



Activities in and around ETTW

No 18– December 2018

I. News from Board and Working Groups

ETTW Board meeting 4 December 2018

At the meeting, ETTW President, Raymond Xerri informed the Board that he had been appointed Consul General in Canada by his government and that he will therefore step down as president of ETTW. He thanked the board for an interesting and challenging period as ETTW President and wished the organization good luck. On behalf of the ETTW members present Ivo Dubois thanked the President for having done an outstanding job in a difficult time.

New report from the Fundamental Rights Agency

Steen Illeborg presented a communication from the *EU Agency for Fundamental Rights* about its project on free movement and citizens' rights. This is one of our priorities, and our Secretary General accordingly participated in an expert panel in 2016 on the preparation of a study, commissioned by the European Commission, about case law in different member states. The project is now finished and its report, entitled '*Making EU citizens' rights a reality: national courts enforcing freedom of movement and related rights*', is now available. (see more under "Interesting reading")

The link is: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/free-movement>.

All country reports are also available online.

Education for young expatriates

ETTW has during the year arranged a Conference "Providing Education for European Diasporas – A joint Challenge for EU and its member States" on 7 March and a Workshop "Brain Drain: A One Way Ticket? - A Workshop on Youth and Workforce Migration" on 9 October 2018.



Pierre Mairesse summed up the conclusions of the two events. He pointed to the fact that both the ETTW conference and the workshop on work force migration had demonstrated that there is a keen interest in the educational aspects of migration and the brain drain reality, both in the sending and the receiving countries. This was evident both in the reports from the many educational institutions participating in the first conference and in the contributions from the many young expats who contributed to the discussions during the workshop. One of the recurrent themes in both events had been the need for *distance learning and e-learning* and Pierre Mairesse proposed that this theme be made the subject of a workshop to be organized by ETTW in the spring of 2019 - preferably in March – a proposal that was agreed by the Board

The conclusions of the two meetings and the inventory of international schools and institutes of education are now accessible on the ETTW website.

Contact: Pierre Mairesse pierre.mairesse1@gmail.com

Digital Registration of Expatriates with a view to internet-voting and administrative documentation - ID cards, drivers' licenses etc.

In continuation of the on-line voting campaign, launched by ETTW,

Peter van der Veldt, Smartmatic Sales Director Europe, had been invited to present the Smartmatic projects and the technical development which had taken place since the i-voting conference in the European Parliament in 2016, co-organized by ETTW, Smartmatic, SCYTL and the EP. He outlined the projects his company and its auxiliaries are working on in the area of voter registration, i-voting and vote counting, underlining their practical value for citizens far removed from administrative and government centers. (The presentation and its conclusions have been sent to members)

European citizens' initiative on permanent European citizenship,

ETTW Board decided to support a campaign for an ECI on permanent European citizenship, initiated by the ECIT Foundation (ECIT), which has been accepted for registration by the European Commission. What is needed is 1 million signatures, with a minimum of signatures from at least 7 EU countries.

Tony Venables informed that the proposal had already gathered more than 130.000 signatures and that a relaunch will take place in Brussels in January.



ETTW Board agreed to ask its member organizations to advertise the invitations to sign the petition prominently on their websites and communicate them to their members via email and the social media along with the appropriate forms

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

Reports from ETTW Working Groups

BRAIN DRAIN: A ONE-WAY TICKET?

Follow-up of the ETTW conference on education

As reported in previous newsletter ETTW was invited by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) to participate in a brain drain study. As a result our President Dr. Raymond Xerri participated in a workshop on the 9th of October on this theme.

CoR members emphasised the need to define local and regional strategies to counteract what is seen as a major problem in some eastern and southern European countries, calling for a fund to stimulate resettlement.

Mr Navracsics, the European Commissioner in charge of Education and Youth, has announced the creation of some twenty European universities, the development of cooperations between universities and business to make European regions more attractive for young people and the generalisation of automatic recognition of diplomas and qualifications.

ETTW President Raymond Xerri, on his side, explained that brain drain is not only a local problem but a European one. He called for a mobilisation of the European institutions to tackle it and all the problems affecting European expatriates, with the appointment of *a European Commissioner in charge of the diasporas* and the convocation of a great European diaspora Convention as is done in other continents.

Regarding brain drain, he insisted on the need to fight against bureaucracy, to promote the entrepreneurship of young Europeans and to foster cooperation with business.



