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Scotland legislates to include EU nationals post-Brexit

Press release from EFA MEP Alyn Smith (Scotland)

Scotland's government has announced that it will bring forward legislation to ensure that all EU nationals resident in Scotland maintain their Scottish voting rights in the event that Brexit takes place.

The measure, announced as part of the Programme for Government, builds on the existing policy of the SNP that all residents in Scotland should have the same democratic equality as their neighbours. In the referendum on Scotland's independence all EU nationals resident in Scotland had a right to vote. The Electoral Franchise Bill will also implement reforms to ensure all legal residents, from all countries, will be able to vote.

The move was hailed by Scottish MEP **Alyn Smith**:

"From the bottom of our hearts, anyone living in Scotland is Scottish.

"We need more people not fewer, and I am proud that our government is taking real moves to reassure people who have paid us the supreme compliment of making Scotland their home that they are welcome and valued part of the community. The memory of the EU referendum where EU nationals were shamefully excluded from voting by the UK government still causes much upset.

"With the prospect of Brexit, which was emphatically rejected by Scotland, looming in everyone's minds it is a welcome piece of good news that the Scottish government at least is doing all it can within its powers to make people feel welcome and secure.

"The government also announced that it will pay the registration fees of all EU nationals employed by it, if the UK government goes ahead with this unwise and divisive proposal.

"The Scottish Parliament has only recently regained the power to legislate for votes in Scotland, and we fully intend to use it. Presently many nationals of other countries like the USA cannot participate in Scotland's democratic process despite being part of our community. We will change this.

"We have already implemented votes at 16 and will broaden the franchise as far as possible for Scottish and local government and any other elections to regional bodies.

"Where the legislation will require a two thirds majority agreement in Parliament, I am confident that with the

considerable support from the people of Scotland in a recent consultation to these proposals will bring this home soon."

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