

What do Citizens Want from Brexit?

Survey Findings

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WHAT DO CITIZENS WANT FROM BREXIT? SURVEY FINDINGS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary of the main findings	3
Background and aim of this survey	4
Structure and methodology	4
Data overview: EU and UK sample in comparison.....	5
European citizenship rights after Brexit: the most valued rights and the new level of rights awareness among EU and UK citizens.....	8
The impact of Brexit on EU and UK citizens: main concerns and new forms of social and political activism	10
<i>Annex 1</i>	15
<i>Annex 2</i>	17

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

- Since the EU referendum vote, an increasing number of UK and EU citizens consider themselves less aware of their rights than before
- The most valued rights of both UK and EU citizens are:
 - The right to enter, live and work in another EU country
 - The right not to be discriminated against
 - The right to access the reciprocal healthcare system of another EU country
- 96% of UK respondents and 86% of EU respondents feel personally affected by Brexit. While the top concerns of both UK and EU citizens are related to restrictions to the right of free movement, UK citizens are more afraid of losing their European citizenship and of the economic impact of Brexit. EU citizens, on the other hand, are more concerned about an uncertain future and fear discrimination and xenophobia in the UK
- The majority of EU and UK citizens (four out of seven EU respondents and seven out of nine UK respondents) have become more socially and politically engaged after Brexit. They keep themselves better informed about the current political situation (mainly because they no longer trust the information coming from the media and politicians) and are more vocal about their rights. Finally, as a consequence of the referendum, most of the respondents have tried to do as much as possible to reverse the Brexit decision, such as joining a pro-EU political party, attending demonstrations and being more active in carrying out pro-EU campaigns on social media.

BACKGROUND AND AIM OF THIS SURVEY

This report is based on the findings of a survey designed and launched by ECAS on 29 March 2017, coinciding with the date when Theresa May submitted the letter to the President of the European Council that triggered Article 50 TEU.

The aim of this survey was to gather the key concerns of citizens directly impacted by Brexit, namely UK citizens living elsewhere in the EU and EU citizens residing in the UK, in order to provide feedback to decision-makers who are going to be involved in the withdrawal negotiations.

This activity has been carried out in the framework of the Citizen Brexit Observatory: a partnership of the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS), the University of Sheffield School of Law and the Law Centres Network to support fair treatment of EU citizens living in the UK and UK citizens living in the EU.

STRUCTURE AND METHODOLOGY

The survey was divided into two parts. The first part included questions to profile the respondents and describe the sample (i.e. nationality, country of residence, age, gender, occupation and level of education). The second part included a set of multiple choice or ranking-type questions, as well as open questions. Respondents were asked about their perception of the impact that Brexit is having on their lives, on their political and social attitudes, about the rights or benefits of EU citizenship they valued the most, and about their own assessment of the level of awareness of such rights before and after the June referendum.

To ensure consistency in the analysis of the open questions, broad categories were identified by the authors in order to classify the various responses (see Annex 1). The results were systematised in separate tables (available upon request), which indicate the number of times a topic was mentioned in the responses. Results were controlled by two variables, age group and occupation, in order to provide a better picture of the profile behind the responses. Each of the responses was then classified into one, two or more of the pre-defined categories.

The survey was promoted among various social media groups of UK expats in the EU and EU communities in the UK, in order to ensure representativeness of the sample including Brexpats Hear Our Voice, Gibraltar for Europe, Brexit NL, Français à Glasgow, Irish in Britain, Londres Expat, the 48%, the3million, EspaÑoles en Reino Unido-Surviving Brexit, Bremain in Spain, EU Immigrant Brexit Survival, to mention but a few.

This survey received a total of 1,670 unique responses: 71% (1,190) from British citizens and 28% (468 responses) from other EU citizens, including 26 responses from citizens holding dual citizenship. The

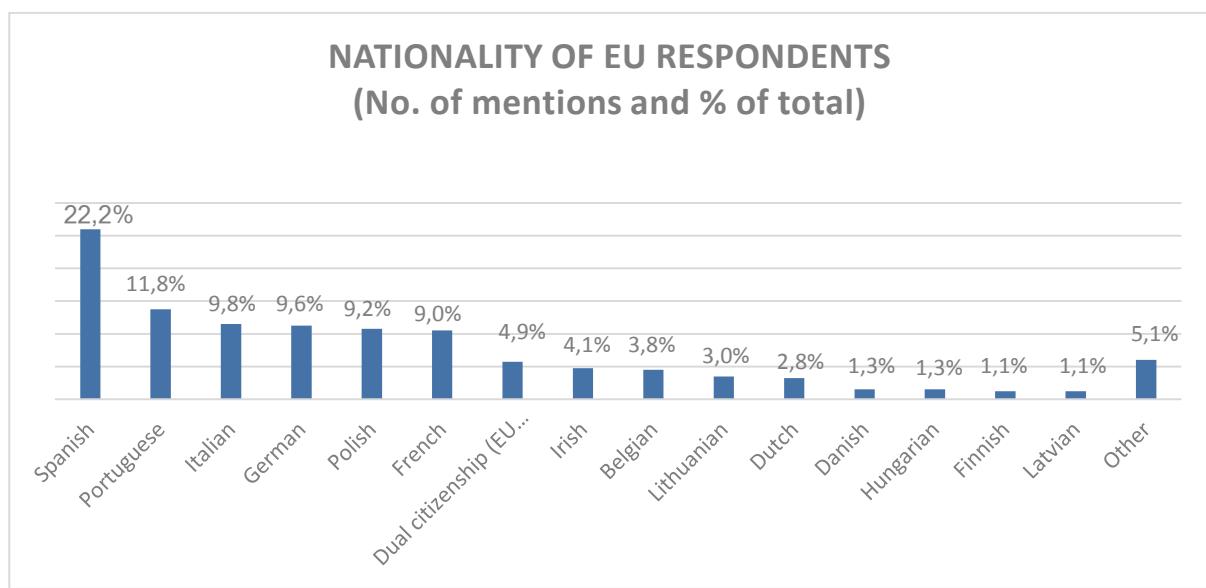
twelve responses from other citizens (0.72%) have not been taken into account in the qualitative analysis that follows. The latter include third country nationals and three respondents who classified themselves as 'European' without specifying a particular nationality.

