



Professor Tanja Buelmann of Northumbria University with Christos Katsioulis, Director of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's London office.
(Photo credit: Andre Weisser/FES London)

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Uncertain future for EU citizens in the UK post-Brexit

More than 3.7m EU citizens living in the UK could find themselves in a state of “eternal limbo” following Brexit, according to the findings of a new report by a Northumbria University academic.

Under current plans for so-called “settled status”, all EU citizens living in the UK, regardless of how long they have lived here or whether they are married to a Briton, will have to apply if they want to stay in the country, if the UK

leaves the European Union.

However, even if an application is successful, many questions remain unresolved as “settled status” legislation will largely be implemented through secondary legislation, which can be changed easily and without involving Parliament.

This could potentially lead to a ‘Windrush’ scenario in years to come, with the situation for UK citizens living in Europe also remaining uncertain, according to [Professor Tanja Bueltmann](#), of Northumbria University.

Her paper, *Endangered Rights – The Impact of Brexit on EU Citizens*, has recently been published by the German political foundation and think tank, the [Friedrich Ebert Foundation](#).

In it, Professor Bueltmann, an expert in migration and diaspora history, sets out her recommendations, including ring-fencing the rights of EU citizens living in the UK and their UK counterparts living in Europe, to protect their rights no matter the outcome of Brexit negotiations.

Speaking about her research, she said: “EU citizens in the UK are being treated in a way that could not be further removed from the promises and assurances they were given before the EU referendum.

“Instead of facing no change, they are being forced to apply to stay in their own homes, in some cases the country they have lived in for decades. The best-case outcome is that they will be able to stay, but with lesser rights, a special ID on a register for EU citizens only, and with ongoing checks. The worst-case scenario – rejection of the “settled status” application – could mean illegality and deportation.

“There is even less clarity about the situation for Britons living in EU countries, partly because the solutions for them involves 27 member states. In total this will affect more than five million people and their families – these are people who have embraced the EU and its ideals and are now, in essence, being unfairly punished for that.”

In her conclusion, Professor Bueltmann urges EU leaders, governments and politicians to be guided by humanity and fairness in their decision-making

around Brexit. She recommends the adoption of a 'Citizens' Rights Protocol' designed by the UK not-for-profit organisation [the3million](#).

The paper will now be distributed across the UK and other EU member states to raise awareness of the situation faced by EU citizens in the UK and Britons in EU countries, in the hope that people will finally be put before politics.

Professor Bueltmann's paper can be read in full here - <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/14683.pdf>

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