

Part I: Should EU Citizens Living in Other Member States Vote There in National Elections?

Abstract

The core right of EU citizenship is freedom of movement within the territory of the Union. But EU citizens who live in a member state other than their homeland cannot vote in the national elections of that country unless they first acquire its citizenship through naturalisation. In several member states they also lose their right to vote in national elections of their country of origin when they have lived abroad for too long. A group of EU citizens has started a European Citizens' Initiative to propose that EU citizens should have the franchise to vote in national elections of their country of residence. This working paper collects all the contributions to a EUDO CITIZENSHIP forum debate on this proposal. While all authors agree that the loss of democratic participation rights due to the exercise of free movement rights is contrary to the spirit of EU citizenship, they disagree to a certain extent on what the right answer to this problem is: should EU citizens vote in their countries of origin, of residence, or be given a choice? Should third country nationals be included in a broader electoral reform? How will it be possible to convince a sufficient number of EU citizens of this initiative, given the disappointing turnout rates in European Parliament elections?

Keywords

EU citizenship; Voting rights; Democratic franchise; National elections; Free movement.