



## EU Rights

*European citizenship is at the core of the European project and freedom of movement is one of the most cherished rights of European citizens.*

17,5 million Europeans currently live and work in another EU country but many of them face serious challenges and administrative hurdles. These preclude them from exercising their rights "under objective conditions of freedom and dignity" and, in practice, undermine the fundamental status of their rights.

ECAS believes that the new Commission and Parliament should do more in order to ensure that the practical implementation of the freedom of movement and other EU citizenship rights measure up to the spirit of the European legislative framework and the values of solidarity and non-discrimination it promotes.



## ECAS asks:

- The European Commission to eliminate any ambiguity in the interpretation of the freedom of movement-related legislation by issuing structured guidelines (new Communication) to the Member States to codify the rulings of the European Court of Justice since 2009 and to clarify "grey areas" which are subject to controversial interpretation at national level.
- The European Commission and the Member States to make available resources for continuous training of public administrations on EU citizenship rights. The outcomes of such training should be regularly assessed and reported to the European Parliament.
- The EU and national decision-makers to develop and implement a monitoring system in order to ensure that there are no EU mobile citizens precluded from exercising their political rights due to incompatible national and local rules or administrative hurdles.
- All relevant stakeholders (EU institutions, civil society, businesses, academics) to work together to foster the exchange of good practice aimed at facilitating freedom of movement in the EU and enhancing EU citizens' rights.



## ECAS asks:

- The European Commission to divide the existing online consultations on EU policy-making into two parallel channels: one which is designed to better gain the views of organised interests and one which is tailored to collect the insights of citizens through crowdsourcing mechanisms.
- Decision-makers at all levels to complement representative democracy with collaborative elements of participatory democracy in order to reduce the gap between political elites and citizens and to transform their relationship into more of a partnership, especially for the co-creation of policy.
- The EU institutions and national and regional stakeholders to foster the development of a European public space and restore the public sphere of dialogue and debate in local communities, especially in non-metropolitan and rural areas in order to help overcome the feeling of abandonment and disconnect among citizens and reduce the scope for populism. This involves reinforcement of European political parties, civil society organisations and citizens networks, as the core foundation of representative democracy.
- The EU and national governments to invest in formal and informal civic education on active citizenship, democracy, European and national competencies, populism, online disinformation, EU fundamental rights and values and, especially, respect for minorities and their role in an inclusive democratic society, which is being undermined by populists.



## European Democracy

*An important societal transformation is taking place throughout Europe and across the world. On the one hand, a new deliberative-collaborative e-democracy model is emerging which can contribute to a more open and inclusive form of policy-making by involving citizens through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).*

*On the other hand, Europeans are confronted with increasing threats such as populism and online disinformation that undermine the foundations and institutions of our democratic societies.*

ECAS believes that the EU should explore more fully the potential of ICT in reducing the gap between political elites and citizens in order to create an engaged citizenship through civic tech.

We are convinced that it is only through understanding populism that the EU will more fully appreciate how to take citizens' voices into account in our democratic political system.

ECAS also believes that the challenge of online disinformation should be countered by ensuring citizens' access to qualitative and objective information as a basis for a healthy public debate.