

EDF position paper on Brexit

Updated May 2017

Strategy following the publication of the second white paper on the Great Repeal Bill

EDF has been refining and developing its work on Brexit in the first half of 2017.

There are three broad strands to the work:

- Parliamentary lobbying around the proposed repeal bill
- Strategic communications drawing on work previously done around human rights
- Research on implications of Brexit for marginalised communities receiving EU funding.

For parliamentary work we propose the following aims:

- To promote a vision for a modern outward-looking and high standards Britain after we leave the EU, where we can build on current rights to equality, respect and inclusion.
- To protect our current equality and human rights protections, and ensure there can be no process for them to be changed without appropriate parliamentary scrutiny and involvement of citizens and civil society.
- To ensure that all future legislation embeds rights to equality on a constitutional basis.

In order to achieve this, we will work with Forum members and associates to promote amendments to the repeal bill which would achieve these aims.

There are five proposed areas for amendment which would:

- Ensure all existing EU law protections for equality and human rights are incorporated into UK law when we leave the EU.
- Ensure that delegated powers in the bill cannot be used to amend equality and human rights legislation.
- Introduce a British constitutional right to equality.
- Ensure protections in the Charter of Fundamental Rights are retained by incorporation of (relevant) UN treaties.
- Ensure the UK keeps pace with case law developments at the Court of Justice of the European Union and in other comparable countries.

Implications for the devolved administrations will have to be fully considered.

No members opted out.

The following associates opted in:

Enei, Just Fair, Rene Cassin, Women's Budget Group
July 2016 position

The Equality and Diversity Forum is the national network of influential organisations working across all areas of equality and human rights. Together we can make a reality of equality, human rights and social justice in people's lives.

Our network supports many people and communities across the country who are experiencing inequality, discrimination and disadvantage. We can provide insight and expertise on what life is really like for them and the issues they face; and help identify new ways to address the problems.

We support the need for a positive vision of an inclusive, outward-looking UK. Equality and human rights are central to a modern society where we can live and work successfully together, and where we can make the best of everyone's contributions and talents.

Equality and human rights standards provide essential values, freedoms and protections that we all rely on and that are valued by the public. They help increase opportunity and overcome barriers to participation. They help prevent and tackle discrimination, abuse, hate, and violence.

In the coming months, it will be vital for

1. legal protections to be maintained and advanced and to form part of any agreement with the European Union
2. inclusive messages to be repeated frequently by leaders at national and local level, and racism and hate to be condemned in the strongest terms
3. measures to tackle racial and religious-based hate to be stepped up, and incidence of other types of hate and abuse to be monitored for any increase
4. measures to be put in place to promote dialogue and good relations, and bring people and communities together
5. messages and measures to support businesses to be successful and productive by drawing on the broadest talent pool and following inclusive employment practice
6. a review to fully understand the causes of the current situation of inequality and division, and make recommendations for ways forward

In addition there are three major risks to the sector that we would like to discuss:

1. with policy-makers' attention inevitably focused on the EU negotiations, there is a risk that capacity (in terms of both expertise and volume) will be diverted and that other pressing policy problems will not be progressed.

2. withdrawal from the EU will result in a loss of funding to the voluntary and community sector, including those working for equality, human rights and social justice. This will be directly through loss of EU project and research grants, or potentially indirectly through loss of value in the investment portfolios of trusts and foundations who fund the sector. Inevitably this will hit charities' ability to meet their charitable purposes and help those in most need.
3. during the run-up to the Referendum, NGOs faced significant pressure to not engage or campaign. This has caused problems for many in our network and has had a dampening effect. As charities whose mandates require us to actively speak up about the inequality, discrimination and disadvantage our beneficiaries face, we need urgent clarification that charities can speak out in relation to the UK's negotiation with the EU and any proposed changes to key protections as a result of the UK leaving the EU.

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No members opted out. Associate Inclusion London opted in.