

**Written evidence submitted by the Ambassador for the French
Republic to the UK (FRE0135)**

[evidence begins on the following page]



AMBASSADE DE FRANCE
AU ROYAUME-UNI

Le Chargé d'Affaires a.i.
N° 2020-0314483

29 July 2020

Dear Mr Benn,

Thank you for your letter of 16 July concerning the implementation of the citizens' rights provisions of the agreement on the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union. The Ambassador is currently on annual leave and has asked me to reply to you on her behalf.

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 order to help Member States to fulfil their obligations under the Withdrawal Agreement in the best possible way, the Commission provides continuous supports to ensure a uniform interpretation of the Withdrawal Agreement and allow for exchange of information and best practices at the EU level.

In line with the Withdrawal Agreement, all Member States have chosen either the constitutive or declaratory residence system. The chosen option is a national choice and depends, inter alia, on numbers of resident UK beneficiaries in the Member State concerned.

According to the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE), 148,300 British nationals were living in France in 2016.

France has opted for a constitutive system, in accordance with Article 18 paragraph 1 of the Withdrawal Agreement. This decision has been made public. In this respect, British nationals and their family members living in France or moving there before the end of the transition period will have to apply for a newly created residence permit which bears the text: "*Article 50 TUE / Article 18(1) Accord de retrait du Royaume-Uni de l'UE*".

British nationals and their family members concerned will have a long time to apply for these residence permits, since they are required to hold a residence permit only from 1 July 2021. A new version of the website devoted to online residence permit applications (<https://contacts-demarches.interieur.gouv.fr>) will be up and running from 1 October 2020 to make it easy for them to apply for their permits online, in accordance with the Withdrawal Agreement. These residence permits will be issued free of charge.

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AMBASSADE DE FRANCE

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An information campaign was launched on 31 January 2020 to inform British nationals and their family members about the change in their situation and the formalities to be completed to guarantee their rights under the Withdrawal Agreement. Prior to the launch of the website devoted to online residence permit applications, the necessary information has been centralized and regularly updated on the interministerial website <https://brexit.gouv.fr/sites/brexit/accueil.html>. This website has been operational since December 2018 and is accessible in French and English.

Finally, a decree concerning the entry into and stay in France of British nationals and members of their family who are beneficiaries of the Withdrawal Agreement is due to be published between now and October 2020. It will ensure the effective implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement's provisions.

At the EU level, 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>).

I hope that these elements will be useful to you and to the Committee. We remain at your disposal should you need any additional information.

Yours sincerely,



François Revardeaux

The Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP
Chair of the Committee on the Future Relationship with the EU
House of Commons
London, 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. Catherine Colonna
Ambassador of France to the United Kingdom

By email

Your Excellency,

The House of Commons [Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union](https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/366/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.

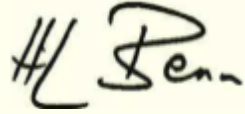
As well as any general observations you wish to make, we would welcome your answers to the following questions:

- 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