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Professor Janet Beer
Vice Chancellor

University of Liverpool
The Foundation Building,
765 Brownlow Hill,
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Dear Professor Beer,

I am writing following the EU referendum result. As we know you are aware, the result places University of Liverpool staff who are current EU citizens but who do not currently have Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the UK in a specifically vulnerable position.

Some staff have told us they have begun looking for work elsewhere in the EU. Others may find themselves having to apply for the right to continue working while in University of Liverpool employment. We risk a brain drain institutionally while the city faces a capital flight.

The current position [1] is extremely unclear. Government has made no guarantees that, once two years are up and negotiations concluded, current EU citizens residing in the UK will be permitted to stay. However, during the campaign, both official Leave campaigns [2] pledged that such citizens would "automatically" be given this right, i.e. be given ILR.

This uncertainty helps no-one. We believe it is time to demand that the Government agrees to the up-front commitment made by the 'Leave' campaigns and protects EU citizens living and working in the UK.

We are writing to invite you to support a joint public statement, from the University of Liverpool and its joint trade unions, to that effect. For politicians, there are good grounds for acceding to this call. The UK can ill-afford to lose EU workers. Processing three million individual ILR applications is not feasible in the timescale available. Making this pledge would reduce the threat of a reciprocal deportation of 1.3 million British people from Europe. Finally, in the current febrile atmosphere, it would represent a clear line against those who would wish to blame migration for economic ills.

We are open to discussing the wording of a joint statement. For example, it could be extended to include demands for guarantees regarding the position of EU students and EU research funding.

However, the most immediate call, and the one that would address the fears of EU staff, would be an up-front guarantee from Government that they would be granted ILR within the next two years, independent of the outcome of any exit negotiations.

Yours sincerely

Jo McNeill
President, University of Liverpool UCU and NEC

Kay Lancaster
Branch Secretary, Unite

Karl Huxham
Branch Secretary, Unison

[1] See <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7632/CBP-7632.pdf>

[2] This is what the Leave proponents said (op cit):-

EU Leave campaigners indicated support for such an approach during the referendum campaign. Supporters of the Vote Leave campaign said that, in the event of a vote to leave the EU, there will be no change for EU citizens already lawfully resident in the UK. It envisaged a post-Brexit immigration system in which EU citizens already living in the UK will automatically be granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK and will be treated no less favourably than they are at present. The Leave.eu campaign gave a similar assurance during the campaign that European migrants living in the UK would not be removed in the event of a vote to leave, pledging that. Any restriction of free movement would not be implemented retrospectively.