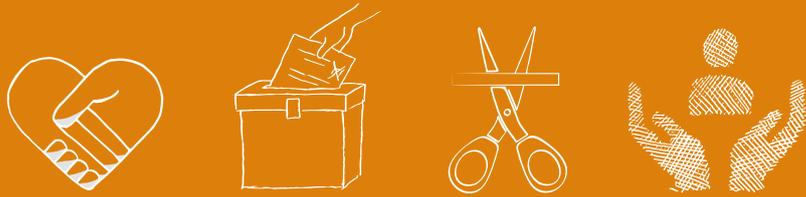




European
Commission



EU Citizenship report 2017 - factsheet

January 2017

The EU citizenship report sets out what this Commission has done and will do to promote and strengthen EU citizenship.

What is EU citizenship?

If you hold the nationality of an EU Member State, you are also an EU citizen. EU citizenship does not replace your national citizenship, it adds to it.

EU citizenship gives you many freedoms and opportunities, such as the right to free movement in the European Union, and the right to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal and European Parliament elections wherever you live in the EU. Ensuring that your EU citizenship rights are effective in practice is an important priority for the European Commission.

The EU Citizenship Report

Every three years, the Commission reports on progress and identifies priorities to make sure that EU citizens can fully enjoy their rights in their daily life, when working, travelling, studying or participating in the EU's political life.

The report is based on direct feedback from citizens, a public consultation conducted in 2015 and Eurobarometer surveys about citizens' knowledge and opinions on EU citizenship and their electoral rights. The Commission, together with the European Parliament, presented these findings at a public hearing on EU Citizenship early in 2016.

Based on feedback from citizens, the Commission will focus its actions on EU citizenship around four themes:



Promoting EU citizenship rights and EU common values



Promoting and enhancing citizens' participation in the democratic life of the EU



Simplifying daily life for EU citizens



Strengthening security and promoting equality



Promoting EU citizenship rights and EU common values

87 % of Europeans are aware of their status as EU citizens, which is more than ever before. However, awareness of certain rights, such as the right to consular protection, remains low.¹

Europeans increasingly want to know more about their EU citizenship rights and about what to do if their rights are not respected.

EU citizens expect more to be done to promote EU common values, in particular through education, cultural activities and mobility of young people, including volunteering.

1. http://ec.europa.eu/justice/citizen/document/files/2016-flash-eurobarometer-430-citizenship_en.pdf



Promoting and enhancing citizens' participation in the democratic life of the EU

EU citizens do not exercise their right to vote in European and local elections as fully as they could. Most Europeans say that turnout at the European Parliament elections would be higher if they received better information about the elections (82 %) and about the EU's impact on their daily lives (84 %).²

EU citizens living in another Member State would also welcome practices making it easier for them to exercise their right to vote in European Parliament elections (21 % experienced difficulties in this respect).

2. http://ec.europa.eu/justice/citizen/document/files/2016-summary-flash-eurobarometer-431-electoral-rights_en.pdf

The Commission will...

1. In 2017 and 2018 conduct an **EU-wide information and awareness raising campaign on EU citizenship rights** including on consular protection and electoral rights ahead of the 2019 European elections.
2. Take action to strengthen the European Voluntary Service and promote the benefits and integration of volunteering in education. Invite the first 100 000 young Europeans to volunteer with the **European Solidarity Corps** by 2020. It will provide the opportunity to develop new skills and meaningful experiences, to make an important contribution to society across the EU, and to gain invaluable experience and acquire valuable skills at the start of their career.
3. Safeguard the essence of EU citizenship and its inherent values; in 2017/2018 produce a report on **national schemes granting EU citizenship to investors** describing the Commission's action in this area, current national law and practices, and providing some guidance for Member States.

The Commission will...

4. Intensify **Citizens' Dialogues** and encourage public debates, to improve public understanding of the impact of the EU on citizens' daily lives and to encourage an exchange of views with citizens.
5. Report in 2017 on the implementation of EU law on local elections to ensure that EU citizens can effectively exercise their **voting rights** at local level.
6. In 2018, promote best practices which **help citizens vote and stand for EU elections**, including on retaining the right to vote when moving to another Member State and cross border access to political news, to support turnout and broad democratic participation in the perspective of the 2019 European elections.



Simplifying daily life for EU citizens

Europeans made 214 million cross-border trips to other EU countries in 2014. 15 million Europeans live in another EU country, mostly to work or study there. Free movement provides EU citizens with opportunities to travel, study, do business, work, shop and live in other EU countries.

Surveys show that EU citizens, especially younger citizens, see free movement as the EU's most positive achievement. They recognise it as a benefit for themselves as well as for their countries' economies: 71 % consider that free movement of people within the EU brings overall benefits to the economy of their country.

Nevertheless, Europeans can still find it difficult to move or live in another EU country, mostly due to lengthy or unclear administrative procedures, lack of information and difficulties in getting access to private services. Citizens also encounter difficulties planning cross-border travel which combines more than one mode of transport (multimodal travel). They also find it difficult to contact public authorities and access cross-border healthcare.

The Commission will...

7. Submit a proposal for setting up a '**Single Digital Gateway**' to give citizens easy, online access to information, assistance and problem-solving services and the possibility to complete online administrative procedures in cross border situations by linking up relevant EU and national-level content and services in a seamless, user-friendly way. Moreover, assess cutting red tape in national administrations by requiring citizens to supply their data only once.
8. Further facilitate and promote EU-wide multimodal travel in order to make mobility of EU citizens more efficient and user-friendly, through the specification of **EU-wide multimodal travel information** services and improvements to the interoperability and compatibility of systems and services.



Strengthening Security and Promoting Equality

Europe faces complex security threats. The vast majority of Europeans believe more common EU action is needed to address them. Free movement inside the EU also requires measures to secure the external borders and to combat and prevent crime. EU citizens and their family members living or travelling in the EU sometimes encounter problems when using their identity cards and/or residence documents, especially if they lack sufficient security features.

When using their EU right to consular protection, EU citizens most commonly (60 %) ask for an emergency travel document to travel back home. Existing EU rules establishing a common format for such emergency travel documents date back to 1996 and are outdated.

Almost all Europeans (96 %) think that domestic violence against women is unacceptable but it still occurs widely. Findings on victim-blaming and attitudes about consent are alarming.

Despite efforts to eliminate discrimination, there is a clear increase in the number of Europeans who say they have experienced some form of discrimination or harassment compared to 2012.

The Commission will...

9. In the first quarter of 2017, finalise the study on EU policy options to improve the security of EU citizens' **identity cards and residence documents** of EU citizens residing in another Member State and of their non-EU family members. The Commission will evaluate the next steps, options and their impacts in view of a possible legislative initiative by the end of 2017.
10. In 2017, assess how to modernise the rules on **emergency travel documents for unrepresented EU citizens**, including the security features of the EU common format, to guarantee that citizens can effectively exercise their right to consular protection.
11. Carry out in 2017 a **campaign on violence against women** and actively support the accession of the Union to the Council of Europe Convention on combating and preventing violence against women and domestic violence (the '**Istanbul Convention**') alongside Member States and present proposals to address the challenges of **work-life balance** for working families.
12. Act to improve the social acceptance of **LGBTI people** across the EU by implementing the list of actions to advance LGBTI equality and actively support the conclusion of the negotiations on the proposed horizontal **Anti-Discrimination Directive**.

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