The responses of the two groups – non-British EU citizens and British citizens – have been analysed separately in order to better understand and account for the different concerns expressed by respondents and to enable a comparative analysis.

DATA OVERVIEW: EU AND UK SAMPLE IN COMPARISON

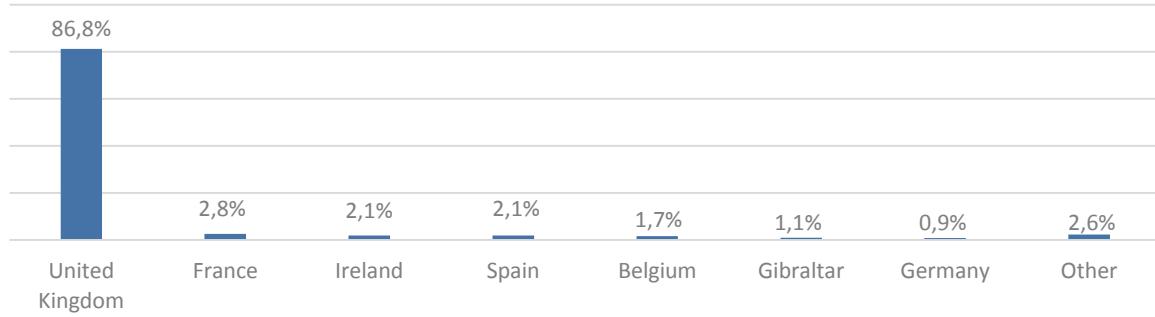
Nationality and country of residence: the vast majority of the EU respondents live in the UK, while the predominant part of the UK respondents live in the EU

72% of the 'EU citizens' are from six nationalities - Spanish (22%), Portuguese (11.7%), Italian (9.8%), German (9.6%), Polish (9.2%) and French (8.9%), which largely reflects the main EU communities currently residing in the UK (see graph below).



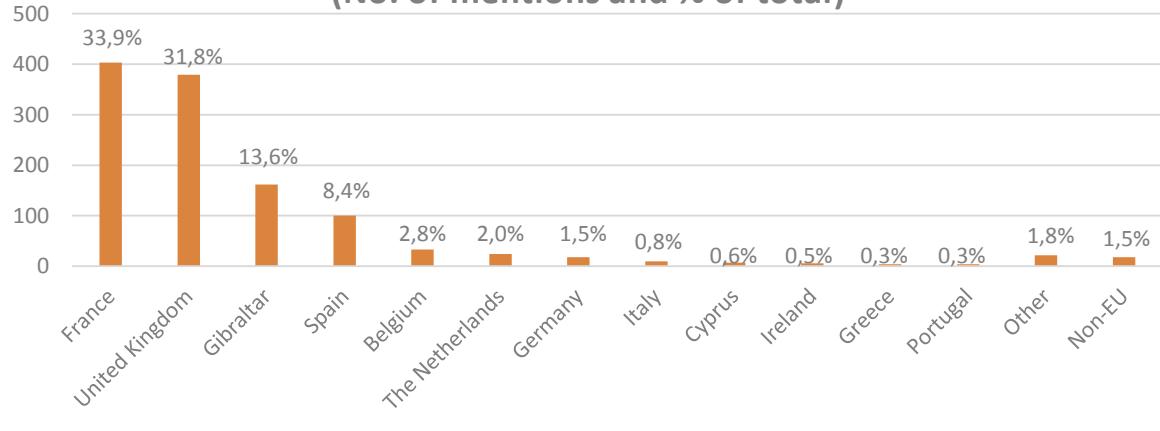
More than four-fifths (87%) of EU respondents live in the UK. The rest of the respondents live in France, Ireland, Spain, Belgium, Gibraltar and Germany, more or less evenly distributed, as well as in Italy, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Luxembourg, Portugal, Sweden and the Netherlands, or find themselves in a cross-border situation (included in the graph below under the category 'other').

RESIDENCE OF EU RESPONDENTS (No. of mentions and % of total)



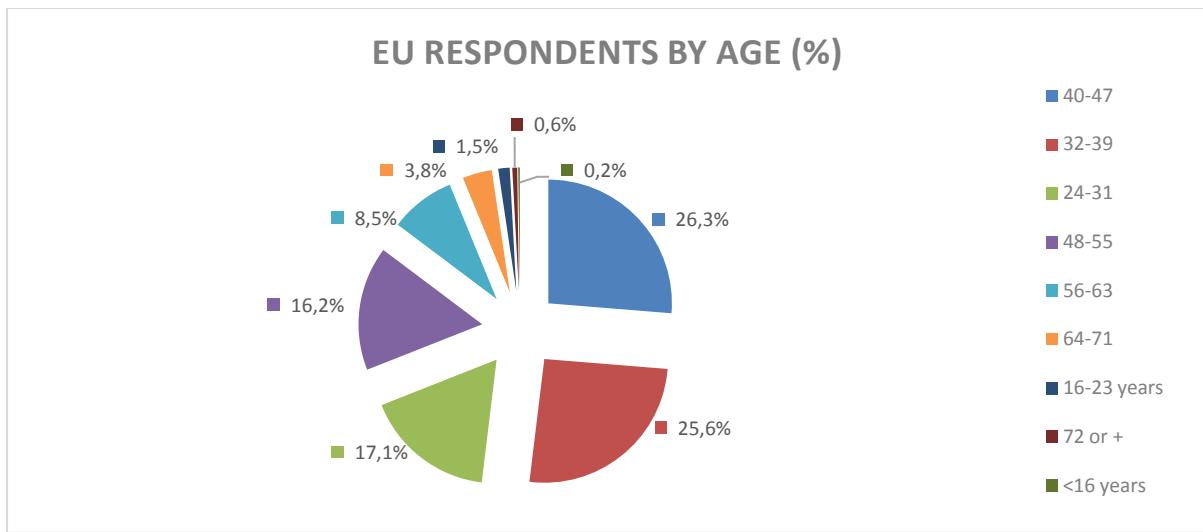
Only 45.4% of the British respondents reside in the United Kingdom or in a British overseas territory under the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the latter (such as Gibraltar). 54.6% of the replies were submitted by UK citizens living abroad, with France being the top host country (33.9% of respondents), followed by Spain (8.4%), Belgium (2.8%), The Netherlands (2%) and Germany (1.51%), and others.