The workshop presented an excellent opportunity to promote ETTW's activities in the field of education and, more generally, for expatriates.

Contact: Pierre Mairesse pierre.mairesse1@gmail.com

II. News from Member organisations

Key issues of attention in member organizations

Malta

Raymond Xerri reported from the Council for Maltese Living Abroad about its 5th convention. He underlined the importance of these conventions and reminded the Board about the ETTW priority of organizing a European Diaspora Convention, thus encouraging the work to be continued.

Denmark

Steen Illeborg reported from a diaspora initiative launched by the Danish prime minister. A task force composed mainly of top Danish CEOs has been asked to formulate an active diaspora policy as to how the hidden resources of the Danish diaspora all over the world can be used better.

A sounding board composed of representatives of Danish expats all over the world has been established to evaluate and assure the mutual benefits of the policy proposals both to Denmark and the Danish diasporas.

Romania

Dorin Fleseriu (DF) informed members that recent figures indicate that the number of Romanian expats in Belgium (mainly in Brussels) have increased substantially and that Romanian expats are now the second largest group among EU citizens abroad here. Dorin is back after a period of working in Bucharest and look forward to continuing his work in the ETTW.



Sweden

Swedes Worlwide has appointed Cecilia Borglin as new Secretary General as of October 1st 2018. She has had over 20 years of experience in a wide range of communication disciplines and sectors. She succeeded Karin Ehnbohm-Palmquist who after 10 successful years as Secretary General remains as board member for Swedes Worldwide.

The voter turnout for Swedes living abroad in the Swedish general elections 2018 saw an increase as a result of a well targeted campaign in social media, web, newsletter and PR orchestrated by Swedes Worlwide. Close to 80.000 went to the polls, which is an increase compared to previous elections. In 2014 only 32% of Swedes living abroad got to vote.

New study about accompanying women on their return to Sweden

Of Sweden-born migrants who move abroad, 75 percent return to Sweden. Thus, returnees are one of the largest immigration groups in Sweden. Catrin Lundström at Linköping University has investigated the situation of women returning home after years abroad. The picture that emerges is that these migrants end up in clamp between the global economy and the Swedish welfare system and this is particularly clear in terms of pensions.

Contact: Cecilia Borglin <cecilia@sviv.se>

Paschalis Papachristopoulos, member of *World Council of Hellenes Abroad*, has informed ETTW about a new service in the EEAS, *The Consular Crisis Management Division*, which has been set up to help Member States help their citizens abroad. The ETTW Board decided to establish contact with the service on behalf of member organizations.



III. News from Partner Organisations and other Sources

Congress of the Swiss Abroad supports electronic voting - but faces difficulties

In the last parliamentary session, the question of e-voting was addressed. As in many discussions elsewhere within ETTW member organisations there has been a *confusion between Internet voting and the voting that takes place, in some countries, using electronic voting machines in a polling station*, which is two different things and involves two different technologies.

On the subject of electronic voting in Switzerland, the Committee on Political Institutions of the Council of States decided on 11.10.2018 to follow up on the parliamentary initiative of Damian Müller (18.427) "Yes to electronic voting, but security must take precedence over speed".

This initiative calls for the inclusion of restrictions on e-voting in the Federal Political Rights Act. Only two-thirds of Swiss cantons and 30% of voters in these cantons would have access to electronic voting. In addition, two electronic voting systems will have to be in use to enhance security. According to the initiative the security of the electronic voting goes through the restriction of the people having access to it. It compromises the implementation of electronic voting for Swiss abroad, mainly because of the cost that this would entail. The cantons certainly do not want to invest the sums necessary for the introduction of electronic voting for only part of their electorate, namely the Swiss abroad. This voting channel is the only one able to guarantee the access of 172'000 Swiss abroad registered on an electoral register to their political rights.

The Organization of the Swiss Abroad (OSE) is the competence center for questions relating to Swiss abroad. OSE is an independent, non-governmental organization with no political or religious affiliation. It represents and defends the interests of Swiss abroad and offers them a wide range of benefits and services.



IV. Interesting Reading

Helping to make fundamental rights a reality for everyone in the EU European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

EU citizens have the right to move freely from country to country but in practice pitfalls exist when it comes to receiving residence permits or social assistance, finds the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights' latest report.

