

**Written evidence submitted by the Ambassador for the Republic of
Croatia to the UK (FRE0117)**

[evidence begins on the following page]



*Embassy of the Republic of Croatia to the
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
London*

**Mr Hilary Benn MP
Chair of the Committee on the Future Relationship
with the European Union
UK Parliament**

31 July 2020

Dear Mr Benn,

Thank you for your letter of 16 July 2020. I would like to take the opportunity to provide the input concerning the highlighted questions of interest for the Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union.

Firstly, it is important to underline that the rights of EU citizens living in the United Kingdom and United Kingdom nationals living in EU Member States remain a priority for the European Union, its institutions and its Member States. Croatia attaches great importance to the rights of Croatian citizens in the United Kingdom, as well as to the rights of UK citizens living in Croatia, in accordance with the Withdrawal Agreement. The number of UK citizens who have registered their residence with the relevant Croatian authorities is approximately 900.

It is worth recalling that the Part Two of the Withdrawal Agreement that deals with citizens' rights applies only as from the end of the transition period, with the exception of Article 19 of the Withdrawal Agreement. All EU Member States have to put in place their systems for the issuance of residence documents so that they can start handling applications for a new residence status or a new residence document on 1 January 2021 at the latest. Croatia has chosen to apply the declaratory residence system under Article 18(4) of the Withdrawal Agreement, enabling UK citizens who are beneficiaries of the Withdrawal Agreement and who register their residence to enjoy all the rights provided under the Agreement.

Further information related to residency rights is available on the websites of the Croatian Ministry of Interior (<https://mup.gov.hr/vijesti/information-concerning-the-future-relations-between-the-united-kingdom-and-the-european-union/283273>) and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (<http://www.mvep.hr/en/other/brexit/>). This includes the recommendation to all UK

citizens and their family members residing in Croatia to register their residence or apply for a residence card as a family member during the transition period.

Additional activities related to the issuance of new residence documents, including of a legislative nature, are currently under consideration and will be in place by the end of the transition period. We will continue to update our websites regularly, as well as to make information available to all interested UK citizens.

In order to fulfil the obligations under the Withdrawal Agreement in the best way possible, Croatian authorities are in regular contact with the European Commission's services as well as with the British Embassy in Croatia.

Best regards,



Igor Pokaz
Ambassador



Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Email: freucom@parliament.uk Website: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/366/committee-on-the-future-relationship-with-the-european-union/>

16 July 2020

H.E. Mr Igor Pokaz
Ambassador of Croatia to the United Kingdom

By email

Your Excellency,

The House of Commons [Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union](#) is inquiring into the progress of ongoing negotiations between the UK and the EU and the implementation of the Citizens' Rights provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement.

The rights of EU citizens living in the UK and UK citizens living in the EU was an important and sensitive issue throughout the Article 50 negotiations with both sides agreeing that it was essential to uphold as far as possible the rights accrued by citizens in both of these categories during the UK's membership of the EU.

The Committee would be very interested in hearing from you about the arrangements your Government is making to ensure that UK citizens living in your country can secure their rights under the Withdrawal Agreement.

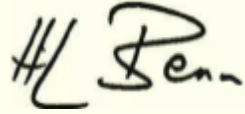
As well as any general observations you wish to make, we would welcome your answers to the following questions:

- What is your estimate of the number of UK citizens currently living in your country and on what basis have you come to that figure?
- Has your Government decided if it is going to implement a constitutive or declaratory system and has this decision been made public? If not, when will this decision be made and publicised?
- Has your Government published guidance for UK citizens, and their family members, in your country explaining what they must do to secure their rights under the Withdrawal Agreement? If so, could you provide us with a link to the guidance online? If such guidance for UK citizens has not yet been published, by what date does your Government intend to do so?
- Whatever system your Government chooses to operate, what is the first step that UK citizens have to take, and what are the relevant dates by which they will have to complete this step, and any subsequent steps, in order to secure their rights under the Withdrawal Agreement?
- Are lawmakers in your country required to pass any domestic legislation in relation to residency applications made by UK citizens living there? If so, are these laws already in place or scheduled to be considered and in effect by a certain date?
- Finally, are there any issues or challenges specific to your country that are currently facing UK citizens who want to confirm their residency rights and what additional impact has Covid-19 had on the wider process?

I am writing in similar terms to the other national Ambassadors of EU Member States to the UK based in London. All replies that the Committee receives will, in due course, be published on its website.

Should you have any questions at all, the Clerk of our Committee, Gordon Clarke, will be very happy to help. He can be contacted at clarkeg@parliament.uk.

I have the honour to be, with the highest consideration, Your Excellency's obedient servant,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H/ Benn'.

Hilary Benn
Chair of the Committee