

Fleeing a sinking ship?

Departures from the UK to EU at a ten year high*

A new study conducted by Oxford in Berlin and the WZB - Berlin Social Science Center has found that the number of Brits leaving for continental EU countries is at a ten-year high. OECD figures and national government statistics have shown that the number has risen continuously since 2010 with an exaggerated spike since the Brexit referendum in 2016.

The Oxford in Berlin/WZB British migration study interviewed UK citizens that have left the UK for Germany over the last 10 years, examining the reasons for their migration. The study data reveals the great sacrifices and risks many British citizens are taking in order to find some form of certainty in their lives after the Brexit vote. The results clearly show that for those Brits leaving the UK after 2016, Brexit was the main motivation.



When Temi from London saw the EU referendum being announced in May 2015, she left a secure, high paying job to try and protect her rights as a British European citizen living in Berlin.

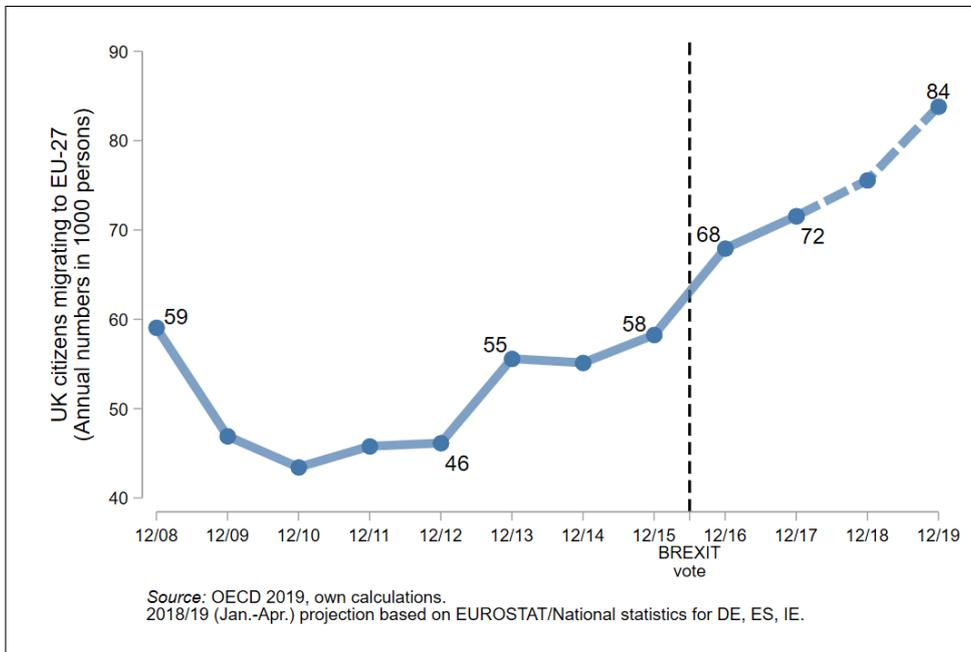
“It’s clear now that the Berlin Government is going to treat us Brits who arrived before Brexit differently to the ones that will arrive afterwards. The Berlin Foreigners Registration Office have already told us that with a no-deal Brexit on 31st October all applications for residency will be free until then and after that we’ll have to pay.” she says.

Andreas from Aberdeenshire has been having leukaemia treatment in Aberdeen 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 Dad, my Mum and I moved house and home to Germany. We now live in German social housing in the same building as Syrian refugees and have the peace of mind that I can finish my chemo and hopefully make a full recovery.”

Co-author of the study and migration specialist Dr. Daniel Auer says: *“The uncertainty surrounding Brexit has certainly 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 rely on approximations from passenger surveys. For that reason, in our study we use OECD data based on national immigration statistics, available until the end of 2017, so one of the challenges for our study is to better understand the effect of Brexit since then.”*



And some Brits are still on their way over, like Martin and Cornelia who just packed up their house in Reading and are on the way to Hamburg with their two young children. While Cornelia managed to organise a laboratory job with her former employer in Oxford, Martin is making a huge sacrifice going from a well-paid IT job to being unemployed. If it wasn't for the Brexit vote, they both said they'd have definitely stayed in the UK.

* As of October 15, 2019. For further information please contact co-authors of the study:
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