# SURVEY REPORT

Tanja Bueltmann

Identity, Belonging and Representation Post-Brexit among British Citizens in the EU/EEA and Switzerland

# Identity, Belonging and Representation Post-Brexit among British Citizens in the EU/EEA and Switzerland

## Survey Report

**Tanja Bueltmann**

**University of Strathclyde, January 2023**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# LIST OF FIGURES & TABLES

# LIST OF TABLES

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents data and key findings from a survey of (former) British citizens resident in the EU/EEA/Switzerland. The survey was conducted between October and November 2022 and is part of a wider longitudinal study exploring Scottish migration to continental Europe in historical perspective; the study is funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh. The survey contained a mix of 'tick box' and free comment questions around five clusters of questions covering: (1) status; (2) identity; (3) belonging; (4) representation & community; and (5) standard demographic questions. These clusters were chosen partly to make the data as comparable as possible to data previously collected on EU/EEA/Swiss citizens in the UK.[1]

**General survey statistics[2]**

- 1,139 valid survey responses
- 65.67% of respondents originally come from England; 16.07% from Scotland; 5.53% from Wales; and 0.61% from Northern Ireland
- average age of respondents: 55.51 years
- age range of respondents: 18 to 83 years, with a plurality of 32.66% concentrated in the 51-60 years age bracket
- average age of respondents at time of arrival in the EU/EEA/Switzerland: 38.16 years
- gender identification of respondents: 52.2% female, 45.5% male; 0.9% non-binary or transgender
- average time respondents have lived in the EU/EEA/Switzerland: 16.10 years

**Status of respondents**

| | |
|---|---|
| British citizenship & a new post-Brexit status | 69.7% |
| Dual British-EU/EEA/Swiss national | 24.1% |
| Renounced British citizenship after EU referendum to become an EU/EEA/Swiss national | 1.3% |
| Unsure about status or other | 4.9% |

**Respondents' place of residence in the EU/EEA/Switzerland**

A plurality of all respondents are currently resident in Greece (17.82%), followed by France (10.18%) and Spain (9.75%).

**Main findings and key themes**

- Survey respondents constitute a relatively highly mobile group, with around a third having previous migration experience.
- A plurality of respondents moved to the EU/EEA/Switzerland for work and/or personal reasons, such as moving with a partner/family.
- Only 17.7% of survey respondents moved to the EU/EEA/Switzerland to retire, providing further evidence that the common characterisation of British citizens in the EU as a group primarily comprised of 'expat retirees' is misleading at best.
- 76.6% of respondents plan to live in the EU/EEA/Switzerland permanently.
- 65.7% of respondents agree that Brexit has increased the likelihood of them staying in the EU/EEA or Switzerland.

---

[1] Tanja Bueltmann and Alexandra Bulat, 'EU Citizens' Identity, Belonging and Representation Post-Brexit: Full Report' (Strathprints, 2021), https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/82036.

[2] The full report also provides disaggregated data by UK home nation.

Respondents with a new post-Brexit status

- 60.7% feel that their rights are secure; while the majority, this leaves a sizable 39.3% who have concerns about the security of their status going forward.
- 91.4% of respondents have a physical document to prove their status, a stark contrast with the situation of EU citizens in the UK, where no physical status document exists. But problems exist for British citizens too, in particular, the late roll-out of paper documentation in Portugal, for example.
- Travel is where most issues relating to the new status currently occur, e.g. passports being stamped even though they should not be stamped.
- 38.2% in this group of respondents are either already in the process of applying for an EU/EEA/Swiss citizenship or planning it; an additional 28.6% are thinking about it.

Respondents who are dual nationals

- 76.6% became dual nationals after the 2016 EU referendum
- 98.1% respondents agree that dual nationality gives them a post-Brexit safety net and practical benefits, while 89% also see it as an expression of rejecting Brexit.
- Overall, those who became dual nationals after the EU referendum felt happy and excited about it, but there was also an overwhelming sense of relief.

Respondents who renounced their British citizenship

- A small group of respondents (*n*=15) renounced their British citizenship to become an EU/EEA/Swiss national; for a majority of them, renouncing their British citizenship was a direct expression of their rejection of Brexit.

Representation and trust

- 60.14% of respondents feel unrepresented, with a further 30.03% of respondents feeling not well represented; these figures broadly mirror those for EU citizens in the UK, reflecting how a group of millions sees itself and its position in society as unrepresented or not well represented.
- 95.6% of respondents disagree that they trust the UK Government; the scale of this breakdown in trust is stark.
- By contrast, 62.3% of respondents agree that they trust the EU, while 47.5% also agree that they trust the government of their current country of residence.
- This section provides some of the starkest findings of this survey and raises very serious questions about democratic participation and representation of a very large group of people that also includes EU citizens in the UK.

Identity and belonging

- For British citizens in the EU/EEA/Switzerland, Brexit has had significant impacts on their identity and belonging:
  - 82.6% of respondents still see themselves as European; this is higher than the respondents' identification with being British, which sits at 68.9%
  - Disaggregated data for UK home nations reveals some fascinating patterns and divergences, the most striking is that for Scottish respondents: 95.1% see themselves as Scottish, with European second at 83.2%; among English respondents, only a significantly lower 56% also see themselves as English.

- o For English respondents, 'Britishness' sits above this as an umbrella identity that 76.9% of English respondents relate to. However, only 39.9% of Scottish respondents relate to being British.
- o What we can see is a layering of identity that Brexit reshaped:
  - ⇒ English respondents have the weakest connection with their UK home nation, while Scottish respondents have the strongest;
  - ⇒ English respondents have the strongest connection to Britishness, while Scottish respondents have the weakest;
  - ⇒ Welsh respondents essentially sit in-between on Britishness, but also have a strong connection with their UK home nation;
- o Brexit has served to strengthen the respondents' European identity, while weakening their British identity.
- o 76% of Scottish respondents say that Brexit strengthened their UK home nation identity, while only 5.3% of English respondents agree with this statement.
- o Brexit has made nearly three quarters of all a respondents feel more connected to the EU/EEA/Switzerland, and for 60% of all respondents it has also made them feel more at home there.
- o Overall, a layered system of belonging exists that stretches from EU/EEA/Switzerland to UK home nation, but also depends a lot on factors such as where family live: belonging is not just about location as such.
- o In terms of home nation attachment, the most significant difference again relates to Scottish respondents, 64.5% of whom still feel a home nation attachment; for English respondents the percentage is 26.6%. Similar to identity markers, the data show that the sense of belonging to Scotland among Scottish respondents is strong, while the sense of belonging to England among English respondents is much weaker.

## Community life, diaspora, and collective action

- Brexit was a direct trigger for forms of collective action among British citizens in the EU/EEA/Switzerland, with many respondents choosing to become actively involved in some form of citizens' rights activism.
- There is also evidence of ethnic networking, particularly among Scottish respondents.
- This also serves as a measure for diaspora, indicating that the Scottish diaspora, compared to those of other UK home nations, is stronger in terms of active recognition and participation.
- This is further supported with statistical data showing that 47% of Scottish respondents feel part of a global community of Scots – the highest figure for all home nations; by contrast, only 14.2% of English respondents feel part of a global English community.
- Read together with the previous patterns on identity and belonging, this re-emphasises compellingly that Scotland / Scottishness has the strongest attachment level among UK home nations.
- This may go some way towards explaining why relatively fewer Scots plan to stay permanently in the EU/EEA/Switzerland compared to other UK home nation groups.
- Another possible factor is the constitutional question: there are notable indications that Scottish independence would serve as a pull factor for a return to Scotland.
- It is also notable that Scottish respondents, while having no trust in the UK Government in line with overall data above, have strong trust in the Scottish Government.
- A majority of Scottish respondents agree that Brexit increased the likelihood of Scottish independence.
- Moreover, a significant majority of 77.6% of the Scottish respondents agree that Scotland should become an independent country; EU membership is a key rationale.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the data and key findings presented in this report, there are five key recommendations for different groups of policymakers / stakeholders:

1. Policymakers in both the EU/EEA/Switzerland and the UK need to, as a matter of urgency, address the issue of lack of representation identified in this report. Reading the data from this report together with previously gathered data for EU citizens in the UK, it is deeply concerning that, collectively, the citizens most directly impacted by Brexit feel such a strong sense of not being represented. There are serious questions here that relate to this groups' place in communities, as well as democratic participation. It is clear that Brexit created a representation void and this needs to be acknowledged and addressed. As it stands, this void is, at best, tackled through forms of activism from those affected. While the collective action that stems from this has been important and helped improve the situation, this approach is not a sustainable solution, as the closure of operations by the group 'British in Europe' highlights.

   That is why this report recommends that a joint UK-EU citizens' stakeholder forum is developed to discuss needs and strategies for moving forward on representation issues specifically; this should include discussion on electoral reform opportunities and expansion of the franchise where limitations are in place. Long-term, the recommendation is for the UK to also consider seriously the introduction of a form of defined representation, for instance by adopting a system similar to the French system of representing overseas citizens. This would be a complex undertaking, but both the UK and EU need to consider the long-term consequences of millions of people feeling unrepresented and being potential disenfranchisement. This must be addressed with bold solutions to prevent long-term disengagement and the cementing of serious democratic deficiencies.

2. The UK Government must start rebuilding trust with British citizens in the EU/EEA/Switzerland. Over consecutive years of Brexit negotiations that trust has been eroded almost completely. It is recommended that 'votes for life' are introduced promptly in line with the Election Act 2022 as this may go some way towards rebuilding trust and also serve as an additional measure in response to point 1 above.

3. It is recommended that the UK Government changes UK immigration rules to enable British-EU/EEA/Swiss families to return to / live in the UK more easily. Current legislation, shaped by the hostile environment, is not good enough. The recommended change is straightforward and would have a very immediate positive impact.

4. Most problems identified by British citizens with a new post-Brexit status relate to travel, for instance the incorrect stamping of passports. Training for border and airline staff needs to be improved so that British citizens in the EU/EEA/Switzerland are treated correctly in line with the Withdrawal Agreement.

5. In light of findings documenting the real strength of the Scottish diaspora in the EU/EEA/Switzerland, there is significant potential for the Scottish Government to more directly engage with the Scottish diaspora to improve and build links with the EU/EEA/Switzerland post-Brexit. It is recommended that the Scottish Government expands its existing diaspora strategy accordingly, utilising the types of diaspora networks this research has discovered and will shed more light on in future publications.

# ABOUT THE SURVEY

This report presents data and key findings from a survey of (former) British citizens who had been resident in an EU/EEA country or Switzerland since before 31 December 2020. The survey was conducted between October and November 2022 and is part of a wider longitudinal study on Scottish migration to continental Europe that is funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh. The Chief Investigator (CI) of the project is Prof Tanja Bueltmann, University of Strathclyde.

While the overall project aims to understand how Scots in continental Europe have acted as a community, exploring developments since the 1800s and the impact of Brexit as a watershed in this history of connections between Scotland and Europe, the survey was open for respondents from all UK home nations to enable a comparative perspective. As the overall project has a historic angle, this survey will, eventually and in future publications that will go beyond the scope of this report, facilitate the tracing of change and/or persistence of the Scottish migration experience in continental Europe over time. These future publications will also draw on interviews with a selection of Scottish respondents of this survey.

The survey's key aim was to gather data about the post-Brexit experiences of (former) British citizens in the EU/EEA or Switzerland to provide further depth to the growing body of work that examines the impact Brexit has had on the two groups most directly affected by it: EU citizens in the UK and British citizens in the EU/EEA/Switzerland.[3] Apart from new evidence on the evolution of the respondents' lived experiences of Brexit, this survey provides a new nuanced perspective by looking at both the overall British experience, as well as data disaggregated by the respondents' UK home nation. This disaggregated perspective is designed to enable better understanding of how the respondents' own background may have shaped distinct patterns in relation to the impact of Brexit on identity, for example.

Respondents had to:
1. Be an adult aged 18 years or older and give individual consent;
2. Have been living in an EU/EEA member state or Switzerland since before 31 December 2020;
3. And meet one of the following nationality criteria:
    - Be a British national (including British nationals who hold any other non-EU/EEA/Swiss nationality);
    - Be a dual British-EU/EEA/Swiss national;
    - Was a British national but renounced British citizenship *after* the UK's EU referendum to take up the nationality of an EU/EEA member state or Switzerland.

**Research design, methods, and research ethics**

The Survey was designed by the project CI and went through research ethics clearance, including assessment of compliance with legal, data protection and data storage regulations. The research was granted ethical approval by the University of Strathclyde Ethics Committee in August 2022, reference UEC22/61.

---

[3] This work includes Tanja Bueltmann, 'Experiences and Impact of the EU Settlement Scheme: Report on the3million Settled Status Survey' (the3million, 2020), https://the3million.org.uk/publication/2020012001; Bueltmann & Bulat, 'EU Citizens' Identity, Belonging and Representation Post-Brexit'; the research of the MIGZEN project, see https://www.migzen.net/publications.

The survey was launched on Twitter by the project CI and then disseminated via various social media platforms and communication channels through citizens' rights groups that support British citizens in the EU post-Brexit, including, for example, 'British in Europe' and 'Hear Our Voice'. With the help of these organisations, and some local associations in specific EU member states, e.g. 'British in Germany', the survey link and information were widely shared. Respondents were self-selecting and chose to participate after reading the participant information provided at the beginning of the survey. This self-selection approach brings up valid questions about data representativeness and how we can extrapolate and identify more general patterns—or not—from the data presented here. The analysis that follows notes any potential issues that readers may want to bear in mind when reading the report and relates the survey data to other evidence where appropriate to provide context and comparative perspective.

Following data minimisation principles, the survey was designed to be as specific to individual respondents as possible and to make participation straightforward. Consequently, the survey utilised distinct survey routes (1) based on status and, at a second choice point, (2) based on where in the UK respondents come from to enable data disaggregation on the basis of UK home nation. The Appendix to this report includes a breakdown of the survey.

# DATA AND FINDINGS

The following report provides quantitative and qualitative data from the survey, analysing key findings. As the overall project this survey is a part of is focused on Scots, Scottish data is fronted throughout this report, but it also provides the data for British citizens as a group and disaggregated data broken down by all UK homes nations.

**Survey overview**

Total number of valid survey responses: 1,139.

The survey contained a mix of 'tick box' questions and free text boxes where survey respondents were able to explain their views in detail—every section of the survey had at least one free text box with a final one also provided. In total, across all free text boxes, survey respondents provided ca 250,000 words of free text comments. These comments offer unprecedented depth and nuance far beyond the statistical data provided here; examples from qualitative comments are included throughout this report as much as possible.

In terms of UK home nation origin/roots, the breakdown for respondents is:

|  | *n* | % | % of UK home nation population share for comparison |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scotland | 183 | 16.07% | 8.1% |
| England | 748 | 65.67% | 84.3% |
| Wales | 63 | 5.53% | 4.7% |
| Northern Ireland | 7 | 0.61% | 2.2% |
| other | 138 | 12.12% | n/a |

**Table 1:** Number of respondents by UK home nation origin[4]

There are two key points to note about this distribution:

The most immediately noticeable is the very small number of respondents with origins/roots in Northern Ireland. While this does not matter for the overall assessment of the experiences of (former) British citizens post-Brexit, it means that the disaggregated Northern Irish data is best not used for the purpose of identifying potential patterns or distinctive aspects in the experience of Northern Irish respondent. The choice was made to still include the data where applicable, but readers are encouraged to remember the small response number when looking at any Northern Irish data throughout this report and read it as a representation of individual lived experiences only.

The second point relates to the 'other' category. Respondents had been given the option to explain their choice for 'other'. Consequently, qualitative comments throw more light on the specific situation of respondents and their background, revealing that a majority who chose this category (approx. 85% of them) chose it because their UK background cuts across home

---

[4] ONS, 'Population estimates for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: mid-2020: National and subnational mid-year population estimates for the UK and its constituent countries', Table 2, https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualmidyearpopulationestimates/latest [last accessed 11 November 2022].

nations, and they did not wish to pin it down to one. This was the case, for instance, because one parent came from England and another from Wales, or because a respondent was born in England but grew up in Scotland from a relatively young age. Most of the remaining respondents in the 'other' category are British citizens who were born overseas, a proportion having never lived in the UK. It is worth nothing, finally, that around 2% of respondents in the 'other' category—based on an examination of qualitative comments—made this choice as a result of what might best be described as ruptures in identity that led to a conscious rejection of home nation identifiers. The section on identity and belonging will explore these themes in more detail below. In general, 'other' responses have not been factored into the disaggregated statistical data but are always included in the overall figures.

**Basic demographic characteristics of survey respondents**

Age profile

Table 2 documents the average age of respondents at the point of survey response submission. As is evident, the average age of Scottish respondents is a little lower. This fact is likely to relate at least in part to the data provided in Table 13 further below on the reasons for the respondents' move to the EU/EEA/Switzerland, which indicates that, among Scottish respondents, there is a smaller proportion of retirees.

| All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|-----|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 55.51 years | 53.49 years | 56.17 years | 56.08 years | 57.86 years |

**Table 2:** Average age of respondents

In absolute terms, the respondents' age ranged from 18 years old to 83 years old, with a plurality concentrated in the 51-60 years age bracket and an overall majority of a combined 72.74% in the 51 years or older age bracket. While this does, in part, relate to the number of retirees (Table 13 below), other indicators suggest that the survey respondent population has, on the whole, already lived in the EU/EEA/Switzerland for some time. Consequently, many have simply grown older there rather than arrived in older age.

| <20 | 21-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61-70 | >70 |
|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| 0.09 | 2.72% | 10.27% | 18.17% | 32.66% | 25.72% | 10.36% |

**Table 3:** Respondents' age range breakdown

Gender identification

Table 4 shows the respondents' gender identification breakdown.

| | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|-----|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| **Male** | 45.5% | 47.8% | 44.4% | 42.9% | 85.7% |
| **Female** | 52.2% | 49.5% | 53.6% | 52.4% | 14.3% |
| **Non-binary** | 0.4% | 0.0% | 0.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Transgender** | 0.5% | 1.1% | 0.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Prefer not to say** | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.4% | 1.6% | 0.0% |
| **Other** | 0.9% | 1.1% | 0.5% | 3.2% | 0.0% |

**Table 4:** Gender identification of respondents

Except for the Northern Irish respondents—who, as noted, are too small in number to identify patterns—the split is generally relatively even between male and female, with a number of respondents also identifying as non-binary and transgender, and a proportion choosing their own description or preferring not to say.

