

After Brexit, what?



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LONDON Freelance Branch members who are nationals of another EU member state face uncertainty over their continued residency status in the UK, as Brexit looms. The Branch asks members who are affected to make contact – in strict confidence – via the *Freelance* email editor@londonfreelance.org and suggests that if your continuing status in the UK is already assured, then your “other EU” colleagues need you to show support.

Many EU nationals in the UK are now seeking to gain Permanent Residence (PR), a requirement as a first step towards naturalisation

as a British citizen. The 80-page application form asks them to supply evidence of their continuing presence in the UK since their arrival, and of any trips abroad. While we self-employed keep better track of receipts and bills than others do, EU nationals can't be expected to have kept everything. Up to now, all they'd needed to keep track of was their EU passport.

Many applicants have received letters telling them they fail PR criteria as they haven't had private health insurance cover in the UK. They've never needed any: there's a National Health Service, for which

there is no sign-up requirement or mechanism. Most EU member states have a state-regulated contributory health insurance scheme, often with nominal premiums – a discrepancy the Home Office would seem to be deploying to deny EU nationals their rights post-Brexit.

Now Sophie in 't Veld, a Dutch Member of the European Parliament, has called for a UK representative to appear before the Parliament, once Article 50 is triggered, to account for unfair treatment of EU nationals. She has called on EU nationals facing the UK's “bureaucratic wall” to contact their MEP now.

The European Parliament can – theoretically – veto the final exit deal between the UK and the EU. Leaks suggest they're already planning such a move over environmental protection.

Write to your MEP, and your MP while your at it, regardless of your own status. Contact them via www.theyworkforyou.com

On **Monday 20 February** there is a mass lobby of Parliament over the rights of EU nationals, organised by EU nationals' advocacy groups The 3 Million, New Europeans and others. It's from 2.30-6.30 and they'd like you to register, via the link from this article online. A march to protest Brexit in general is planned for **Saturday 25 March**.

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A precarious living in the gig economy: event

LONDON Freelance Branch presents an evening of informed debate on the headlong rush by bosses towards making us all freelance – regardless of whether we want to be or not. It'll be a how-to evening on understanding the gig economy and knowing your rights in it.

We will explore some of the dynamic responses from the trade union movement – how we as freelancers in any and every line of work are responding to all this. There will also be drinks and networking at the

start and finish of the evening.

Come to hear and discuss cutting-edge theory and bold strategies on how to tackle threats to our hard-earned working rights from a diverse panel of speakers:

- Guy Standing – a Professorial Research Associate at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, and a founder of the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN), a non-governmental organisation that promotes a basic income for all.

- Ursula Huws – Professor of Labour and Globalisation at Hertfordshire Business School where she does research on creative labour. Ursula is a long-time member of the National Union of Journalists.

- Mags Dewhurst – chair of the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain Couriers and Logistics Branch, who won a ground-breaking legal battle against the delivery firm CitySprint over being treated by them as self-employed.

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Life after Brexit in Belgium

NUJ BRUSSELS Branch now has a guide for UK nationals – predominantly freelancers – working in Belgium. It opens: “while Brexit is making headlines for journalists all round the world, few of those actually writing the headlines have had time to give consideration to their own likely status after Brexit.”

Key points in the guide include:

Irish nationality is good (some UK nationals in Brussels Branch have already taken steps to get it); if you've been freelancing, keep records of your Social Security payments; if you've been in Belgium for less than five years, to become officially Belgian you'll have to decide on a language to demonstrate proficiency in – Dutch, French or German – and

start learning it now if you haven't already. Yes, you can have both UK and Belgian nationality.

The guide's at bit.ly/BXLguide and we'll alert you to any guides for UK national freelance journalists in other EU countries as soon as we become aware of them: if you know of any, please contact us via editor@londonfreelance.org

Sat 11 March
Special event on
precarious work

Mon 13 March
Brexit ethix with
star speakers

Mon 10 April
Rory Peck Trust

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