With millions of EU citizens enjoying their right to live in another EU country, over 50% of Europeans cite freedom of movement as the EU's greatest achievement. However, challenges remain, as FRA's report, '*Making EU citizens' rights a reality: national courts enforcing freedom of movement and related rights*', shows. It gives examples of how EU citizens from other Member States can be discriminated against, directly or indirectly, because of their nationality. This applies to getting educational grants, housing loans or finding work, for example.

The report looks at national case law related to the rights of EU citizens to reside freely in other Member States. It shows how courts in different countries vary in the interpretation of the key EU's provisions regulating EU citizens' rights. These include the definition of a family member, sufficient resources, or when they can receive benefit. This can affect people's everyday life, their family, career and well-being. Here *legal guidance and training for legal professionals* would help to remove the obstacles that prevent people from fully enjoying their rights when moving freely throughout the EU.

The report's examination of case law also points to restricted voting rights as EU citizens. This particularly applies to voting in municipal or European Parliament elections under the same conditions as nationals of that Member State.

Member States should make greater efforts to get EU citizens that are not nationals of the country they live in to be politically active and vote in European



and municipal elections. This includes *removing administrative barriers* such as proof of residence, the report says.

Member States should therefore systematically collect data on how the Directive on Free movement of 2004 is being applied and identify potential issues of discrimination. This will help improve understanding of the difficulties in applying the Directive. It would also help monitor use of the Directive.

European Commission and European Parliament reports have consistently highlighted the difficulties EU citizens face in enjoying their freedom of movement rights. The Commission asked FRA to carry out the first ever collection of EU-wide case law showing how Member States are applying and interpreting freedom of movement in practice. This report contains an analysis of a sample of this case law.

[Making EU citizens' rights a reality: national courts enforcing freedom of movement and related rights](#)

[Country studies for the project 'Living in another Member State: barriers to EU citizens' enjoyment of their rights'](#)

EU Court of Justice: Britain can unilaterally undo Brexit

It is now clear that Britain can unilaterally choose to undo Brexit and revoke Article 50, which controls the country's exit from the Union. This is evidenced by the ruling of the European Court of Justice on the issue that came December 10, 2018

The court states that a Member State is free to unilaterally withdraw its notification of withdrawal as long as the withdrawal agreement has not yet come into force, i.e. if it is done before March 29, 2019.



However: "This judgement clarifies the law. The judgement does not in any way change our policy. That the Government knows this course is possible, just as many undesirable actions are possible, does not change the fact that such an approach is hypothetical and the Government has no intention of doing it", says Secretary of State, Steve Barclay. Tbc...

Global mobility - what trends can we see?

The Boston Consulting Group and the international recruitment company The Network have jointly created one of the most comprehensive investigations on who and why people decide to move abroad. With 366,139 respondents from 197 different countries, they have analyzed trends in the global labor market based on people's background.

The trends that can be distinguished can be seen by some as obvious while others can create new thinking courses. So when it comes to global mobility, which ones are more willing to move to a new country than others? The report, among other things, raises these target groups:

- Singles are more likely to move abroad (65%)
- Younger people have lower thresholds to change countries as opposed to older ones (61%)
- People without children are more willing to move (60%)
- More men than women want to work abroad (61%)

Other exciting trends discussed are which countries top the lists you prefer to move. Previously, both the United States and Britain were on top of lists like these. According to this report, Britain has, after the decision on Brexit 2016, been replaced by *Germany as the most popular country in Europe* and the United States has become less attractive. Even though the USA is still ranked number one on the list, there is a growing trend around countries such as Canada and China. Unlike the United States, Canada has focused on a more open migration policy to strengthen the country's economy. Therefore, they



would like to get more labor and it's also easy to move there to study which makes the country an attractive destination.

The report also shows that the willingness to actually move abroad for work has decreased in different parts of the world. For example, fewer numbers of Chinese choose a foreign service as there are great opportunities to develop and climb in their career in China. This trend is also evident in Central and Eastern Europe, where fewer Europeans have an interest in working abroad if compared with previous years.

I wish to thank you all for the work being done and for the kind support being given during the years as Editor of ETTW News. Number 18 is the last News in this format and with me as editor.

I wish you all the very best for the years to come in your personal and professional capacity wherever you are in Europe and beyond!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

Ylva Tivèus

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