Citizenship

97.98% of respondents hold British citizenship, either together with a new post-Brexit status or as a dual national. Of those respondents who also hold other citizenships—375 in total—the top three other citizenships held are German (16.53%); Irish (15.2%) and French (10.13%). The breakdown varies somewhat by UK home nation (Table 5), reflecting patterns in the respondents' current place of residence in the EU/EEA/Switzerland, as well as the respondents' previous mobility trajectories.

| Scottish | | English | | Welsh | | Northern Irish | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| =Belgium / =Ireland | 15.68% | Germany | 17.62% | Germany | 25% | Ireland | 100% |
| France | 13.73% | Ireland | 11.01% | = France / = Greece | 15% | | |
| Netherlands | 11.76% | France | 9.69% | = Ireland / = Malta | 10% | | |

**Table 5:** Top three non-UK citizenships among dual national respondents

Other citizenships held beyond these top three reveal Commonwealth connections and/or prior migratory movements by respondents and/or their families and include Australian, South African, and Canadian citizenship amongst others.

Language(s) spoken in the home

Respondents were also asked which languages they speak at home as this can be informative in terms of the respondents' identity and integration. English is dominant with 91.92%, but a proportion of respondents speak other languages at home, primarily reflecting, as qualitative comments from throughout the survey confirm, their living together with a spouse or partner who speaks that language and/or having bilingual children. German and French are the most-spoken non-English languages, at 10.89% and 10.10% respectively. In some cases, for instance for some dual nationals by birth not born in the UK, the non-English language is their first language. Meanwhile, some respondents have indicated that they speak local languages or dialects from their UK home nation or place of residence, for instance Swiss-German or Gaelic, again reflecting wider intersections between language use and identity.

Education and employment

It is useful in terms of the respondents' general characteristics to also understand their socio-economic profile in some basic terms. Demographic details gathered on their education and employment offer a useful yardstick, revealing that a majority of respondents, a combined 60.6%, have a at least an undergraduate university degree, with a plurality of them, 34%, holding a postgraduate degree. An additional 9.9% hold a doctorate. This is not representative of the general population, but follows a pattern and concentration seen in other surveys of the type conducted, including the most recent survey of EU citizens in the UK, where 64.48% of respondents had a university degree.[5]

---

[5] Bueltmann & Bulat, 'EU Citizens' Identity, Belonging and Representation Post-Brexit' (2021).

|  | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary school | 0.01% | 0.0% | 0.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Secondary school | 3.9% | 2.7% | 4.7% | 3.2% | 0.0% |
| High school, college, or an equivalent | 13.0% | 14.2% | 13.2% | 19.0% | 28.6% |
| Professional or vocational degree | 10.5% | 3.8% | 11.2% | 17.5% | 14.3% |
| University degree - undergraduate | 26.6% | 24.6% | 28.1% | 25.4% | 14.3% |
| University degree - postgraduate | 34.0% | 38.3% | 31.6% | 33.3% | 28.6% |
| Doctorate | 9.9% | 15.8% | 8.4% | 1.6% | 14.3% |
| Other | 2.0% | 0.5% | 2.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% |

**Table 6:** Education level of respondents

Employment data offer further context to the respondents' socio-economic background (Table 7), showing that a combined majority of 61.6% of respondents are either in employment or self-employed. Of the remaining, a plurality of 33.2% are retired, though it is worth emphasising that a high proportion of them just happened to retire in the EU/EEA/Switzerland rather than moving there to retire (Table 13 below offers more detail on retirement).

|  | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employed | 39.8% | 50.3% | 37.0% | 36.5% | 14.3% |
| Self-employed | 21.8% | 19.1% | 21.9% | 19.0% | 42.9% |
| Unemployed | 2.5% | 4.4% | 1.6% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| Retired | 33.2% | 21.3% | 37.8% | 33.3% | 42.9% |
| Student | 1.6% | 2.7% | 1.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Other | 6.8% | 8.7% | 5.3% | 7.9% | 0.0% |

**Table 7:** Employment status of respondents

Overall, then, we are looking at a relatively highly educated group of respondents who, on the whole, are in a good socio-economic position. It is important to bear this in mind when considering the evidence of this report.

**Status of survey respondents**

In order to understand the impact Brexit had on respondents, it is, first of all, important to know their status (Table 8).

A majority of 69.7% hold British citizenship and secured their status in the EU/EEA/Switzerland with a new post-Brexit status in line with the Withdrawal Agreement. Consequently, new rules and processes now apply to this group of respondents and some of these new rules have, as qualitative comments reveal, proven disruptive and triggered issues that did not exist prior to Brexit. These issues are explored in more detail further below. The second most frequent status, for nearly a quarter of respondents, is that of dual British-EU/EEA/Swiss national. Of the remainder, 1.3% are former British citizens who chose to renounce their British citizenship to become an EU/EEA/Swiss citizen. A notable 1.3% of respondents were not sure about their

status. Qualitative comments document that almost all of them are respondents either waiting for the resolution of a citizenship application, i.e. about to become a dual national, or the resolution of a problem where a status application or legal action is unresolved. The latter is concerning in terms of status security. Remaining responses reflect individual lived experiences, including, for example, some working in international organisations where there has, effectively, been no change of status.

| | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have British citizenship & hold a new post-Brexit status | 69.7% | 69.9% | 72.2% | 79.4% | 14.3% |
| I am a dual British-EU/EEA/Swiss national | 24.1% | 21.9% | 21.9% | 17.5% | 85.7% |
| I renounced my British citizenship after the UK's EU referendum to become an EU/EEA/Swiss national | 1.3% | 0.5% | 1.3% | 1.6% | 0.0% |
| I am not sure what my status is | 1.3% | 1.1% | 1.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Other | 3.6% | 6.6% | 3.1% | 1.6% | 0.0% |

**Table 8:** Post-Brexit status of respondents

**Location of survey respondents and length of residence in the EU/EEA/Switzerland**

A plurality of all respondents are currently resident in Greece (17.82%), followed by France (10.18%) and Spain (9.75%). As Table 9 demonstrates, however, top five location patterns vary between UK home nations.

| Scottish | | English | | Welsh | | Northern Irish | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| France | 12.5% | Greece | 21.0% | Greece | 22.2% | Spain | 28.6% |
| Netherlands | 12.5% | Spain | 9.6% | =Germany / =Spain | 14.3% | =Greece =Ireland =Italy =Latvia =Portugal | 14.3% |
| Belgium | 9.8% | France | 9.2% | | | | |
| Italy | 9.2% | Italy | 9.0% | France | 11.1% | | |
| Greece | 8.7% | Germany | 8.3% | Denmark | 9.5% | | |
| | | | | Austria | 6.3% | | |

**Table 9:** Top locations of respondents in the EU/EEA/Switzerland

The overall distribution and concentration across EU/EEA countries and Switzerland can be seen in Figure 1: the darker the colour, the more survey respondents are located in that country. As the map highlights visually, there is wide coverage of respondents from all over the EU/EEA/Switzerland. Only four countries are without any respondent: Croatia, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, and Lithuania. Past surveys have already documented that it can be difficult to attract responses from certain locations in light of the overall relatively low numbers of British citizens in some places. The fact that only four countries are not covered via this survey data is generally positive and reflects targeted respondent recruitment efforts undertaken with the help of citizens' rights groups.
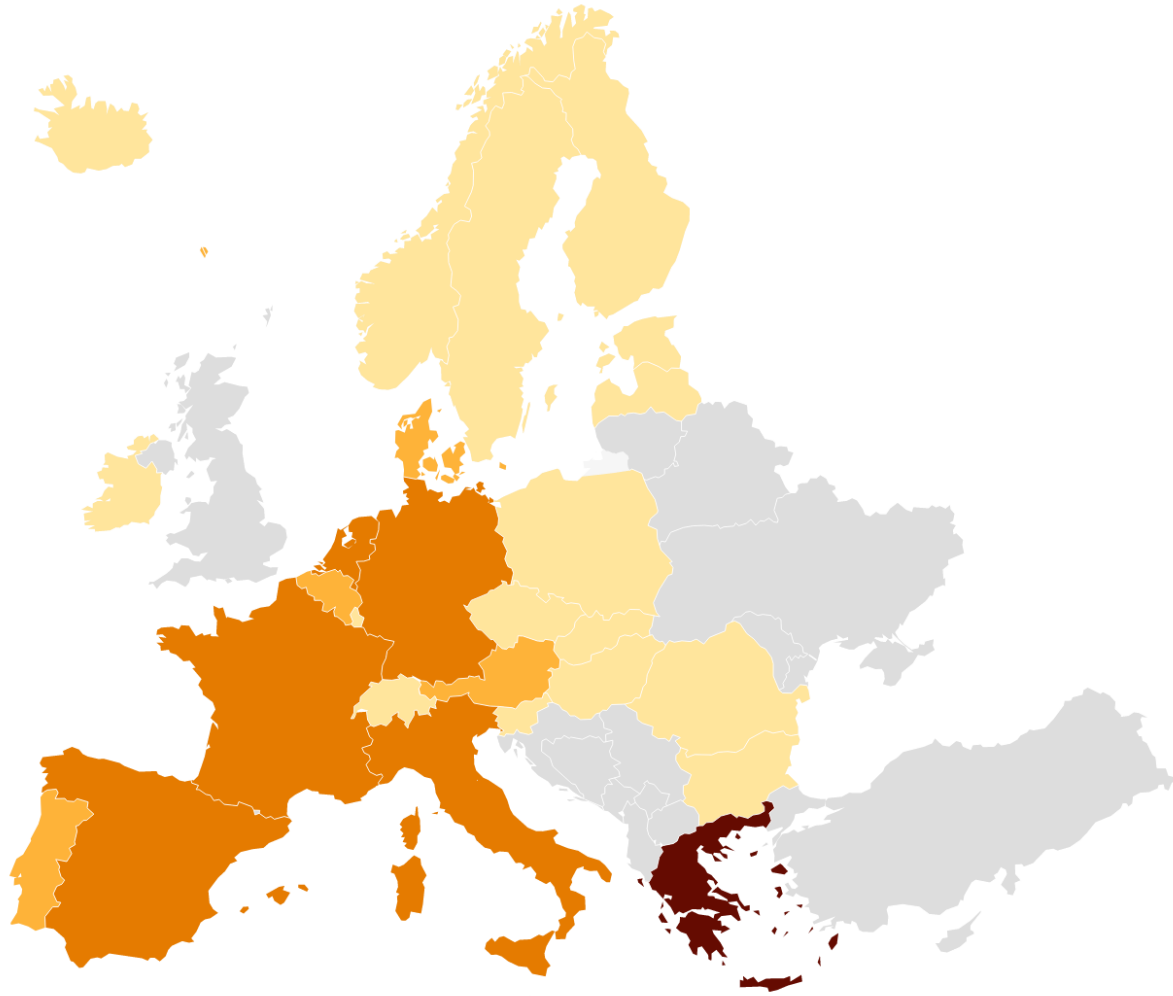
**Figure 1:** Location concentration of survey respondents in the EU/EEA/Switzerland[6]

Apart from their place of residence, a key aspect in understanding the experiences of respondents is also the time they have already spent in the EU/EEA/Switzerland, with residency length likely connected to questions of identity and belonging. Table 10 shows the average total time respondents have lived in the EU/EEA/Switzerland.

| All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|-----|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 16.10 years | 15.94 years | 16.25 years | 17.48 years | 9 years |

**Table 10:** Average total time respondents have been living in the EU/EEA/Switzerland

In some cases, this time stretches across locations (see also Table 12.1 below), but regardless of location and time spent in a particular one, the main point here is that the average total time respondents have been living in the EU/EEA/Switzerland generally reflects that respondents can be considered as settled there.

This point is emphasised by the respondents' average age at time of arrival (Table 11), which indicates that life in the EU/EEA/Switzerland shaped a significant proportion—and period, e.g.

---

[6] The map has been created using Datawrapper. An online version with the detailed figures for each country is available here: https://www.datawrapper.de/_/jIlIR/

the period of raising children for those who have children—of the respondents' working as well as personal lives.

| All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 38.16 years | 36.43 years | 38.83 years | 37.29 years | 48 years |

**Table 11:** Average age at arrival in the EU/EEA/Switzerland

**Mobility among survey respondents**

Frontier workers

Within any given migrant population questions about their mobility patterns are of interest. For a small proportion of respondents—35 in total—this mobility is a near-daily occurrence as they are frontier workers, i.e. they live in one country but work in another. The Withdrawal Agreement made special provisions for this group to enable them to continue with their work despite the loss of freedom of movement rights. Qualitative comments reveal that Switzerland—Germany; the Netherlands—Germany; Denmark—Germany; and France—Switzerland are the most common combinations for place of residence and place of work among frontier worker respondents.

Prior migration

But this is not the only indicator of mobility among survey respondents. As Tables 12.1 and 12.2 show, 34.5% had already lived in another EU/EEA country or Switzerland prior to their current place of residence, and just over 30% have lived elsewhere around the world before.

| | Previously lived in another EU/EEA country or Switzerland | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **All** | **Scottish** | **English** | **Welsh** | **Northern Irish** |
| **No** | 65.5% | 63% | 67.5% | 66.7% | 28.6% |
| **Yes** | 34.5% | 37% | 32.5% | 33.3% | 71.4% |

**Table 12.1:** Percentage of respondents who have lived in another EU/EEA country or Switzerland prior to their current place of residence

Among those who previously lived in the EU/EEA/Switzerland, qualitative comments reflect the role of job opportunities that had arisen and brought respondents to those countries, but also mobility patterns as a result of educational pursuits including language study or the Erasmus exchange programme. There is also evidence of external factors shaping movements, for instance for those serving in the RAF who were then stationed in continental Europe. Among those with any such prior migration, the top three countries in which respondents have also lived are Germany, France, and Switzerland.

Respondents who had previously lived elsewhere around the world provide fascinating insights into the multiplicity of moves some migrants pursue. From being the child born to British parents overseas and then returning to the UK, to job opportunities that brought respondents to places that range from Panama to New Zealand, just over 30% of respondents really have been citizens of the world. The top three countries in which respondents have lived outside of the EU/EEA/Switzerland are the United States, Australia, and Canada, thus also reflecting the pull of the Anglo-world. A relatively high proportion of survey respondents are,

therefore, very mobile, with both Scottish and Welsh respondents having been more mobile than English respondents.

|  | Previously lived elsewhere in the world | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
| No | 69.53% | 69.6% | 71.8% | 68.3% | 71.4% |
| Yes | 30.47% | 30.4% | 28.2% | 31.7% | 28.6% |

**Table 12.2:** Percentage of respondents who have lived elsewhere around the world (excluding the UK) prior to their current place of residence

Additionally, qualitative comments also reveal the continuous mobility of what we might call 'split lives' between places. This is an aspect of post-Brexit lived experiences that requires more investigation in future, but the impact of Brexit is clearly evident as the end of freedom of movement has limited the time British citizens can spend in the EU/EEA/Switzerland. As one respondent recounts, they had 'lived in both the UK and Spain for part of the year for 15 years until Brexit basically stopped that'. This led some respondents to make decisions they would not otherwise have made as these two examples serve to illustrate:

> *'I had not intended to become resident in Portugal. I had an apartment in which I spent varying lengths of time over the autumn and winter – between 4 and 7 months. Once Brexit happened, I had to choose: I could either stay for 2 x 90 days (including any travel in the rest of the EU, such as holidays in France) and live in the UK the rest of the year; or I had to register as resident in Portugal and spend more than 6 months each year in order to retain my resident status. Since I have an automatic right to return to the UK because I am a British citizen, I chose the latter more or less out of necessity. I no longer own a property in the UK, though I do have an address there with family.'*
>
> -----------------------------------
>
> *'I maintain a presence in England but moved because I could no longer bear the UK. I felt ashamed and embarrassed by the behaviour of the government and the choices of the people. On the other hand, the idea [to become a resident of Greece] was forced by Brexit in a positive way. I wanted the experience of living there for a few months because I saw Brexit as the end of opportunities to do so in the future. While there, the idea of getting residency came to me.'*

**Reasons why survey respondents moved to the EU/EEA/Switzerland**

The reasons why respondents moved to the EU/EEA or Switzerland are diverse. That is, in itself, a fact worth stressing again given how there has long since been somewhat of a distorted view of British citizens in the EU/EEA or Switzerland as primarily a group of pensioners who moved there to retire. Among survey respondents, retirement was a reason for the move to the EU/EEA/Switzerland for only 17.7% of respondents. As the data make clear, a plurality of respondents moved for work and/or personal reasons—multiple reasons could be indicated, with crosstabulation showing that there is some overlap between these two in particular (Table 13). Those who chose 'other' primarily used that option to explain their specific circumstances in more detail. Reasons provided include parents moving just prior to the respondents' birth; moves for specific activities, such as renovating a property; and again moves for education, especially language improvement and learning.

| | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Work - I had an offer of employment before moving | 30.8% | 35.5% | 29.7% | 38.1% | 14.3% |
| Work - I came to look for work | 7% | 9.8% | 6.4% | 3.2% | 0.0% |
| Work - I came to set up a business as self-employed | 4.2% | 3.8% | 4.0% | 1.6% | 14.3% |
| Education | 5.0% | 5.5% | 4.3% | 3.2% | 0.0% |
| Personal - I moved there WITH my spouse / partner | 30.6% | 28.4% | 30.5% | 31.7% | 57.1% |
| Personal - I moved there FOR my spouse / partner | 16.0% | 15.8% | 15.2% | 17.5% | 0.0% |
| Personal - I joined family already there | 1.8% | 2.2% | 1.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Personal - my family moved there when I was a child / teenager | 1.4% | 2.7% | 1.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Retirement | 17.7% | 10.4% | 20.6% | 17.5% | 28.6% |
| Other | 15.1% | 15.8% | 14.8% | 11.1% | 0.0% |

**Table 13:** Reasons for the respondents' move to the EU/EEA or Switzerland

What is noteworthy about those who did move to retire in the EU/EEA/Switzerland is that the percentages for English and Welsh respondents are quite a bit higher than for Scots in this sample. Given the Scottish respondents', on average, younger age, and younger age at point of arrival in the EU/EEA/Switzerland, this difference also relates to these wider respondent characteristics.

