

Business groups and TUC issue joint statement on EU citizens' rights

The British Chambers of Commerce, CBI, TUC, FSB and EEF have made a joint plea to guarantee the rights of EU and UK citizens before Christmas.

Four million EU and UK citizens face a second Christmas of uncertainty about their right to remain in the countries they now call home. Despite signs that negotiators have made progress on this issue, they are being treated as bargaining chips and are left unsure of their position, especially if there is no deal between the UK and the EU.

Trade unions and businesses are deeply concerned that our friends, colleagues and workers continue to be in limbo. They deserve better treatment, given their vital contribution to our communities, businesses and public services.

The right to remain of the four million must be resolved. There must be certainty whatever the outcome of the Brexit negotiations. The UK government and EU27 should unilaterally guarantee their status and future rights before Christmas. Neither side need wait for the other to do this. If many who go home for holidays simply do not come back, this would have a damaging impact on critical public services and growth.

Adam Marshall, Director General – British Chambers of Commerce

Carolyn Fairbairn, Director General – CBI

Frances O'Grady, General Secretary – TUC

Mike Cherry, National Chairman – Federation of Small Businesses

Stephen Phipson, Chief Executive – EEF