



British Embassy  
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## CITIZENS' RIGHTS NEWSLETTER

A monthly update for UK nationals resident in Belgium under the Withdrawal Agreement

### A welcome message from Ambassador Martin Shearman

Thank you for signing up to our monthly Citizens' Rights Newsletter! We aim to keep you informed of your rights under the Withdrawal Agreement, including any actions you may need to take. This newsletter is time-limited, to guide you during the twelve-month residence application window. This month, we'll focus on the new residence system that Belgium launched on 1 January 2021 for all UK nationals living here before that date. We'll highlight any upcoming virtual events and, for those unable to join our monthly Facebook Q&A sessions, we'll include answers to the most frequently asked questions we received that month from UK nationals in Belgium.

I, and the Embassy Team, continue to work from home for now. We wish you a happy, healthy and prosperous 2021 from behind our screens. Stay well!

Martin

### New Residency System for UK nationals living in Belgium before 1 January 2021



**What?** All UK nationals legally resident in Belgium before 1 January 2021 must apply for a new residence card (M card) to protect their rights as beneficiaries of the Withdrawal Agreement. This will replace any existing card you may have at the moment.

**How?** If you already have an E or E+ card, you will have received a letter from the Belgian authorities and need to follow the actions outlined by your local municipality (commune/gemeente). When applying for your new residence card at your commune/gemeente, everyone will need to submit a criminal record extract. If you do not yet have an E card, you will also need to submit documents in line with EU rules according to your personal situation (e.g. rental contract, job contract or proof of sufficient funds). Ask your commune/gemeente for details on the process.

**When?** You must apply for your new residence card (M card) by **31 December 2021**.

**Criminal record extract?** You are best placed to decide whether you should provide a Belgian or a UK criminal record extract; there is no legal requirement on which one you need.

**"Technical issues"?** There has been a small delay in the production of the new residence cards, but they should be available by end of January/early February. This does not prevent you from submitting an application.

You can find more information on the Office for Foreigners' website [here](#).

### Frontier Workers commuting to work in Belgium before 1 January 2021

**What?** All UK nationals who live in another EU member state (or the UK) and were regularly crossing the border to work in Belgium before 1 January 2021 must apply for a new "local border traffic" card (N card) to protect their working pattern. This will replace the Annexe 15/Bijlage 15 you may already have.

**How?** Ask the commune/gemeente where you work for details on their application process. You will need to submit a criminal record extract from the UK or your country of residence. If you were not able to obtain an Annexe 15/Bijlage 15 before 31 December 2020, you will need to submit additional documents, such as confirmation of your employment.

**When?** You must apply for your new "local border traffic" card (N card) by **31 December 2021**.

More information on the Office for Foreigners' website [here](#).

### January Facebook Q&A - Top Questions

#### Passport stamping at border?

- A UK national does not need to have their passport stamped upon entry to their country of residence, if they can prove they were resident there before 1 January 2021 and continue to live there. This also applies when transiting through another EU Member State to reach your country of residence.
- A few UK nationals had their passports stamped when returning to Belgium from the UK after the festive period. If you are a resident in Belgium, this stamp is **null** and **void**. Your rights in Belgium are not affected as a result of your passport being incorrectly stamped.

#### Travel around Schengen – the “90 in 180 day” rule

- UK nationals, including those resident in Belgium, can travel in the Schengen area **visa-free** for visits of 90 days in any 180-day rolling period. For example, this includes for holidays or to attend business meetings. Stays for longer periods of time depend on individual Member States. Find more information [here](#), and check the Commission's [online calculator](#) to work out how many travel days you have left in a given period.
- Remember to always travel with your Belgian residence card as well as your passport.

**Residency** – please look at the section above for detailed information!

If you would like to see all the questions received at this month's Facebook Q&A, please click [here](#) (no Facebook account needed).

### Upcoming Embassy Events

- 3 Feb 2021 from 17:00 to 19:00
  - Q&A Session on British Embassy [Brussels Facebook Page](#)

You may also wish to be aware of a Webinar on Residence and Work Permits, hosted by [Brussels Commissioner's Expat Desk](#), on 9 Feb 2021 from 12:00 to 13:00. Register by email: [inscription@commissioner.brussels](mailto:inscription@commissioner.brussels).

### Tell a Friend

If you know any UK nationals living in Belgium who would benefit from receiving these newsletters, please do not hesitate to spread the word! They can sign up to receive the newsletter by [sending a blank email using this link](#).

### Stay in Touch



Find the latest information on our [Living in Belgium guide](#)

If you have any questions not answered by the online information, you can send us your queries via our [webform](#).

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