In some ways the statistical data hide important aspects of the respondents' lived experiences as this was often, at least originally, shaped by other factors, however. For some, moving to the EU/EEA/Switzerland was simply an 'adventure' they were hoping to have. Another respondent recounts how they moved because they 'took a gap year' but then just 'never left'. Falling in love could be a key factor here. As another respondent explained, 'I was backpacking around the world. I didn't get very far as I fell in love with my husband in Greece.' Many respondents were looking for better working conditions and social services. Developments in the UK had long since been a factor in decisions. As one respondent noted:

> *'I grew up on Tyneside when all the industry closed in the 80s and Auf Wiedersehen Pet was on the telly. Thatcher told us to get on our bikes. More than half of my class from school ended up moving south and a few of us went to work abroad.'*

Amongst younger respondents with children a common theme is the parents' desire to improve the future opportunities for their children. One respondent explained that they see Brexit as a 'car crash for our children's futures', so they were very keen to ' get them into the position that they would be entitled to EU passports.'

Among those respondents who did move to the EU/EEA/Switzerland to retire, the motivation could stem from not being able to 'afford to stay in the UK on our pensions'. Others longed for better weather or had already owned property prior to their move. For some, the EU referendum sped up their move. As a respondent explained: 'I retired early from work and moved to Greece specifically because of Brexit.' There are quite a few responses in the 'other'

category too that expressly identify the EU referendum, and fear of Brexit consequences, as a reason for the move and/or for bringing it forward. Some respondents refer to the EU referendum and Brexit as the 'catalyst for the move', or that they moved 'to escape Brexit'.

Brexit was, at a minimum, a contributing factor in moves that happened after the EU referendum, and is a constant theme throughout free text survey responses, as these further examples illustrate:

> *'My German wife and I decided we no longer wanted to live in UK post Brexit referendum. In particular, we were affected by the impact of immigration law [...] We cannot now return to UK on retirement as I cannot sponsor her on my pension. We knew it was a one-way journey. Fortunately, I could revive an application for German citizenship.'*
>
> ------------------------------------
>
> *'Our main reason for leaving was Brexit and the effect it has had on the UK. We could see that the next ten years (at least) was going to be a very painful time for the UK and have found the cultural fallout from Brexit means the UK is not a pleasant place to live. We were also very aware that we had a very small window to leave the UK under the Withdrawal Agreement and wanted to take the opportunity whilst we could.'*
>
> ------------------------------------
>
> *'My husband is a US citizen and getting him a visa for the UK was near impossible due to my low income as a freelance journalist. We realized under EU law, moving to an EU country was easier. We settled on Austria as we had both lived there before (5 years previously), we could speak some German, and we like the mountains.'*

**Survey respondents' current plans and the impact of Brexit**

A clear majority of respondents, 76.6%, plan to live in the EU/EEA/Switzerland permanently (Table 14).

|  | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to live in the EU/EEA or Switzerland permanently. | 76.6% | 61.2% | 79.4% | 85.7% | 42.9% |
| I see myself in the EU/EEA or Switzerland in the long-term, but not permanently. | 15.5% | 25.1% | 13.6% | 12.7% | 57.1% |
| I see myself in the EU/EEA or Switzerland short-term, but not long-term. | 1.1% | 1.6% | 1.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| I plan to leave the EU/EEA or Switzerland in the near future. | 1.5% | 2.7% | 1.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Other | 5.3% | 9.3% | 4.4% | 1.6% | 0.0% |

**Table 14:** Current plans of respondents

Excluding Northern Irish respondents due to the small sample size, there are noticeable proportions among remaining UK home nation respondents who intend to stay long-term, but not permanently. The Scottish stand out here as this is the view of over a quarter. While one factor that explains this is likely the lower number of retirees among the Scottish respondents, there are also indications in other survey comments that, for some, this hinges on the UK constitutional question. This is explored in more detail later on in the report.

For around a quarter of respondents, Brexit had no impact on their current plans (Table 15). For a clear majority of 65.7%, however, it has increased the likelihood of them staying in the EU/EEA or Switzerland.

| | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes - Brexit increased the likelihood of me staying | 65.7% | 68.3% | 64.6% | 61.9% | 85.7% |
| Yes - Brexit increased the likelihood of me leaving | 5.2% | 4.9% | 5.3% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| No | 25.1% | 22.4% | 26.3% | 25.4% | 14.3% |
| Other | 4% | 4.4% | 3.7% | 6.3% | 0.0% |

**Table 15:** The impact Brexit had on respondents' plans

Qualitative comments document the diverse ways in which Brexit impacted plans:

*'Since moving here, I got married and had children. Brexit makes it far more difficult for us to live in the UK by removing my wife's right to live and work there. I hadn't planned to return but Brexit means that I now wouldn't consider it - if we moved it would be to another country with EU freedoms.'*

-------------------------------------

*'Although I would like to stay in the EU/EEA permanently, my partner and I both have families in the UK who aren't getting any younger. It may be the case that we have to take on caring duties at some point in the future, which would require us to stay in the UK for an indefinite amount of time. We have to meet minimum residency requirements here in Finland until we can both hopefully gain dual citizenship, so neither of us wish to spend very long outside of the country until then. If we both still had freedom of movement, this wouldn't be a concern.'*

-------------------------------------

*'Brexit means that I will remain in the EU until I have been granted citizenship here and can freely move around again. I don't want to move back to the UK until I have obtained my EU rights back via citizenship, because if I move back to the UK, it will be much harder for me to return to the EU to live and work - and I do not envisage myself returning permanently to the UK and would like to keep the option of living and working in the EU.'*

-------------------------------------

*'Brexit has completely screwed my plans. I used to live in Sweden and work in Denmark, I lost my job just before Brexit, so I had to move to Denmark to get job opportunities. I got my job back but am now in Denmark and can only work here. I cannot work in other EU countries, and I cannot retire to Sweden as planned.'*

-------------------------------------

*'Brexit has reduced my options. Now that the children have left home, I could imagine my wife and I doing a (say) 2-year job in another EU country. However, whereas she, as a Danish and EU citizen could do this by right, my post-Brexit rights are limited to Denmark.'*

The last two comments reveal what is a common theme among responses: a notion of now being essentially, as another respondent phrased is, 'landlocked' due to the loss of freedom of movement. The tenor is clear: respondents feel that this is not what they 'signed up for' when exercising their freedom of movement rights. While Brexit happened in the way it did because of UK government choices, the EU made some choices too that, these comments

reveal, were not really in the best interests of those directly impacted by political decisions beyond their control.

This holds true for the UK government too in a number of ways that go beyond the immediate Brexit negotiations. Not to cater for the needs of families impacted by Brexit status changes is a failure and, in effect, preventing returns to the UK even where perhaps desired.

> *'Before Brexit, we had plans of moving back to the UK to be near to my family. Now, because of immigration rules imposed by the UK, we would never be able to afford the fees to apply and be granted settlement. So, whilst I can go back to England, my partner couldn't come with me permanently.'*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'My husband is a non-EU national with permanent residence in the EU so we will be able to remain in the EU with no issues. Returning to the UK is now much more difficult under UK national immigration law - expensive and lengthy spouse visa application with no guarantee of success and income thresholds to meet. Prior to Brexit we were also able to visit the UK together with a free and expedited Family Permit, this no longer exists and so even seeing UK family for Christmas requires several hundred pounds for a visit visa. We haven't applied yet, but I know of many people in our situation whose spouses have been rejected, so I'm not hopeful.'*

But, in addition, some respondents also express concerns about the 'atmosphere' that now exists 'towards us "foreign Brits"', which is serving to 'discourage' some respondents from returning even where that had been the plan to do so.

Anxieties are palpable even among those respondents whose actual plans have not changed because of Brexit. Among some who had always planned to stay in the EU/EEA/Switzerland, for example, new concerns have arisen, including how they will manage to cope with post-Brexit changes going forward:

> *'I can see we might have more problems as we get older. I'm now 65 and my partner 73. I'd far prefer to stay here but now every step in the admin system is such hard work post-Brexit. I'm not sure if we'll be able to keep up the struggle.'*

The latter also indicates that concerns over status security remain, so let us now look at respondents who hold a new post-Brexit status in more detail.

**Survey respondents with a new post-Brexit status**

Those who hold a new post-Brexit status in line with the Withdrawal Agreement are the main group of survey respondents at 69.7% (Table 8 above). While there are some common experiences in this group, there are also many differences as different EU/EEA countries and Switzerland implemented the process for acquiring the new status in different ways. For some, it essentially presented no change to the status they already had, albeit now enshrined in the Withdrawal Agreement, while others had to apply for a new status and documentation.

Overall, it is, therefore, good to see that a combined majority of 80.05% respondents found acquiring their new status easy (52.93%) or very easy (27.12%). In general terms, this compares positively to the experiences of EU citizens in the UK, though for a majority there too the process itself was straightforward.[7]

---

[7] Bueltmann, 'Experiences and Impact of the EU Settlement Scheme' (2020).

But as was noted for EU citizens too, this is not a statistical exercise, but an assessment of impacts and for that the actual lived experiences of even just a few can have a very detrimental impact given overall numbers. Of those survey respondents who found the process difficult (16.43%) or very difficult (3.52%), some issues certainly stand out through qualitative comments that are worth considering here. At the forefront are practical issues, including the delayed issuance of biometric cards. This could lead to significant knock-on impacts, such as 'problems in changing address or registering for healthcare'. Given the choice of some countries to implement deadlines and have lengthy processes, some of these problems could have been prevented altogether. In the UK just as much as in the EU/EEA/Switzerland, a simple declaratory system should have been utilised. Given the EU's opening mantra for Brexit negotiations had been that protecting the rights of those who had exercised freedom of movement rights is a priority, it must be said that it was not in the end. While the overall experience of British citizens in the EU/EEA/Switzerland tended to be more positive in terms of the process they had to go through compared to EU citizens in the UK, and while some countries in the EU/EEA/Switzerland clearly opted for straightforward routes and offered a lot of support, there were significant problems elsewhere nonetheless. From the inability to even get appoints with immigration or council officials, to initial rejections of applications, for some respondents, in their own words, 'lives are in tatters now'.

Impacts could be wide-ranging as these examples document:

> *'Firstly, I want to say that the level of stress, uncertainty and anxiety was very high. Italian bureaucracy is notorious and the process for gaining residency was lengthy, just opening a bank account to show funds was a difficult process. Then suddenly we needed a Carta di Soggiorno and the anxiety continued, in my area it was a reasonably straightforward process, which is not everyone's experience. Italy had to respond with uncharacteristic speed to get this process up and running following the uncertainty of Brexit negotiations.'*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'In Greece, each Aliens office requires different documents for residency application. There are no national guidelines. Thankfully, another British expat was able to guide us in the right direction. We, in turn, helped others on our island to get their residency.'*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'As I already held a permanent residence card in Belgium, it was relatively straightforward to make an appointment and go to the commune and ask to exchange it for the new Brexit M card. I got my new card within 2 weeks of applying. However, the Belgian authorities made two mistakes […] they were very apologetic. But I had to wait again for the new card (and could not pick up prescriptions etc as I had no ID card). Whole process was humiliating and emotionally draining for me.'*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'The paperwork was difficult for me to gather as I had not started living in France with the goal of moving there permanently, so didn't have firm dates or lots of evidence to present in support of my case. There was no help from the UK government. The help I got came from the diocese who had set up a group for this purpose.'*

The UK government is a frequent recipient of criticism too, particularly in terms of a real lack of support:

> *'The main problem was the UK government. They didn't support us. They didn't advise us on the steps we needed to take. They used us as bargaining chips. In fact, all the information that I needed was provided to me by the Spanish government.'*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'My kids and I cried a lot at the beginning when it wasn't clear if I could stay or continue to work as a self-employed person without a contract. I was depressed and the pandemic*

> *tipped me over the edge. The lack of care, honesty and transparency from the UK government has completely undermined my faith in "the system". The fact that as a UK citizen living in the EU, I wasn't allowed a say in the referendum when it directly affected my life, unlike the majority of UK citizens, is extremely unjust.'*

But a question for the EU remains too, specifically how member states implemented processes and the consequences of stripping British citizens who had already exercised freedom of movement rights of those rights. One survey respondent encapsulated the issue well, explaining how choices were made on the basis of particular rights held:

> *'A very stressful experience, not because of the French authorities who were great. Stressful in terms of [the process …]. All in all, as someone who chose France willingly as a place to live as it was in the EU and I did have rights, and then potentially losing those rights, I feel quite traumatized and scarred by the whole experience.'*

Acquiring a new status is, as for EU citizens in the UK, only part of the story, however. Among EU citizens in the UK, their sense of security varies depending on what specific right one looks at.[8] Due to divergent local systems across the EU/EEA/Switzerland, a direct comparison is not possible, but survey data for those survey respondents with a new status show that 60.7% feel that their rights are secure. While the majority, this leaves a sizable 39.3% who have concerns about the security of their status going forward (Table 16).

|  | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 60.7% | 57.8% | 62.2% | 58.0% | 100.0% |
| No | 39.3% | 42.2% | 37.8% | 42.0% | 0.0% |

**Table 16:** Respondents' sense of security in relation to their new post-Brexit status: do they feel secure?

One of those who feel less secure encapsulates concerns well:

> *'There have been so many new hoops I have had to jump through just to retain fundamental rights, it's been tiring and frustrating. Although theoretically I am protected under the WA, I definitely feel less secure than I did when the UK was still part of the EU. It's been quite a humbling experience in many ways, so many rights I took for granted now gone I feel I understand better the uncertainty that other third country nationals must feel.'*

Connected to this are questions about status checks and, with that, the availability of a physical proof of status—such proof is not available for EU citizens in the UK and that continues to cause problems. Positively, therefore, 91.4% of respondents to this present survey say that they have a physical document to prove their status (Table 17).

|  | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 91.4% | 89.8% | 91.3% | 96.0% | 100.0% |
| No | 4.5% | 7.0% | 4.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Other | 4.0% | 3.1% | 4.1% | 4.0% | 0.0% |

**Table 17:** Physical proof of status coverage among respondents with a new post-Brexit status: do you have a physical document to prove your rights?

---

[8] Bueltmann & Bulat, 'EU Citizens' Identity, Belonging and Representation Post-Brexit' (2021).

Still there have been issues, in Portugal and for those with Portuguese documentation in particular:

> *'I have been unable to prove or benefit from my WA rights due to the almost 2-year delay in the Portuguese Govt issuing updated residency cards; and their failure to ensure that the temporary document they issued to us was accepted within Portugal and other EU states as evidence of WA beneficiary status, despite them swearing consistently that it did until 3 weeks ago. 3 weeks ago the Minister for Foreign Affairs finally admitted in a Portuguese media interview that there were problems with the temporary document and the delays in issuing biometric cards - having 3 weeks earlier done media interviews across Europe, including in the UK, that there were "no problems".'*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'Interim Portuguese QR code not accepted as proof of residency at Frankfurt Airport'*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'Portugal only started issuing WA cards in February 2022, despite opening the application process in December 2020. Eight months later, the vast majority of Brits have still not received their cards. Personally, I have not experienced any issues with continuing to use my pre-Brexit permanent residency card, but the uncertainty and waiting has been somewhat stressful.'*

Among those with documents, practical problems continue to arise while the implementation of rules is also an issue. Border officials and airline staff, for instance, do not seem to always follow rules in line with the Withdrawal Agreement, with border officials incorrectly stamping passports, for example. Travel is where most issues appear to currently occur.

> *'Travelling back to Belgium from US after a holiday in 2021: The (misinformed) US flight check-in people demanded to see Article 50 residence permits (we were travelling on British passports), despite our German passports/identity cards which we were also carrying, and our UK right to travel to Belgium without a visa/permit, and nearly refused us boarding. It was insane.'*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'Transferring flights in Germany was hugely problematic before I received my residency card. The border police refused to accept my paper documentation and insisted on the card which I didn't yet have. They were aggressive and rude. They also insisted on stamping my passport. I complained and got an apology and confirmation from the European Commission that they should have accepted my documentation.'*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'I've encountered issues travelling both to Schengen and non-Schengen EU countries; passports stamped when they shouldn't be; excessive border checks from what appeared to be a lack of understanding of the rights granted to an Article 50 holder. Primarily between Hungary and Romania (and back).'*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'There is constant confusion around passport stamping. I was "stamped in" to France on a short trip last week, but could not find anyway to be "stamped out" again. I think I can only spend 90 days in other EU countries, but have no idea how anyone can check or enforce that - until someone decides to try. It's a mess.'*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'I was denied boarding by an airline employee who didn't know my old document was still valid. I was eventually allowed to board because of the distress caused to my child, an EEA national travelling with me, but all the other passengers carrying the same documentation were denied and some turned back upon landing on that particular day.'*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'Every time I go through a Schengen border control, I need to provide both my passport and Aufenthaltstitel card - and watch to check that they don't stamp my passport. As I am currently travelling a lot that's been 20-odd times this year. Most of the time this is fine but*

> *on my most recent arrival in Basel, the French immigration officer picked up the stamp and was about to stamp my passport before I called out for her not to, and she then conferred with a Swiss colleague and looked more closely at the Aufenthaltstitel card. [...] it is concerning that it's happening.'*

--------------------------------

> *'My residence permit was required in order for me to exchange my British Driving Licence for a Dutch one. Since then, it has only been required at Dutch national border so that my UK passport would NOT be stamped [...]. The residence permit is not viewed as an identification document, or as a permit to travel. Dutch and Belgian officials are more likely to ask for my driving licence, which contains my Citizen's ID.'*

But there are many other wider-reaching impacts, some of them, as one respondent notes, '"soft" issues', but problematic in daily life nonetheless.

