



**BRILL member case studies: UK nationals living  
and working cross-border in Luxembourg and the  
*Grande Région***

## **Cross-border working and living**

### **Louise**

I am British as is my husband and son. We hold no other nationality.

We live in France, in the first village inside the border in “Dreiländereck” – on the Moselle, opposite Schengen and about 1km from the German and Luxembourg borders (if you take a road – the German border is less than that if you walk up the hill behind our house).

I work in Luxembourg at the Publications Office and my husband works at the European School in Mamer, which is also attended by our son.

We pass through Germany (albeit briefly) to enter Luxembourg daily. Even at weekends we are in and out of the 3 countries, crossing borders without realizing it if we just go for a walk. As a simple example, what I am intending to buy will generally dictate whether I shop in Luxembourg, France or Germany.

We generally get our medical treatment in Luxembourg, but do use the French doctor from time-to-time.

We have bank accounts in France and Luxembourg – the house mortgage was arranged through a Luxembourg-based bank even though it is in France.

### **Catherine**

I was born in London, schooled in Birmingham and studied at Edinburgh University. I worked a short while in the UK and then took the gamble of following my partner for a new life in Luxembourg. I felt like a true adventurer, all was possible to me, all doors were open. This is freedom of movement. Freedom to choose.

I worked for fifteen years for the pharmaceutical industry based in Belgium, but my workplace was Luxembourg. I crossed from country to country every day, even several times a day.

I bought a house in France. My 3 children were born in Luxembourg, but they sleep in France and go to school in Luxembourg. They have play dates and parties at classmates in Luxembourg, France, Germany and Belgium. They are European, but if you ask them what nationality they are, they'll tell you they're British. They cross borders, hopping from country to country as others hop from Canary Wharf to Wimbledon.

I set up a biomedical research group in Luxembourg that collects patient bio-databases and aims to expand to other European countries. Will these databases

have "freedom of movement" in a Brexit Britain? How will I be able to collaborate with scientists in Britain? Who will now fund an independent British scientist working in Europe?

Will I have the opportunity to seek other employment with the same ease in the EU as a British national in 2019? I already feel disadvantaged in the EU job market, who will employ a Brit now with such uncertainties?

As a British national who officially resided in Luxembourg for 17 years and recently moved to France 3 years ago, I do not qualify to seek nationality in either country. Even though I've paid taxes in Luxembourg for over 20 years that gives me no rights to Luxembourgish nationality.

I am appalled that I was denied the right to vote in the Brexit referendum, both my personal life and professional life now completely uncertain. I am now so thankful that my children were born outside the UK and that they at least will continue to benefit from EU freedom of movement, freedom to choose. As British nationals they should have the right to study in the UK as equals to other British nationals.

### **Alison**

I am British. I have been an EU Commission official since 1994.

I live in Germany but work in Luxembourg every day. I took this decision as my partner is German and he didn't want to leave Germany. I left Brussels to come to Luxembourg in 2005, as the commute time here is less than the commute time there. I moved to Germany in 2006: My partner joined me in 2007. Our daughter, DE and UK nationality, was born here in 2008, and currently attends the European School in Luxembourg and has done for the last 5 years.

### **Sarah**

I work for an EU institution in Luxembourg and am a dual German/UK national. I was brought up in the UK.

I work in Luxembourg during the week but most weekends I return to the UK, where my partner lives. I occasionally go to Germany to visit my elderly parents. I also have family in the Netherlands and in the UK.

I am worried that, when the UK ceases to be a member of the EU, as German law stands I might not be able to maintain my dual citizenship and would be forced to choose between my German citizenship (which is what makes me eligible to carry on working in an EU institution), and my UK citizenship (which is relevant to all other key aspects of my life – personal relationships, professional qualifications and experience, residence for tax purposes, property ownership, etc).

## **Henry**

I am a cross border worker. I live in Germany but work in Luxembourg every day as a compliance manager at a financial institution.

## **Diana**

I live and work in Luxembourg for an EU institution.

My daughter studies in The Hague so we often commute between the two countries.

My son is following an English curriculum at a Luxembourgish Lycée, so in all probability will continue his studies outside of Luxembourg.

I return to the UK fairly often as I have various family responsibilities.

I often travel over the borders to visit friends or for other personal and (often) mundane reasons

## **Karen**

I am a British citizen, working in an EU institution, married to a French/Belgian citizen. We have two young children (age 1 and 3) who are British/French citizens. We work in Luxembourg but bought a house and moved to Belgium in April 2017 so we now both commute daily to Luxembourg for work. I have all my eye check-ups at an optician in the UK, and I buy my glasses there.

As we have not been married for 5 years yet, I cannot become a naturalised French citizen.

As we have not lived (as a married couple) in Belgium for 5 years, I cannot become a naturalised Belgian citizen.

