



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

TASK FORCE FOR THE PREPARATION AND CONDUCT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS
WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM UNDER ARTICLE 50 OF THE TEU

Chief Negotiator

Brussels, 18 June 2019

Dear Secretary of State, *Dear Steve,*

Thank you for your letter of 17 June.

The European Union has done its utmost to achieve the United Kingdom's orderly withdrawal by agreeing a Withdrawal Agreement with the UK Government on 25 November 2018 which addresses, in a comprehensive manner, all issues resulting from the departure of the United Kingdom, and first and foremost those affecting citizens.

The entry into force of the Withdrawal Agreement is the best way to safeguard the rights of citizens affected by the United Kingdom's withdrawal, both in the European Union and in the United Kingdom. There is no other way to achieve all the benefits that the Withdrawal Agreement provides.

While Part II of the Withdrawal Agreement (articles 9 to 39) covers residency-related rights for those citizens who exercised their right to free movement between the United Kingdom and a Member State of the Union (including the rights of workers and self-employed people, and in relation to the recognition of professional qualifications and social security entitlements), it is not the only part of the Agreement which ensures the effective protection of citizens.

Other parts of the Withdrawal Agreement directly concern citizens and affect their daily life, for example the provisions on the orderly completion of judicial cooperation procedures in criminal and/or civil matters and of administrative procedures affecting citizens, on personal data protection, and on participation in Union programmes (e.g. Erasmus +, research programmes, etc.). Equally, the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland and the Protocol on the Sovereign Base Areas of the United Kingdom in Cyprus contain clear provisions to the direct benefit of the citizens residing there.

Fundamentally, the rules and principles on the interpretation and application and the governance system of the Withdrawal Agreement (e.g. primacy and direct effect of its provisions, and the consistent interpretation of such provisions with the rulings of the Court of Justice of the European Union) are indispensable to ensure that the provisions on citizens' rights in the Withdrawal Agreement are applicable in practice and remain protected over time.

I firmly believe that the orderly withdrawal of the United Kingdom, provided for by the Withdrawal Agreement, is the best possible outcome for both the United Kingdom and the Union. Nevertheless, if, despite our efforts, the United Kingdom would prefer to leave the Union without the Withdrawal Agreement, the Union and the remaining Member States would act in a responsible manner, through unilateral measures.

We have conducted intense work in preparation for such an event. This was recalled by the Commission's Communication of 12 June 2019 on the state of play of preparations of contingency measures for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union. Such preparatory work includes appropriate action in relation to the residency-related rights of United Kingdom citizens.

It remains our common interest to address all the issues affecting citizens as part of a comprehensive approach ensuring an orderly withdrawal. This would also create the necessary trust for an ambitious future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom.

Yours sincerely,



Michel Barnier

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