> *'Brexit has impacted quite a lot, especially with so-called "soft" issues, such as banking (both UK and EU), Identity issues, even receiving Christmas presents and personal items from friends and family living in the UK. Restrictions on what you can bring to and from when travelling to the UK and customs duty on "private personal items and goods". Roaming charges, the cost of calling friends and family. Even keeping your UK mobile number which you may have had for many years and use for UK banking.'*

--------------------------------

> *'Mobility within the EU is harder (due to 180-day rule). I can vote in fewer elections (only the municipal elections now) so I feel disenfranchised. I still argue that the UK or Scotland (if were to become independent) to negotiate a closer and more sensible arrangement with the EU, where freedom of movement and trade is at least re-established. It is also a drag to have to fill out customs declarations for items arriving from the UK. I am glad I am not in any import/export business of products, only services.'*

--------------------------------

> *'I am now effectively 'trapped' in Denmark for the foreseeable future, if I want any chance of gaining Danish citizenship. As I'm no longer and EU citizen I can't move freely in Europe anymore. My partner is going to Slovenia for a semester abroad and I cannot join him due to Brexit, meaning we'll have to pay rent for two apartments instead of being able to sublet our apartment in Denmark. Furthermore, it's limited my job opportunities. I studied European Studies at Master's level and was hoping to work in the EU. However, many EU positions require EU citizenship, so it's an added barrier for me.'*

--------------------------------

> *'I came to Spain as I had a right to do so, not because Spain agreed to let me in. I now feel that I am here because Spain is tolerating my presence. I am furious that I have lost the right to move within Europe. Obviously, I am angry at the Brexiters, but I am also very upset that the EU allowed citizenship to be stripped from millions of people.'*

--------------------------------

> *'The process of becoming a Greek resident required lots of paperwork, but more importantly, it was emotionally challenging. It forced me to think about what I was prepared to relinquish in order to live in Greece. I hate that I live in a country where I have no voting rights — and regard this as an infringement of my human rights. Ironically, in the country that gave birth to the concept of democracy, not all residents have the democratic right to vote. That is not right — and I feel unfairly disenfranchised. It's a huge sacrifice to not be allowed to vote in either local or national elections in the country I actually live in. I also resent that I still pay tax in the UK — as much as I ever have — but have fewer rights there. I have currently set my life up to be a permanent resident of Greece, but to have ordinary residence in England to retain some rights there. I have to count the days I spend in the England to retain ordinary resident status alongside being a Greek resident.'*

In light of questions around the sense of security and issues with proving status, one possible consideration for British citizens with a new post-Brexit status is to take the citizenship of their

place of residence and become a dual national. Table 18 provides a breakdown of their responses, revealing that a significant number—38.2%—are either already in the process of applying for an EU/EEA/Swiss citizenship, or planning to do so, while an additional 28.6% are thinking about it.

| | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am already in the process of doing so | 11.1% | 14.1% | 9.6% | 12.0% | 100.0% |
| I am planning to do so | 27.1% | 27.3% | 25.7% | 40.0% | 0.0% |
| I am thinking about it | 28.6% | 32.0% | 28.7% | 20.0% | 0.0% |
| I thought about it and concluded not to do it | 23.2% | 18.8% | 25.4% | 16.0% | 0.0% |
| I have not thought about it | 10.1% | 7.8% | 10.6% | 12.0% | 0.0% |

**Table 18:** Respondents with a new post-Brexit status and their views on taking EU/EEA/Swiss citizenship

Decisions around whether or not to apply for citizenship of an EU/EEA country or Switzerland relates to personal considerations, for instance the wish to be in the same passport queue with one's family, but dual nationality rules also play a critical role: not all countries allow the holding of multiple citizenships. Overall, a plurality of respondents said that whether or not they would have to renounce their British citizenship to acquire an EU/EEA/Swiss one would not have an impact on their decision (Table 19). Disaggregated data by UK home nation shows, however, that for a plurality of Scottish respondents it does matter; this could potentially relate to the constitutional question – see also other data explored further below.

| | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It would make me less likely to become an EU/EEA/Swiss national | 31.2% | 37.5% | 30.9% | 22.0% | 0.0% |
| It would have no impact on my thinking | 37.8% | 28.1% | 38.1% | 56.0% | 100.0% |
| I am not sure | 18.6% | 21.9% | 18.5% | 18.0% | 0.0% |
| I've not thought about this | 12.3% | 12.5% | 12.4% | 4.0% | 0.0% |

**Table 19:** The impact of dual nationality rules / renouncing British citizenship

Qualitative comments shed some more light on the thinking of respondents in relation to renouncing their British nationality.

*'It's a very thorny issue and very hard to explain. On a practical level, it would make perfect sense to give up my British citizenship in order to get Italian citizenship. However, I still feel British and my parents and family in the UK are and are still there, so I'd feel I was 'divorcing' from them and my origins, which is not something I want to do. Thankfully, I don't have to choose as now I can have dual.'*

--------------------------------

*'The behaviour of the British government since 2019, has made the decision easier for me to renounce my British passport when I am able to get Dutch citizenship. As I always had a speech problem, meeting the Dutch requirements difficult and has delayed my plans to give up my passport, but as I have now met those requirements, my only delay now is the waiting list for the appointment at the local council.'*

--------------------------------

> *'My wife is Belgian, my daughter a dual national, and Switzerland is a third country for us both. Brexit makes it potentially difficult to move to either of our countries, so given the choice between a country that's going off the edge of a cliff [meaning the UK], and the right to live and work in 27 countries, it's not such a tough choice.'*
>
> ----------------------------------
>
> *'We still run a UK business and this we are not sure how change of citizenship would affect us legally. If there was dual citizenship [in our EU country] it would be a no brainer.'*
>
> ----------------------------------
>
> *'Since I want to live and freely move around in the EU, I believe EU citizenship is more valuable than British. I would prefer to keep both, but if I had to choose, I would choose EU nationality. Before Brexit, I was not concerned with applying for citizenship in Denmark, but now I feel it is necessary.'*
>
> ----------------------------------
>
> *'Should Scotland achieve independence, I would want to be Scottish. Because of this hope, I feel uncomfortable about renouncing my British status although I do not believe it offers any benefits at this time.'*

## Survey respondents who are dual British-EU/EEA/Swiss nationals

24.1% of survey respondents (Table 8) already are dual nationals. In order to determine how this status may relate to Brexit and its impact, they were asked when they became a dual national. That revealed that over three quarters, 76.6%, acquired their EU/EEA/Swiss citizenship after the UK's EU referendum, indicating a cause and consequence rationale (Table 20).

|  | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Before the 2016 EU Referendum | 12.8% | 10.0% | 11.0% | 36.4% | 0.0% |
| After the 2016 EU Referendum | 76.6% | 82.5% | 78.7% | 63.6% | 66.7% |
| I am a dual British-EU/EEA/Swiss national by birth | 10.6% | 7.5% | 10.4% | 0.0% | 33.3% |

**Table 20:** Breakdown of when dual nationals took up their dual nationality

Of the 12.8% of respondents who became dual nationals prior to the UK's EU referendum, 88.6% agreed that they did so because they felt it would give them practical benefits; a further 80% were motivated by gaining the right to vote. But motivations did not only stem from such considerations as 80% also agreed that becoming a dual national reflected their commitment to their new home, while 68.6% agreed that they saw it as a means that would help them to better integrate. As one respondent noted:

> *'I consider myself extremely fortunate now that I have dual nationality […]. At the time, 1975, there was no language test, no cost, no documents, except my birth certificate and marriage certificate and only a six month wait. Having dual nationality means a lot to me as it expresses who I have become. I can participate fully in my life here and of course I have the right to vote as I did in the General Election the other week.'*

For the majority of respondents who became dual nationals after the UK's EU referendum, their motivations for doing so are set out in Table 21. The breakdown confirms that Brexit was a key factor in their choice to become a dual national. This is emphasised by the high

percentage of respondents, 98.1%, who agree that dual nationality gives them a post-Brexit safety net; 96.2% also agree that practical benefits are a key factor. Importantly, however, 89% also see it more directly as an expression of rejecting Brexit.

| | | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brexit was a key factor in my choice to become a dual national after the UK's EU referendum. | *Agree* | 93.8% | 100.0% | 92.2% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| | *Neutral* | 1.4% | 0.0% | 0.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| | *Disagree* | 4.8% | 0.0% | 7.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Post-Brexit, dual nationality is a safety net. | *Agree* | 98.1% | 100.0% | 98.4% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| | *Neutral* | 1.9% | 0.0% | 1.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| | *Disagree* | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| I reject Brexit; becoming a dual national is one expression of that. | *Agree* | 89.0% | 97.0% | 87.6% | 71.4% | 75.0% |
| | *Neutral* | 8.6% | 0.0% | 10.1% | 14.3% | 25.0% |
| | *Disagree* | 2.4% | 3.0% | 2.3% | 14.3% | 0.0% |
| I became a dual national to be able to vote in national elections. | *Agree* | 59.5% | 51.5% | 68.2% | 28.6% | 0.0% |
| | *Neutral* | 26.2% | 30.3% | 20.9% | 28.6% | 50.0% |
| | *Disagree* | 14.3% | 18.2% | 10.9% | 42.9% | 50.0% |
| Dual nationality gives me practical benefits. | *Agree* | 96.2% | 97.0% | 95.3% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| | *Neutral* | 3.3% | 3.0% | 3.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| | *Disagree* | 0.5% | 0.0% | 0.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Becoming a dual national was important to me for my identity. | *Agree* | 71.4% | 69.7% | 70.5% | 57.1% | 75.0% |
| | *Neutral* | 19.0% | 21.2% | 18.6% | 28.6% | 0.0% |
| | *Disagree* | 9.5 % | 9.1% | 10.9% | 14.3% | 25.0% |

**Table 21:** Reasons for becoming a dual national post-EU referendum

Respondents were also asked about how they felt when they became a dual national. Overall, a majority felt happy and excited, but there was also an overwhelming sense of relief. A significant proportion also felt some sadness.
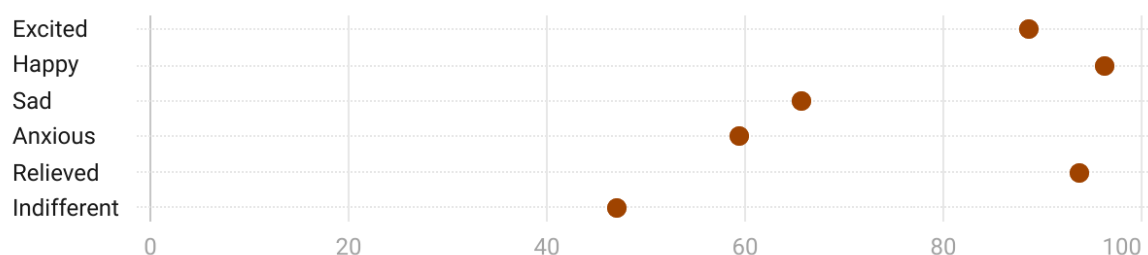


**Figure 2:** Feelings when becoming a dual British-EU/EEA/Swiss national post-EU referendum (percentage range)

Qualitative comments suggest that this was largely because the respondents' decision to become a dual national was triggered by what we might call a negative trigger (Brexit) and a longing for security in status rather than a primarily positive affirmation of the choice to become the citizen of another country.

> *'It secured my family's future. Eight weeks after becoming an Austrian, I became the father of twins, born Austrian. My wife was stateless at the time of birth, waiting for her citizenship to come through.'*
>
> ----------------------------------
>
> *'I felt a real high coming out of the police station with my new passport and ID card – I've re-joined the EU! I've always felt European - one of my favourite sporting events is the Ryder Cup although normally I hate golf, simply because I can identify 100% with "Team Europe" in a way I can't do with any individual country team in other sports. On a more practical level, my renewed Freedom of Movement will enable me to move to Germany to re-join my partner (we lived together in Spain for 5 years, but she had to return to Germany in 2019 for family and work reasons).'*
>
> ----------------------------------
>
> *'Symbolically, in terms of personal identity, not being only British has helped deal with the helplessness and rage of the Brexit referendum that I was not allowed to vote in'.*
>
> ----------------------------------
>
> *'Having worked and lived in Europe for 20+ years, across many countries, and having a hybrid European family, I was incredibly sad that the UK had taken the Brexit decision. Even more sad about the division caused within my own family. However, I was also fortunate that the EU made me welcome and made it possible, even easy, to make the choice to become a citizen of Finland.'*
>
> ----------------------------------
>
> *'On the morning after the referendum I felt like I had been rejected by country. The UK had pulled up the drawbridge and I was on the outside. I applied for French nationality more out of fear that the same thing could happen in France, and I wanted security. At the ceremony where I received my French nationality I was welcomed so warmly (as were all the other new French nationals) that I actually started feeling more 'French'. I had already been living in France for over 10 years but never felt in the slightest bit French but since then I really feel part of the wider French family.'*

Of this largest group of respondents who applied for EU/EEA/Swiss citizenship after the UK's EU referendum, a combined 65.3% found the process easy or very easy, while a combined 33.8% found it difficult or very difficult. In part, this split reflects the different processes depending on country. It is notable that, as for a growing number of British citizens who still live in the UK, a number of respondents used article 116 II Basic Law[9] to regain the citizenship that had been removed because their families were persecuted by the Nazi regime. As one respondent explained, **'I was eligible for naturalisation under DE law, my mother having lost her citizenship due to the Nazis.'**

A plurality of respondents, 39.2%, found gathering residency evidence the biggest challenge, followed by language tests (31.5%), and having to navigate dual citizenship rules (25.9%). While the gathering of residence evidence is also what EU citizens in the UK see as most difficult, experiences then diverge as the cost is their second major concern. This comes as no surprise when considering that the self-declared average cost for EU citizens applying for British citizenship, including all fees and related expenses, is £1,960.[10] For Britons in the EU/EEA and Switzerland, a combined 67.7% declared a cost of under £500, with a plurality of 41% declaring under £250.

Those who are dual nationals by birth could also indicate agreement with a series of statements, with a majority of 96.6% agreeing that dual nationality gives them practical benefits and serves as a post-Brexit safety net in the view of 86.2%. Meanwhile, 69% agree

---

[9] For details see https://uk.diplo.de/uk-en/02/citizenship/restoration-of-german-citizenship/2463592
[10] Bueltmann & Bulat, 'EU Citizens' Identity, Belonging and Representation Post-Brexit' (2021).

that dual nationality is important for their identity and 62.1% agree that they feel emotional attachment with both their EU/EEA/Swiss and British nationalities.

> *'I am a dual national by birth but pre-2016 I had never used (nor had ever intended to use by EU citizenship). Although I did not change citizenship, I applied for a new passport and stopped using by British passport as a result of Brexit.'*
>
> ------------------------------------
>
> *'My mother applied for my first German passport in 1975, under the German RuStAÄndG 1974 law, ahead of the 1975 Brexit / EEC referendum. The fear I might need to rely on my dual nationality one day has been with me most of my life.'*

**Survey respondents who renounced their British citizenship to become an EU/EEA/Swiss national**

Finally, a small group of respondents—15 in total—chose to renounce their British citizenship in order to become an EU/EEA/Swiss national. While this group of respondents is of a small size, it is worth considering views, particularly as all respondents agreed with the statement that Brexit was a key factor in their decision to become an EU/EEA/Swiss citizen. For 11 of the 15 respondents with this status, renouncing their British citizenship was, in fact, a direct expression of their rejection of Brexit, though other factors were also important to many respondents, including no longer wanting to be the citizen of a country that has a monarch as its head of state. The following are examples of some of the other comments respondents made, outlining their choice to renounce their British citizenship:

> *'Bloody heck that you have to pay hundreds of pounds to renounce your British citizenship. I'd have happily sent them back my British passport put through the shredder after all the sleepless nights, anger, and loss of earnings that Brexit caused.'*
>
> ------------------------------------
>
> *'I felt so betrayed by [the UK] government and my country - not having a vote on Brexit and then left hanging with no idea what was next. My job, family and quality of life were all at risk. Dual nationality was not an option here - but was for my wife and children once I acquired citizenship. My new country couldn't have been kinder or more welcoming. I hated the idea of losing this part of my identity - but I embraced it. I still feel deeply bitter that [the UK] government turned their back on me and forced me to choose. I've lost so much but gained a lot more and now have turned my back on them. In a way I'm glad they made me choose. My life is much better here.'*
>
> ------------------------------------
>
> *'I was fairly indifferent to it, since with the 15-year rule disenfranchising me from UK elections, I didn't really feel that I was a proper British citizen in any case. Also, I felt that the British government and the pro-Brexit voters hadn't given the British citizens in the EU any consideration at all, so I felt no reason to continue to feel allegiance to the UK.'*
>
> ------------------------------------
>
> *'The most confusing thing was when I contacted the UK government, after receiving my Dutch passport, the UK Government said I didn't need to give up my British citizenship. But according to Dutch law, I have to give it up, so I wanted to do things correctly. I filled in the (paper) form, posted it off, and paid £350 - and received no confirmation for a long time, but eventually, I got a letter acknowledging that I had renounced my British citizenship.'*
>
> ------------------------------------
>
> *'It was very important to me to secure EU nationality, even if I would have enjoyed almost identical rights as a TCN spouse of an EU National when moving to Austria from Belgium. I was (and continue to be) surprised at the pride I feel in being Belgian and the affection I have for the country, even though I no longer live there. I know that I am hugely privileged to have had the possibility to acquire a second nationality. Having spent almost my whole*
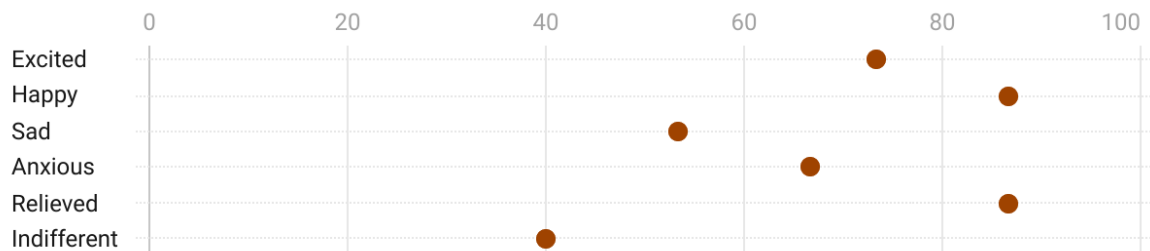
Still a clear majority of respondents felt sad at the point of renouncing their British citizenship, but there was also a very strong sense of relief.
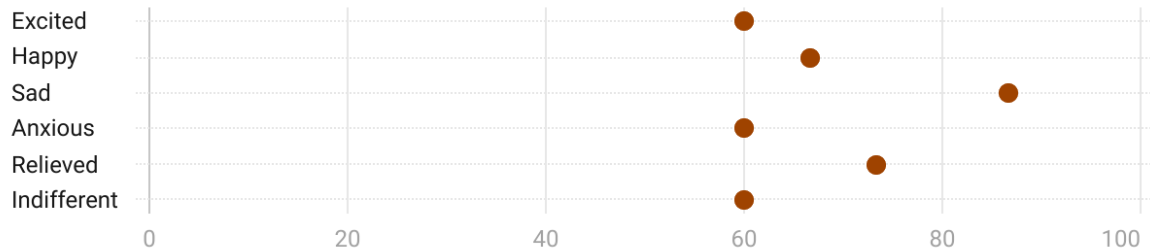
**Figure 3:** Feelings when renouncing British citizenship (percentage range)

Meanwhile, a sense of happiness, combined with relief, was the prevailing feeling at the point of becoming an EU/EEA/Swiss citizen.

