
LITHUANIA RUSHES TO KEEP CITIZENS AS BREXIT LOOMS

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As Brexit puts a question mark over the rights of EU nationals in Britain, Lithuania is rushing to let its citizens keep their Baltic passports if they opt to become British.

A bill tabled in the 141-seat parliament would allow dual citizenship for Lithuanians living in fellow EU and NATO countries at a time when the ex-Soviet state of three million people continues to see an exodus of workers.

The bill will allow us to keep our compatriots who left from severing their last remaining link to their homeland, Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis told public radio yesterday (11 April).

Dual citizenship is currently an option only for those who left the country under the Soviet or Nazi occupations, with rare exceptions.

3/ EU & EEA countries that disallow dual citizenship:

- Austria
- Lithuania
- Norway

Countries that are tricky:

- Estonia
- Germany

Under the current law, those who left after Lithuania regained independence in 1990 automatically lose their passport when they become citizens of another country.

President Dalia Grybauskaitė said the law, tabled by 114 lawmakers on Friday (8 April), could breach the constitution and warned that she may use her veto – though seventy-one lawmakers would be enough to override it.

Around 370,000 Lithuanians have left the country since it joined the European Union in 2004, half of them relocating to the United Kingdom, where an uproar over Eastern European immigration was seen as a key factor in the Brexit vote to leave the bloc.

British Prime Minister Theresa May promised to impose greater control on immigration from the continent, and guarantees for EU nationals currently living there will be among the issues negotiators discuss amid the Brexit divorce process.

EPP official: UK shouldn't 'use' citizenship to put pressure on Brexit talks

The EU suspects that the UK will play political games in the Brexit negotiations on the issue of citizenship due to the blocs perceived strong interest in the matter, a European Peoples Party (EPP) official revealed. EURACTIV.com reports from Malta.

Dalia Asanaviciute, the leader of the UKs Lithuanian community, welcomed the draft law and warned that otherwise a quarter of the roughly 200,000 Lithuanians living there could choose to swap out their citizenship in order to maintain their full rights in Britain.

Lithuania does not have luxury to lose so many of its educated, tax-paying, English-speaking citizens, she told AFP.

Rise in Eastern Europeans leaving UK since Brexit vote

Migrants from eight Eastern European countries are increasingly leaving Britain after the Brexit vote but the number arriving from Bulgaria and Romania has jumped, official data released today (23 February) showed.

Kaynak/Source: