



The Europeans throughout the World Les Européens dans le Monde De Europeanen in de Wereld

Association internationale sans but lucratif

BE: Union Francophone des Belges à l'Etranger UFBE; **Vlamingen in de Wereld VIW;** **DK:** Danes Worldwide; **ES:** Instituto Ramón Rubial; **FI:** Finland Society; **FR:** Français du Monde adfe; **Mission Laïque Française MLF;** **GR:** World Council of Hellenes Abroad SAE; **IE:** GlobalIrish; **IT:** Confederazione degli Italiani nel Mondo - CIM Belgio; **LV:** The European Latvian Association; **MT:** Maltin fil-Belġju; **NO:** The Norse Federation; **SE:** Swedes Abroad SVIV; **SK:** World Association of Slovaks Living Abroad SZSZ; **UK:** Association for the Rights of Britons Abroad ARBA

Copenhagen, 23 April 2012

PRESS RELEASE

Copenhagen Conference on European Citizens' Rights, 20 April 2012 Millions of European citizens are deprived of their right to vote

Millions of EU citizens reside in a country other than that of their origin. There are estimated to be 13 million in another EU country and between 50 and 60 million or even more in non-EU countries. The majority of these expatriate EU citizens are prevented from voting in national elections, as they can neither vote in their country of origin nor in their country of residence. Further, most of those living outside the EU cannot even vote in EU parliamentary elections, despite being European Citizens, whose right to vote in European Parliament elections is only guaranteed if they live in an EU country.

At the same time millions of EU citizens are prevented from full integration in their EU country of residence due to inflexible legislation on citizenship. There are wide variations in the treatment and the rights of expatriate EU citizens within the EU. As examples of the discrepancies that exist in their voting and representation rights, some countries like France, Italy and Portugal allow their expatriate citizens to vote and be represented in their national parliament, while most other European countries leave their expatriates in a legal limbo concerning their national voting rights. For the majority of EU citizens living in a non-EU country, it is impossible to participate in the European Parliamentary elections.

These topics were discussed during the *Conference on European Citizens' Rights* hosted by **the Europeans throughout the World (ETTW)** and **Danes Worldwide**, the association of Danes abroad, during the Danish Presidency of the European Union, at the *Europa House* in Copenhagen on the 20th April 2012. The Conference issued the attached **Copenhagen Recommendations** to all authorities at both EU and national levels.

The ETTW calls for harmonisation of the rules regarding voting rights and multiple citizenship within the EU. European citizens must be able to keep their voting rights as well as being able to keep or gain dual (in some cases more) citizenship, which must be regarded as basic rights in order to ensure the free movement of EU citizens throughout the EU without losing their rights, and remove unfair discrimination.

For further information, please contact Secretary General of the ETTW, Nicholas Newman (mail@euromonde.eu), or Secretary General of Danes Worldwide, Anne Marie Dalgaard (amd@danes.dk) Tel.: +45 23 69 00 42

ETTW - The Europeans Throughout The World is an international non-governmental federation of national associations for residents abroad, founded in 1984 under Belgian private law. THE EUROPEANS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD serve the more than thirteen million European nationals living in Europe in another country than their own and more than fifty million Europeans living elsewhere in the world.