**Figure 4:** Feelings when becoming an EU/EEA/Swiss citizen (percentage range)

Having considered the status of survey respondents in more detail, let us now move on to questions of representation and trust in the political process and different actors and stakeholders that survey respondents encountered over time.

**Representation and trust**

From the very start when the EU referendum date was set, questions were raised about representation—and for the referendum itself also that of participation in the democratic process itself. EU citizens in the UK were not included in the franchise and, as research has shown, this left a mark on many of them in terms of feeling excluded in a decision that so directly impacted their lives. For British citizens the eligibility to vote in the EU referendum hinged on the question of how long they had been living outside of the UK as those who had lived abroad for more than 15 years were affected by the 15-year overseas voter time limit. Of the British citizens surveyed, a majority of around 65% were able to vote in the EU referendum, though not all were resident in the EU/EEA/Switzerland at the time. Among those who were, as qualitative comments document, a notable proportion were prevented to have a say by the 15-year rule. As one respondent explained:

*'I should have had a vote in the referendum - it affected my family, and we deserved a say. The 2016 Tory administration should not have enforced an advisory referendum without our votes. They disenfranchised a million+ people and wrecked many lives, derailed plans, left retired people destitute who should have enjoyed security.'*

Within this group, feelings of being left behind and ignored are, understandable, common. Moving forward, the Elections Act 2022, which received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022, provides for the so-called 'votes for life' policy for UK citizens.[11]

There is a wider point to be made in relation to engagement and participation in democratic processes in the EU/EEA/Switzerland. Franchise rules are different in different countries and qualitative comments document problems in relation to disenfranchisement among a significant number of respondents in a few locations. At times this may be the result of misunderstandings of franchise rules and routes to participation, highlighting the need for countries to do more on informing all residents of the elections they can vote in or ways in which they can engage with local communities. Measured in terms of voter registration (Table 22) there is certainly room for improvement as only around a third of respondents are registered to vote where they can do so, and a sizable proportion does not know whether they can register to vote. It is vital to improve awareness and understanding of rights.

| | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 33.87% | 36.6% | 33.4% | 31.7% | 28.6% |
| No | 42.26% | 37.2% | 43.2% | 42.9% | 71.4% |
| I am not sure whether I can | 7.69% | 7.1% | 7.8% | 9.5% | n/a |
| Other | 16.18% | 19.1% | 15.6% | 15.9% | n/a |

**Table 22:** Breakdown of respondents' EU/EEA/Switzerland voter registration status

This is especially important because, overall, the EU referendum triggered—and Brexit maintained—significant concerns among British citizens in terms of their sense of being represented in politics and debate. Concerningly, a majority of 60.14% of respondents feel unrepresented, with a further 30.03% of respondents feeling not well represented (Table 23). Even more concerningly, these figures broadly mirror those for EU citizens in the UK,[12] reflecting how a group of millions sees its position in society.

| | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I feel represented | 4.21% | 3.3% | 4.0% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| I do not feel well represented | 30.03% | 31.1% | 30.2% | 22.2% | 42.9% |
| I feel unrepresented | 60.14% | 58.5% | 61.2% | 66.7% | 57.1% |
| It depends | 5.62% | 7.1% | 4.5% | 4.8% | 0.0% |

**Table 23:** Respondents' views on their representation in politics

As one respondent explained, 'in UK terms, I am not represented. But French politics has a space for French people living abroad and non-French people living in France. That matters.' Meanwhile, another asked 'does the UK care about me? The German government actively encouraged me to become German'. Defiance comes through too, however, with many respondents stressing that they are 'still a British citizen', hence the UK Government has a duty to look after them. Overall, however, there is a very clear sense that respondents do not feel well looked after in terms of their representation.

---

[11] Neil Johnston and Elise Uberoi, 'Overseas Voters' Research Briefing, House of Commons Library, 28 April 2022, https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05923/
[12] Bueltmann & Bulat, 'EU Citizens' Identity, Belonging and Representation Post-Brexit' (2021).

*'I was denied a vote in the most important referendum that has been held during my lifetime. My rights were taken away from me without my consent nor my wishes. I and thousands of other British citizens, have no voting rights in the UK and can only vote in local elections in Spain. This is not democracy!'*

-----------------------------------

*'As far as I am concerned, there is no "representation" for UK citizens living outside the UK and in the EU. Some might think that is a good thing but actually, as a British citizen I am "still" governed by the laws of the UK, no matter where I live. Therefore, "political representation" is extremely important to me. Since losing my EU citizenship, I am now also not represented within my country of residence. I feel like a guest.'*

-----------------------------------

*'I have felt utterly abandoned by the UK Government, and know I am not alone in thinking this. it's now clear that they don't care about 99% of UK citizens in the UK, and they definitely don't give a damn about UK citizens who choose to live in the EU. There should be a new constituency MP created to specifically to represent the rights of UK citizens living overseas, including in Europe (as France has), as constituency MPs have absolutely no power to support us (and many have no interest). I believe a new non-Conservative Govt will show more interest & help UK citizens in the EU, but it can't undo the damage that has been done in the past few years.'*

-----------------------------------

*'I can now vote for my town council in Spain, and nothing else. How is this acceptable in 2022? It's possible that my UK vote will be restored for the next general election, but even if it is it will be in a constituency where I haven't lived since 2006, where I know no one and own no assets. I would like to see UK overseas constituencies in Westminster. I would also like Spain to permit dual passport holders, and/or for EU citizenship to become a standalone status. To reclaim EU citizen rights I would currently need to become permanently beholden to Spain, and I'm not happy about that.'*

-----------------------------------

*'I am angry and resentful that I don't have rights to vote in either local or national elections in the country that I now live in and pay tax to. I am COMPLETELY unrepresented […]. This also leaves us, as a group, very vulnerable. Not only can we not vote, but no politician is motivated to campaign for any issues specific to us — there's no votes on it for them, even if they care. I regard it as a severe infringement of my human rights that the right to vote in the country I live in is denied to me. I don't understand what the justification for this is either. I live in Greece, everything that happens in Greece affects me. I want […] for my voice to be heard equally with all other residents of Greece.'*

-----------------------------------

*'I can vote in Denmark as a Dane, but specific issues to do with being British and Britishness and things that directly affect Brits abroad are completely ignored. In the media, it is a divisive issue, with images of tax-havens and non-dom Conservative voters, but that is not the case... France has good representation for their overseas citizens, with MPs for their French citizens overseas, something that would be wonderful for the British overseas.'*

-----------------------------------

*'Once we can vote again, I will start on getting representation for overseas Brits at Westminster. In the pandemic I was writing the same letters to our government […] that Olivier Cadic was writing to Macron about the impact of Covid on French overseas. He's an elected senator. I was an unpaid volunteer.'*

-----------------------------------

*'There has been no meaningful concern in the UK government (or the EU) that many of us are left without a vote. Those with non-British family members will have great difficulty returning to the UK if they need or wish to. Those with non-EU family members are even struggling to get visas to visit the UK. In Italy we are still waiting for an agreement on driving licence exchange. If there isn't one in less than 3 months some people face losing their jobs, being cut off and some unable to get to essential medical appointments. No one cares that many UK citizens living in the EU have had their UK bank accounts closed. There*

But this is not just a question of representation: there is also an even more fundamental issue about trust that we need to consider. In essence, there has been a near complete breakdown in trust with respect to the UK Government: British citizens in the EU do not trust the UK Government to look after their interests. While this is, in many respects, not entirely surprising, the scale of this breakdown of trust is very stark (Table 24.1).

| | | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I trust the UK GOVERNMENT to look after my interests. | *Agree* | 1.1% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 0.0% |
| | *Neutral* | 3.3% | 5.3% | 3.2% | 0.0% |
| | *Disagree* | 95.6% | 93% | 95.2% | 100.0% |
| I trust the EU to look after my interests. | *Agree* | 62.3% | 48.0% | 55.6% | 42.9% |
| | *Neutral* | 29.5% | 37.8% | 34.9% | 28.6% |
| | *Disagree* | 8.2% | 14.2% | 9.5% | 28.6% |
| I trust the GOVERNMENT OF MY CURRENT COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE to look after my interests. | *Agree* | 47.5% | 49.7% | 66.7% | 57.1% |
| | *Neutral* | 39.9% | 36.5% | 23.8% | 14.3% |
| | *Disagree* | 12.6% | 13.8% | 9.5% | 28.6% |

**Table 24.1:** Breakdown of who respondents trust with their representation

Qualitative comments emphasise this strongly. Individual respondents express what are widely shared views: that their 'belief and trust in the UK Government' has 'been lost' and that they have 'absolutely no trust in the British Government to look after us'.

Having said that, and while trust in the EU is significantly higher than in the UK Government, there are also trust issues with respect to the EU, as well as national governments throughout the EU and decision-makers at local levels. This relates broadly to the issue of words not quite meeting actions/reality: while the EU has always said citizens' rights are a priority, and while member states all developed systems to protect citizens' rights in line with the Withdrawal Agreement, lived experiences differ at time. Issues, and this discrepancy, come out strongest in qualitative comments:

> *'Citizens' Rights were never a priority for the UK Government negotiating the Withdrawal Agreement. If it weren't for the efforts of 'British in Europe', which was a voluntarily funded group of affected citizens, we wouldn't have got the little that we did. The EU and national European Governments have implemented what was necessary but individual officials may not know or care what the rules are so day to day issues can arise. I am just counting down the days until I can apply for Belgian nationality to make it all go away.*

> -----------------------------------

> *'I have actually lost faith in the EU (to do the right thing) since Brexit. I feel let down by the EU. For somebody who is pro-EU, this may sound strange. Due to Brexit, I've had no choice but to be compelled to follow every protocol, every action of the EU. I never got a "genuine" feeling that Britons in EU really mattered to the EUco/EUparl. We were just statistics, just ammunition to use in a political battle playing out around us. Pawns. Nobody bothered looking into the practicalities of border guard confusions of passport stamping until it was too late. It took years for most EU countries to put in place permits and processes for administering residence of Britons in EU when even the most disorganized country on the planet the UK - had already started processing millions of residents in their schemes when the ink on the Withdrawal Agreement was still wet. […] Another let-down on the EU side is observing just how speedily quick (within days or weeks), reactionary and hard the EU is towards the UK when there is even a glimmer of a prospect that the UK may breach the WA. But then compare that lightning speed with the slowness (years!) for the EUco/Parl/bloc to react in the softest weakest ways to serious breaches of human or LGBT rights and EU values by an EU member state (Poland and Hungary). It's not right. It makes a mockery of the EU. I expect more. Better. It breaks my heart that the EU is letting me down. Letting others down. I pay my EU taxes and the EU must offer better value for its citizens. I realise my comments are mainly about the EU, but that's because it is the one that has disappointed me the most. And the one that matters most. The one I am most passionate for, and about.'*

As the principle focus of this research is specifically on Scots, Scottish respondents were also asked how they view the devolved Scottish Government in the context of representation/trust. As Table 24.2 shows, just over 50% agree that they trust the Scottish Government to look after their interests. This is an interesting outcome given the Scottish Government does not have an official function for Scots resident abroad—although a growing number of Scottish Government offices are being established and do provide an engagement hook for some activities. The words of a survey respondent who is not actually from Scotland (the respondent comes from Wales originally), but lived there for over a decade, are perhaps quite illuminating in this context: 'I feel the current Scottish government is the most "like me" in the UK.'

| I trust the SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT to look after my interests. | *Agree* | 50.3% |
|---|---|---|
| | *Neutral* | 33.3% |
| | *Disagree* | 16.4% |

**Table 24.2:** Scottish respondents: trust of the Scottish Government

The relatively high number of Scottish respondents being 'neutral' on this question is also notable. Qualitative comments provide some additional insight here, suggesting that many who are neutral on this question chose that option primarily to recognise that the Scottish Government has no overseas diplomatic function for Scottish British citizens.

**Identity and belonging**

As existing research indicates, Brexit constitutes a real rupture in the sense of belonging of both EU citizens in the UK and British citizens in the EU.[13] The results from this survey provide further evidence of this. Importantly, this impact is not uniform: among both groups most impacted by Brexit, we can see layers of identity that are in interplay. To provide a level of comparison, data from this survey for British citizens (Table 25.1) is presented alongside data for EU citizens that the CI had gathered on the same question in another survey (Table 25.2).[14]

| *Which of these common identity descriptors do you relate to? (multiple answers were possible)* | **All** | **Scottish** | **English** | **Welsh** | **Northern Irish** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| European | 82.6% | 83.2% | 82.2% | 84.1% | 71.4% |
| EU citizen | 44.7% | 42.6% | 44.0% | 42.9% | 85.7% |
| British | 68.9% | 39.9% | 76.9% | 58.7% | 71.4% |
| English | n/a | 1.6% | 56.0% | 4.8% | 0.0% |
| Scottish | n/a | 95.1% | 1.5% | 1.6% | 0.0% |
| Welsh | n/a | 0.0% | 2.4% | 88.9% | 0.0% |
| Northern Irish | n/a | 0.5% | 0.7% | 1.6% | 57.1% |
| a REGIONAL identity in the UK, e.g. Highlander | 22.9% | 24.6% | 23.7% | 7.9% | 28.6% |
| a LOCAL identity in the UK, e.g. Liverpudlian | 29.0% | 32.8% | 28.6% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| a REGIONAL identity where you live now, e.g. Bavarian | 21.9% | 21.9% | 22.2% | 12.7% | 14.3% |
| a LOCAL identity where you live now, e.g. Parisian | 24.5% | 26.8% | 23.7% | 11.1% | 14.3% |
| Other | 14.5% | 6.0% | 14.3% | 6.3% | 42.9% |

**Table 25.1:** Layers of identity – British citizens in the EU

If we focus on the results for all respondents of the current survey in the first instance, it is clear that a majority of respondents still see themselves strongly as European at 82.6%. This is higher than the respondents' identification with being British, which sits at 68.9%.

Disaggregated data for UK home nations reveals some fascinating patterns and divergences. The most striking is that for Scottish respondents: 95.1% see themselves as Scottish, with European second at 83.2%. While the figure for Welsh respondents who identify as Welsh is

---

[13] Bueltmann, 'Experiences and Impact of the EU Settlement Scheme' (2020).
[14] The options offered were the same across both surveys. While the survey of British citizens enables a breakdown of data by their UK home nation, for EU citizens a comparable breakdown effect is achieved by the identification of where in the UK they reside. In order for this to be as directly comparable as possible, the choice was made not to specifically add the label 'Irish' to the identifiers—those who see themselves as such were able to add this under 'other', which provided a free text box for direct text entry.

also higher than that for European—88.9% for Welsh and 84.1% for European—this is not the case for English respondents: only a significantly lower 56% of English respondents also see themselves as English. So in terms of UK home nations, identification with home nation and use of its specific identity descriptor as part of their identity is lowest among the English respondents—nearly 40% lower than for Scottish respondents.

For English respondents, Britishness sits above this as an umbrella identity that 76.9% of English respondents relate to. However, only 39.9% of Scottish respondents do. Consequently, in terms of the layering of identity, we get quite different outcomes depending on UK home nation:

- English respondents have the weakest connection with their UK home nation, while Scottish respondents have the strongest;
- English respondents have the strongest connection to Britishness, while Scottish respondents have the weakest;
- Welsh respondents essentially sit in-between on Britishness, but also have a strong connection with their UK home nation;
- on the whole, respondents from all UK home nations still see themselves strongly as European.