RESIDENCE OF UK RESPONDENTS (No. of mentions and % of total)

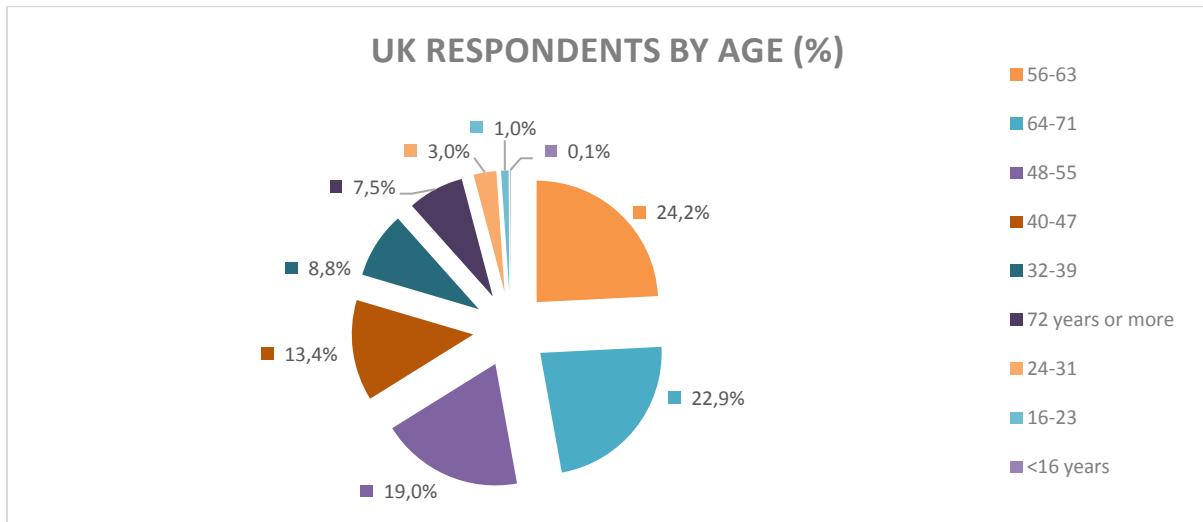


Age of the respondents: EU young generation vs. UK old generation

The age of the respondents of the two groups differs significantly. The majority of EU respondents are either young or at an economically active age up to 47 years (44.4% aged 16-39 and 26% aged 40-47). Only 13% are aged 56 or over.

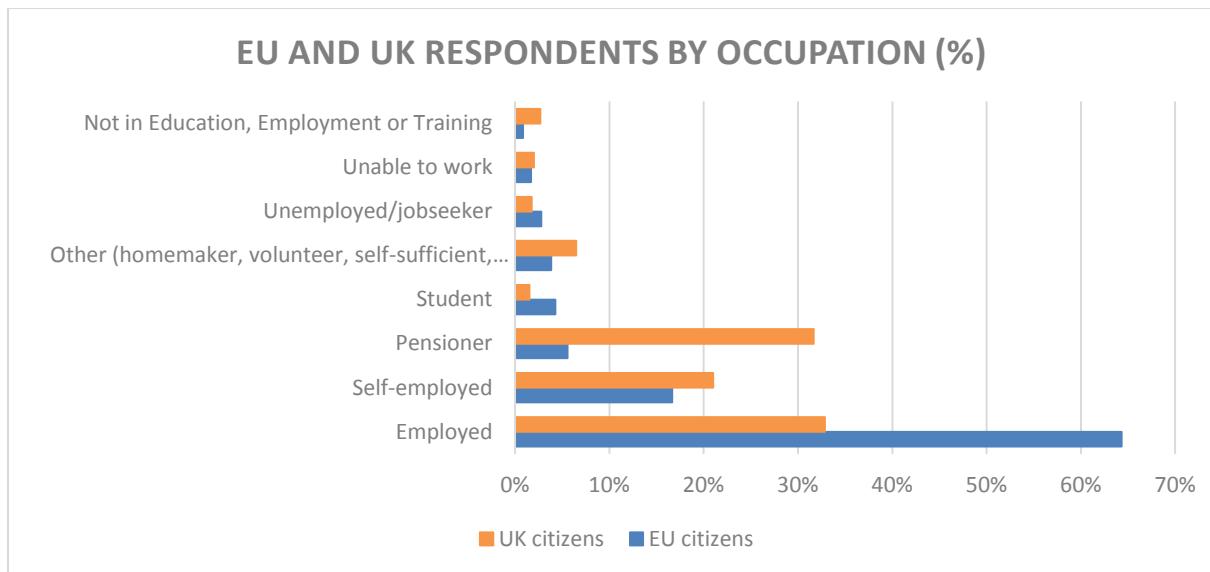


The majority of UK respondents, on the contrary, are over 56 years old: 56-63 (24.2%) and 64-71 (22.9%). UK citizens younger than 40 years old account for only 12.9% of responses.



Occupational status: EU employed/self-employed concerns compared to UK pensioners' views

The majority of EU respondents – 81% – are either employed or self-employed, while almost one-third (31.7%) of UK citizens are pensioners. Pensioners account only for 5.6% of respondents in the EU citizens group.



