automatic mutual recognition of diplomas and learning periods abroad by 2025, including the recognition of competences acquired at the end of secondary education (baccalaureat, abitur, IB ...), which is a priority for ETTW (https://ec.europa.eu/education/initiatives/european-education-area/automatic-mutual-recognition-of-diplomas_en)
- ETTW has been invited by the European Committee of the Regions to participate in a brain drain study.
- ETTW has also been invited by this same Committee to participate in a workshop on education within the ‘European Week of Regions and Cities’.
- France, Netherlands, Sweden, Poland and the European Schools provided contributions to improve the inventory of schools and educational services abroad.



- An exchange of good practices on a theme to be defined by ETTW will be organised in 2019

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II. News from Member Organisations

Danes Worldwide

Legislation and Rights

The late winter and spring of 2018 has been a busy time at Danes Worldwide. We continue to feel the effects of the immigration debate in Denmark, and with it the many legislative changes that greatly impact the lives of our members. This includes a proposed change in tax obligations, which has now been retracted (thanks in part to our critical hearing statement to the Danish Parliament), and a bill on family reunification that marks a positive departure from the connection requirement, while also introducing a series of new requirements for Danish-international couples looking to settle in Denmark. Currently in the last round of hearings, the bill is expected to be adopted and take effect on 1 July 2018.

Recent topics in the immigration debate include the now adopted rules for accruing eligibility for state pension, and political discussions on new rules for accruing eligibility for Danish unemployment benefit. The latter proposal was also tabled, due in part to critical input from Danes Worldwide.

Engaging with Danes abroad

Danes Worldwide teamed up with Copenhagen Goodwill Ambassadors in 2016 to conduct a survey under the auspices of Copenhagen Capacity, ultimately



leading to the report, “*Expat Danes – an overlooked goldmine?*” As part of our follow-up on this report, we have held meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and Copenhagen Capacity to discuss how we can best raise awareness of the value of our more than 200,000 fellow citizens living abroad, while also engaging and involving these citizens for the benefit of Denmark. We intensified these efforts in the spring of 2018 and will be delivering a report to the upper echelons of Danish politics with the aim of inspiring action. Danes Worldwide wants to contribute our nearly 100 years of experience with Danes abroad, our contact with expat Danes, and our work for a better legislative framework for fellow citizens residing abroad.

Visiting the Danish diaspora in Asia

This spring, Danes Worldwide visited Thailand and China to participate in meetings with local Danes. In February, we visited Bangkok and Pattaya. More than 80 members and their families attended a meeting in Bangkok at the Danish Embassy, organized in collaboration with the Danish- Thai Chamber of Commerce. We also took the opportunity to assess Danes Worldwide’s Learning Center while in Bangkok, which can continue for at least two more years with yet another teacher, giving us two teachers at Learning Center Bangkok. In Pattaya, about 30 local Danes and their families made their way to our meeting at the Norwegian Consulate in the city. The topics of greatest interest among the meeting participants were family reunification and the stricter eligibility requirements for state pension and unemployment benefits.

Danes Worldwide held similar meetings in Shanghai and Beijing, both of which were organized in close cooperation with the Danish-Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

Annual General meeting

Danes Worldwide’s annual general meeting was held on May 24 at Asia House in Copenhagen’s Frihavnen district. Board Chair Michael Metz Mørch presented the board’s report to the members in attendance. Laura Lochman, head of mission from the American Embassy, gave a fascinating talk on the embassy’s work in Denmark.



As part of the board's desire to ensure a "rolling succession", five new members were elected. The Board of Danes Worldwide now consists of 13 members, the maximum amount according to the by-laws.

100 th Anniversary in 2019

Danes Worldwide was founded in 1919, which means that we have a major celebration waiting in the wings. A range of events will be held throughout the year to mark the occasion. The preliminary line-up includes the following attractions:

A birthday reception will be held on the exact day – Tuesday, April 30 – at Danes Worldwide's secretariat, where we will be serving cake and a glass of bubble. In tribute to the organization's former Kronborg Meetings, there will be a special performance at the Hamlet Stage in the summer of 2019. As with the 2017 member's event, we are planning a workshop day in August 2019 focusing on political issues of special interest to Danes living abroad. We will also be holding a special meeting for Danes Worldwide's representatives in August, where they will help chart a path for the organization's efforts going forward and further strengthen our intercontinental dialog. On Thursday, August 15, we will be celebrating the 100 th anniversary with a grand gala dinner for members, non-members, partners and honorary members. The event will be held at the beautiful Vilhelm Lauritzen terminal and adjacent hangar at Denmark's most international address, Copenhagen Airport.