Alongside national / home nation identifiers, British citizens in the EU/EEA or Switzerland, like EU citizens in the UK, also draw on localised identities in their definitions of themselves. There is a broad range of identifiers among respondents who chose to provide this detail, ranging from 'Cornish' to 'Hebridean', from 'Brummie' to 'Londoner'. It is noteworthy, however, that such local expressions appear to be especially strong among those from what we might describe as 'the North'. That includes specifically the north of England, with Yorkshire most prominent, but also the north of the UK as a whole, with Scotland as a whole—and the Highlands in particular—standing out. Much of this relates to values associated with specific locations rather than local identity per se and this local attachment can also occur in the EU/EEA/Switzerland. As respondents explained:

*'Five years ago I would probably have said I wanted a French passport as it was an EU passport. Now, I actually want to be French. That's not so much a reflection on Brexit as on my coming to understand France and its political and cultural life. I don't have huge regret about not feeling very British. But I do have very strong feelings about my home city. That's where I feel I really come from. And yes, [that city] voted Remain.*

------------------------------------

*'I have always identified as a Londoner over any other British identity, for me this encompasses values such as multiculturalism and social liberalism. As London and Londoners are often maligned by other British people, I feel that this identity has put me at odds with other British people even before Brexit. London has always felt to me like a European/global city within the borders of the UK, post-Brexit this feeling has only strengthened. The constituency I grew up in was the second strongest "remain" voting area, and I grew up with European neighbours.'*

------------------------------------

*'I feel a lot less British than I did pre-Brexit. I feel emotionally attached to Wessex and the South-Central coast of England especially but not really the rest of England. I feel I belong in Vienna. I feel Viennese but not Austrian strangely enough.'*

------------------------------------

*'Brexit, and the exclusionary nationalistic interpretation of Englishness and Britishness that gained ground with it effectively shattered the identity I worked so hard to gain since I arrived in the UK at the age of 13. All the remarks about me being very visibly culturally*

> *"continental" (e.g. being multilingual at home, reading literature in multiple languages, the types of food or Christmas habits we had or even the way I dressed) which up until then felt like banter became very hurtful. It also became a self-fulfilling prophecy because I started to identify more and more with the Central European side of my family and ultimately made me want to move somewhere where being "continental" didn't make me continuously suspect of disloyalty or inauthenticity.'*

While important and interesting in its own right, when read together with EU citizen survey data (Table 25.2)[15] we can see a fascinating pattern that raises further questions about Englishness as an identity and how it is received. EU citizens, on the whole, see themselves primarily in terms of the nationality of their country of birth and then as a European and EU citizen. When we look at the data in terms of where in the UK those EU citizens reside, we can see that of those who live in Scotland, 44% of EU citizens also see themselves as Scottish. This is the highest figure for any UK home nation. The quite staggering fact is this, however: among those EU citizens resident in England, only 2.8% also see themselves as English.

| *Which of these common identity descriptor do you relate to? (multiple answers were possible)* | **EU citizens resident in Scotland** | **EU citizens resident in England** | **EU citizens resident in Wales** | **EU citizens resident in Northern Ireland** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| European | 85.6% | 85.4% | 89.2% | 65.6% |
| EU citizen | 70.8% | 70.7% | 72.0% | 65.6% |
| British | 7.4% | 12.1% | 5.4% | 3.1% |
| English | 0.7% | 2.8% | 2.2% | 0.0% |
| Scottish | 44.0% | 0.6% | 2.2% | 3.1% |
| Welsh | 0.4% | 0.3% | 22.6% | 0.0% |
| Northern Irish | 0.4% | 0.6% | 0.0% | 34.4% |
| the nationality of my country of birth | 81.3% | 82.0% | 76.3% | 84.4% |
| a regional identity in the UK e.g. Midlands | 17.6% | 20.3% | 24.7% | 6.3% |
| a local identity in the UK, e.g. Liverpudlian | 16.2% | 23.5% | 15.1% | 0.0% |
| a regional identity in a country other than the UK | 21.5% | 23.2% | 19.4% | 28.1% |
| a local identity in a country other than the UK | 19.4% | 17.6% | 16.1% | 9.4% |
| Other | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |

**Table 25.2:** Layers of identity – EU citizens in the UK

Even with 'British' factored in—qualitative comments make clear that there are some who are choosing this instead of English—this does not change the general pattern. Here too Wales sits somewhere in between, as does Northern Ireland. So for EU citizens, there is a strong rejection of Englishness, while Scottishness is being embraced by a significant number.

---

[15] Data come from the survey conducted for Bueltmann & Bulat, 'EU Citizens' Identity, Belonging and Representation Post-Brexit' (2021).

Qualitative comments further underscore this as it reveals EU citizens in Scotland describing themselves as a 'New Scot'.

What looking at the data together with the data for British citizens in the EU/EEA/Switzerland suggest, therefore, is that the pattern of rejection of Englishness / stronger acceptance of Scottishness, exists 'both ways': in Scotland's diaspora in the EU/EEA/Switzerland, and in the EU/EEA/Swiss diaspora in Scotland. Even considering that there is variation in the figures for other UK home nations, the outlier is England. The question is why. For EU citizens in Scotland, data brought out that strong identification with Scottishness might relate to how the Scottish Government, and the First Minister and MSPs specifically, communicated with EU citizens post-EU referendum. As the respective report made clear, while EU citizens in Scotland understood that the same rules applied to them as elsewhere in the UK, they recognized the support in Scotland was specific to Scotland and decisions by the Scottish Government.[16] For Scottish respondents in this survey of British citizens, the high levels of trust for the Scottish Government and broader identity expression may also go some way towards explaining differences in views. Ultimately, identity layers are complex and not always particularly clear cut. And Brexit has thrown up—for many for the first time in their lives—a lot of new questions and new thinking around who they are. In that process, Brexit has strengthened some of the identity layers and weakened others (Table 26).

| | | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Ireland |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brexit has strengthened my European identity. | *Agree* | 70.2% | 76.0% | 66.6% | 77.8% | 85.7% |
| | *Neutral* | 13.8% | 9.8% | 15.9% | 7.9% | 14.3% |
| | *Disagree* | 16.0% | 14.2% | 17.5% | 14.3% | 0.0% |
| Brexit has strengthened my British identity. | *Agree* | 5.0% | 2.2% | 6.0% | 4.8% | 0.0% |
| | *Neutral* | 15.0% | 8.7% | 17.4% | 12.7% | 0.0% |
| | *Disagree* | 80.0% | 89.1% | 76.6% | 82.5% | 100.0% |
| Brexit has strengthened my UK home nation identity. | *Agree* | 21.9% | 76.0% | 5.3% | 39.7% | 42.9% |
| | *Neutral* | 25.5% | 12.0% | 28.1% | 36.5% | 28.6% |
| | *Disagree* | 52.6% | 12.0% | 66.6% | 23.8% | 28.6% |
| Brexit has strengthened my local identity, e.g. as a Parisian. | *Agree* | 28.2% | 20.8% | 29.3% | 23.8% | 0.0% |
| | *Neutral* | 44.7% | 54.1% | 41.3% | 55.6% | 57.1% |
| | *Disagree* | 27.1% | 25.1% | 29.4% | 20.6% | 42.9% |
| Brexit has not had any impact on my identity. | *Agree* | 12.2% | 8.7% | 13.9% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| | *Neutral* | 14.0% | 9.8% | 15.5% | 9.5% | 14.3% |
| | *Disagree* | 73.8% | 81.4% | 70.6% | 84.1% | 85.7% |

**Table 26:** Impact of Brexit on respondents' identity

Some of the patterns are perhaps not all that surprising as, for a majority, Brexit has served to strengthen their European identity, while it weakened their British identity. Disaggregate data is again more informative in this respect as it shows some nuances between UK home nations. The most striking point to make in this regard is again about the Scottish respondents,

---

[16] Bueltmann & Bulat, 'EU Citizens' Identity, Belonging and Representation Post-Brexit' (2021).

76% of which say that Brexit strengthened their UK home nation identity. Meanwhile, only 5.3% of English respondents agree with this statement. Wales again sits in-between.

Part of the explanation for these patterns appears to relate to how Brexit directly led to the rejection of some identifiers. As one respondent, describing themselves as 'Scottish and European' noted, 'I never felt British but post Brexit I actively reject this label'. Another noted that while 'Brexit made me want to reject being British […] it is not so simple to do so when I am not yet eligible to apply for Italian citizenship and my husband has remained UK resident.' For others, Brexit itself was an identity project and has, therefore, resulted in them feeling 'inclined to reject it all - it was "identity" which caused all the Brexit mess, so I would tend to deny anything.' It is worth considering a few more examples respondents' views to better understand the nuances of their lived experiences:

> *'I used to be Northern, English, British and European. I now don't feel any of those things, as Westminster has more or less told me that if I want to be European, I am a citizen of nowhere. My home is now (and will remain) France, so I will become a good French citizen instead.'*
>
> ------------------------------------
>
> *'To me, my identity means that I belong to that community, no matter where I come from and no matter how big that community is. Since Brexit, I feel (even within my own family) that I am an outsider. They don't see it that way, but I do. Who am I? That feeling is felt by me now no matter whether I'm in the UK or my EU country of residence. I'm now "piggy in the middle". I'm neither here nor there. Silly situation but proves my point: at passport control, my EU family (my wife, son, and grandchildren) can pass through passport EU lanes, I can't. I am separated."*
>
> ------------------------------------
>
> *'Brexit has really affected my identity. We were not consulted or given a vote at the time of the Brexit referendum despite the impact it would have on our lives (and despite the fact we understood common European values better than many of the British voters) and our needs and problems remain very unimportant to the UK government to this day. We feel invisible and neglected. I don't like what Britain says and does in its relationship with Europe. At a time when I am having my Britishness forced on me because my identity has been forcefully changed from European to British, I feel shame and disconnect as well as complete abandonment by Britain.'*
>
> ------------------------------------
>
> *'Brexit has really left me unsure of what my identity is. I don't feel British, and I certainly don't identify with the mindset of a lot of British people who live there. Yet, I am not Danish either. So, I don't really know anymore!'*
>
> ------------------------------------
>
> *'We have friends and relatives based in Europe, and I feel European. Although I was born in England, my father is Scottish […] I went to school in [Scotland], moving to London when I was 18. While I consider myself British, I also often describe myself as Scottish, and the more so recently. My husband is of Lebanese origin but was born in London. My two children were born in London. We therefore very much identify as Londoners (but not English). If Scotland were to become independent, I would consider applying for Scottish citizenship. Brexit has made me think more about identity and strengthened my sense of being European, Scottish and a Londoner. It has weakened my sense of allegiance to England.'*
>
> ------------------------------------
>
> *'Brexit has damaged my internal perception of myself as European. I spent a long time after the vote feeling as though I had lost a part of my identity. Living in Spain has helped me regain a sense of that.'*
>
> ------------------------------------
>
> *'I was always proud of being Scottish and will have always have a strong Scottish identity but the same cannot be said of being British. In the past I have always told people that I*

*was Scottish and British but now I now always say that I am Scottish. Every year since Brexit I have felt less British and feel ashamed to be British. When I finally become Dutch some part of me will always be Scottish.'*

------------------------------------

*'My strongest identity is definitely European, second strongest probably the football team I support, then (still, a bit) British (Welsh and English through my parents). I don't really feel Spanish despite my new passport but do identify with the region I live in and also the German city where my partner lives and where I hope to move soon.'*

------------------------------------

*'Brexit has killed my identity. Without my voice even being permitted to speak, I was stripped of my identity. I live in a limbo between identities, constantly being let down by my country, feeling isolated, abandoned and ignored My adopted country doesn't know what we are now entitled to, and we are suddenly outsiders. We've gone from freedom to restriction. I haven't been to the UK since Brexit and I'm unsure what to expect and definitely unsure of how I'll feel when I do go.'*

------------------------------------

*'My identity as a British/English person has been affected by Brexit. I used to have some weird pride about being British. I have Scottish ancestry maternally and paternally and always felt a bit Scottish even though I never lived there. I suppose I feel more like I want to claim the Scottish side of myself. I feel ashamed of being English. I think as the chickens are coming home to roost, as the country falls apart, in some ways I can start to feel some Englishness again, but I was deeply affected by it. I socialised usually with people not from the UK due to working in an international organisation. I was always the English person in a group. I felt comfortable with that identity. Our humour, our silliness about cups of tea and the weather, beans on toast, marmite, quirky things. I liked being the English girl in Greece too. I played on my Englishness. I felt so lost and thrown and embarrassed and ashamed. I don't like people to know that I'm English now. I'm just thinking in the past my friends from Zimbabwe and Ghana would tell me I'm very African and I felt flattered but still felt very English. Now my boyfriend says to me you are Greek, and I feel relieved.'*

------------------------------------

*'I have redefined myself as an immigrant/emigrant post Brexit. I strongly identify as new-German (with a very profound sense of gratitude). My anger towards Belgium (which made it near impossible for EU civil servants to claim nationality) is still very potent. My British/English identity is now dominated by my definitive emigration.'*

------------------------------------

*'I am struggling to renegotiate my relationship with Britain. I deeply resent the way my German wife was made to feel rejected from a place she regarded as home. Things are not helped by the way successive British governments have behaved in regard to the EU. I am proud to be German. I feel much less proud to be British. But it is a journey to reconnect with what is good in my British heritage and culture.'*

------------------------------------

*'Having been a strong European for 70 years of my life, having my EU citizenship stripped away from me, being forced to become a 3rd country national, losing my freedom of movement to live or work anywhere within the EU27 – I feel deserted and lost!'*

While the impact of Brexit on the identity of most respondents has been significant, the same is true for their overall sense of belonging (Table 27). This is perhaps even more relevant in terms of their wider perception of themselves and their place in the world—and very specifically the vital question where home is. To better understand this, respondents were asked to define what home means to them in the first instance. For many it is a specific place, usually where they live now, and there is a strong sense among a majority that home relates to family and friends. 'Family' is, in fact, the most frequently used word among all responses left in free text replies for this question, with 'friends' coming in second. As one respondent explained, for them home is 'where I have friends. It could be anywhere in the world so long

as I have at least one person to love, and who loves me.' The third most frequently used word in definitions is the word 'house', indicating the importance of the actual physical space where one lives. Beyond that, and in terms of feelings, respondents explain that home is about 'comfort, security'; about being 'somewhere I feel welcome, somewhere I feel like I belong.'

| | | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brexit has made me feel more connected to the EU / EEA / Switzerland. | *Agree* | 72.6% | 74.3% | 70.5% | 79.4% | 71.4% |
| | *Neutral* | 13.8% | 11.5% | 15.4% | 11.1% | 14.3% |
| | *Disagree* | 13.6% | 14.2% | 14.2% | 9.5% | 14.3% |
| Brexit has made me feel more at home in the EU / EEA / Switzerland. | *Agree* | 60.0% | 54.1% | 60.7% | 68.3% | 57.1% |
| | *Neutral* | 23.1% | 27.9% | 22.5% | 14.3% | 14.3% |
| | *Disagree* | 16.9% | 18.0% | 16.8% | 17.5% | 28.6% |
| Brexit has made me feel more connected to the UK. | *Agree* | 3.0% | 0.5% | 3.6% | 1.6% | 0.0% |
| | *Neutral* | 7.8% | 7.1% | 8.4% | 7.9% | 0.0% |
| | *Disagree* | 89.2% | 92.3% | 88.0% | 90.5% | 100.0% |
| Brexit has made me feel more at home in the UK. | *Agree* | 1.2% | 0.0% | 1.3% | 1.6% | 0.0% |
| | *Neutral* | 10.1% | 7.1% | 11.0% | 14.3% | 0.0% |
| | *Disagree* | 88.7% | 92.9% | 87.7% | 84.1% | 100.0% |

**Table 27:** Impact of Brexit on respondents' sense of belonging

Brexit has made nearly three quarters of all a respondents feel more connected to the EU/EEA/Switzerland, and for 60% of all respondents it has also made them feel more at home there. Meanwhile, the connection with the UK and sense of the UK as home has very clearly weakened very much. Qualitative comments serve to illustrate the shift:

> *'I had a Scottish grandparent. If it was possible, perhaps after independence, and Scotland had a similar system of citizenship through grandparents to Ireland, then I would choose to be Scottish. This is motivated by, well, embarrassment with my association with England - it being the driver and supporter of Brexit. I jokingly say to people that I "identify as Scottish now". That is regardless of whether an independent joined the EU. But if Scotland joined the EU, and it was possible, I would take Scottish citizenship for that reason too.'*
> -----------------------------------
> *'I was comfortable as a British person - after all, I'd spent my whole life in the UK until my mid-50s. I also felt it gave me some standing, while I was travelling, as a citizen of a country with a reputation for fair dealing and relative lack of corruption (and not American). Now, while I still feel at home in the UK, I am ashamed of Britain's increasing insularity and xenophobia, and of its rejection of its European identity. It's made me feel more European, less British, but also more Welsh because Brexit was essentially an English project.'*
> -----------------------------------
> *'Britain now feels like a foreign country to me, even though I still follow the UK news. I would consider moving anywhere else but the UK, but if I had to move back, I would much rather it not be England where I was born, I would choose somewhere with equal anti-Brexit sentiments.'*

Yet while Brexit has clearly had a significant detachment effect in relation to feelings of connection and home for the UK, and while it did make clear majorities of respondents feel a

stronger sense of connection and home with their country of residence in the EU/EEA/Switzerland, there are a relatively sizable number who disagree that Brexit triggered the latter. Of all respondents, 13.8% and 16.9% respectively disagree that Brexit made them feel more connected to, or more at home in, the EU/EEA/Switzerland. Qualitative comments indicate that this may, at least in part, relate to how they see their home identity not through the UK, but a specific home nation or region. For instance, if we look across the data and qualitative evidence, it appears, as discussed above, that Scottish respondents still feel a stronger home attachment to Scotland. This my go some way towards explaining why the rupturing effect of Brexit in relation to the place of residence in the EU/EEA/Switzerland is perceived as slightly less by a good proportion of Scottish respondents.

