

**Written evidence submitted by the Ambassador for the Slovak
Republic to the UK (FRE0131)**

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Eubomír Reháč
Ambassador
to the Court of St. James's

London, 3 August 2020

Dear Mr Chairman,

Please accept my assurances 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 Union, its institutions and its Member States.

In the case of the Slovak Republic, I herewith present answers to all the questions you raised:

• ***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?***

As of 30 June 2020, **2 672** citizens of the United Kingdom were registered for a valid stay in the territory of the Slovak Republic. The statistical data were processed on the basis of outputs from the information system Evidence of Foreigners with a Permitted Residence in the Slovak Republic.

• ***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?***

The Slovak Republic implements a declaratory system. Our decision will be taken in the amendment to Act no. 404/2011 on Residence of Foreigners and Amendment and Supplementation of Certain Acts, a proposal which is currently being prepared.

• ***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?***

All the guidance is published on the website of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic (<http://www.minv.sk/?brexit-2>). The necessary information for UK citizens and their family members is published both in Slovak and in English together with specific examples of how to proceed with their residence status after UK's withdrawal from the EU. This information is continuously updated in cooperation with the British Embassy in Bratislava. The Bureau of Border and Foreign Police of the Presidium of the Police Force with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Bratislava are currently preparing, in cooperation with the British Embassy in Bratislava, an information campaign for UK citizens and their family

members with a focus on getting acquainted with the possibilities of resolving the residence status of these persons after UK's withdrawal from the EU.

• *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?*

UK citizens have the rights guaranteed by the Withdrawal Agreement, which the Slovak Republic applies directly. The first step for UK citizens who have a registered residence in the Slovak Republic is to apply for new residence permits as third-country nationals by 31 December 2020, at the latest by 30 June 2021. The registration of residence of UK citizens as citizens of the EU will be automatically changed to permanent residence for 5 years or long-term residence of the EU on 1 January 2021 (as a residence of a third country national), depending on how long they have registered a previous residence in the Slovak Republic.

• *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?*

The Slovak Republic applies the Withdrawal Agreement directly and we have a declaratory system. We are preparing an amendment to Act no. 404/2011 on the Residence of Foreigners.

• *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?*

The Bureau of Border and Foreign Police of the Presidium of the Police Force is not aware of any problems of UK citizens in connection with the confirmation of their right of residence in the territory of the Slovak Republic. The Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic is likewise not aware of any problems even during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Ministry does note the low interest of UK citizens in changing their residence status in relation to Brexit, which may cause problems in the future.

Dear Mr Chairman,

Please allow me also to mention that in order to help Member States to fulfil their obligations under the Withdrawal Agreement in the best possible way, the European Commission provides continuous support to ensure a uniform interpretation of the Withdrawal Agreement and allows for exchange of information and best practices at the EU level. In this context, the Commission has adopted a guidance note in May 2020 to help Member States interpret and implement Part Two of the Withdrawal Agreement (C(2020)2939 final). It has also 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>).



Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP
House of Commons
L o n d o n
SW1A 0AA



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 Lubomir Rehak
Ambassador of Slovakia 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.

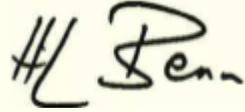
As well as any general observations you wish to make, we would welcome your answers to the following questions:

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

Hilary Benn
Chair of the Committee