



CITIZENS' RIGHTS NEWSLETTER

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

This month, we are looking at **travel around the EU**, including the "90 in 180 days" rule, driving licences, and useful links to the latest COVID rules in Belgium.

Welcome to those who just signed up!
[You can find previous editions here.](#)

◆ NEWS UPDATE ◆

M CARDS

The M cards have arrived!
If you have already submitted your application, your Commune/Gemeente should be in touch with you shortly to arrange for the collection of your new card.

Remember! It's always a good idea to take photocopies of your old residency card (E/E+/F/F+) for your records. You can keep your card until you are issued your new one. Your Commune/Gemeente will take your old card back when they give you your new M card.

NATIONALITY

We are aware that the Royal Decree relating to nationality does not list the M card as proof of lawful residence for the purposes of applying for Belgian nationality. Ambassador Martin Shearman wrote to Justice Minister Vincent van Quickenborne to seek clarification. We will update you via our usual channels, including this newsletter, when we receive further information.

What is the "90 in 180" visa-free rule for travel around the Schengen area?

UK nationals do not need a visa when travelling to and within the Schengen Area for short stays of up to 90 days in a 180-day rolling period. For stays longer than 90 days in a 180-day period, you may require a visa and/or permit.

Short stays may include holidays, attending business meetings, travel for journalistic or media purposes, attending cultural or sport events or exchanges, travel for short-term studies or training, etc. [Click here for further information on visa-free travel.](#)

As a UK national living in the EU, if you are visiting another EU Member State that is not your country of residence, and you don't frontier work there, then you will be subject to the EU's "90 in 180 day" visa-free rule.

You will be responsible for counting your own days of stay and for complying with these conditions. [Click here for the Commission's online calculator](#) to work out how many travel days you have left in a given period.

Using EHICs / GHICs when on holiday

If you make social security contributions in Belgium

You should be entitled to a Belgian-issued European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). All EU-issued EHICs remain valid for necessary care when visiting the UK and other EU Member States. We still recommend taking out [comprehensive travel insurance](#) when travelling, including health cover, as an EHIC provides limited coverage. For more information on getting a Belgian EHIC, get in touch with your mutuelle/ziekenfond.

If your healthcare is covered by the UK

You should be entitled to a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). Existing UK-issued EHICs also remain valid for necessary care when visiting EU Member States until the expiration date on the card. They do not need to be replaced immediately. Once it expires, it can be replaced with a new Global Health Insurance Card issued by the UK. [Click here for more information on EHICs/GHICs.](#)

Driving licences: do I need additional documentation when travelling around the EU?

If you have a Belgian driving licence

You do not need additional documentation, such as an International Driving Permit, to drive when visiting other EU countries.

If you still have a UK driving licence because you've been resident in Belgium less than 185 days

This will depend on where you are going. Always check the official guidance of the EU country where you are visiting on whether any additional documentation is required. You can also check the country page on our [FCDO Travel Advice](#) under "Road Travel".

If you have been resident in Belgium for longer than 185 days and still have a UK driving licence

You **must** exchange it for a Belgian driving licence now. You can do this at your Commune/Gemeente. You do not need to re-sit your theoretical or practical tests. [Click here for official guidance from the Belgian Ministry of Transport.](#)

Documents for travel

You should always carry your residence card as well as your valid passport when you travel. If you have applied but not yet received your card, carry your certificate of application ("annexe" 8 or 56).

If you cannot show that you are resident in Belgium, you may be asked additional questions at the border to enter the Schengen area, and your passport may be stamped on entry and exit. This will **not** affect your rights in Belgium.

COVID Travel Rules for Belgium

From Monday 19th April, restrictions on non-essential travel from Belgium within the EU were **lifted**. Travel is still strongly discouraged, and rules for travel outside the EU (including to the UK) have not changed.

Always check the entry requirements of the country you are visiting!
You can find this information on our [FCDO Travel Advice country pages](#).

USEFUL LINKS

[Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)
[FCDO Travel Advice: Belgium](#)
[Belgian Passenger Locator Form](#)
[Belgian Ministry of Public Health official guidance](#)
[Colour code by region or country for travels](#)

April Facebook Q&A - main themes

Social Security Coordination

Existing EU social security coordination provisions, including pensions, continue as before for those in scope of the Withdrawal Agreement. This means you can continue to aggregate contributions made in different EU Member States to reach the minimum requirements for a national state pension (e.g. years worked), including the UK State Pension.

Bilateral Tax Agreement

There is a bilateral agreement between the UK and Belgium to ensure that you do not pay tax on the same income in both countries. This agreement is not affected by EU Exit.

M Card

A criminal record extract is not required for children under 18. Manufacturing delays have been resolved since the Facebook Q&A, so those who have already applied for their cards should soon be contacted by their Commune/Gemeente to collect them.

[Click here to see all the questions received at this month's Facebook Q&A](#) (no Facebook account needed).

Upcoming Embassy Events

5 May 2021 from 18:00 to 20:00
Q&A Session on [British Embassy Brussels Facebook Page](#)

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](#)

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