## **Claire**

I live and work in Luxembourg, however at least once a month I go shopping in Trier. This is supplemented by regular visits to Brussels and Saarbrücken, as many goods are cheaper there or the selection is greater. I don't consider Trier, Saarbrücken or Brussels as "weekend holiday destinations" rather as "regular shopping destinations" (which happen to be in another country). So I possess Belgian and German railway cards and loyalty cards for shops which are not in Luxembourg but for which I am a regular customer.

## **Family reunification and healthcare**

### **Tania**

I'm a cross-border 'worker' or I used to be.

We are a family of four and we live across the border in Germany. My husband works in Luxembourg.

From 1997-2006 we lived in Luxembourg and then moved to Germany.

I worked from 1997 until about three years ago when I took medical retirement as I have cancer.

We have two children, aged 10 and 12, who are in local schools in Germany.

My concern is that, currently the EU pays my medical treatment, which takes place in Luxembourg. I've had chemo on and off for 7 years and it will be ongoing. I worry what will happen once the UK leaves the EU. Will I be entitled to treatment paid for by the CNS (Luxembourg social security provider), through my husband?

We can't apply for Luxembourg nationality as no longer live there but we do own an apartment in the city.

### **Margaret**

I and my husband, a former teacher, are retired and moved to Luxembourg from the UK twelve years ago to be near our daughters and grandchildren. One daughter is married to a Luxembourger and another one moved here for work. My mother aged ninety has lived with us for seven years. She has Alzheimers and attends a day centre three days a week. She has no other relatives. Brexit is quite a worry as we don't know how her health care will be funded after 2019. Obviously, she would never be able to apply for Luxembourgish citizenship because she won't be able to meet the requirement of learning Luxembourgish and passing the citizenship test. I and my husband don't speak Luxembourgish either.

### **Emma**

I am a UK official at an EU institution. Luxembourg is so small that life for most of us cannot limit itself to Luxembourg-only, compared perhaps to someone living in France where they would not necessarily need to leave France to find what they need.

For our basic, daily needs, I can find myself in Belgium, Germany and/or France for specific shops on a weekly basis, either for speciality reasons or price reasons or simply because we can! Having been brought up in Belgium, I tend to go back there frequently to either supermarkets or clothes shops that I do not find in Luxembourg.

For medical needs, say a specialist, for example, I rarely find what I need in Luxembourg and it is not because I do not trust them, it is simply because the discipline does not exist. Luxembourg does not have a University hospital and therefore does not have the body of experts that most other countries have. My son has a malformation in his leg veins and he is monitored at a paediatric hospital in Brussels as there is indeed no such specialist in Luxembourg. The closest I got was a dermatologist. Similarly, I needed laser treatment for a skin problem. The machine was not available in Luxembourg, and I am treated in Trier, Germany.

My parents have settled in Belgium. My sister is in the UK. I travel regularly to both, at least once a month to Belgium and 2 or 3 times a year to the UK, and my sister and family come out to see my parents and I regularly too. It would be unthinkable any other way. My parents are getting old and need more care – I cannot imagine having trouble travelling freely between the two countries to take them to a medical appointment or see them through other difficult administrative tasks.

### **All the above plus higher education**

#### **Fiona**

I am a UK national. I am married to a German-Chilean national and have two children who have triple nationality (UK, German and Chilean). I work as an international public health lawyer and advocate for a Swiss-based European medical society. I moved to Luxembourg from the UK in 1995. In 1999 I moved to Germany for family reasons. I moved back to Luxembourg for work reasons in 2002. I work in Luxembourg and Brussels most weeks and usually a couple of days a month in Geneva at my head office. But my work takes me all over the EU. In the last twelve months I have travelled to more than 10 EU countries for work, as well as holidays.

Having to now apply for work permits and travel visas for the EU27 would be extremely disruptive for me. Applying for Luxembourgish citizenship is not an option for me at the moment. Whilst I speak two out of the three official languages here, I don't speak the third, Luxembourgish, and cannot therefore apply. Of course, I could learn but because of my work related travel I cannot commit to regular language or citizenship classes. At the moment, my options are to give up my job and try to become Luxembourgish or keep working and hope that there is an agreement that allows me to keep all of my EU rights for life as a UK national. At the age of 51, both of them are far from risk-free.

I'm also worried about the prospects of my two children who would like to study in the UK. My son will likely be applying for university entry in 2018 and will benefit

from the EU/home fee rates but we don't know whether his degree would be recognised after Brexit. My daughter won't be applying until 2020. If she has to pay international fee rates with no access to student loans, we are going to have to think seriously as to whether we can afford to spend anything from £50-100,000 educating her in the UK only for her to receive a degree that might not even be recognised in the rest of the EU after 2019. We never expected to find ourselves out of the EU and we did no financial planning for international fee rates.

British Immigrants Living in Luxembourg April 2017