

News story: EEA EFTA Separation Agreement

The UK has reached an agreement with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway which protects the rights of our citizens who have chosen to call each other's countries home, as well as resolving a small number of other issues arising from the UK's exit from the EU. This agreement largely mirrors the Withdrawal Agreement agreed with the EU.

This means that UK and EEA EFTA citizens living in each other's countries at the end of the implementation period will be able to continue enjoying broadly the same rights as they do now. This includes arrangements on residency, healthcare, pensions and education, social security coordination and mutual recognition of professional qualifications. Over 15,000 nationals from EEA EFTA countries living in the UK and approximately 17,000 UK nationals living in the EEA EFTA countries will benefit from these arrangements.

As these countries participate in the single market and other EU-led initiatives, this agreement will mirror a small number of the other relevant separation issues that we have agreed with the EU in the Withdrawal Agreement. The separation issues covered by this agreement are: arrangements on goods placed on the UK or EEA EFTA markets, intellectual property, ongoing police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, data protection, public procurement, and ongoing judicial procedures. This is significant, given that total UK trade with the EEA EFTA states amounted to almost £30bn in 2017.

The agreement will be concluded before exit day and, alongside the EU Withdrawal Agreement, it will be legislated for through the EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill. However, the rights and obligations of the EEA Agreement and other international agreements with these countries will continue to apply to the UK for the duration of the implementation period. This means that businesses and citizens will face no immediate changes in existing rules. EEA EFTA nationals living in the UK will be able to apply to the UK's Settlement Scheme in the same way as EU citizens.

In the unlikely event of 'no deal' with the EU, the UK would still pursue a citizens' rights agreement with the EEA EFTA states. We are discussing this with the EEA EFTA states. In any scenario, EFTA nationals will be able to stay in the UK post-exit.

The Governments of the UK, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein issued the following joint statement on this announcement:

We are pleased to have reached this agreement. It will protect the rights of our citizens as the UK leaves the EU, and it will provide certainty to businesses. We want to put in place new arrangements from the end of the implementation period to protect our historic

relationships, including in the area of trade.