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More information: <https://www.danes.dk/en/frontpage/>

Swedes Worldwide

Celebrating 80 years as an organisation

In 2018, we celebrate our 80th anniversary by holding a jubilee in the 20th - 21st of August in Stockholm. The theme of this years' program is "*Sweden in the world and the world in Sweden – challenges to our common future*". The speakers at the event are Carl Bildt, former Secretary of State in Sweden, Ola



Rosling, son of Hans Rosling, and Jan Eliasson, former General Secretary in the United Nations. Henrietta Flodell, the youth representative of Sweden in the United Nations, will also participate. In addition to this seminar, we will also hold our **annual meeting** and thereafter an anniversary lunch will be served at the Grand Hotel. At the same time, we will award the winner of "*the International Swede of the Year*". The former winners of this award will be invited.

Promoting the General elections

Our main issue that we are working with right now concerns the general election in Sweden, which will take place the 9th of September. The main focus here is to get more people to vote. Only 32 % of Swedes living abroad voted in the last general election in Sweden four years ago, which is a very low number. In order to get more people to vote, we inform our followers and members about the election, how the political parties in the Swedish parliament look at different issues concerning Swedes living abroad, and also how to vote in the election from another country. This issue is very important for our members and followers, and it is also important for the democratic society. Therefore, we put a great deal of effort into this.

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III. News from Partner Organisations and other Sources

Congress of the Swiss Abroad 10-12 August 2018

Once a year in August, the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) organises a congress for Swiss citizen living all around the world. The event has become a popular opportunity to meet and network for all those, who are interested in the international mobility of the "Fifth Switzerland". The varying themes are picked to match the interests and expectations of this audience.



Every year a different region of Switzerland hosts the congress. This year's congress (the 96th) of the Swiss Abroad takes place 10-12 August in Visp under the theme: "*Switzerland without Europe - Europe without Switzerland*". Topics such as how the relations between Switzerland and the European Union should be handled and what the impact of the different emerging scenarios on their future in the EU will be, are to be discussed. Currently 455,000 Swiss citizens live in the EU and benefit directly from the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons (FZA).

The relationship between Switzerland and Europe is a topic that for the most part goes beyond the European question. It has a global dimension, not only because of the resulting consequences for Switzerland, but also because of the domestic and foreign policy or the economic impact.

BREXIT: Will EU-Commonwealth Citizens residing in the UK retain their Commonwealth 'citizenship' status?

By Brexit News - Mark Jones

Cypriots and Maltese living in the UK¹ who over the years became British citizens and many others who never bothered to become British citizens are now queuing not only at the Home Office to 'settle their status,' but, also at their respective high commissions and consulates to obtain their citizenship and passport from their 'homeland' which will provide them with EU access post-Brexit.

What does this mean? If these Commonwealth citizens become British citizens over the years and before Brexit, they would face no problems. The problem lies with those many thousands of Cypriots and Maltese who did not become British citizens over the years and left their 'homeland' as British subjects. Prior to independence of these countries; the case of Cyprus (1960) and Malta (1964),

¹ The UK includes England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The territories of Anguilla, Bermuda, British Antarctic Territory, British Indian Ocean Territory, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, Pitcairn Islands, Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan du Cunha, South Georgia, the South Sandwich Islands, Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri, Dhekelia, Turks and Caicos Islands. The three Crown dependencies are: Guernsey, Isle of Man and Jersey.



people who came to the UK were considered British subjects that were given a golden change to regularise their status in the UK in 1983².

Despite this change and chance, thousands decided not to take this golden handshake and even today, many originate from these countries and do not have their citizenship or 'status' resolved. There are about 4.5 million in total in the UK from all ethnic groups with 'status' issues. What will happen to these 'commonwealth citizens' who can be from both categories - born and/or be of Cypriot or Maltese background? What if these thousands ignore the Home Office 'settlement status Brexit handshake' once again?

Will they retain the 'rights and privileges' they enjoyed as 'Commonwealth citizens?' Cyprus is obliged to eventually join Schengen and Malta is part of the Schengen visa area. What does this mean post-Brexit? The UK was never part of Schengen and will definitely not be post-Brexit. Will this mean that Cypriots will retain these rights and privileges since they are still not part of Schengen, whilst Malta will not since Malta is part of Schengen?

