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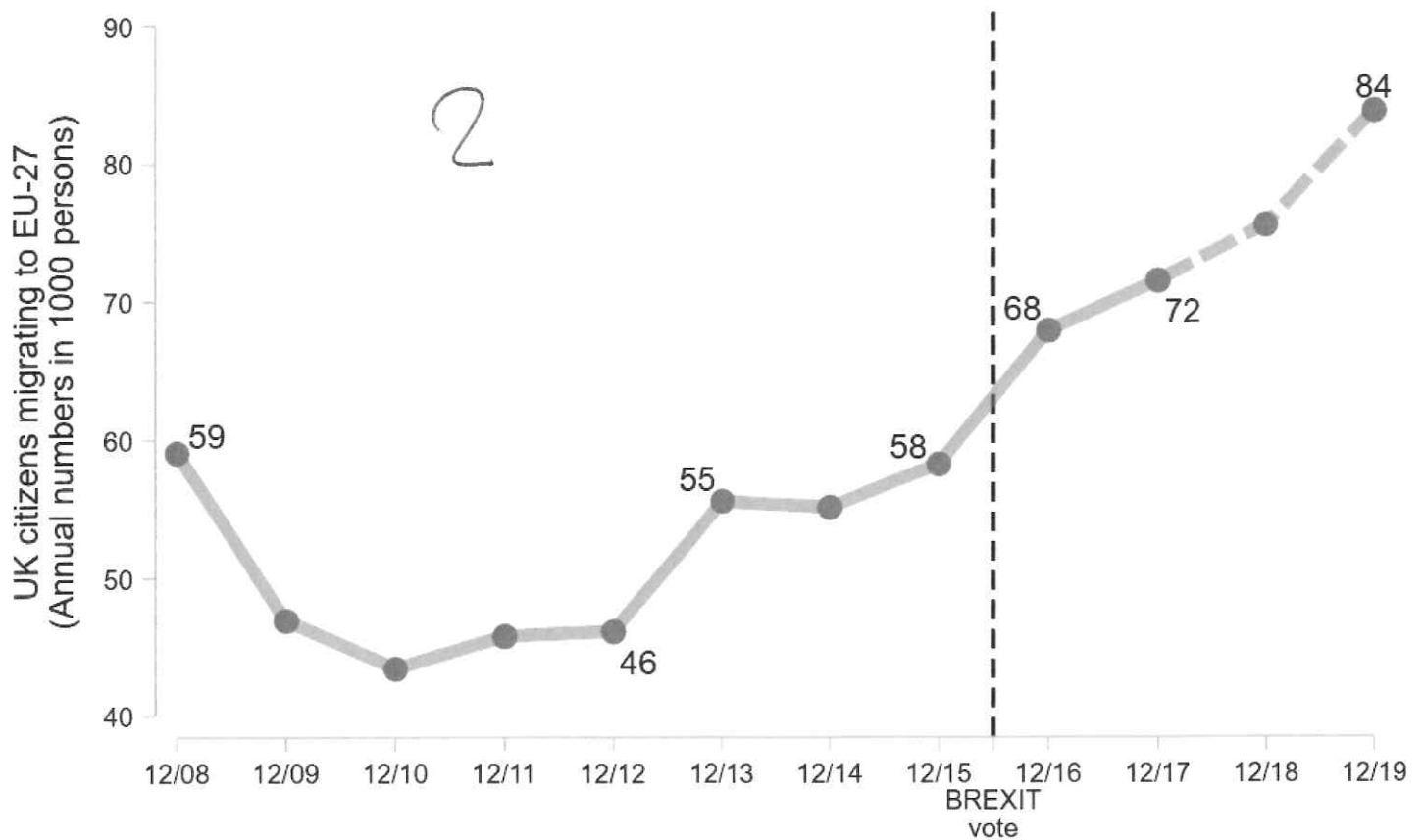# More Britons willing to leave UK to escape Brexit uncertainty

Published 28 October 2019 / By Daniel Auer & Daniel Tetlow

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In a joint research effort by Oxford in Berlin[1] and the WZB - Berlin Social Science Centre, we combine national immigration statistics reported across the European Union with extensive background interviews provided by British emigrants in Germany, in order to highlight the dramatic impact of Brexit on people's lives on both sides of the channel. While an increasing number of Brits are packing their bags and emigrating to continental EU, many of those who have already left the UK are trying now to preserve their livelihoods in the EU by obtaining a new citizenship.

