

# The future of EU citizenship

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*bEUcitizen Final Conference, a project financed under the EU's FP7*

*26-28 April 2017, Residence Palace, Brussels*

In 1992 the Treaty of Maastricht formally introduced the concept of European Union citizenship. Twenty-one years later the European Commission proclaimed 2013 the Year of European Citizens marking it with the publication of the report 'EU citizens: your rights, your future'. This was *inter alia* intended to draw the attention to the (perceived) problem that significant numbers of European citizens were not taking advantage of many of their rights as European citizens. It raised the question that lies at the heart of the FP7 funded bEUcitizen research project that started in 2013: what are the barriers that European citizens face in exercising their rights?

More in particular, the bEUcitizen project engaged with the following questions and themes:

1. What is the meaning and significance of EU Citizenship? What is its added value and which innovative narratives can be developed to give shape to the future of EU citizenship?
2. What impact does migration have on European citizenship? How do we deal with the waning public support for EU migration and with the refugee crisis that is perhaps even more problematic and urgent, which the EU is currently facing?
3. What continue to be the main barriers to free movement and seeking residence in another Member State?
4. How is the European Union dealing with questions on legitimacy, cohesion and solidarity and what impact does this have on EU citizenship? (How) do these questions relate to the rise of anti-European politics?

Twenty-five years since Maastricht, European citizenship seems more than ever difficult to realize. The challenges that the EU and its citizens face are huge: widening inequality; the rise of populism and Euro-skepticism; challenges to open borders and mobility; the consequences of the Brexit referendum, to list but a few. These challenges do not only demand an improved narrative on European citizenship but also new visions of European citizenship of the future.

The research questions of the bEUcitizen project are therefore acutely relevant.

The bEUcitizen - *All Rights Reserved? Barriers towards European CITIZENship* final conference on the future of EU citizenship will present and discuss findings, conclusions and policy recommendations in the light of the aforementioned four questions and themes.



During the bEUcitizen conference to be held from **26 to 28 April 2017**, there will be ample opportunity to engage in discussions with European institutions, academia and stakeholders. In particular, two lunch sessions tailored to policy makers and members of Parliament will be organised, which will focus on the implications of the bEUcitizen studies, their background and policy recommendations. As a kick off a future creating workshop on European Citizenship will be held during the first afternoon. Together with different groups of youth, members of the European Parliament, civil servants from several countries and NGO representatives, scenarios will be explored for strengthening EU citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*We warmly invite you to join us for the bEUcitizen final conference and contribute to the discussions of our final results!*

More information including the conference agenda and registration will be continuously published on <http://beucitizen.eu/agenda/beucitizen-final-conference/>.

On behalf of the entire bEUcitizen team, I hope to meet you in Brussels!

Yours sincerely,

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