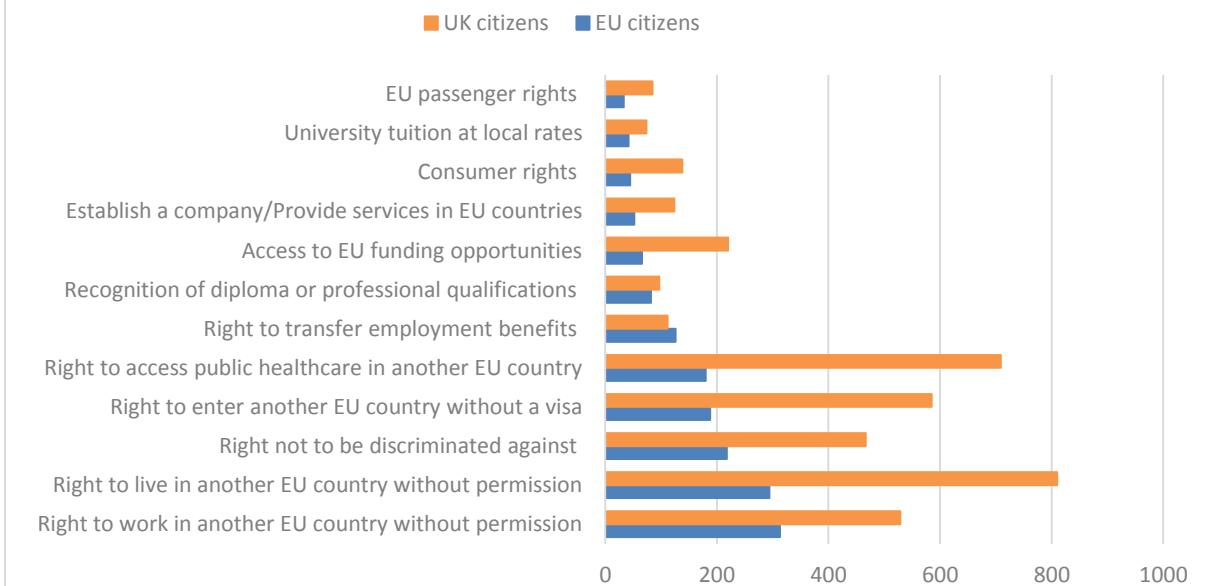
EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS AFTER BREXIT: THE MOST VALUED RIGHTS AND THE NEW LEVEL OF RIGHTS AWARENESS AMONG EU AND UK CITIZENS

The most valued rights for EU and UK citizens: the right to work vs. the right to live in another Member State; the right not to be discriminated against vs. the right to access public healthcare

The most cherished right by UK citizens is the right to live in another Member State (810 mentions), followed by the right to access the healthcare system in another Member State (709 mentions).

Comparatively, what EU citizens value the most is their right to live and work in another EU country (313 and 294 mentions, respectively), and the right not to be discriminated against on grounds of nationality, age, beliefs, disability or sex (218). This is confirmed in the qualitative analysis of the open questions which follows below, where free movement restrictions as well as fears of xenophobia and discrimination emerge as key issues of concern regarding Brexit.

TOP VALUED RIGHTS BY EU AND UK CITIZENS (No. of mentions)

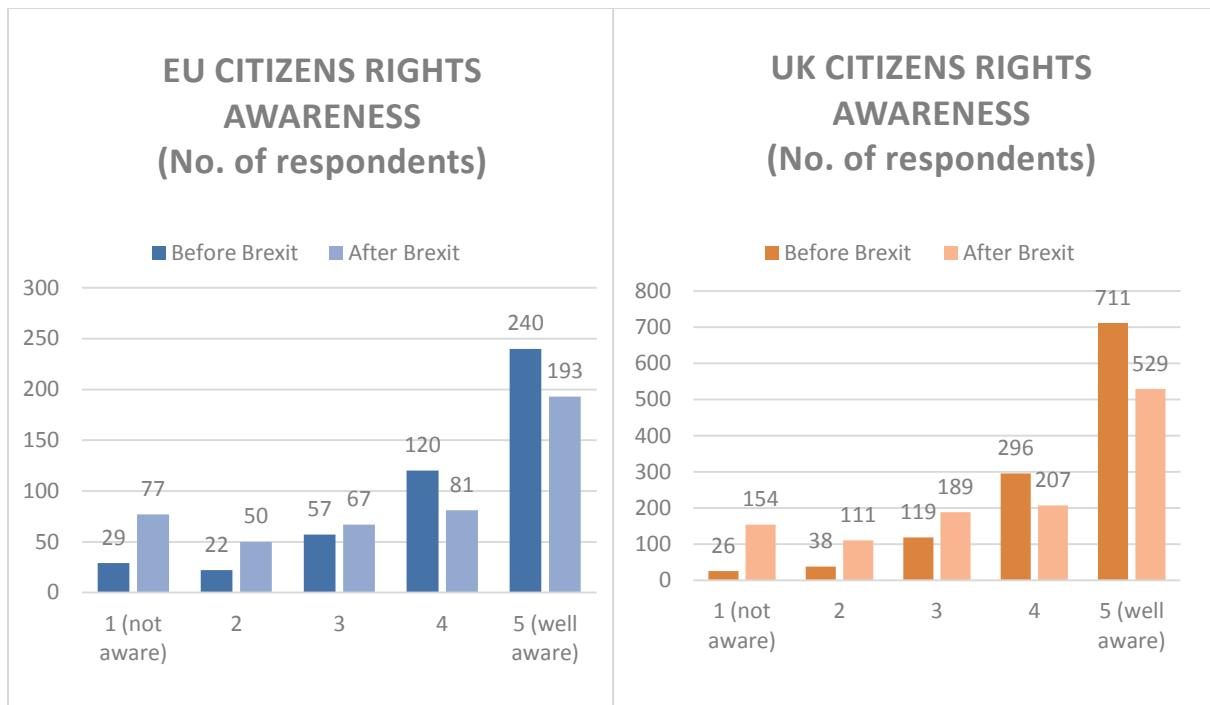


Note: The figure shows the number of times a right was selected by respondents. Respondents were asked to select a maximum of three rights, but a few selected more than three.

