

Joint statement following the meeting of the Specialised Committee on Citizens' Rights between the European Commission and the UK Government via video conference

First published on
28 April 2021

The sixth meeting of the Specialised Committee on Citizens' Rights was held today, co-chaired by officials from the European Commission and the UK Government. A number of representatives from EU Member States were also in attendance. The Committee has been established by the Withdrawal Agreement to monitor the implementation and application of the Citizens' Rights part of the Withdrawal Agreement, which protects the rights of EU citizens in the UK and of UK nationals in the EU and their family members.

The EU and the UK exchanged updates on implementation and application since the last meeting. This included residence systems, frontier worker systems and mutual recognition of professional qualifications. The EU and the UK highlighted the need to implement the Withdrawal Agreement correctly for the benefit of EU citizens and UK nationals, and reaffirmed their commitment to address issues where both Parties do not share the same interpretation. During the meeting, issues relating to those who have been prevented from accessing benefits and services, such as healthcare, the verification of beneficiary status under the Withdrawal Agreement and the loss of rights for those with a non-permanent residence status who do not apply for permanent residence before their original status expires were raised.

A third Joint Report on Residence was also presented. Specific attention was given to countries with a constitutive system, in light of the approaching deadline for applications and handling of applications submitted after the deadline. The EU and the UK recalled that EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals in France, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta and the Netherlands need to apply for a new residence status by 30 June 2021 in order to be protected by the Withdrawal Agreement. The EU and the UK also emphasised the importance of providing clear communications and comprehensive support to vulnerable or hard to reach citizens. Public and non-public bodies must also work to ensure that beneficiaries of the Withdrawal Agreement are able to enjoy their rights and entitlements, particularly when accessing benefits and services and exercising their right to work, rent and study.

The EU and the UK have agreed to meet again in June to produce a fourth Joint Report on Residence and maintain a close dialogue on implementation and application. The EU and the UK reiterated their commitment in ensuring the correct implementation and application of the Citizens' Rights part of the Withdrawal Agreement and stressed the importance of upholding citizens' rights.