



# 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'Étranger 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, 20 April 2012

## The COPENHAGEN RECOMMENDATIONS

**Voting rights and multiple citizenship**, issues of major concern to expatriate European citizens, 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 20<sup>th</sup> April 2012. It was recalled that there are estimated to be 13 million EU citizens living abroad within the EU and a further 50 to 60 million living outside the EU, the equivalent of a large member state.

There are considerable differences between the voting rights of expatriate European citizens from different countries. Many EU member states do not extend the right to vote in EU parliamentary elections to those living outside the EU, thus discriminating between European citizens. Further, many European states do not allow their citizens living abroad to vote in their national elections, or remove voting rights after a certain time abroad, thus depriving them of representation in their national Parliament.

The Conference also discussed the situations of citizens possessing or acquiring multiple nationalities by birth, descent, marriage or naturalisation and the implications of allowing or prohibiting such multiple nationalities.

The Conference recalls that 2013 is European Year of Citizenship, regrets the lack of action and progress on these issues and calls upon all authorities at both EU and national levels to

- end discrimination between EU citizens based on their nationality and place of residence, in particular concerning the vote and the right to representation in both national and European Parliament elections, and make practical arrangements to facilitate the convenience of the citizen, wherever he or she resides in the world, for example through proxy, postal or electronic voting mechanisms;
- explore the possibilities for EU member states to reserve seats for MEPs representing their expatriate citizens outside the EU;
- end restrictions on multiple nationalities, resulting from birth, descent, marriage or naturalisation;

and renews the call for a Member of the European Commission to be given specific responsibility for expatriate EU citizens and for an agency to be created to take up their concerns on a permanent basis.

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Additional information and studies on voting rights and multiple nationalities as well as previous recommendations on EU expatriate issues can be found on the website of the European throughout the World ([www.euromonde.eu](http://www.euromonde.eu))

*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.*