Rights awareness before and after the referendum: a 10-15 percentage point decrease

The self-perception of rights awareness before Brexit among EU citizens and especially among UK citizens was significantly higher than after the referendum vote on 23 June. Whilst the personal perception in both groups of being 'highly aware' of own rights has dropped (from 51% to 41% in the case of EU citizens and from 59% to 44% for UK citizens), the total lack of awareness, especially among UK citizens, has dramatically increased (from 6% to 16% in the case of EU citizens and from 2% to 13% in the case of UK citizens).

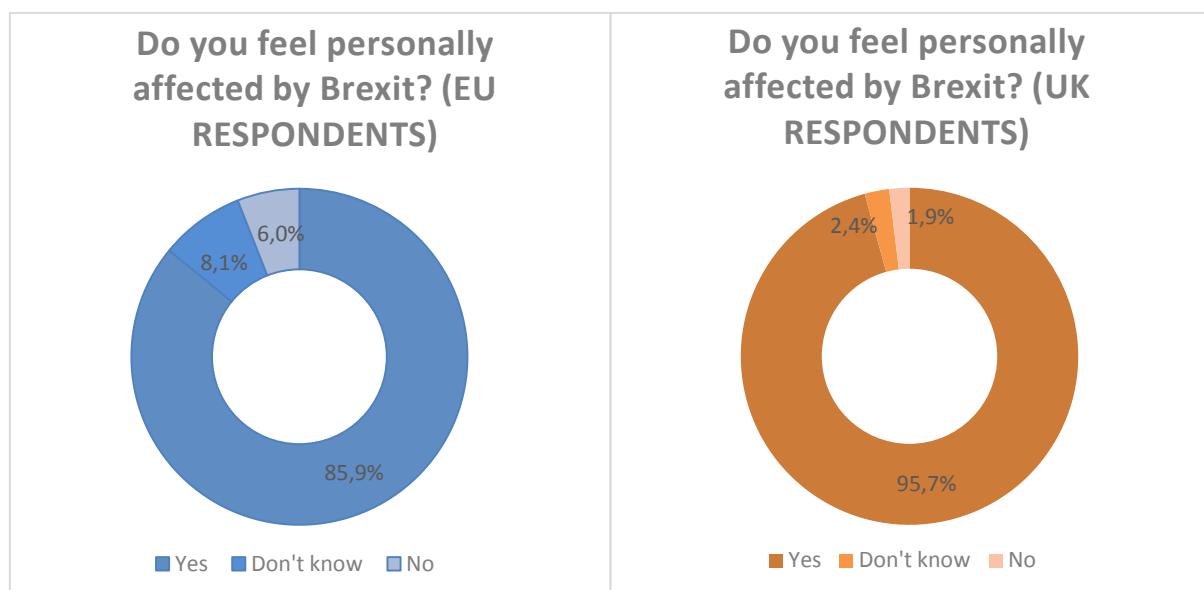
This represents an increase of about 10 percentage points of non-awareness for both groups, and a decrease in high awareness of rights of about 15 percentage points among UK citizens and 10 percentage points among EU citizens.



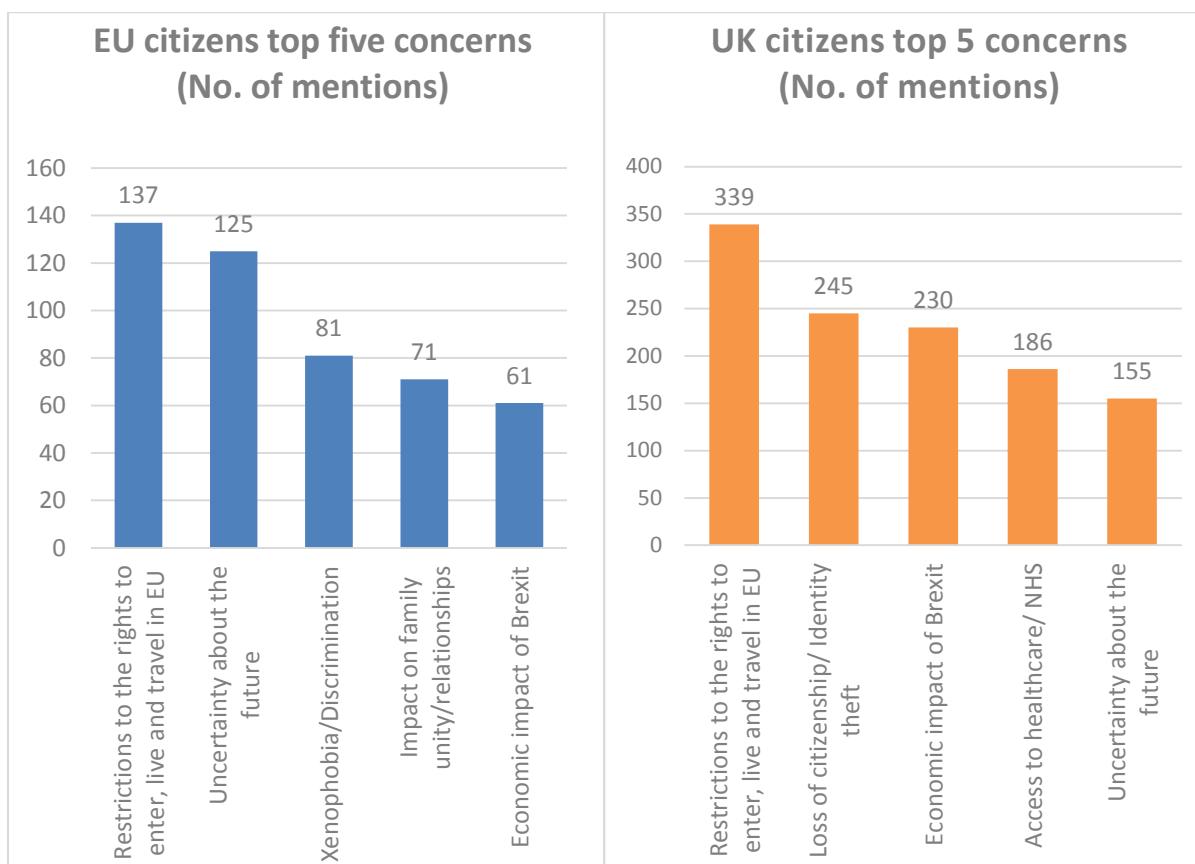
THE IMPACT OF BREXIT ON EU AND UK CITIZENS: MAIN CONCERNS AND NEW FORMS OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Perception of the impact of Brexit on personal life

Almost 86% of EU citizens and 96% of UK citizens feel personally affected by Brexit.