Moreover, the depth of feelings also relates to the time spent away from the UK and in the place of current residence. As previously indicated, some respondents have not lived in the UK for a long time; Table 28 provides a more detailed breakdown.

| When did you last live in the UK? | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less than 5 years ago | 19.9% | 20.7% | 19.4% | 19.0% | 28.6% |
| 5 to 10 years ago | 20.9% | 17.4% | 21.3% | 28.6% | 28.6% |
| 11 to 16 years ago | 18.2% | 21.2% | 17.7% | 11.1% | 28.6% |
| 17 to 22 years ago | 14.2% | 13.6% | 13.4% | 17.5% | 14.3% |
| 23 to 28 years ago | 8.8% | 11.4% | 8.7% | 7.9% | 0.0% |
| 29 to 34 years ago | 8.9% | 9.2% | 9.7% | 4.8% | 0.0% |
| 35 to 40 years ago | 3.6% | 2.2% | 3.9% | 4.8% | 0.0% |
| More than 40 years ago | 5.1% | 4.3% | 5.4% | 6.3% | 0.0% |
| Never lived there | 0.4% | 0.0% | 0.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% |

**Table 28:** Breakdown of when respondents last lived in the UK

Crosstabulation of data show that feelings of connectedness and belonging to the EU/EEA/Switzerland are strongest among those who have lived there for more than 10 years. But Brexit, ultimately and while very significant, is only one factor. That is why the survey also asked respondents about their sense of home in general terms. Do they feel at home in their country of residence in the EU/EEA/Switzerland (Table 29.1); the UK (Table 29.2); and their UK home nation (Table 29.3)? That sense is strongest for the current place of residence in the EU/EEA/Switzerland, with 82.4% of all respondents feeling at home there (Table 29.1).

| | All | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 82.4% | 80.3% | 84.9% | 84.1% | 57.1% |
| No | 6.1% | 6.6% | 6.6% | 1.6% | 0.0% |
| It depends | 11.6% | 13.1% | 8.6% | 14.3% | 42.9% |

**Table 29.1:** Respondents' sense of home – country of residence in the EU/EEA/Switzerland

When we shift the focus to the UK, the sense of home no longer exists for 52.4% of all respondents (Table 29.2). The lower Scottish figure in the disaggregate data is noteworthy. Qualitative comments reveal that this relates primarily to whether family links still exist or not.

|  | **All** | **Scottish** | **English** | **Welsh** | **Northern Irish** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 24.4% | 26.2% | 24.3% | 22.2% | 42.9% |
| No | 52.4% | 39.9% | 56.3% | 57.1% | 28.6% |
| I have never lived there | 0.4% | 0.0% | 0.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| It depends | 22.8% | 33.9% | 19.0% | 20.6% | 28.6% |

**Table 29.2:** Respondents' sense of home – UK

There may well be a sense of familiarity, but the sense of home is a different matter. As one respondent noted, the UK 'feels familiar, like home does, but it does not feel where I belong.' Other respondents express similar views:

> *'I do if I'm in my siblings' homes. They're family. Of course, I feel at home with them. But as for place, it depends on exactly WHERE in the UK. I do in Bath, for example, but I don't at all in Canterbury. It's a gut feeling which is impossible to put into words. I find Bath and other places (London [heart emoji]) so welcoming of all that is different - I feel the respect and welcoming of the vast number of tourists in these places. In Canterbury I sense the locals' irritation and distrust at exactly the same thing. Also, it is impossible for me to feel "at home" in a place which refuses to allow me to express my opinion and to have a say in who I pay my voluntary contributions to and to who will manage my pension when I reach that age. Who will manage the life of my siblings etc. The UK MUST introduce the vote for life. I can't even begin to feel at home again there until that is done. I am not political, but the Tories have completely damaged all that I used to be so proud of to be British.'*
>
> ----------------------------------
>
> *'I feel at home with friends and family in the UK and in specific places. But I no longer feel at home with the political culture of the UK. The shallow populism of recent governments alienates me.'*
>
> ----------------------------------
>
> *'When I visit, everything feels familiar, and homely. But I feel like a stranger.'*
>
> ----------------------------------
>
> *'My mum lives in the home I grew up in so on that front yes, that will always feel like 'a' home for me. My friends and family in the UK are always in my heart but I have branched out and moved on to create My home here in Spain.'*

It was interesting to see, given other data, that for UK home nation a plurality of all respondents no longer feel at home there either. However, disaggregate data again provides important food for thought on differences between home nations (Table 29.3).

|  | **All** | **Scottish** | **English** | **Welsh** | **Northern Irish** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 34.1% | 64.5% | 26.6% | 36.5% | 57.1% |
| No | 46.6% | 19.1% | 56.0% | 31.7% | 0.0% |
| I have never lived there | 0.8% | 0.5% | 0.7% | 3.2% | 0.0% |
| It depends | 18.5% | 15.8% | 16.7% | 28.6% | 42.9% |

**Table 29.3:** Respondents' sense of home – UK home nation

The most significant difference again relates to Scottish respondents, 64.5% of whom still do feel a home nation attachment. For English respondents, however, this figure is less than a third at 26.6%, and for Welsh respondents just over a third at 36.5%. Similar to identity markers, the data show that the sense of belonging to Scotland among Scottish respondents

is strong, while the sense of belonging to England among English respondents is much weaker; Welsh respondents again sit in-between.

Qualitative comments help us better understand the layers in the sense of belonging, also revealing shifts over time and the impact of changed personal circumstances. What the latter emphasises is important: lived experiences evolve and it is important to bear that in mind when considering this data. Consequently, it will be important to reassess patterns in due course to understand whether some of the ruptures shown here are temporary or perhaps permanent.

*'I have held on to my identity of being from a Glaswegian family for more than 20 years but with Brexit I now think of myself as being an Amsterdammer and feel that the Netherlands is now my home instead of Scotland. When I next visit Scotland, I will not being going home for a visit, which I have previously done in the past. Now return journey back to Amsterdam will be going home.'*

------------------------------------

*'My Mum is originally from Wales, my Dad was English, so I always felt British more than English or Welsh (though more English than Welsh because of living in England). Brexit increased my Welsh identity - I was more disappointed by the narrow pro-Brexit vote in Wales than the overall one; I hate the frequent anti-Welsh sentiment on anti-Brexit forums (laughing emojis when a factory closes in Wales, crying emojis if it's in England unless it's a region of England that voted for Brexit) and I have joined Yes Cymru, the "independence for Wales" campaign. I'm not 100% sure if I support independence but wanted to help them get their views heard.'*

------------------------------------

*'This is very hard, and I have spent much time reflecting (and also written about it privately). One thing my husband and I did after I got my German citizenship was buy a small flat in Berlin (where we lived for some years). I needed an anchor I think - I felt 'kicked out' by the UK and actively unwanted by Belgium. I think / in the very deepest way - I felt that 'home' is a two-way street (I had always believed I could choose my home within UK/EU, now I understood that my 'home' could choose/reject me too). It has been a profoundly reflective and tough period (or was the first three years post referendum).'*

------------------------------------

*'I no longer really feel at home anywhere, but my physical home is now in Portugal. Where I live currently but also where I came from - specific to location. Denmark isn't home but Esbjerg is. Wales is home but more so where I grew up and family live.'*

------------------------------------

*'I think this is the curse of the expat generally. I long for the UK, but it is nostalgic and disconnected. When I am in the UK, I realize how little people (friends and family) understand my life. It's very lonely. In contrast, I am pretty well integrated in my local community, but language barriers remain […] and I do things differently and will always be a curious foreigner even to friends here. So I think the answer is we have no home and a confused identity which does impact us negatively, but it also brings some strange upsides (cultural wisdom, some greater understanding of human bonds and identities, insight into how Greece and the UK function including mistakes being made).'*

------------------------------------

*'It depends who I'm talking to. In my mind, it's both England and Copenhagen. When I talk with my expat friends and colleagues, I use 'home' to refer to England. But I live in Denmark and have a Danish boyfriend, so I try not to say 'home' for England with him because it sounds like somewhere I might return to - and I have no intention to. When I travel away from Denmark, it always feels good to return 'home' to Copenhagen.'*

------------------------------------

*'For me, "home" was always Glasgow […]. What was jarring for me to experience was returning to Glasgow after living in Denmark for some time […] and realising that I had lost a lot of that sentiment towards the city. Glasgow - and Scotland - will always be my home. But [city in Denmark] is my new home, and I love it just as dearly. It's something discussed*

*often with internationals […] - the concept of "going home". For example, I might say when travelling back to Scotland that I'm "going home" for the weekend, yet when I board my flight back to Denmark, I am again "going home". How strange!'*

---

*'Home will always be my home in Scotland - but Vienna is my adopted home […]. We sometimes refer to home and "homehome" Homehome is Musselburgh.'*

*'Home means many things to me. As a person who has travelled extensively and lived in several countries, home is where I find myself creating a life at that particular point in time. I have three 'homes' in my heart: the UK, Denmark, and Australia because in these places I have networks of family and friends who mean a great deal to me and with whom I have maintained connections over my lifetime. I cannot choose between them. I never thought I would have to. I currently live in Denmark, and it is my home right now, but my connection to those other places can sit alongside that, although post Brexit I have a very real fear that others can and may change that.'*

---

*'Brexit has created a sense of not belonging anywhere - I feel alien in my own country and in Italy I feel at home on a day-to-day basis, but I worry the rules allowing me to stay in the future will either change or be forgotten as the number of people to whom the rules apply diminishes over time.'*

---

*'Stronger sense of Scottish identity brought into sharp contrast between attitudes in England Vs Scotland. Unease about European identity when crossing borders through the "other" channel - progressive sense of not belonging due to forced loss of EU citizenship.'*

---

*'I guess I never had to think about it too much before Brexit. I felt I had multiple homes. I feel less connected to the EU now because my rights have been limited, but I feel more at home in the EU because I have lived here more than half of my life and I think the EU is a wonderful achievement. It greatly reduced my feelings of being British. When I saw the type of people claiming to be patriotic in the UK, the Brexiters with their racism, their ignorance, their faux nationalism, calling me a traitor for living in the EU: if that is British, then I don't want anything to do with it.'*

---

*'Brexit has completely affected my sense of belonging. I turned my back on my country as I was so ashamed of it and because I felt fear at being trapped, but in some ways, I now feel alienated and not sure where I belong or what my future will be, mostly as I have sons in the UK, or I think at this point I would never have come back. I didn't want to feel trapped there. In a sense I'm still controlled in another direction, to meet the requirements of residency I can't be in the UK for 6 months or more per year, so I'm physically alienated from my country too. But this feels freer to me than being stuck there. I'm very confused about where my life is going because my sons are here, one is getting married next year and the excitement at preparations is difficult from afar. And then maybe grandchildren. I don't know if they feel this way, but I feel I'm failing them and that I'm out of it. But at the same time if I stayed in the UK, I wouldn't have mentally survived it. I felt so appalled by the way the country was heading, the rhetoric, the lies, the behaviour, the attitudes of people. I couldn't have survived being trapped within it. I have issues anyway with being trapped due to past experiences.'*

## Community life, diaspora, and collective action

Qualitative comments and some of the patterns in the survey data examined here already indicated that multiple factors shaped the respondents' sense of belonging, some of which were a direct outcome of Brexit, while others feature life before and after Brexit. Themes of community and living as British EU citizens in the EU emerged throughout, for instance. This raises questions about the activities of British citizens in the communities in which they settled,

but also how they behave as a collective of British citizens in the EU/EEA/Switzerland, and how Brexit did—or did not—shape that collective and any collective action pursued.

In terms of wider community life, we see a high level of activity and involvement in local communities among a large number of respondents who are happy to recount details in free text comment boxes, including:

> *'I am involved in cultural and walking groups, I play a traditional musical instrument with a cultural group, and I volunteer actively with local charity groups. I am at present organising a group of residents to lobby the local council for certain changes and have taken part in political protests and demonstrations.'*
>
> -----------------------------------
>
> *'Singing with the church choir involves some singing for the town e.g. on All Saints Day at the Town Graveyard. I was involved in lobbying for better bicycle infrastructure particularly at a local level for about 16 years. At the time of a huge influx of refugees from Syria and Eritrea, I helped small groups sporadically in learning the local language and helped new Syrians in the neighbouring flat with all sorts of stuff.'*
>
> -----------------------------------
>
> *'We are a small (2000 inhabitants) poor comune in rural Italy. There are many unfilled needs, but the locals rally round and do a tremendous amount to make life enjoyable and support those in need. I take part in those and have initiated several'.*
>
> -----------------------------------
>
> *'This is a poor area where people lack tools or the knowledge to use them. As a retired person I have time, and skills, to repair all sorts of machinery etc. for local farmers, or for my neighbours, or even, on occasion, the ferry boat run by the local council! My partner works voluntarily at a local café whose widowed owner cannot find staff.'*
>
> -----------------------------------
>
> *'Joining neighbours with participation in the wine festival, helping locals and friends with chores or harvesting of vegetables. Helping to start a gym class for our community and hoping to join children in the local school with their English language studies.'*
>
> -----------------------------------
>
> *'I'm involved in the communities of my kids' schools. We chose Flemish-language education specifically because we see our move to Belgium as permanent and want to integrate. […] I'm involved with the Anglican church […], but I find it too expat-orientated and am looking to join a Belgian church.'*
>
> -----------------------------------
>
> *'I have friends, play in a band. Village life in SW Germany us structured around Vereine, such as Sports, Firefighting, Red Cross etc. I am not a member of any, but that would also be the case in Britain. I feel I am as integrated here as I was in Britain.'*

From school runs to leading music and craft groups; from language classes to sports, many respondents are very actively involved in their local community life. More specifically, the EU referendum/Brexit were a factor among around a third of respondents in prompting them to pursue some form of citizens' rights activism (Table 30), activities broadly defined from financial support to more hands-on grass-roots activism.

|  | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 34.4% | 36.5% | 44.4% | 0.0% |
| No | 65.6% | 63.5% | 55.6% | 100.0% |

**Table 30:** The EU referendum as a trigger for citizens' rights activism / collective action

As one respondent explained, the reason for this activism was that 'I couldn't stand by and leave it to the British Embassy to fail to assist.' Other respondents also had similar motivations:

> *'My political representation is non-existent where I live as since Brexit, I've lost the right to vote in local elections and cannot vote in national ones. […] My post Brexit interests were only ever fought for by voluntary activists whose campaigning ensured, for example, that certain of my rights were protected under the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement. This affected me especially in relation to state pension rights, having worked and paid contributions in two EU states.'*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'No effort was made to defend our rights by the Government. Pressure groups had to be formed in the various EU nations (and the UK) to get some support, but this was not forthcoming.'*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'Long before the 15-year rule, I had made the conscious decision not to vote in UK elections - as I considered that I should not participate in the politics of a country where I didn't (and didn't intend to) live. (As a politics graduate, I had put some thought into the matter). But the inability to vote in the 2016 referendum - that affected my rights so directly - felt like a betrayal. However, there WAS no effective political representation of non-resident UK citizens either pre- or post- Brexit.'*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'The UK did very little to protect the rights of British citizens in Europe. Without the work of the lobbying group "British in Europe" and also the various country branches, I feel we would have been left to fend for ourselves. The ideologues of BREXIT and the UK government did not appear to care, and what information and support that did come from them was too little too late. All the information I obtained was from the EU and as I say the amazing work of "British In Europe" which was never funded by the UK government and is now no longer functioning as a result. We are now left to fend for ourselves. I feel we are collateral damage'.*
>
> ---------------------------------
>
> *'For the first time in 30 years I have had to connect into the British community in Denmark in order to get support for my appeal to regain my rights under the withdrawal agreement. Prior to Brexit my life was conducted in Denmark, using the Danish language amongst friends, fellow students, and work colleagues of Danish and other EU nationalities. There seems to be more interest in the impact of Brexit on imports and exports of goods than on human beings in both the EU and Britain.'*

Forms of collective action that respondents themselves undertook sit within a wider matrix of pressure group-type engagement that arises at points of crisis. This kind of collective action, often channelled through societies, has a particularly long history in the form of ethnic associationalism where parallels can be seen to present-day migrant activism. [17] Consequently, survey respondents were also specifically asked about their ethnic expression along these lines to better understand levels of engagement beyond the specific Brexit and wider community context, while revealing potential overlaps as had been the case historically among many immigrant groups.

The data emphasise the strength of Scottish connections and Scottish identity as Scottish respondents have the highest figure of ethnic associational activity—around a third of respondents (Table 31). So even though a majority of Scots are not engaged in these ways either, Scots have a notably higher percentage of engaged diaspora Scots than English and Welsh, documenting some form of activity and/or engagement along ethnic lines. This includes

---

[17] Tanja Bueltmann, *Clubbing Together: Ethnicity, Civility and Formal Sociability in the Scottish Diaspora to 1930* (Liverpool, 2014).

a diverse range of organisations, from local Scottish clubs to business and cultural organisations that sometimes pursue a Scottish focus, to attending well-known annual celebrations such as Burns Night dinners. If we view this together again with data on identity and UK home nation attachment, this further supports the argument previously made that Scots hold stronger connections to their Scottishness and Scotland than other respondent groups do to their respective UK home nations and identity.

| | Scotland | England | Wales | Northern Ireland |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 30.6% | 18.9% | 17.5% | 0.0% |
| No | 69.4% | 81.1% | 82.5% | 100.0% |

**Table 31:** Respondents' ethnic networking / associationalism

What this also indicates is strength in the Scottish diaspora compared to those of other UK home nations. As defined in existing work, diasporas are maintained through structures, for instance ethnic clubs, and the agents (people) who operate within them.[18] What we can see here is that Scots in the EU/EEA/Switzerland have more structures that enable active engagement, and more of them (the agents) choose to use these structures compared to respondents from England and Wales. What this suggests is that the EU/EEA/Swiss Scottish diaspora is strong and can be mobilised through structures and agents. Moreover, this finding chimes with historic patterns where Scots were, for instance, once described as 'an association-forming people'.[19] As one survey respondent noted: 'being a Scot living abroad feels like a continuation of a long Scottish tradition of emigration.'

