

Short report

Project: “EU citizenship (bEU) – to be or not to be“ – 1st event

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Audience: general, Brussels-based public, approx. 45 people

Lecture: “Understanding EU citizenship – from the past to the present“

In the framework of its annual project “EU citizenship (bEU) – to be or not to be“, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom hosted the kick-off lecture of bEU on May 17, 2019 in Brussels.

The welcome words were given by Thomas Illka, Regional Director European Dialogue of Friedrich Naumann Foundation and Daniel Kaddik, Executive Director, European Liberal Forum.

Dr. Francesca Strumia, Senior Lecturer at the University of Sheffield School of Law, and Visiting Research Fellow at the Collegio Carlo Alberto in Turin, was invited to give a lecture on the topic of „EU citizenship, free movement and the Brexit case“. The expert, a qualified lawyer with international practice and sound experience in lecturing, gave a detailed overview about the legal basis of EU citizenship, both in the Treaties and subsequent case law shaped by the ECJ. Ms Strumia succeeded in presenting a highly technical topic in an interesting and entertaining manner with a sufficient level of detail. To round off her 40-minute presentation, the speaker presented different options for the future of EU citizenship for British citizens after Brexit, highlighting the difference between static and mobile British citizens. The rationale behind the decision to start the project with a lecture on EU law was to lay the (legal) foundations for the whole project and subsequent parts of it. It is expected that some of the participants and speakers will also attend subsequent parts of the project.

The lecture was shortly commented by Maarten de Groot, European Programme Manager at Democracy International. Examining the topic from a philosophical perspective and in the light of his role as a political activist, de Groot recalled the role and importance of direct democracy as well as the ability of EU citizens to rely on their rights. The event closed with a Q&A and a following light lunch. The overall feedback was very positive; the ability of the speaker to present a complex topic was particularly highlighted as well as the Brexit case study.

In view of the upcoming European Elections, no ALDE MEP was formally invited to contribute to the programme. However, representatives from ALDE party and LYMEC as partner organisation in the project were present.