

# GETTING OUR VOICES HEARD

## UK Constituencies Abroad

To change UK law so that all citizens of the UK living abroad can:

- vote for their representation in discrete constituencies abroad
- participate in UK referenda.

Everything changed when the UK left the EU

- When the UK left the EU on 31 January 2020 UK citizens who have lived, live and will live in Europe for more than 15 years were and will be completely *disenfranchised*. This is true for UK citizens elsewhere in the world after 15 years.
- Prior to 31 January 2020, LibDems in France supported the abolition of the 15 year cap on UK voting rights to ensure some measure of democratic equality for all. It leveraged the Government's manifesto pledge to abolish the 15 year rule, as yet unfulfilled!
- Now the British diaspora in Europe joins the diaspora in the rest of the world and is completely disenfranchised.
- The UK has *abandoned* the Human Rights of its citizens living abroad.

- UN Declaration of Human Rights Article 21 Paragraph 1 states that:

***Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives***

- Restoring representation with the right to vote, without which we can have no voice, is our aim
- The last attempt to retain votes for life was shamefully filibustered at the last fence, the 3<sup>rd</sup> reading in the House of Commons

## Virtual Think Tank (VTT)

To draw on our Liberal foundations to:

- reinvigorate the LibDems
- understand and influence the development of the European Union

Everything changed following the General Election 2019

- The fundamental foundations of Liberalism have been all but lost in the current wave of populism and nationalism.
- Dubious manipulations and grandstanding of Russia, China and the United States of America have made European countries as a whole more aware of the need for close European cooperation.
- Europe has to think about how it can better function as an entity and the LibDem Party has to give profound consideration how it can contribute to this continuing European evolution.

- 'A View from France' policy paper outlines a definition of citizenship and what it means.
- The next steps will focus on what is meant by *Liberty, Europe & European* and *Globalisation*.

## And finally...

The Executive Committee has set up two Sub Committee to steer the work of these initiatives and their Chairs will be in touch shortly to explain and outline the challenge ahead.