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Press release | 20.06.2017

# Possibilities for keeping EU citizenship after leaving EU set out in new report

## Press release from EFA MEP Jill Evans (Wales)

As formal negotiations get underway in Brussels, Plaid Cymru MEP **Jill Evans** is publishing a new report that explores how UK citizens could retain EU citizenship after the UK's withdrawal from the EU. The study was launched in the European Parliament on Tuesday, and the researchers will present their research findings to key decision makers from the European Commission and the European Parliament in Brussels.

The report – *'The Feasibility of Associate EU Citizenship for UK nationals post-Brexit'* was prepared for Jill Evans MEP by a team of researchers at Swansea University led by Prof. Volker Roeben.

It explores a series of possibilities for the UK and the EU to come to an agreement that would protect the citizenship rights of UK citizens, as well as considering a new status of 'associate citizenship'. The report also examines how the Welsh Government could use its powers to protect the rights of citizens.

The benefits of EU citizenship include the right to travel, live and work anywhere in the EU and a wide range of other rights under EU law regarding health, education, work and social security. The prospect of losing these rights as well as possibly losing their European identity has caused great concern.

**Jill Evans MEP** said:

*"This report is an important contribution to the debate around UK citizens retaining their EU citizenship, or having the right to become associate EU citizens.*

*"Many people in Wales still identify strongly as Welsh European and are horrified at the thought of losing their EU citizenship, with all the benefits it brings. I have received hundreds of emails from constituents who rightly feel that it is unfair that their rights are stripped away from them against their will.*

*"Protecting people's rights should come first in the negotiations. We need guarantees not only on residency rights, but also on citizenship.*

*"People should not have their EU citizenship taken away from them against their will. It is not inevitable. Other options exist and this report presents them in detail.*

*"On the EU-27 side, there is a lot of support in principle for the idea of 'associate citizenship', and an*

*unwavering commitment to securing the rights of citizens. The European Parliament's resolution proposes to "examine how to mitigate [the loss of citizens' rights] within the limits of Union primary law", and the European Commission has insisted that the question of citizens' rights be a top priority in the negotiations. Guy Verhofstadt, the European Parliament's chief negotiator, has been vocally supportive of UK citizens retaining the same rights as they currently enjoy under EU law.*

*"The research I am presenting to key decision makers today shows that there is indeed a way to mitigate the loss of citizens' rights, and proposes a way forward."*

Ends

Notes:

*'The Feasibility of Associate EU Citizenship for UK nationals post-Brexit'* - A study for Jill Evans MEP by Prof. Volker Roeben, Prof. Jukka Snell, Dr Pedro Telles, Dr Petra Minnerop and Mr Keith Bush QC, Swansea University, June 2017

The report has five key conclusions on protecting EU citizenship and related rights:

- Continued EU citizenship is possible in European and international law, but a new status of 'Associate Citizenship' might also be created;

- This can be achieved through EU legislation and the withdrawal agreement between the UK and the EU;

- No revision of the EU's founding treaties is necessary to achieve this;

- UK citizenship law is flexible and accepts the principle that people should not be stripped of citizenship against their will;

- Devolution in the UK brings particular responsibilities for devolved government to protect EU citizenship.

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**Responsible MEPs**

Jill Evans

Member

**Attached documents**

THE FEASIBILITY OF ASSOCIATE EU CITIZENSHIP FOR UK CITIZENS POSTBREXIT

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