EU-Commonwealth citizens/of ancestry residing in the UK

	Cyprus	Malta
Born in Cyprus or Malta and presently residing in UK*	82,295	30,900
Of Cypriot or Maltese ancestry, presently residing in UK with and without settled status issues**	160,000	50,050
Total	242,295	80,950

Sources: *statistics extracted from OHS 2016, Scottish Government 2017, Welsh Assembly Government 2018 and the Northern Ireland Executive 2016.

** Estimate established on the basis of statistics extracted from Ancestry UK 2018, OHS 2016, NHS 2017, UK State and Military Pension Departments and UK Home Office 2017.

Brexit - A green card for Europe

New Europeans has launched a campaign for a **Green Card for Europe** focussing on the 5 million citizens affected by the vote of the UK to leave the EU. This includes 3.4 million EU citizens in the UK and as many as 1.6 million

² From 1983 onwards, a child born outside the UK on or after 1 January 1983 (or outside a British Overseas Territory on or after 21 May 2002) automatically acquires British citizenship by descent if either parent is a British citizen otherwise than by descent at the time of the child's birth.



Britons in the EU who continue to suffer from a lack of clarity about their status and their rights when (and if) Britain leaves the EU.

It states that the EU is not in a position to offer “reciprocal arrangements” to the “settled status” being offered to EU27 citizens in the UK. Many EU member states do not want to introduce any kind of additional registration system for UK citizens in the EU - there is no attempt at harmonisation. Decisions about how to document who has permanent residency will remain a matter for individual member states.

The thorniest issue of all is the free movement *rights for Britons in the EU* who currently enjoy these rights because they are nationals of an EU member state. It seems that the UK government has not even attempted to negotiate this. The European Commission correctly states that it (currently) has no legal base to be able to offer such a rights.

New Europeans has therefore made the following proposals:

- Treat the 5 million citizens whose lives have been thrown in to limbo by the UK’s vote to leave the EU as **one group** not two. Britons living in the EU are children of Europe just as much as they are UK citizens and entitled to the EU’s protection. EU 27 citizens in the UK and Britons in the EU are all victims of Brexit.
- Act **unilaterally** – the EU cannot wait for Britain to act, it needs to take the initiative and secure the rights of Britons in the EU unilaterally because this is the right thing to do. What an example the EU will set around the world.
- Take action **now** - the 5million cannot wait for any longer in this state of uncertainty. It is undermining people’s life plans, their ability to make choices and take decisions about their future, their daily quality of life. It is a totally unacceptable situation given that the EU and the UK can act now to put a stop to it.
- Introduce a **Green Card for Europe** – we propose that the European Commission introduce a Green Card scheme which would give Britons resident in the EU the same rights they currently enjoy as citizens of an EU member state. The card will also be given to EU27 citizens in the UK as a ticket of entitlement to the rights they currently enjoy.



New Europeans wish to make clear to the British Government and the European Commission that a Green Card is needed not just for Britons in the EU but also to help EU27 citizens in the UK who urgently need a physical document to prove their status and protect them from discrimination. It is the only chance they have for EU 27 citizens in the UK to continue to lead their lives as “normal” that is as if they were still living in another EU member state.

There is backing for this kind of proposal from members of the European Parliament who in a remarkable act of solidarity have re-opened the debate about the future freedom of movement rights of Britons in the EU.

To find out more and to support the campaign for a Green Card for Europe please visit their crowdfunder page [Green Card for Europe – Stepping Up Stage 2](https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/green-card-4-europe-next/) <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/green-card-4-europe-next/>?

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IV. Interesting Reading

Equal pay for equal work across Europe

On 11 April 2018, EU ambassadors approved the compromise text negotiated with the European Parliament on the revision of the *Posting of Workers directive*. (from 1996). The final adoption of the directive will come at a later stage, once the legislation has been voted in the Parliament.

With this agreement, the EU delivers on the important principle of equal pay for equal work, ensuring that all workers are treated fairly across the Union. Local or posted workers doing the same job at the same place will have the same working and wage conditions.



The revision of the 1996 directive was launched with the objective of adapting the legislation to new economic and labour market conditions and to facilitate the transnational provision of services whilst ensuring fair competition and respect for the rights of those workers who are employed in one member state and sent to work temporarily in another by their employer (posted workers).

More specifically, it aims at ensuring fair wages and a level playing field between posting and local companies in the host country whilst maintaining the principle of free movement of services.

