



Eleanor Rylance

Candidate for the Federal
International Relations
Committee



What I do

I'm a translator and LibDem activist from Devon. I speak several languages: I'm bilingual in French and English, I speak German and Spanish, and am learning Italian and Swedish.

Brexit was the prompt that activated me, but the process took a little longer: in 2016, after watching the unfolding political horror show and shouting at the TV for a year or more that "someone should do something about that", I suddenly realised that I was a someone and that I should do something.

I was already a parish councillor (19 years now!) and since becoming politically active I have stood at every level of UK government from district to European Parliament. I've stood in 2 Westminster elections and was a candidate on the very successful South West & Gibraltar European list in 2019. Since then global geo-politics has been very present in all our lives, not least the Ukraine war which is very close to our family.

I have also volunteered for roles within the LibDems from local party to federal committees:

- Multiple roles within my local party, and regional conference committee. **Member of LibDems European Group since 2018.**

- ALDE party delegate** for the last 3 years, and Secretary of the Federal International Relations Committee (FIRC) for the last few months.

- Candidate in: 2 Westminster elections (2019 and 2024); European Parliament elections 2019; every district election since 2017, and several county elections.

- I've been a LibDem district councillor in Devon since 2017, and Chair of my council for the last 3 years. In those 7 years I've carried through council several motions on environmental issues- I'm also a Green LibDem. In every venue I can I try represent the rural voice, often somewhat absent from national political debate.

- I was Company Secretary of the European Movement UK 2021-2023

Why I do what I do

I became an economic migrant at age 6, after my parents lost our UK house in the early 1970s and we moved to an unrenovated 15th century farmhouse in rural South West France.

France welcomed us, educated us, nurtured us. I grew up as a “third culture” child, bilingual in French and English, constantly negotiating between home, school and the outside world.

This has left me with strong empathy for others who move countries for whatever reason. I know from experience that migration can be a very positive thing, even if it begins with less than positive causes.



(Photo is of me aged 6- only a few weeks into school in Lot-et-Garonne and still no real idea what's going on. Also in the kerfuffle of losing the house and moving, nobody had really noticed that I couldn't see much- hence the puzzled expression)

During those 12 years in France I learned two more languages, travelled across Europe with ease and spoke to anyone, passed my baccalauréat and was accepted to study law at Cambridge University, where I made lifelong friends and launched myself into Cambridge Young Europeans. In 1988 a wise friend advised me to join this brand new party, the Liberal Democrats. I was certain that politics wasn't for me, so did not in fact join...until politics came looking for me in 2016. It turns out that my friend was right all along.

Fast forward through a couple of decades of juggling jobs and children, to life here in rural Devon in 2016 as a freelance translator, and the awful realities of Brexit and the effects of geo-politics on individuals- I realised that my youngest child would simply not have the same opportunities as her older siblings. As a family we are extremely involved in our local twinning association, which I chair, and it has brought many benefits to the children of our community.

Since 2016 I've been determinedly trying to salvage rights of all our children to live, study and work anywhere in Europe that they want to. We must preserve our relationships with our mainland European friends, and mount responses deeply rooted in liberal democracy to counter the global rise of nationalism and populism. Together as a global political movement we simply have to find better solutions than the nationalists.

That is why I am asking for you to vote for me to join the Federal International Relations Committee. If elected I would continue FIRC's work of kindling and nurturing links with our sister parties and developing our party's presence around the world.

Thank you, *Eleanor*