



## EUROPEAN MOVEMENT IN SCOTLAND: HOLYROOD 2021 ELECTIONS

### FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND IMMIGRATION

#### Manifesto commitments recommended by EMiS

- Recognise Scottish voters' wish to be part of the EU, including Freedom of Movement of People and EU citizenship; mitigate the new restrictions for tourists and impact on the Scottish tourist industry
- Look to negotiate with the UK Government devolution of power over immigration into Scotland or development of Scotland-specific immigration policy which addresses demographic decline and skills shortages
- Support physical proof of settled status for EEA citizens and a welcoming environment to new citizens
- Using full powers of devolution, stay closely connected to EU through participation in exchange programmes, regulatory alignment, promotion of European culture and languages in schools, arts and society, twinning programmes, new European flight and ferry connections, and incentives to EEA visitors, students and workers to choose Scotland.

#### Background

The European Union (EU) and the broader European Economic Area (EEA) gives its citizens the right, without financial or bureaucratic barriers, to travel, work, study, live, drive, set up businesses and retire in 30 countries across our continent. This is positive for economic and fiscal growth, cultural and learning exchange and personal freedom.

UK citizens have lost their EU citizenship and all associated rights and freedoms. They no longer have the right to enter, work, live or study etc in any other country in Europe, other than Ireland which forms a Common Travel Area with the UK. Stays in the Schengen area of more than 90 days in any six months require further long-stay, study or work visas.

UK citizens will have no automatic right to receive any visa or to enter any EEA territory. Musicians travelling to perform in the EU are already facing costs and restrictions. Longer border checks and more intrusive border force questioning can be expected for travellers in each direction. The opportunities for Scotland's young people to study or find work in the EEA will be restricted. Retiring to the sun will not be an easy option for many with new post-

Brexit barriers and costs. The European Health Insurance Card which gives EEA citizens reciprocal urgent health protection is no longer being issued to UK citizens. The replacement Global Health Insurance Card has more limited coverage. Reciprocal social security and voting rights have been lost. A UK driver's licence is no longer sufficient in the EU, and further car insurance bureaucracy has been introduced. Phone companies have the power once again to make extortionate roaming charges. More complex rules apply to travelling with pets.

Residents in the UK from EEA countries are required to apply for Settled Status by 30 June 2021 or become illegal immigrants at risk of deportation. Proof of legal status is only online and employers, landlords, banks and other service providers have to check EEA citizens' status; Without physical proof of their settled status, many EEA citizens feel vulnerable and insecure, and some will experience discrimination.

EU citizens make a vital contribution to Scotland and to its economy, society and culture. EU workers support many sectors, ranging from agricultural, fisheries and processing workers, through health care, haulage and hospitality, to finance, engineers and scientists in high-growth sectors. Yet the UK Immigration Act replaces free movement with a system of controls for EU citizens designed to deter future post-Brexit EU migrants who would need to meet the £25,600 income threshold. Such restrictions would cut migration to Scotland considerably, resulting in, perhaps, 50% less EU migration with Scotland's working age population declining by almost 2%. The Scottish Fiscal Commission has warned of the specific risk to Scotland – which has a worse demographic outlook than the UK as a whole - of reduced migration on the size of the tax-paying working age population. If wanting to attract European talent, Scotland's employers will need to deal with the complexity and costs of the new system. Scotland needs an immigration arrangement tailored to its economic situation. It could be given control over its immigration needs by means of 'regional visas' or the special use of Scottish national insurance numbers.

**For further inquiries, contact: [policybriefs@euromove.scotland.org.uk](mailto:policybriefs@euromove.scotland.org.uk)**

**For more about EMiS and its position on a range of policy issues see: <https://www.euromovescotland.org.uk/>**