

**Written evidence submitted by the Ambassador for the Republic of  
Estonia to the UK (FRE0121)**

[evidence begins on the following page]



*Ambassador Tiina Intelmann  
Embassy of the Republic of Estonia*

Rt Hon. Hilary Benn MP

Chair of the Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union

House of Commons

London, SW1A 0AA

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020

*Dear Mr Benn,*

Thank you for your letter of 16 July 2020 and questions therein with regard to the preparations my Government is undertaking to ensure that UK citizens living in Estonia can enjoy their rights under the Withdrawal Agreement.

As you very correctly point out, upholding citizens' rights remains essential when implementing the Withdrawal Agreement. Let me assure you that the rights of UK citizens living in Estonia remain a priority for my Government. In general, Estonia has taken a generous approach towards UK citizens and their family members residing in Estonia.

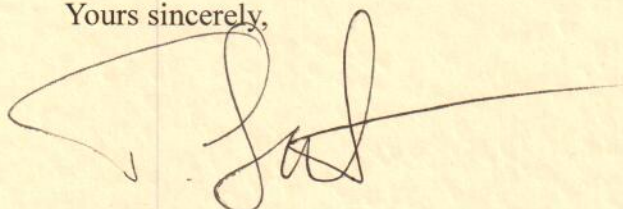
In February 2019, the Estonian Parliament adopted a law stipulating that British citizens, who reside in Estonia as of the date of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, or come to live here during the transition period, will continue to enjoy the same rights as they did before the withdrawal date. The same goes for both their current and future family members. We do not foresee a separate registration for British citizens or their family members, as they will automatically acquire a new status, without presenting any additional documents.

As of July this year, according to the Estonian Population Register, approximately 1400 UK citizens have registered their residence in Estonia and hold a valid ID-card. Citizens of the United Kingdom can continue residing in Estonia under their current Estonian ID card until its expiry date and the same goes for their family members who hold a residence permit card.

As the application for new documents etc. is done digitally, we do not foresee any specific challenges arising from Covid-19. The Ministry of Interior is planning to inform all UK citizens registered in Estonia this autumn via direct e-mail explaining what will change with regard to their rights. All information regarding the rights of UK citizens post-Brexit is outlined on the Ministry of Interior (and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) website, which is updated regularly: <https://www.siseministeerium.ee/en/activities/citizenship-and-migration/united-kingdom-withdrew-european-union>. In co-operation with the local UK Embassy, several briefings for UK citizens living in Estonia have taken place with representatives of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Social Affairs giving information concerning the rights of UK citizens. In addition, the European Commission provides continuous support to ensure a uniform interpretation of the Withdrawal Agreement and to allow for exchange of information and best practices at the EU level.

Should you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tiina Intelmann', written over a horizontal line.

Tiina Intelmann



# Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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

16 July 2020

H.E. Ms Tiina Intelmann  
Ambassador of Estonia 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.

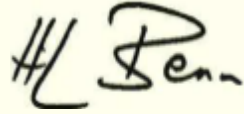
As well as any general observations you wish to make, we would welcome your answers to the following questions:

- 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](mailto: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**