

Citizens' Rights Specialised Committee meeting, 17 June 2021: joint statement

Press release

The UK government and European Commission met by video conference for the Specialised Committee on Citizens' Rights, and published a joint statement.



Joint statement by the Specialised Committee on Citizens' Rights between the European Commission and UK government:

The seventh meeting of the Specialised Committee on Citizens' Rights was held today, co-chaired by officials from the UK government and the European Commission. 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 UK nationals in the EU and EU citizens in the UK, including their family members.

The UK and the EU discussed the implementation of the Citizens' Rights part of the Withdrawal Agreement, with attention given to the end of the grace period in the UK, France, Malta, Luxembourg and Latvia on 30 June 2021. The Committee calls upon EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals in the EU to apply by the deadline if they are yet to do so. Both parties emphasised the importance of continuing to provide clear communications ahead of the deadline for applications, where an application for a new residence status is required.

During the meeting, issues related to residence were discussed. The UK highlighted their concerns regarding individual cases of misapplication of the Withdrawal Agreement, experienced by UK nationals across the EU. The UK raised non-compliant administrative procedures where UK nationals are being prevented from submitting an application for a new residence status. The UK also raised

difficulties faced by UK nationals when attempting to evidence their rights where residence documents are yet to be issued, including those refused entry to their host State and instances of UK nationals being prevented from accessing benefits and services, such as healthcare. The UK also noted their assessment that the EU has not provided a sufficient level of communications and support to UK nationals in the EU. The EU highlighted their concerns as regards the compatibility with the Withdrawal Agreement of the UK's EU Settlement Scheme in not making a clear distinction between the beneficiaries of the Withdrawal Agreement (the so-called 'true cohort') and non-beneficiaries who are granted status under UK immigration law (the so-called 'extra cohort'), despite not exercising a qualifying Treaty right. The EU also expressed concerns about the fact that EU citizens lose their residence status if they do not apply in time from pre-settled to settled status and also about the lack of protection under the UK's EU Settlement Scheme of EU citizens who will not apply to the residence status by the end of the grace period until they receive their status. The EU noted that it did not share the UK's interpretation of the Withdrawal Agreement and technical discussions will continue until the end of next week, given the lack of convergence of interpretations. The EU emphasised that it will now carefully consider next steps.

A fourth joint report on residence was also discussed. External representatives from civil society organisations, 'British in Europe' and 'the3million', attended to present to the Committee and ask questions about the implementation and application of Part Two in the UK and the EU, in conformity with the rules of procedure of the Specialised Committee.

The UK and the EU have agreed to meet again in September where a fifth Joint Report on Residence will be discussed. The importance of maintaining a close and constructive dialogue on citizens' rights was reiterated, along with ensuring the correct implementation and application of the Citizens' Rights part of the Withdrawal Agreement.