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Michel Barnier  
European Chief Negotiator Taskforce on  
Article 50 negotiations with the UK  
Rue de la Loi 200 Berlaymont – 1049 – Brussels

17 June 2019

Dear Michel

Thank you for your letter of 25 March, which I read with interest.

Since I received your letter, I have met Alberto Costa MP and representatives from British in Europe and the 3 Million to discuss Parliament's support to seek a 'joint UK-EU commitment to adopt Part II of the Withdrawal Agreement whatever the outcome of negotiations'. I know that you have also met them to listen to their views on this issue but for completeness, I wanted to ensure that you are aware of what we discussed. I am sure you agree that they make a persuasive case on the need to provide certainty to citizens in all scenarios.

Both these groups are clear that they are not asking for the Withdrawal Agreement to be reopened, but for the citizens' rights agreement to be agreed using an Article 50 legal base in any scenario. They are clear that this offers the greatest protection to UK nationals in the EU and to EU citizens in the UK, particularly in key areas such as healthcare and pensions.

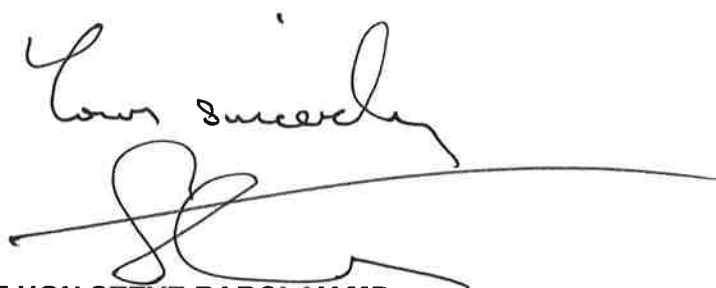
In addition, I have also had representations from the devolved nations of the UK indicating their support for this approach.

The UK Government remains fully committed to protecting the rights of EU citizens in the UK in any scenario. We continue to monitor the provisions that national governments of the EU27 are adopting to protect UK nationals in a no deal scenario. I am encouraged by your commitment that no UK national will be left in the dark. This is reiterated in the Communication of 12 June, which recalls that protecting the legal status of UK nationals currently residing in the EU is a priority, and sets out your continued monitoring of the action taken by Member States to date. I am also pleased that the Communication calls on Member States to continue outreach to UK nationals in their territories; something to which we are equally committed and which our Embassies stand ready to assist.

However, there remain gaps in a number of areas and in a number of Member States. The British in Europe group has said that in a no deal scenario a ring-fenced citizens' rights agreement is far superior to 28 national unilateral solutions.

I believe we collectively have an opportunity to address these concerns and that we should make sustained efforts to do so, including by fully considering these proposals and the technical issues raised in your letter. I note that there is gathering support from Parliamentarians in the European Parliament and other Member States for so doing. For example, I am aware that Members of the European Parliament wrote to leaders of the institutions calling for a ring-fenced citizens' rights agreement and the Staten-Generaal recently voted for a similar amendment to deliver such an agreement.

To conclude, I agree that our joint efforts should remain focused on making sure that we reach an agreement in order to secure an orderly departure for both the UK and the EU. However, I suggest that together our officials continue to work on how we best protect citizens' rights in all scenarios.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Barclay', written over a horizontal line.

**RT HON STEVE BARCLAY MP**  
**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION**