



efc briefing

citizenship

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Have your say on citizens' rights at EU level!

EFC members and partners are invited to express their views on how to strengthen EU citizens' rights. Input received will feed into the contribution that the EFC is preparing to the consultation "EU Citizens' Rights – The Way Forward" launched by the European Commission. The consultation aims to identify the key barriers and challenges that remain for the full effectiveness of the rights stemming from EU citizenship¹, notably in cross-border situations, and look for concrete actions to be adopted to tackle them, with particular reference to issues such as free movement of persons, diplomatic and consular protection, electoral rights, free movement of civil status documents and consumers' rights. Interested EFC members and partners are invited to send their input by **9 June 2010** to the EFC secretariat at eu@efc.be. For further details, see http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/news/consulting_public/news_consulting_public_en.htm.

The findings and ideas which will emerge from the consultation will contribute to a substantive debate on enhancing citizens' rights which will be organised by the Commission on 1-2 July 2010. The conclusions of the consultation and the conference will inform the preparation of the Communication on Union Citizenship, to be issued in October 2010, in which the Commission will set out the measures that it will take to enhance citizenship of the Union, along with a roadmap for the adoption of those measures.

EU citizens' rights as well as citizenship issues in general will be discussed at the **policy briefing on EU policies and priorities in the field of citizenship** which will take place in the context of the EFC Annual General Assembly and Conference on 3 June 2010 from 15.00-16.00. This interactive session will allow participants to review with European Commission's representatives current and upcoming actions in this area and how they will impact foundations' actions in this field. It will also look at the role that foundations can play in moving the EU's agenda forward. For further information, see <http://www.efc.be/AgaConference/Pages/PolicyBriefings.aspx#citizenship>

Active citizenship and volunteering will also be at the core of the discussions of the **Spotlight session on the '2011 European Year of Volunteering: How to get involved at national and European level'** to be held on 3 June from 14.00-15.00. For further information, see <http://www.efc.be/AgaConference/Pages/Spotlighton.aspx>

Topics for consideration

Specifically, interested parties are invited to provide their input on the following issues:

- What are the main obstacles EU citizens currently face in the exercise of their rights resulting from Union citizenship? What could be done to address these obstacles (for example, by providing citizens better and simpler access to information, advice and problem solving assistance, etc)?
- In which areas should the rights of citizens be strengthened?
- What are the main obstacles faced by European Union citizens when moving to or residing in another EU country? What could be done to remove these obstacles and enhance this right (for example, by improving enforcement of EU rules; simplifying administrative procedures, etc)?

¹ These include the right to move and reside freely within the EU, to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal and European Parliament elections in whichever EU country an EU citizen resides ([Article 22 TFEU](#)), to diplomatic or consular protection by another EU country outside the EU if the citizen's country is not represented there, to petition the European Parliament and to apply to the European Ombudsman as well as the prohibition of discrimination and the new the European citizens' initiative introduced by the Lisbon Treaty. The Citizens' Initiative will allow one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States can ask the Commission to bring forward new policy proposals on any issue which falls within the competence of the Union.

- What could be done to improve the recognition of documents relating to birth, marriage, death, etc between Member States, and to reduce formalities and costs (for instance by ensuring automatic recognition of such legal documents in any other Member State, by establishing standard European formats for specific documents, etc)?
- What could be done to improve consumers' access to goods and services from other Member States (for example by harmonising consumer legislation or otherwise motivating companies to sell cross-border)?
- What are the main obstacles faced by European Union citizens residing in another EU country when voting or standing as candidates in municipal and European Parliament elections? What could be done to remove these obstacles and enhance these rights (for example, by making it easier to register on the electoral roll, etc)?
- What could be done to increase involvement in the democratic life of Union citizens residing in another EU country (for example, by facilitating their participation in political parties, etc)?
- What could be done to increase voters' participation in European Parliament elections (for example, by carrying out electoral campaigns focusing on European issues, etc)?
- What are the main obstacles faced by European Union citizens outside the European Union when seeking diplomatic or consular protection? What could be done to remove these obstacles and enhance this right (for example, by ensuring that Union citizens get exactly the same or at least a minimum level of assistance from any EU country, by simplifying the reimbursement of costs for evacuation operations in crisis situations, etc)?

EFC members interested in obtaining further information are invited to contact the EFC secretariat at eu@efc.be