Top five concerns after Brexit: freedom of movement restrictions in the EU as the main concern for both EU and UK citizens. While EU citizens fear xenophobia and discrimination, UK citizens do not want to lose their EU citizenship and European identity



Note: for more information about the top ten concerns, please see Tables 1 and 2 of Annex 2

Freedom of movement restrictions in the EU represent the top concern for both EU and UK respondents (especially for EU respondents aged 40-47 and UK citizens aged 56-72).

Uncertainty about the future and the impact that Brexit will have on the economy and incomes (i.e. price increases, a loss of investment, the devaluation of the pound, the value of pensions, etc.) are also among the five main concerns shared by both groups of respondents, even if they have a different order of priority. In particular, EU citizens (especially those aged 24-31) feel more stressed or anxious about the implications that Brexit will have on their future, while UK respondents (mainly over 56 years old) are more concerned about the economic impact of Brexit.

"Increased levels of stress due to uncertainty over status post-Brexit, future employment, pensions if returning to home country, possible discrimination in future if staying in GB (2nd class citizen), cost of naturalisation should I wish to go down that route, papers needed to apply for PR, concerned for UK economy" (German respondent)

"I feel that Brexit diminishes Britain as a nation. It encourages small-minded nationalism and prejudice and it will probably harm economically many of those who voted for it. I think it is a very retrograde step, possibly ultimately also for Europe as a whole. On a personal level I am also concerned as whether I will continue to be able to live and work in Brussels and to travel easily with my job"(British respondent)

A serious area of concern for EU respondents is the fear of xenophobia, discrimination and hostile attitudes towards foreigners (particularly Europeans) in the UK. This is particularly the case among those aged 40-47. Another area of concern is the impact that Brexit will have on (mixed) families and, more generally, on relationships, as some fear that they or their relatives will be forced to leave the UK and don't know if they will be allowed to stay with their partner/children in the UK.

"I have lived in the UK for over 10 years. I am an unmarried partner to a British citizen and we have a child (3yo) who is British and second child on a way. I'm studying Scottish law (accelerated) as I decided to stay for good in Scotland (because of my family). I don't know what the UK government will tell me, at the moment they gave no assurance as to the future"
(Polish respondent)

UK citizens, on the other hand, are more worried about the risk of losing their EU citizenship and their identity. In particular, some UK citizens describe the current situation as a case of 'identity theft' because they feel their European identity has been stolen from them, after the referendum vote, without their consent.

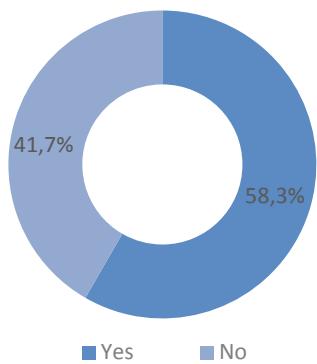
Finally, among the top concerns of UK citizens, there is also the loss of the right to access the healthcare system in another EU country.

"Culturally I am European, I feel that everything I have done in my adult life has been as part of my identity as a European. To have this ripped from me against my wishes leaves me feeling distraught"(British respondent).

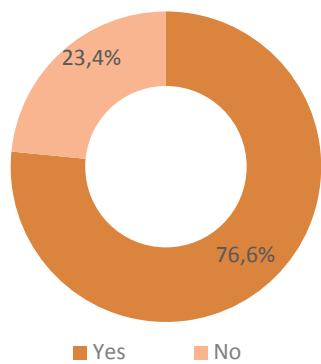
The impact of Brexit on the political and social activism

58% of EU citizens and 77% of UK citizens have become more politically and socially active after Brexit.

Has Brexit changed anything in relation to your political and social activism? (EU CITIZENS)

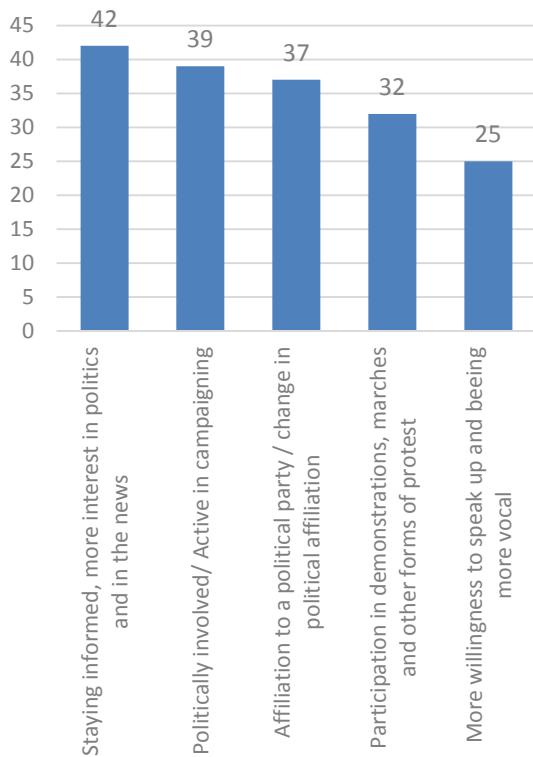


Has Brexit changed anything in relation to your political and social activism? (UK CITIZENS)

