



British Embassy  
Rome



# A message from Jill Morris

## A MESSAGE FROM JILL MORRIS, HER MAJESTY'S AMBASSADOR

**British Embassy Rome**

Issue No. 1

Tuesday 12 September 2017

Welcome to my newsletter for British nationals in Italy.

As negotiations between the UK Government and the European Commission continue to move forward, I know that there is a strong appetite for information. This letter is intended to complement our face-to-face engagement, providing you with updates and inviting you to feed in your views. I have also recently posted a [video on Facebook](#) on progress made so far in the negotiations and, in addition, I will soon be conducting a Twitter Q&A (details to follow on our [@ukinitaly](#) social media channels).

In this first edition, I want set out the progress made to date on the top priority of **Citizens' Rights in the UK and in the EU**. While at times these negotiations have been tough, it is clear that **we have made concrete progress on many important issues**. These rounds were not at this stage about establishing jointly agreed legal text. They were about reaching a detailed understanding of each other's position, understanding where there might be room for compromise, and beginning to drill down into technical detail on a number of issues.

Significant steps forward took place in both July and August. The British Government has published a [joint technical paper](#) with the European Commission, which sets out our respective positions in more detail. This underlines both the significant alignment between our positions, and also provides clarity on areas where we have not as yet reached agreement.

**In July**, we achieved a high degree of convergence on:

- the scope of our proposals on residence and social security;
- the eligibility criteria for those who will benefit from residence rights under the scope of the withdrawal agreement;

- a shared commitment to make the citizens' rights application process as efficient and streamlined as possible.

**In August**, we agreed:

- to protect the rights of frontier workers;
- to cover future social security contributions for those citizens covered by the Withdrawal Agreement;
- to maintain the right of British citizens in the EU27 to set up and manage a business within their Member State of residence, and vice versa; and
- that we should at least protect existing healthcare rights and arrangements for EU27 citizens in the UK and UK nationals in the EU. These are the European Health Insurance or EHIC arrangements.

These areas of agreement are good news. They may sound technical but they matter enormously to individuals. In each one of these areas, agreement is reciprocal. They will work for British nationals in the EU and the EU27 in the UK, helping to provide certainty and clarity:

- the agreement on **health care rights**, for example, will mean that all British residents in Italy will continue to have their health care arrangements protected, both where they live and when they travel to another Member State. You will be able to use your EHIC card when you travel to another Member State.
- on future **social security contributions**, when an individual has moved between the EU27 or the UK, their National Insurance contributions will be recognised by the EU and the UK, for example when determining state pensions.
- on **mutual recognition of qualifications**, we have made progress in protecting the recognition of qualifications for British citizens resident in the EU27 and EU27 citizens resident in the UK.

Of course, there remain **areas of difference** which we continue to work on. For example, we will need to have further discussions on the specified cut-off date, future family reunion, and the broader issue of compliance on enforcement. Progress in these areas will require flexibility and pragmatism from both sides.

During the Summer negotiating rounds, a number of issues also emerged in the EU offer that will need further consideration. In these areas the **EU's proposals fall short** of ensuring UK citizens in the EU and EU citizens in the UK in allowing them to continue to live their lives broadly as they do now, for example:

- the EU does not plan to maintain the existing **voting rights** for UK nationals living in the EU. While we have made it clear that we will protect the rights of EU nationals living in the UK to stand and vote in municipal elections.

- similarly, the EU proposals would not allow UK citizens currently resident in the EU to **retain their rights if they move within the EU**.

Even in areas where there has been progress, more is needed. While the EU has agreed to **recognise the qualifications** of UK citizens resident in the EU, and vice versa, we believe this **should go much further**. This recognition should extend to students who are currently studying for a qualification, it must apply to onward movement by UK citizens in the EU, and it should extend more broadly to protect the livelihoods of thousands of people which depend on qualifications which will be gained before we exit the EU.

The British Government has always said that guaranteeing the rights of British citizens in the EU is a top priority, alongside our responsibility to those EU nationals who live and work in the UK. The outcomes of these discussions demonstrate that we have delivered on our commitment to put citizens first, and to give them as much certainty as early as possible in this process.

I and my team will continue to engage with you over the coming months. For example, in September we will be holding meetings in Florence and Milan to provide the opportunity for an exchange of views with me, the Foreign Office Consular Director and policy experts from London.

Best regards,

Jill Morris CMG  
Her Majesty's Ambassador to Italy

---