In particular, the new directive covers questions on remuneration and allowances, long-term posting, collective agreements, temporary work agencies and co-operation on fraud and abuse.

- **Remuneration** will apply from day 1 of posting, so that posted workers will benefit from the same rules on remuneration as local workers of the host members. The rules on **allowances** are also clarified.
- The concept of **long-term posting** is introduced. This means that a worker will be considered to be posted long-term after 12 months (with the possibility of a 6 months extension subject to a justified notification by the service provider). After this period, the posted worker will be subject to nearly all aspects of the labour law of the host country.
- The number of potential **collective agreements** which may apply in member states having a system for declaring collective agreements or arbitration awards of universal application is increased. Collective agreements can be applied to posted workers not only in the construction sector, as it is so far, but in all sectors and branches.
- **Temporary work agencies** are to guarantee to posted workers the same terms and conditions which apply to temporary workers hired in the member state where the work is carried out.
- **Cooperation on fraud and abuse** in the context of posting is enhanced.
- For the **international road transport** sector, the rules would be stipulated in the forthcoming sector-specific legislation.
- The deadline for **transposition** and the date of **application** will be 2 years after the entry into force of the directive.



- **More information:** [Press release: Commission presents reform of the Posting of Workers Directive – towards a deeper and fairer European labour market](#)
- [Factsheet: Towards fair labour mobility: Revision of EU Posting of Workers rules](#)

Easier civil judicial cooperation across the EU

Every year, there are approximately 3.4 million cross-border civil and commercial court proceedings in the EU. More and more people are living, studying and working in other EU countries, and businesses are expanding across borders.

The Commission has now proposed to modernise and digitalise judicial cooperation for cross-border civil and commercial cases throughout the EU to make access to civil justice cheaper, more efficient and more accessible to citizens and businesses.

The updated rules will:

- **Make it obligatory for courts to exchange documents electronically cross-border** - Currently, in a cross border case, both Member States' justice systems involved submit the documents by post, which is slow and incurs some costs.
- **Introduce a uniform return slip for documents sent to people and companies by post** – Currently there are many problems with receiving documents cross-border as return slips vary and often are not correctly filled out.
- **Promote the use of video-conferencing** - It will make it easier for persons to be heard without requiring them to travel to another country. Videoconferencing will facilitate this and allow savings..
- **Strengthen procedural rights of the parties and access to justice** – The rules will strengthen the rights of the defence, for instance it will clarify when and how people can exercise the right of refusal. Digitalising justice and using technologies cross-border will make justice more efficient and cheaper for people.
- The rules provided for by the Regulation on service of documents may also be relied upon in various out-of-court proceedings, for example in



succession cases before a notary, or in family law cases before a public authority.

More information : [Revised Regulation on Service of Documents](#)

European court rules Romania must give residency to same-sex partner

The same-sex spouse of an EU citizen is entitled to reside with his or her partner regardless of whether their same-sex marriage is recognized in the country, the European Court of Justice said on June 5. The EU's law on freedom of movement — which allows for a spouse to join their partner residing in another EU country — applies to same-sex couples, the court ruled, specifying that the term "spouse" is not exclusively for heterosexuals

The European Court of Justice has concluded that the rights of married marriages in an EU country mean that cohabited couples have the right to reside in other member countries where such marriages are not approved. The case concerns a Romanian and an American who married in Belgium in 2010 where gay marriage is legal. However, the couple was refused a longer residence permit from the Romanian state when they wanted to move there because the American was not counted as husband when same sex marriage is not recognized in Romania. "Although Member States are free to allow same sex marriage or not, they must not prevent a citizen's right of free residence within the Member States by denying his or her spouse of the same gender, who is a national of a non-EU country" says a statement from the court.

Full verdict: <https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2018-06/cp180080en.pdf>



Upcoming Events

- 13 June:** Free movement of Europeans - and now what?
Debate organised by European Parliamentary Association and New Europeans, Strasbourg
- 10-12 August:** 96e Congrès des Suisses de l'étranger, Visp Switzerland
- 20-21 August:** Swedes Worldwide celebrates its 80th Anniversary and invites to Summer Program 2018, Stockholm
- 22 November:** Next ETTW Board Meeting, Brussels
- 15 August 2019** Danes Worldwide celebrates its 100th Anniversary, Copenhagen

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

For updates, visit the ETTW website: <https://euromonde.eu>

