



Non-British-EU-citizens – EU ex-pats

All EU citizens who live in another member-state (EU Expats) have the right to participate in local and European elections. This is also the case for the over one million Non-British-EU citizens living in the United Kingdom.

Such EU citizens have the option to either vote in the European Elections in their home country or in the country they live in. In general, 80% of EU ex-pats vote in the country they live in not the country they are citizens of in European elections. However, in the UK this is hindered by the fact that Non-British-EU-citizens are four times less likely to be on the electoral register as UK citizens.

Why engage EU ex-pats for the European elections?

There are several reasons why Non-British-European-Citizens should be targeted in an election campaign:

One aspect is that in the anti-fascist fight against the BNP every single vote counts. Another aspect is that European ex-pats in general are likely to be less eurosceptic. They already have a varied perspective on the possibilities the EU opens up to its citizens. Finally, many people who live abroad, but are not eligible to vote there, have a feeling of frustration and detachment. The European elections offer a great opportunity to engage with the European electorate.

In some parts of the country local elections will be held on the same day as the European election. As EU-citizens are also eligible to vote in local elections in the UK, engaging them can also be an extra vote for local candidates. Engaging with EU ex-pats this year can also be a good preparation for some of the local elections, like in London, which will be held in 2010.

The LibDems have already started to target EU ex-pats in London. The SNP has

successfully targeted Polish voters in the last Scottish elections. Labour must not miss out on a key new community within the electorate.

Why would Labour benefit from an increase in EU-expat turnout?

Clearly not every EU ex-pat is necessarily a labour voter. But EU ex-pats are exercising a fundamental right defined by the European integration process, which is the freedom to move to live, work and study anywhere in the European Union. Especially EU citizens from the 8 Eastern European countries joining in 2004 will remember that had the Tories had their way pre 2004, many of them would not have been able to move here. EU expats are highly unlikely to vote BNP and UKIP and many will find it difficult to vote Tory even, for similar reasons.

How to find the European ex-pats in the UK

EU-citizens are marked by the letter G on the electoral register. This means you can run a simple report on [contact.creator](#) for your constituency or individual wards to identify EU ex-pats on the register. You can also ask local or regional trade union branches if they are organizing EU ex-pats. Also, do not forget to look out for country specific community centres, churches, schools, country themed (food) shops (i.e. polish delicatessen), or cultural events like concerts likely to attract audiences from particular countries. You may also be surprised how many EU ex-pats living in the UK you meet when out canvassing. Now you know they are eligible to vote, engage them in a conversation – and first of all make sure they are on the electoral register and know they have the right to vote here!

How EU ex-pats register for the European election – A two step process

If you come across EU ex-pats who are on the electoral register, they will have to fill in and sign an additional form. The 'European Parliament voter declaration form' asks EU ex-pats to confirm that they will vote in the UK and not in their home country. This is to prevent individuals from voting twice, once in each country.

This is new for the 2009 election, no such form was necessary in 2004. Local electoral services have to follow the guidance issued by the Electoral Commission on this. Some

Councils have already sent out these forms to EU ex-pats on the register others will be doing so shortly.

EU ex-pats not on the register will have to fill in a voter registration form as well.

The deadline for the registration and EP voter declaration is May 19, 2009.

For further information on this and to download the form please follow the links below.

http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/PDF/6079%20European_Union_Form_lowres.pdf

http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/register_to_vote/eu_citizens_form.aspx

You can find out more about key messages and background information to Labour issues on a European level on the websites of the Labour Movement for Europe www.lme.org and on the London & South East LME branch at www.lme-lse.org.uk
