

The Connexion – 29 oct. 2018

## **A senator representing French people abroad has spoken out for Britons in France at a parliamentary debate.**



Olivier Cadic (pictured) sits on the French Senate's Brexit commission and helped launch [the3million](#), the campaign group that protects the rights of EU citizens in the UK.

He told senators that Brexit had a major impact on those EU citizens – and on Britons in the EU, many of whom could not vote.

“I’m not speaking about tomatoes, saucepans or vehicles, but children, women and men. They’re calling out to us,” he said.

He asked Europe Minister Nathalie Loiseau if she will ring-fence the rights of Britons agreed so far in the negotiations, so they are protected in a “no deal”.

She replied that they would make sure the “fate of the British is comparable to what we planned in the deal, as long as measures taken by the UK for our citizens are on the same footing”.

France has 11 dedicated MPs and 12 senators to represent its expatriates throughout the world. The UK does not have any.

Mr Cadic, who lives in Kent, said he believes the rights of the French in the UK and the British in France will be respected if there is no deal but disagrees with waiting to see what the UK does.

He told *Connexion*: “If I was the president, I would say I can’t accept that people are left in this situation, so we must separate and guarantee their rights. It would be to our credit.

“I proposed this to our Brexit commission, who accepted it.

“I know it’s complicated and everyone’s nerves are frayed; I understand the politics. But if the British in France were reassured, that would be something at least.

“People say ‘but what if it’s not reciprocated?’ but I say, no. If the British government behaved badly to the French citizens, that’s their business. It would be to their discredit, and that’s that.”

Mr Cadic said he is aware of difficulties some people are experiencing with *carte de séjour* applications and he worries for them all, but especially

the elderly. He said he will raise the need for simple formalities when a no-deal bill is debated in the Senate this month.

The bill spells out the need for measures to help the British who would otherwise technically become illegal residents because they lack non-EU citizen visas, residency cards and permissions to work.

It also refers to the need to respect British qualifications obtained by French people abroad, and periods spent paying into a British pension by returning French expatriates.

From the start, Mr Cadic saw the Northern Ireland border issue as insurmountable and he sees no solution other than reunification with Ireland.

He said: "At this stage the only hope is that the British give up on Brexit because it's in the country's greater interest to stay in the EU. There's nothing better."

He pointed out that Theresa May was once a Remainer and is losing political credibility by maintaining that the only option is to leave.

"In politics you should commit to your ideas, you can't do the opposite," he said. "If she doesn't believe in it, she must show the public that it's not a good idea.

"She should come back from Brussels and say 'I've done my best but it's not working. We'll only lose out if we carry on. If necessary, we will hold another election and I will stand on a platform of Remain'."