

# State of the Union Citizens' Rights 2022: *Reinventing EU Citizenship post COVID-19*

March 29, 2022, 9.30 – 12.30 CET, online

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected many aspects of EU citizens' lives: the ways we travel, the ways we work, the ways we meet our family members and friends. ECAS research<sup>1</sup> shows that the initial outbreak had a particularly serious impact on mobile EU citizens, as it magnified the obstacles that they have been facing in their host countries. Everyone has had to endure the crisis but the pressure placed on those exercising their freedom of movement rights has been particularly high.

More than two years after the outbreak of the pandemic, there is finally hope of “a long period of tranquility”, according to the World Health Organisation<sup>2</sup>. Thanks to the high percentages of the vaccinated population, the low virulence of the Omicron variant and the end of winter, it seems that our European way of life might slowly return to normal. But do Europeans really want it the way it was or do citizens expect changes and reforms for a better, more sustainable and fairer European Union?

Freedom of movement was one of the first victims of COVID-19. The initial response to the pandemic took place at nation-state level and revealed a lack of solidarity and coordination among the Member States. The European Commission has committed to addressing the restrictions on free movement in the upcoming 2022 Communication on Directive 2004/38/EC<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Avramovska E., Markovic P, *Under a Double Lockdown: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Mobile EU Citizens' Rights*, ECAS 2021

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/03/europe-set-for-long-period-of-tranquillity-in-pandemic-says-who>

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, EU Citizenship Report 2020 - Empowering citizens and protecting their rights

The pandemic has also challenged other EU fundamental rights and democratic values, including the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union. Not only were elections postponed, but data indicates that COVID-19 has had a negative impact on turnout rates, which, in the long-term, may affect the legitimacy of the officials elected during the pandemic and the respective decision-making process.

The State of the Union Citizens' Rights 2022: Reinventing EU Citizenship post-COVID-19 conference will take an in-depth look at the obstacles that mobile EU citizens have been facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the complicated Brexit process. It will also explore visions on how to reinvent and enrich EU citizenship in the coming years so that it becomes fairer, more inclusive and crisis-resistant.

## AGENDA

9:30 – 9:45 **Keynote speech**

**Yana Toom**, Member of the European Parliament, Renew Europe Group, Vice-Chair of Committee on Petitions, Rapporteur of the EP Report on the EU Citizenship 2020

9:45 – 10:30 **Panel discussion: *Challenges in the EU citizenship field***

Moderator: Assya Kavrakova, Executive Director, ECAS

- **Your Europe Advice annual trends**

Claire Damilano, Senior Legal Manager, ECAS and  
Marrit Westerweel, Citizens' Advice Coordinator, ECAS

- **Brexit-related challenges**

Julie Bishop, Director, Law Centres Network

- **The Impact of COVID-19 on Service Providers and Homeless People**

Simona Barbu, Policy Officer, FEANTSA

- **Potential impact of AI on citizen rights**

Dimitris Kyriazanos, Associate Researcher in the Institute of Informatics and Telecommunications of the National Centre for Scientific Research “Demokritos” (NCSR)

- **Discrimination against mobile European Union citizens** before and during the first COVID-19 lockdown: Evidence from a conjoint experiment in Germany

Carolin Hjort Rapp, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen.

10:30-10:40 **Q&A session with the audience**

10:40-10:50 **Coffee break**

10:50-11:20 **Changing narratives on freedom of movement – results of the CORE campaign and lessons learnt**

Assya Kavrakova, Executive Director, ECAS; Eoin Young, Programme Director, ICPA; Omri Preiss, Managing Director, Alliance4Europe

11:20-12:00 **Panel discussion: Reinventing EU citizenship**

- **The upcoming Communication on Directive 2004/38/EC and the revision of voting Directives**

Sybille Luhmann, Policy Officer for Free Movement and Citizen Rights at the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers

- **The European citizenship of the future**

Francesca Strumia, Senior Lecturer and Director of Internationalization, University of Sheffield

- **EU social citizenship**

Maurizio Ferrera, Professor of Political Science, University of Milan

- **Recommendations of the “European Way of Life” cluster** of the Civil Society Convention on the Future of Europe Piotr Sadowski, Secretary General, Volonteuropé

12:00-12:30 **ECAS Awards 2021 on European Citizenship Innovation**

*Moderator and concluding remarks:* Jean Lambert, former MEP,  
Vice-chairperson of ECAS' Board of Directors

*“Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EACEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.”*



Co-funded by  
the European Union