

Liberal Democrats Abroad

Announcement

Liberal Democrat Peers appointed to represent the interests of British citizens living abroad.

The Liberal Democrats Party has announced the appointment of Baroness Miller and Lord Stoneham to represent, on behalf of the party, British citizens living in Europe and overseas respectively.

The announcement comes just before the second reading of the Elections Bill in the House of Lords on 23rd February 2022. The Bill includes provisions to give back the vote to all British citizens living abroad who were previously registered in a UK constituency. Liberal Democrats Abroad had recently gave evidence to a Parliamentary Committee in support of the “15-year rule” being abolished.

George Cunningham, Chair of the Lib Dems Abroad Steering Committee said: “We welcome the aim of the Elections Bill to abolish the 15-year rule but it’s only part of the picture for 5.5 million Brits living abroad. We will fight for all British citizens to have proper representation through overseas constituencies, as other countries do. Our Liberal Democrat peers will help achieve this already by providing the equivalent of overseas constituency services to Brits abroad who ask for their support”.

British citizens will be able to contact Liberal Democrat peers Baroness Miller and Lord Stoneham who will represent their collective interests in the House of Lords. Case work concerning specific personal issues raised by British citizens living abroad will need to continue to be done at the constituency level by local MPs until such time overseas constituencies may be realised.

Background for editors.

British citizens living overseas are currently entitled to be registered to vote in UK Parliamentary elections for up to 15 years in the constituency they were registered in before leaving the UK. However, the UK Government has committed to end the 15-year limit and introduce 'votes for life'.

The current Elections Bill will unfortunately continue the practice of distributing the votes of Brits living abroad across 650 UK-based constituencies rather than focusing them into a small number of overseas constituencies which would properly and much more easily represent British citizens' interests. Liberal Democrats Abroad believe UK-based MPs cannot be expected to focus both on the local concerns of their constituents in the UK and the quite different needs of British citizens living in the EU or a multitude of other different countries. The Liberal Democrat party is committed to the establishment of overseas constituencies as stated in its 2017 and 2019 manifestos.

The two appointed Liberal Democrat peers will be supported by more than 2,000 members and supporters of the three Liberal Democrat local parties living in over seventy countries – Lib Dems in Europe, Lib Dems in France and Lib Dems Overseas – who will also be available to give assistance to British citizens locally in their country.

Peers contact details:

- Baroness Miller for British citizens in Europe: millers@parliament.uk
- Lord Stoneham for British citizens outside Europe: STONEHAMB@parliament.uk

Liberal Democrats Abroad contacts:

- George Cunningham, Chair, Lib Dems Abroad Steering Committee: gfcunningham@gmail.com
- Tom McAdam, Chair, Lib Dems in Europe: tom.mcadam@libdemsineurope.org
- Jenny Shorten, Chair, Lib Dems in France: jenny@libdemsinfrance.org
- Mark Iliffe, Chair, Lib Dems Overseas: markiliffe@gmail.com