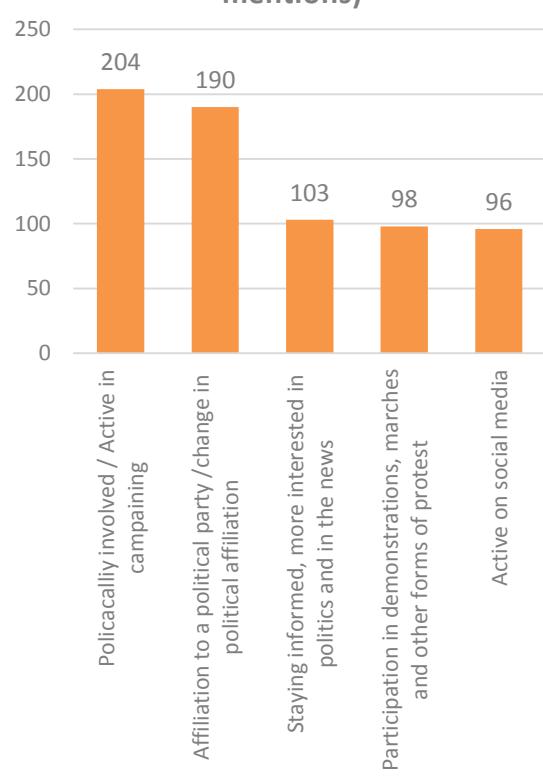


Top five political and social attitudes among EU and UK citizens

EU citizens top five political/social activism (No. of mentions)



UK citizens top five political/social activism (No. of mentions)



Note: for more information about the top ten political and social activism, please consult Tables 3 and 4 of Annex 2

After the Brexit vote, both groups of respondents (especially EU young people aged 16-31 and 32-47 and UK citizens aged 48-63) experienced, with a different order of priority, an increased interest in politics and in the news than before, as well as a general feeling of higher political engagement or active campaigning.

Among the main changes registered in social and political behaviour from EU and UK citizens (especially EU respondents aged 32-37 and over 64 years and UK citizens aged 48-63) there is the decision to join a political party for the first time or to change political affiliation by supporting a pro-European party.

In addition to this, the fourth main change in political/social attitudes shared by both groups of respondents (especially from the majority of EU and UK citizens aged 48-63) is an increased participation in demonstrations and forms of social protest.

"I have participated to three marches against Brexit, I am very vocal on my political ideas, I am thinking about joining a pro-EU party" (Italian respondent)

"Have joined a party for the first time in my life and been on demonstrations" (British respondent)

Finally, within the EU citizens group, a higher willingness to speak up and being more vocal about Brexit and politics in general has emerged (especially among EU citizens aged 48-63), while the UK respondents have become more active online or on social media (especially those who are over 64 years old and who are currently living outside the UK).

"It's become clear to me how people are manipulated by politicians and I feel I need to speak up against this. I have been on a couple of demonstrations and challenge people more often on Facebook" (German respondent)

"I feel a civic duty to correct misconceptions and lies about the EU" (British citizen)

"I use social media platforms to promote my support for the EU. Prior to the UK Referendum I was privately concerned, I am now very publicly opposed to Brexit" (British respondent)

ANNEX 1

Common categories used to analyse the concerns expressed by EU and UK respondents who feel personally affected by Brexit:

1. Uncertainty about the future and impact on life decisions, including anxiety, confusion and stress. Also uncertainty about life in home country in case of return
2. Concerns about future generations/children (i.e. concern about their ability to access same opportunities, about the fact they don't speak the language of the home country in case of return, etc.)
3. Stability and peace in Europe and populist waves, step back for the EU/integration
4. Fear of xenophobic and racist attitudes, discrimination. Also feeling unwelcome and unwanted or even unsafe
5. Impact of Brexit on mixed families, on family unity and more generally on relationships (also including concerns about the rights of UK relatives in the EU post-Brexit)
6. Loss of pension rights and/or social security contributions
7. Impact on disability rights/ concerns for the most vulnerable people
8. Loss of access to healthcare rights and the NHS
9. Restrictions to free movement (right to enter, live and travel in EU and UK)
10. Access to education/ Erasmus+ programme/research programmes/ recognition of diplomas in EU and UK
11. Right to work, employment prospects and standard protection in EU and UK/ impact of Brexit on career
12. Access to EU funding (for research, science, higher education), including impact on work
13. Economic impact of Brexit (i.e. prices increase, devaluation of pound, economic uncertainty, naturalisation fee, impact on business and investment, impact on mortgage and property, cost to enter the UK)
14. Access to the single market/trade concerns
15. Environmental protection
16. Feeling or fears of being treated like bargaining chips
17. Deportation fears (not CSI¹, housemaker, not worker, low income)

Additional categories used to analyse the concerns expressed only by UK respondents personally affected by Brexit

1. Loss of citizenship and the related rights/identity theft
2. Isolation and Irrelevance of UK
3. The future and the stability of UK

¹ Comprehensive Sickness Insurance.

4. Feeling not represented by the government/ feeling betrayed / against the decision to leave the EU/

Additional categories used to analyse the concerns expressed only by EU respondents personally affected by Brexit

5. Voting rights in the UK
6. Disinterest by UK government, feeling let down in spite of having contributed to the country
7. Border issues for frontier workers and border issues in general (Northern Ireland, Gibraltar)
8. Sociocultural impact of Brexit in the UK (i.e. polarised and inward-looking society, impact on values, human rights protection)
9. Undemocratic and demagogic tilt and conservative agenda of UK Government

Categories used to classify the changes in political/social activism of both EU and UK respondents:

1. Affiliation to a political party or change in political affiliation or beliefs
2. Affiliation/support to activist groups against Brexit and in support of rights guarantees, a second referendum. Support is understood in a broad way, including through donations, volunteering, etc.
3. Participation in demonstrations, marches and other forms of protest
4. Social media activism
5. Media/politicians mistrust, concerns about misinformation and manipulation and proactive and critical self-information
6. More willingness to speak up, be more vocal about Brexit or politics and stand up for own beliefs and ideas
7. Staying informed about own rights, EU citizenship and status and/or informing others (including by actively promoting such rights)
8. Staying informed, more interest in politics and in the news than before
9. Participation in petitions
10. Writing to MPs and/or Lords, lobbying the UK Parliament
11. More support to or interest in the EU (including the rights and opportunities it gives to its citizens)
12. Realising the importance of voting in elections (incl. at local level)/referendums
13. Debating and engaging in discussions with others about Brexit, the role of migrants in the UK, etc.
14. General: more engaged and active in campaigning, politically involved and aware
15. More cautious and less outspoken about own ideas
16. Concerns of not being represented/heard and actively looking for ways to avoid this (e.g. by getting British citizenship to be able to vote in future elections)

