

**Written evidence submitted by the Ambassador for the Republic of
Latvia to the UK (FRE0126)**

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Latvijas Republikas vēstniecība Lielbritānijas un Ziemeļīrijas Apvienotajā Karalistē

Embassy of the Republic of Latvia to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

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London

30th July 2020

No. GB-14154

Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP
Chair of the Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union
House of Commons

Dear Mr Benn,

Thank you for the letter, and the interest you have expressed regarding the issues of citizens' rights. 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 and all its Member States, including Latvia.

According to the Population Register of the Republic of Latvia (a national registration system of all residents of Latvia, including foreign nationals) there are currently 1209 UK citizens registered in Latvia.

In line with the Withdrawal Agreement, Latvia has chosen to implement a constitutive registration system. The system has been implemented via "Law on the protection of personal rights for the transition period after the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union" adopted on 22 March 2019, and available at www.Likumi.lv - a website that ensures free access to systematized legal acts of the Republic of Latvia. There is currently no need for additional domestic legislation with regard to residency applications made by UK citizens, but the 2019 Law is being updated to reflect the precise date until which UK citizens can submit the necessary application, namely, 30 June 2021 as foreseen by the Withdrawal Agreement.

Guidance for UK citizens in Latvia has recently been provided through individual letters to each UK citizen legally residing in Latvia. The letter includes all the relevant information regarding application procedures for the new document of residence. There is also general information available on the website of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) of Latvia: <https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/en/search-results.html?search=brexit>. Additionally, the European 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 the UK nationals and their

family members are properly informed about their rights under the Withdrawal Agreement in individual Member States (<https://tinyurl.com/y3xhx3xp>).

The citizens of the UK and their family members who are currently residing in Latvia or will enter Latvia before 31 December 2020 and who wish to continue residing in Latvia, must submit an application to the OCMA before 30 June 2021 in order to obtain a new residence permit. The OCMA will start accepting applications from October 2020. Applications can be sent by mail or submitted via Latvian e-Government e-services portal www.Latvija.lv. While due to COVID-19 face-to-face services are limited, in case of necessity in-person visits are possible subject to prior appointment.

As Latvia continues to work on the necessary arrangements for UK citizens, we rely that the rights of EU citizens living in the UK will also be fully secured in accordance with the Withdrawal Agreement. We have had exchanges with the relevant UK authorities on the procedures being put in place for registration of EU citizens for settled and pre-settled status, and we look forward to continued cooperation on these and other matters related to citizens' rights.

Yours sincerely,



Ivita Burmistre
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. Ms Baiba Braze
Ambassador of Latvia 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.

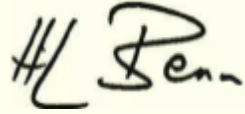
As well as any general observations you wish to make, we would welcome your answers to the following questions:

- 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