More than three years have passed since the UK decided to leave the European Union. And as of now, the British people remain EU citizens. While there has been much debate - without real success so far - on customs regulations and checks along future borders, the uncertainty surrounding residency and citizenship rights has significantly stirred up migration and naturalisation numbers between the UK and the remaining EU-27 countries. OECD figures and recent national government statistics show that the number of Brits emigrating to the EU-27 has risen continuously since 2010, but has spiked following the Brexit referendum in 2016.

Source: OECD 2019, own calculations.
2018/19 (Jan.-Apr.) projection based on EUROSTAT/National statistics for DE, ES, IE.

The in-depth interviews we conducted with UK citizens that have left the UK for Germany since 2008, support these numbers (you can read more in yesterday's Observer article Number of Britons leaving for Europe hits a 10-year high.
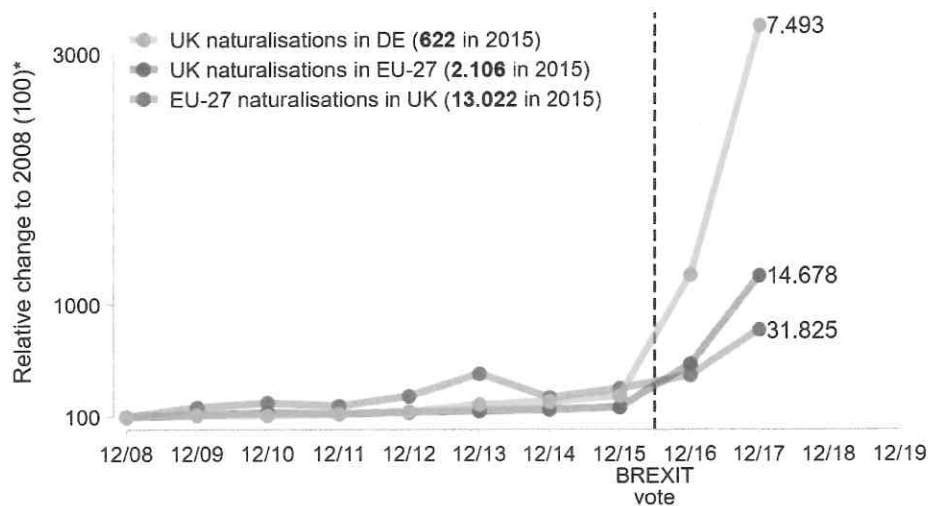
For almost all our interviewees who left the UK since the referendum, Brexit was cited as a key driver indicating that it has played, and continues to play a significant disruptive role in current migration patterns. Temi from London, for instance, left a secure, high paying job and decided in a quick impulsive operation to move to Berlin after she saw the EU referendum being announced in May 2015. Her main motivation being to try and protect her rights as a British European citizen.

Andreas who has lived in Aberdeenshire all his life and is having treatment for leukaemia, suddenly upped sticks and moved to Germany in November 2018:

"My parents got wind of the chance that my chemo care might be interrupted with a no-deal. So, at the end of last year, mid-treatment, my mother who has German roots, decided she's done with any more uncertainty and we left. We now live in German social housing together with a group of Syrian refugees and have the peace of mind that I can finish my chemo and hopefully make a full recovery."

The uncertainty surrounding Brexit has evidently caused large numbers of people to pack their bags - in both directions. Unfortunately, migration numbers, especially for people leaving the UK, have a high error rate because they often rely on approximations from passenger surveys. This has also been pointed out previously by the Migration Observatory at COMPAS. For that reason, OECD data based on national immigration statistics, provide more reliable figures despite presently being available only until the end of 2017.

Perhaps even more striking, naturalisations of British citizens in the EU-27 have surged dramatically. For instance, the reported increase from 2015 to 2017 in the number of UK citizens granted German citizenship is way above 1000%. For the EU-27 as a whole it was a 6-fold increase in Brits securing an EU passport in 2017 compared to 2015.

Relative change to 2008 (100)*

- UK naturalisations in DE (**622** in 2015)
- UK naturalisations in EU-27 (**2.106** in 2015)
- EU-27 naturalisations in UK (**13.022** in 2015)

7.493
14.678
31.825

12/08 12/09 12/10 12/11 12/12 12/13 12/14 12/15 12/16 12/17 12/18 12/19

BREXIT
vote

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* Annual data as of Dec. 31. *Source:* OECD 2019, own calculations.

Post-Brexit, British citizens applying for citizenship in one of the EU-27 countries may be required to renounce British nationality as many member-state regulations could exclusively reserve dual nationality for EU-member states. Therefore, those that want to maintain their European citizenship rights will have to give up their British citizenship, a heart-breaking and impossible prospect for many. While not obtaining a new passport bears perhaps a low risk of expulsion, the high risk comes in the loss of European citizenship rights such as freedom of movement or recognition of qualifications.

