

**Written evidence submitted by the Ambassador for the Hellenic  
Republic to the UK (FRE0124)**

[evidence begins on the following page]



EMBASSY OF GREECE

LONDON

London, 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020  
Ref: AP 1992

*Rt Hon Hilary Benn, MP  
Chair of the Committee on the Future Relationship with the EU,  
House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA*

Re: UK citizens rights of residence in Greece under the provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement

*Dear Mr. Benn,*

Thank you for your letter of July the 16th 2020 regarding arrangements for securing the rights of UK citizens residing in Greece under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement.

As you know, the rights of EU citizens living in the United Kingdom and United Kingdom nationals living in EU Member States remain a priority for the Union, its institutions and its Member States. Part Two of the Withdrawal Agreement, dealing with citizens' rights, applies only as from the end of the transition period, with the exception of Article 19 of the Withdrawal Agreement.

At EU level, and in order to help Member States fulfil their obligations under the Withdrawal Agreement in the best possible way, the Commission provides continuous support to ensure a uniform interpretation of the Withdrawal Agreement and allow for exchange of information and best practices. In this context, the Commission has published an overview of the implementation of the citizens' rights part of the Withdrawal Agreement that will be regularly updated to ensure that United Kingdom nationals and their family members are properly informed about their rights under the Withdrawal Agreement in individual Member States (<https://tinyurl.com/y3xhx3xp>).

At national level, there are approximately 28000 UK nationals who currently reside in Greece, as holders either of a Registration Certificate or a Permanent Residence Document. It is also presumed that there is a yet undefined number of UK nationals residing in Greece. Greece will implement the declaratory system as per article 18(4) of the Withdrawal Agreement. This decision is made public via the above mentioned Commission website and its relevant table, as well as in the dedicated Greek Brexit site (<https://brexit.gov.gr/uk-citizens-in-greece/>).

Moreover, the Greek Government has published information early on for UK nationals and their family members' rights under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, on its official Brexit website and it updates this information regularly. It is to be noted here that this website is also interactive, offering the possibility of tailor made answers to UK and Greek citizens' questions. The Greek Government, in close cooperation with the UK Embassy in Athens, has also organised information sharing and awareness raising events for UK residents in Greece.

The application process for the new residence document that will be issued in Greece for UK nationals, in accordance with the provisions of Art 18 (4) of the Withdrawal Agreement, will begin on 1 October 2020. The first step to acquire the new residence document will be for UK



EMBASSY OF GREECE

LONDON

nationals to proceed to the police station of their place of residence and file an application for the new document.

The legal basis regarding the rights of UK citizens residing in Greece under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement is Law 4652/2020 (Article 10), as amended by Law 4686/2020 (Article 62). A Joint Ministerial Decree, based on Law 4652/2020, is currently being drafted by the Ministry of Public Order. The Decree will specify the application process for the issuance of the new residence documents for UK nationals that wish to reside in Greece after the end of the transition period and will also include dates on the relevant application process, the competent authorities for UK nationals and their family members, etc. This Decree is expected to be published in the near future.

Despite the impact COVID19 may have had on the decision making process and the relevant national legislation that needs to be passed, we are still on track for meeting all internal and EU deadlines as regards the implementation of Part II of the Withdrawal Agreement. Nevertheless, one of the biggest remaining challenges, as for most of the EU member-states, is the non-registered UK nationals and their family members who do not wish to register for various reasons: for instance, Greece has a large number of UK nationals currently residing in Greece, who are pensioners, but are reluctant to register because they are afraid they will lose their rights to NHS healthcare. This would be a matter primarily for the UK nationals and UK authorities to address.

An equally important challenge will be the mobility and social security/health coverage arrangements for EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals in the EU in the future EU-UK partnership agreement. The new UK immigration policy would appear to fall short of the close and cordial relations and exchanges our citizens have enjoyed for over 40 years and we hope that more ambitious - and worthy of our citizens' expectations - arrangements can be found on this important issue in the ongoing negotiations for the future EU-UK relations.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the resolve of my Government to secure the rights of UK nationals living in Greece under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement. Naturally, the level of ambition in this endeavour will be also determined by the relevant choices made by the UK Government regarding the rights of Greek nationals living in the UK. In this regard, I would like to reassure you of our readiness to forge a new and equally close and ambitious bilateral partnership in the post Brexit era to the benefit of both our countries.

Please accept, Dear Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

Dimitris Caramitsos-Tziras  
Ambassador



# 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. Mr Dimitrios Caramitsos-Tziras  
Ambassador of Greece 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.

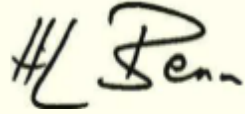
As well as any general observations you wish to make, we would welcome your answers to the following questions:

- 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". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

**Hilary Benn**  
**Chair of the Committee**