Further statistical data tell us more about the strength of diaspora recognition as respondents were also asked specifically whether they have a sense of being part of a wider global community—which, in essence, is what a diaspora is—as Britons and in terms of their respective UK home nation (Table 32).

| | | Scottish | English | Welsh | Northern Irish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I feel that I am part of a global community of BRITONS abroad | *Agree* | 25.7% | 35.6% | 20.6% | 28.6% |
| | *Neutral* | 34.4% | 34.5% | 44.4% | 28.6% |
| | *Disagree* | 39.9% | 29.9% | 34.9% | 42.9% |
| I feel that I am part of a global community of my UK home nation abroad. | *Agree* | 47.0% | 14.2% | 14.3% | 28.6% |
| | *Neutral* | 32.2% | 38.8% | 47.6% | 28.6% |
| | *Disagree* | 20.8% | 47.1% | 38.1% | 42.9% |

**Table 32:** Respondents' sense of belonging to their diaspora

In addition, Northern Irish respondents were also asked whether they feel part of the Irish community abroad. The small sample size here prevents the drawing of any broader conclusions, but the figures are: 14.3% agree; 42.9% neutral; and 42.9% disagree.

What again stands out here too is that a plurality of Scots—47.0%—feel part of a global community of Scots abroad, while the same is not the case among English and Welsh respondents. All groups have some sense of a British community abroad, strongest among

---

[18] Bueltmann, *Clubbing Together* (2014).
[19] Ibid.

the English, but in terms of UK home nation the Scottish respondents' attachment and identification is again the strongest. Read together with the patterns on identity and belonging previously noted above, this further strengthens the evidence base: Scotland / Scottishness has the strongest attachment level of all UK home nations. Further research in this project, including interviews and the comparison with historical patterns, will explore this further, but it is worth noting now that patterns are clearly identifiable based on the data here.

It is also important to note that 'neutral' figures are relatively high throughout for all groups, indicating that active ethnicity is only ever the choice of a portion of respondents. Moreover, there is also the possibility to actively reject any such forms—or British components—as qualitative comments highlight. In light of some of the comments below it is worth noting that existing scholarship has shown that historical forms of this kind of ethnic culture / diaspora culture do not necessarily have to be exclusive or prevent integration, in fact: in some places and amongst some groups, the opposite was true.[20] Moreover, ethnic associationalism is not necessarily the same as what some describe as 'expat culture'. Finally, it is also worth noting that 'expat' is a problematic term to begin with given its connotations. Like EU citizens in the UK, Britons in the EU/EEA/Switzerland are immigrants. While they exercised freedom of movement as their EU citizenship right, the movement itself is still one of migration. With that in mind, it is worth asking whether there is anything specific about the assumed 'expat culture' that explains the kinds of rejections noted below; further investigation of this is also required.

> *'I made a conscious decision when I moved here not to become part of the British "ex-pat" community centred on the English Church and golf club. Since I am not religious and do not play golf, this was not a hardship. I felt strongly that I had a duty to learn the language and form friendships with local people. I dislike the term "expat" and suspected that those who do base their social lives on the anglophone hubs were unlikely to share my political and social views (in this I have proved right). I do have a few anglophone friends here, mostly Welsh, and Irish.'*
>
> -----------------------------------
>
> *'Yes, I am involved with the local expat community, but in Lisbon this involves very few British people, most of our community are American. I think this has increased my sense of separation from the U.K. - I'm actually quite relieved about this at the moment because I don't enjoy the feeling of being British post Brexit, I'm happier as an international English-speaking immigrant.'*
>
> -----------------------------------
>
> *'I don't feel like I fit in. The majority of British people on this Greek island behave like the typical expat, whereas I have worked hard to learn the language and appreciate the culture, making friends with Greek people. When I lived in the EU as a student (Italy and France), I made the effort to assimilate into the local culture. I believe that is very important, but the British have a reputation for not doing so.'*

## Brexit and the question of Scottish independence

As the main concern of the overall project is to assess patterns of Scottish identity manifestation and forms of collective action, it was also deemed relevant to consider views on the question of Scottish independence as it ties in with identity for many. This was also considered important, however, because if Scotland were to become independent, it raises questions for Scots abroad too in terms of a potential change from British to Scottish citizenship, as well as questions about representation.

---

[20] Bueltmann, *Clubbing Together* (2014).

A majority of Scottish respondents agree that Brexit increased the likelihood of Scottish independence; they do not only see it in those terms, however, but a significant majority of 77.6% agree that Scotland should become an independent country (Table 33). A similarly high percentage of respondents think that Scots abroad should have a vote which, in line with the changes to the elections act, is a possibility going forward (depending on implementation). While this is a question where it is worth bearing the self-selection criteria of the survey in mind, these are nonetheless remarkable figures.

| | Agree | Neutral | Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scotland did not vote for Brexit but lost its EU membership. This has increased the likelihood of Scottish independence. | 92.35% | 4.92% | 2.73% |
| Scotland should become an independent country. | 77.60% | 14.21% | 8.20% |
| Scotland should remain part of the UK. | 9.29% | 20.22% | 70.49% |
| If there is another Independence Referendum, Scots abroad should have a vote. | 76.50% | 12.02% | 11.48% |

**Table 33:** Scottish respondents' views on Scottish independence

Qualitative comments reveal the shades of opinion and rationales for views held. Notably, qualitative comments included a significant number of respondents supportive of Scottish independence indicating that, as one respondent put it, 'Scottish independence would make it more likely that our family will return to Scotland.' Qualitative comments reveal a depth in views and rationales that is worth providing in some detail with a series of examples to close:

*'We have no voice in UK politics, I can vote in Westminster elections, but I am just a single vote in a constituency I used to live in. The UK has failed to engage it's citizens abroad and can take lessons from the French and Italians amongst others who have dedicated representatives for their émigré populations. In the Scottish context I have no right to be represented by an MSP and will often be asked for my postcode and told they cannot represent people outwith their constituency. This has caused issues with contacting about devolved matters of international relevance, such as securing a police report for a visa, SAAS scholarships for international study, or receiving access to personal information I'm entitled to (such as my documents from the care system which are difficult to transmit abroad in large parcels).'*

--------------------------------

*'Politically and personally, I am very far from being what might normally be described as nationalistic, but given the difference in values and growing political and social divergence between Scotland and England, it is probably time to make the break.'*

--------------------------------

*'I think Scots need to look at what has happened with Brexit to get an idea of the impact of Scexit. For me the same arguments apply - it is foolish to cut ties with your closest neighbour and biggest trading partner. Membership of the EU is not automatic, and I think it would take a very long while before Scotland would meet the criteria.'*

--------------------------------

*'If Scotland becomes independent, I would be happy to have Scottish national and lose my British nationality though it will inevitably change my identity. [...] I no longer trust the British government to look after my interests.'*

--------------------------------

*'As a Scot abroad, it has been very frustrating to see what has happened in Scotland. The majority of people I know who voted to remain in the UK during the independence referendum, did so because they were guaranteed at the time to remain in the EU. Post Brexit, the divide between the UK and Scotland has only grown more prominent,*

*particularly in light of recent events. Although I won't have a vote in the next planned referendum, I do agree with the fact that the voting population should be those resident in Scotland, as has been the case since 1999. Both sides of the independence debate in Scotland need to work together to ensure the bear future for Scotland. This will also include working with the other home nations, whether as a United Kingdom or not. Hopefully one day at the end of all this mess, there will be a Scottish EU passport!'*

---

*'Scotland will need embassies and consulates abroad; there are so many smart, relevantly experienced and passionate Scots ready to step up, this will not be a problem.'*

---

*'My partner and I have often discussed the possibility of moving back to Scotland in the instance of Scottish independence. It would be impossible to compare the living standards of Denmark and a possible independent Scotland, but it's something that I have at the back of my mind regardless.'*

---

*'I believe that it was undemocratic to not allow Scot abroad the right to vote in the independence referendum, especially when that decision affects our nationality and identity. Just because we live abroad, does not mean we never want to come home and it does not mean we do not care anymore.'*

---

*'The Scottish government should use us. We are many and we are a powerful voice that can tell how Scotland is recognised as a country across the continent and the world. It would be great to get a vote, but I feel the UK government will prevent that and of course, Scotland's future should primarily be in the hands of those who currently live there but then the French are able to vote abroad, as are many nations' citizens. Also, the SG should be telling everyone about the many, many jobs to be secured in international institutions and organisations. Having a seat at the table of these groups means jobs and influence. This is not being expressed at all. I am currently in Brussels at a conference and see how the Irish, Danes, and Maltese are all represented and now the UK and Scotland are not. Many lost their jobs in the commission here as well as in other organisations.'*

---

*'Scottish independence must not be a reaction to Brexit. Brexit itself was a reactionary vote - let's not make the same mistake. There needs to be a viable economic plan for Scotland to be self-supporting and that needs to be clearly communicated to voters. Any campaign that leads with emotive (i.e. manipulative) messaging around identity will be misleading and will only land Scotland in a bigger mess than Brexit.'*

---

*'I am married to a Finnish citizen, and we have just had our first child. I would like the child to have dual citizenship. I do not want to renounce my British citizenship. However, if Scotland gained independence, I would renounce my British citizenship in order to gain Scottish citizenship.'*

---

*'I would describe myself as a pragmatic (rather than an emotional) nationalist, even if ultimately the two can't be entirely separated. The rapid descent of the U.K. as a global economic and soft power in the aftermath of Brexit wipe away the argument that Scotland needs to be part of the U.K. to succeed globally. In some ways, independence seems like the logical conclusion of the Brexit vote. As a Scot abroad, I would be a proud ambassador of an independent Scotland.*

# APPENDIX

This survey breakdown includes all main questions and an indication of survey routes; this is not the full survey, however, as full response options for choice questions have not been included, with some exceptions, for space reasons.

**Section 1**

*This first section is focused on your background and status in the EU/EEA or Switzerland and how Brexit affected – or not – your plans around living there.*

In the EU/EEA/Switzerland, I currently live in …*

For how many years <u>in total</u> have you been living in the EU/EEA/Switzerland? (enter a number only)*

How old were you when you when you first arrived in the EU/EEA/Switzerland? (enter a number only)*

Are you a frontier worker?*

Have you previously lived in any other EU/EEA countries or Switzerland?*

Have you previously lived in any other countries outside of the EU/EEA/Switzerland (excluding UK)?*

When did you last live in the UK? Please select from the drop-down menu.*

What was your reason for moving to the EU/EEA/Switzerland? Please choose ALL that apply.*

You can use this space if you would like to provide more details about your reasons for moving to the EU/EEA/Switzerland.

Which of the following sentences best describes your current plans?*

Has Brexit impacted your plans to stay in the EU/EEA/Switzerland?*

You can use this space if you would like to provide more details about how Brexit has impacted your plans.

Which of the following best describes your status?*

○ I have British citizenship & hold a new post-Brexit status  (1)

○ I renounced my British citizenship *after* the UK's EU referendum to become an EU/EEA/Swiss national  (2)

○ I am a dual British-EU/EEA/Swiss national  (3)

○ I am not sure what my status is  (4)

○ Other  (5)

---

**The answer here determined the subsequent survey route for respondents.**

**Survey Route 1 – British citizens with a new post-Brexit status.**

Please provide details about what new post-Brexit status / permit you hold.*

If you had to go through a process to get the new status, how easy was it?

You can use this space if you would like to give details about any problems or challenges you faced when securing your new post-Brexit status / permit.

Do you feel your rights in the EU/EEA/Switzerland are secure with your new post-Brexit status?*

Do you have a physical post-Brexit status document to prove your rights?*

Have you already had to prove your rights post-Brexit?*   For example at the border, ahead of medical treatment or when renting a flat.

You can use this space if you would like to give details about any issues you encountered with proving your rights post-Brexit.

Are you considering applying for EU/EEA/Swiss citizenship in future?*

If you had to renounce your British citizenship to take EU/EEA/Swiss nationality ...*

You can use this space if you would like to make any further comments on your new post-Brexit status and any impacts it has had.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

**Survey Route 2 – British citizens who renounced their British citizenship to become an EU/EEA/Swiss national.**

Please indicate your agreement / disagreement with the following statements.* -- statements explored the views on how Brexit shaped decisions on dual nationality.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

How did you feel about renouncing your British citizenship?*
Please use the bar slider to indicate to what extent you felt in these ways, ranging from no such feeling to a strong feeling.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

How did you feel about becoming an EU/EEA/Swiss citizen?*
Please use the bar slider to indicate to what extent you felt in these ways, ranging from no such feeling to a strong feeling.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

How easy did you find the process of becoming an EU/EEA/Swiss citizen?*

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Did you consider any of these, if applicable, challenging when you applied for EU/EEA/Swiss citizenship? Multiple answers possible.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Did you have any help when applying for EU/EEA/Swiss citizenship?*

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

How much do you estimate the process of becoming an EU/EEA/Swiss citizen has cost you, including, if applicable, application fees, test fees, legal fees, translations cost etc? Please indicate a range based on the cost for one person.*

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

You can use this space if you would like to make any further comments about renouncing your British citizenship.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

You can use this space if you would like to make any further comments about receiving your EU/EEA/Swiss citizenship.


**Survey Route 3 – dual British-EU/EEA/Swiss nationals**

When did you become a dual national?*

○ BEFORE the 2016 EU Referendum  (1)

○ AFTER the 2016 EU Referendum  (2)

○ I am a dual British-EU/EEA/Swiss national by birth  (3)

The answer above determined the survey route, with bespoke questions on, overall, the same topics.

Please indicate your agreement / disagreement with the following statements.* - These statements focused on the reasons for becoming a dual national

How did you feel about becoming a dual national?*
Please use the bar slider to indicate to what extent you felt in these ways, ranging from no such feeling to a strong feeling.

How easy have you found the process of becoming an EU/EEA/Swiss citizen?*

Did you consider any of these, if applicable, challenging when you applied for EU/EEA/Swiss citizenship? Multiple answers possible.

Did you have any help when applying for your EU/EEA/Swiss citizenship?*

If applicable to you, how much do you estimate the process of becoming an EU/EEA/Swiss citizen has cost you, including application fees, test fees, legal fees, translations cost etc? Please indicate a range based on the cost for one person.

You can use this space if you would like to make any further comments on being/becoming a British-EU/EEA/Swiss dual national.

For those who were dual nationals from birth: You can use this space if you would like to make any further comments about being a British-EU/EEA/Swiss dual national by birth.

**Survey Routes 4 & 5 – unsure about status / other**

You indicated that your status was not listed on the previous page or that you are not sure about your status. How would you describe your status / situation?*

You can use this space for any other comments you wish to make about your status situation and your experiences post-Brexit.

**Section 2**

*This second section asks questions about your identity and the extent to which Brexit has impacted it or not.*

What does 'identity' mean to you?*

---

Below are some descriptors people often use to talk about their identity. Please choose ALL that you relate to.*

---

Please indicate your agreement / disagreement with the following statements.* - various statements about the impact Brexit had on identity

---

Identities can be complex and 'tick boxes' cannot fully reflect nuances. You can use this space if you would like to make any other comments about your identity in the context of Brexit.

---

## Section 3

*This section explores your sense of belonging in the EU/EEA/Switzerland.*

---

What does 'home' mean to you?*

---

Do you feel at home in your country of residence in the EU/EEA/Switzerland?*

---

Do you still feel at home in the UK?*

---

Do you still feel at home in your UK home nation, i.e. England / Scotland / Wales / Northern Ireland (whichever applies to you)?*

---

Please indicate your agreement / disagreement with the following statements.* - various statements about the impact Brexit had on the sense of belonging

---

You can use this space if you would like to make any other comments about your sense of belonging and how Brexit has, or has not, impacted it.

---

## Section 4

*This section asks questions about representation, community, activism, and wider political issues connected to Brexit.*

---

In the UK, I / my family come from …*

○ England  (1)

○ Wales  (2)

○ Scotland  (3)

○ Northern Ireland  (4)

○ Other - please explain:  (5)

As a (former) British citizen, do you feel you and your specific post-Brexit interests, e.g. your rights, are represented well in politics?*

You can use this space if you would like to make more specific comments in relation to your political representation post-Brexit.

Please indicate your agreement / disagreement with the following statements.* - various statements relating to trust of the UK Govt / EU / devolved nations

Please indicate your agreement / disagreement with the following statements.* - various statements about community / diaspora

Are you registered to vote in your country of residence in the EU/EEA/Switzerland?*

Were you eligible to vote in the UK's 2016 EU Referendum?*

Are you involved in an organisation that relates specifically to your UK background?*

Did the EU referendum / Brexit prompt you to get involved in any organisation concerned with the rights of British citizens in the EU/EEA/Switzerland?*

Are you a member of any OTHER organisation or club where you live?

Are you involved in your local community where you live? Please tell your story of involvement if you like.

You can use this space if you would like to make any other comments about your representation and wider political issues connected to Brexit and your situation now.

If you wish to make ANY other comments about ANY topics of this survey, or anything else that you consider relevant, please make them now in this space. This is the last opportunity before the final section of the survey (a few brief demographic questions).

*Scottish respondents got a version of the questions above, with some edits and additions to explore some more specific aspects of their identity and views, including the following:*

Question context: Scottish independence may happen in future and could raise questions in relation to citizenship, identity and representation that are also relevant for Scots who live abroad.

Please indicate your agreement / disagreement with the following statements.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scotland did not vote for Brexit but lost its EU membership. This has increased the likelihood of Scottish independence. (1) | ○ Agree (1) | ○ Neutral (2) | ○ Disagree (3) |
| Scotland should become an independent country. (9) | ○ Agree (1) | ○ Neutral (2) | ○ Disagree (3) |
| Scotland should remain part of the UK. (8) | ○ Agree (1) | ○ Neutral (2) | ○ Disagree (3) |
| If there is another Independence Referendum, Scots abroad should have a vote. (3) | ○ Agree (1) | ○ Neutral (2) | ○ Disagree (3) |

**Final Section**

*Finally, a few brief demographic questions. This information is important for the research to assess if there are any particular patterns among, for example, certain age groups or in particular dual nationality groups.*

Please state your age in years.*

What is your gender identification?*

---

Please select your first citizenship from the drop-down list; please choose United Kingdom here if you are still a British citizen.*

---

Please select any second citizenship from the drop-down list; please choose your EU/EEA/Swiss nationality here if you are a dual national.

---

Please select any third citizenship from the drop-down list.
Choose (1)

---

What language(s) do you speak at home?*

---

What is your highest level of education? *

---

What is your employment status? You can choose multiple options.* - *This is the last question; the survey ends after this.*