It's a telling spectacle at 8am in the morning, seeing British migrants joining long queues outside immigration offices here in Berlin to secure some form of certainty in these times of turmoil. Some British citizens in Germany feel they have a heightened sense of empathy, too. Rebecca, who has spent many hours in such queues says: "I relate so much more personally and politically to the migrant experience than I did before." No doubt for those that are eligible, German or EU citizenship gives the best insurance. And it's perhaps further telling that naturalisation numbers of EU-27 citizens in the UK (who face the prospect of similar loss of citizenship rights) have risen considerably less, albeit from higher absolute numbers.

Whatever the next months may bring, we are no doubt witnessing a significant social phenomenon whose implications are yet to be fully understood. While the legal consequences of Brexit remain so uncertain, people like Temi, Andreas, and Rebecca - along with more than 5 million other EU or UK migrants on both sides of the channel - are making serious sacrifices and taking often big risks to do whatever they can to mitigate the pending impact of Brexit on their lives. Or, in the words of Martin who has just left Reading with wife and two kids to being now unemployed in Hamburg: "If it wasn't for the Brexit vote, we'd have definitely stayed in the UK."

[1] Oxford in Berlin is a University of Oxford subsidiary company and part of the Oxford-Berlin Research Partnership that with partners, such as the WZB, aims to foster excellent and highly innovative, interdisciplinary academic collaboration that crosses institutional as well as national boundaries.

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EU (HTTPS://WWW.UEHP.EU/CATEGORY/EU/)

Brexit: the great escape of European physicians from the United Kingdom

Brexit or the great escape of European physicians. The upcoming Brexit (the date in which Great Britain will leave the European Union), and the total uncertainty on what will be the rules to be followed afterwards, are bringing to a real exodus of qualified personnel from the National Healthcare System (NHS).

According to a survey of the British Medical Association, 45% of European physicians working for the British NHS are thinking about leaving the country, while 18% have already found another job elsewhere. 62.000 EU citizens work in England for the NHS Ues and over 6.000 of these are Italian.

The "Brexit effect" is already there: according to the data of the General Medical Council, last year the number of EU physicians coming to England dropped down to 3.458, a 9% decrease to the minimum from eight years. This situation is already creating problems for the NHS, which is experiencing a financial crisis and a overload of work because of the extension of life expectancy and the increase of chronic medical conditions. The main reason for the exodus of European physicians is basically linked to the impossibility to plan their life on the long term and be sure they could have a stable working future in Great Britain. Despite the preliminary agreement between London and Brussels signed last December, there are still different question marks on the rights of the EU citizens resident in the United Kingdom and their rights after Brexit.

"The referendum on Brexit has been well over 18 months ago, yet too questions keep on not having an answer", said Andrew Dearden, treasurer of the British Medical Association. Despite the attempts of the Government to reassure the residents, uncertainty prevails, especially in light of the continuous tensions between London and Brussels that could result in a missed accord, a scenery known as "hard Brexit."
"The Government must keep on giving guarantees that EU physicians will always be welcome and that their contribution to the NHS will be appreciated", said Jane Dacre, President of the Royal College of Physicians. "*It is crucial that the British NHS can continue hiring professionals in a system that is currently suffering from shortage of stuff*".

The shortage of stuff does not concern only the physicians, but also the nurses: the NHS is missing 40.000 nurses and the number of applications of employment of EU citizens willing to work in the UK has collapsed of 96% in 2017. Paradoxically, Brexit would have had to be the beginning of the raising of the NHS. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Boris Johnson, one of the greatest supporters of Brexit, declared during his electoral campaign that 350 milliosn of pounds that Great Britain gives to the European Union would have been spent for the NHS after Brexit.

This statement had been criticized by the Uk Statistics Authority because it was "intentionally misleading", since it referred only to the gross amount that London gives to Brussels without taking into account the amount that the EU gives back to Great Britain. Boris Johnson has recently repeated his promise to put more money into the NHS after Brexit, but the Government did not ever commit to that.

Translation from the original article on "Il Sole 24 Ore": http://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/mondo/2018-02-15/brexit-grande-fuga-regno-unito-medici-europei-153357.shtml?uuid=AEMaqa0D&refresh_ce=1 (http://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/mondo/2018-02-15/brexit-grande-fuga-regno-unito-medici-europei-153357.shtml?uuid=AEMaqa0D&refresh_ce=1)

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