ANNEX 2

Table 1: Top ten concerns expressed by EU citizens (the numbers in the table indicate the times a particular concern was mentioned in the responses)

<i>EU citizens' concerns</i>	<i>16-23 years (5/7 respondents affected)</i>	<i>24-31 years (62/80 respondents affected)</i>	<i>32-39 years (102/120 respondents affected)</i>	<i>40-47 years (109/123 respondents affected)</i>	<i>48-55 years 71/76 respondents affected)</i>	<i>56-63 years (33/40 respondents affected)</i>	<i>64-72 years and more (19/21 respondents affected)</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Free movement restrictions (right to enter, live and travel in EU)	2	20	32	37	31	8	7	137
Uncertainty about future in the UK	3	30	30	27	21	8	6	125
Xenophobia, discrimination, feeling unwelcome	-	11	21	29	12	7	1	81
Impact on mixed families, family unity and relationships	-	10	17	21	15	5	3	71
Economic impact of Brexit (i.e. prices increase, lower living standards, devaluation of pound, access to mortgage, naturalisation fee, etc.)	-	6	17	18	12	4	4	61
Access to work, employment conditions and prospects in the UK	1	13	19	15	10	1	2	61
Concerns about the future generations and their opportunities	-	3	9	9	8	4	2	35
Loss of pension rights	-	1	4	10	13	4	3	35
Access to healthcare /NHS	-	3	6	7	10	1	3	30
Stability and integrity of EU	-	1	4	4	1	-	1	11

Table 2: Top ten concerns expressed by UK citizens (the numbers in the table indicate the times a particular concern was mentioned in the responses)

<i>UK citizens' concerns</i>	<i>16-23 years (12/12 respondents affected)</i>	<i>24-31 years (32/36 respondents affected)</i>	<i>32-39 years (102/105 respondents affected)</i>	<i>40-47 years (152/159 respondents affected)</i>	<i>48-55 years (214/226 respondents affected)</i>	<i>56-63 years (276/288 respondents affected)</i>	<i>64-72 years and more (357/364 respondents affected)</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Restriction to the right to live and travel in EU	3	5	37	54	76	106	118	339
Loss of citizenship and the related rights/ identity theft	2	4	18	34	52	58	77	245
Economic impact of Brexit (i.e. prices increase, lower living standards, devaluation of pound, access to mortgage, naturalisation fee, etc.)	1	9	19	28	36	67	85	230
Access to healthcare /NHS	-	1	7	8	14	43	113	186
Uncertainty about future in the UK	3	5	8	17	33	45	44	155
Access to work, employment conditions and prospects in the UK	1	8	21	25	42	39	10	146
Loss of Pensions Rights	-	-	-	8	14	40	81	143
Feeling betrayed by the government, not represented, Without a say in the referendum	-	-	12	22	29	32	42	137
Concerns about future generations	-	1	5	14	31	28	40	119
Xenophobia, discrimination, feeling unwelcome	-	3	10	19	40	21	19	112
Impact on mixed families, family unity and relationships	1	1	13	13	12	19	23	81

Table 3: Main 10 changes in social/political behaviour of EU citizens after Brexit (the numbers in the table indicate the times an issue was mentioned in the responses)

<i>Change in social/political attitude among EU citizens</i>	<i>16-31 years (28/87 respondents answered yes)</i>	<i>32-47 years (144/243 respondents)</i>	<i>48-63 years (85/116 respondents)</i>	<i>64 years-71 and older (16/21 respondents)</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Staying informed, more interest in politics and in the news than before	6	23	12	1	42
General: more engaged and active in campaigning, politically involved and aware	3	24	9	3	39
Affiliation to a political party /change in political affiliation or beliefs	-	24	10	3	37
Participation in demonstrations, marches and other forms of protest	1	14	16	1	32
More willingness to speak up, be more vocal about Brexit or politics and stand up for own beliefs and ideas	-	11	13	1	25
Social media activism	-	13	10	1	24
More support to or interest in the EU and the opportunities it offers	2	12	7	1	22
Affiliation/support to activist groups against Brexit, migrant communities or organisations in support of rights guarantees	-	9	6	1	16
Media/politicians mistrust, concerns about misinformation and manipulation and proactive and critical self-information	4	7	5	-	16
Staying informed about own rights, EU citizenship and status and/or informing others	2	4	6	1	13

Table 4: Main ten changes in social/political behaviour of EU citizens after Brexit (the numbers in the table indicate the times an issue was mentioned in the responses)

<i>Change in social/political attitude among UK citizens</i>	<i>16-31 years (33/55 respondents answered yes)</i>	<i>32-47 years (188/265 respondents answered yes)</i>	<i>48-63 years (402/513 respondents answered yes)</i>	<i>64 years-71 and older (288/362 respondents answered yes)</i>	<i>TOTAL (911/1990 said yes)</i>
General: more engaged and active in campaigning, politically involved and aware	3	54	98	49	204
Affiliation to a political party /change in political affiliation or beliefs	2	21	88	79	190
Staying informed, more interest in politics and in the news than before	4	23	44	32	103
Participation in demonstrations, marches and other forms of protest	2	23	48	25	98
Social media activism	4	20	39	33	96
Writing to MPs and/or Lords, lobbying the UK Parliament	1	14	35	23	73
More willingness to speak up, be more vocal about Brexit or politics and stand up for own beliefs and ideas	3	22	29	18	72
Media/politicians mistrust, concerns about misinformation and manipulation and proactive and critical self-information		8	41	22	71
Affiliation/support to activist groups against Brexit, migrant communities or organisations in support of rights guarantees	2	9	34	21	66
Participation in petitions	1	11	25	23	60



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