

British Chambers of Commerce
Dr Adam Marshall

21 December 2017

Dear Adam,

I am writing to update you on the rights of EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals in the EU following last week's agreement at the European Council.

Moving negotiations between the UK and the EU to a discussion about our future relationship is good news for EU citizens living and working in the UK and for all the organisations that employ them. It should also be welcomed by everyone in this country who relies on the expertise, services and support that EU citizens provide as valued members of UK society.

The Prime Minister has consistently said that protecting EU citizens' rights - together with the rights of UK nationals living in EU countries - has been her first priority. EU citizens made a decision to live here without any expectation that the UK would leave the EU. The UK government wants them to be able to carry on living their lives as before.

We have taken a big step forward. EU citizens living lawfully here before the UK's exit from the EU will be able to stay. The deal will respect the rights that individuals are exercising and the benefits they currently have. This will help EU citizens and organisations alike plan for the future.

The agreement will not only enable families who have built their lives in the EU and UK to stay together, it also gives certainty about healthcare, pensions and other benefits. It also includes reciprocal rules to protect existing decisions to recognise professional qualifications, for example for doctors and architects.

These commitments will be locked into a binding and reciprocal agreement with the EU. You can read the agreement here:
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/joint_report.pdf.

All EU citizens will need to apply to obtain status in UK law. A new, transparent, smooth and streamlined process to enable them to apply for settled status will start during the second half of 2018 and remain open for at least two years after the UK leaves the EU.

Communicating with EU citizens about the settlement scheme is a top priority for my department to ensure people are aware of what they need to do to secure their rights. Your support will also be crucial and I would encourage you to share the links above with your members. EU citizens can also sign up for regular official email updates here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/status-of-eu-nationals-in-the-uk-what-you-need-to-know>.

As we move from withdrawal issues to discussing our future relationship with the EU, I shall shortly be publishing proposals for the UK's future immigration system, and bringing forward an Immigration Bill as announced in the Queen's Speech. I will continue to engage with the UK business community/higher education community as part of this process.

I hope this email provides reassurance to you and your members and I look forward to sharing further progress with you over the coming months. I welcome your contribution to ongoing engagement on both the rights of EU citizens living in the UK and also the development of our future immigration system.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amber Rudd', written in a cursive style.

The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP