



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

### **British Embassy Rome**

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After my [summer message](#) in July I want to provide you with an update on Brexit and citizens' rights.

#### **No Deal preparations**

As you may be aware, this week the Government published its '[No-Deal Readiness Report](#)'. The report includes details of the Government's work to ensure that citizens and businesses are ready for Brexit on 31 October, if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

The report also sets out the preparation underway to ensure that goods continue to flow smoothly across the UK and EU border after Brexit, with measures in place and information given to traders, businesses and hauliers on what they need to do to prepare before 31 October.

For **EU nationals currently living in the UK**, the Government has confirmed that they will have their rights protected, including the right to stay, to work and to access benefits and healthcare in a No Deal scenario under the EU Settlement Scheme. **200,700** Italians have applied under the scheme since August 2018. In total **1,860,200** applications have been received and of those **1,524,500** applications have been concluded.

#### **Italian No Deal legislation**

In May the Italian No Deal decreto finished its passage through Parliament. The law ([Legge 20 maggio 2019, n. 41](#)) will be enforced only in the event of the [UK exiting the EU without a deal](#).

You can find a summary of the law's main provisions, including residency and healthcare rights, in our [Living in Italy](#) guide and in my last [Newsletter](#). In brief, the No Deal legislation protects the rights of UK nationals registered in Italy before Exit day. UK nationals will have until December 2020 to obtain a non-EU permit. In the interim period, your current EU residency document will remain valid.

We continue to engage with the Italian government for further details on what documentation will be required when you obtain your new non-EU residency permit. **Please remember that this only applies in a No Deal scenario. You are not required to obtain a new non-EU permit now.**

#### **New Italian guidance on No Deal preparations**

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In July the Prime Minister's office published updated [guidance](#) on the Italian government's No Deal preparations. It confirmed again that the rights of UK nationals resident in Italy will be protected under the legge. n.41 outlined above.

### **Recognition of UK driving licences**

In the guidance issued by the Prime Minister's office referred to above, further clarity was provided on the recognition of UK driving licences after Brexit. UK driving licences will continue to be recognised for 12 months from the date a UK national officially registers as a resident in Italy. After Brexit UK driving licences will need to be accompanied by either an [International Driving Permit](#) (IDP) for visitors to Italy, or by an official translation, for residents. UK driving licences cannot be exchanged for an Italian one after Brexit unless a bilateral agreement is in place. The UK will continue to recognise EU licences in the UK in any scenario and we are therefore continuing to engage with the Italian government on a reciprocal offer. In the meantime our advice remains that you should **try to exchange your UK licence for an Italian one before Brexit**.

### **Launch of the Get Ready for Brexit campaign**

Last month the UK government launched the largest ever government public information campaign to get public and business owners ready for Brexit. The Get Ready for Brexit campaign was officially launched in the EU on the 16 September with paid-for media across all EU countries aimed at UK nationals. This [website](#) offers users a self-check tool to see what actions you may need to take ahead of the 31 October. The campaign's key messages are:

- Get registered as a resident ahead of Brexit
- Check your healthcare access
- Exchange your UK driving licence
- Ensure you renew your passport if it is nearly expired

### **UK Nationals Support Fund**

The UK Government has announced the launch of the [UK Nationals Support Fund](#) to help UK Nationals living in the EU/EFTA to register or apply for residency in their host country, whether we leave the EU with or without a deal. Up to £3 million of grant funding has been made available for third party organisations to provide practical assistance to UK Nationals needing support in registering or applying for residency. Interested organisations who may wish to consider bidding for funding should [get in touch](#) with the FCO.

### **Transitional Healthcare Arrangements**

#### **S1/ EHIC holders**

The UK and Italy are both committed to continue reciprocal healthcare arrangements until 31 December 2020. That would see access to healthcare for S1, S2 and EHIC holders un-changed after Brexit. However, this requires a formal arrangement and we continue to engage with the Italian government to reach one. We will update our [Living in Guide](#) as soon as we are able to.

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Should there not be an arrangement in place, your S1/S2 and EHIC may no longer be valid in Italy after Brexit. We advise you to check your healthcare cover now. You may wish to speak to your local ASL to see if you are able to register with them on another basis, or you may wish to take out private health insurance.

Earlier this year the UK government announced that if someone in the EU is undertaking current treatment or has treatment planned, the UK Government will pay for this course of treatment for up to one year (or the authorised period in relation to an S2) from Exit day, or the period of treatment if shorter. This will apply for those receiving healthcare as an S1, S2 or as an EHIC holder.

In addition, the [UK Government](#) has [confirmed](#) that it will **fund the healthcare of S1/S2 and EHIC holders living or working in the EU, on the same basis as now, for six months from the date of Brexit**. This provision is aimed at ensuring individuals have the time to make alternative arrangements for their future healthcare cover, including registering for healthcare in their country of residence.

The UK will also continue to cover **those travelling to the EU using an EHIC to access healthcare, whose visits commenced prior to Brexit day until they return to the UK**, up to a period of six months.

All **students** are encouraged to take out comprehensive travel insurance and to investigate local healthcare schemes that they may be eligible for. However, given the circumstances, the UK Government has agreed to continue existing cover of healthcare costs for students for the duration of their course, should they be already studying in the EU at the point that the UK leaves the EU and on the basis of evidence from their Institution. More information on support for students can be found here: [www.gov.uk/guidance/studying-in-the-european-union-after-brexit](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/studying-in-the-european-union-after-brexit)

## Q & A

I and my team continue to meet UK nationals at our public meetings across Italy to provide an update on Brexit and citizens' rights and to hear concerns and questions. Most recently we held meetings in Martina Franca and in Rome. We have included the top questions from our most recent public meetings below.

### **I am a UK national living in Italy with an old style residency permit. Do I need to do anything ahead of Brexit?**

The Italian No Deal legislation protects the rights of all those who are officially resident in Italy on Exit day. The current temporary residency document is the *Attestazione di regolare soggiorno* based on art. 7 del D.Lgs 30/2007. For those living in Italy for over 5 years, the residency document is the *Attestazione di soggiorno permanente*. If you think you hold an old version of a residency document you may wish to visit your local comune before Brexit to request an updated copy.

### **I have lived in Italy for more than 5 years and access my healthcare via my S1 form. Do I need to do anything ahead of Brexit?**

If you have registered your S1 form with your local ASL, you currently access public healthcare in Italy paid for by the UK. The UK and Italian government are committed to continue this reciprocal healthcare agreement until December 2020. However, this still requires a formal arrangement. We are in ongoing discussions with the Italian government to secure an arrangement that will see the current system remain in place. Should an agreement not be secured, your S1 will no longer be valid after Brexit. If you are a permanent resident we are seeking confirmation from the Italian authorities on whether your access to

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healthcare will be guaranteed by your long-term residency status. Our advice is that you should now be considering your healthcare. You may wish to contact your local ASL to see what options are available for registering for healthcare without your S1 i.e. paying voluntary contributions. Or you may wish to acquire private healthcare insurance.

The UK government has [announced](#) that it would cover the public healthcare costs for S1 and EHIC holders for up to 6 months after Exit day, for those who are living in the EU prior to Brexit. This is to ensure that there is no gap in healthcare cover and to allow people time to make arrangements for the future of their healthcare including registering for healthcare under the local healthcare schemes in the absence of an agreement with EU Members States on a reciprocal arrangement

### **I own a property in Italy. Will Brexit affect my rights?**

The rights of UK nationals who currently own property in Italy will be unaffected by Brexit. That is because all Member States are bound by Article 1 of Protocol 1 to the European Convention on Human Rights, which obliges them to respect property rights.

This includes those who own property, own property shares and those who own a property and let it to tenants.

Non-EU nationals can purchase land or property in Italy if they are resident in Italy or there is a bilateral agreement in place which allows of purchasing rights. We will engage with the Italian government on a bilateral agreement to be in place after Brexit to ensure that UK nationals outside of Italy can continue to purchase property in Italy.

### **Last year's Security Decreto extended the consideration time of Italian citizenship applications from 2 – 4 years. With the change of government, do you think this might be revoked?**

How citizenship applications are considered is a sovereign decision for each EU member state. The UK government regularly raises concerns that have been reported to us regarding the application process for citizenship. But the process by which applications are decided including consideration times is a decision for the Italian government alone. We will continue to raise concerns where appropriate.

### **I am worried that the UK will withdraw its offer to EU nationals and therefore Italy might change its current No Deal legislation. Do you think that is a possibility?**

The citizens' rights articles of the Withdrawal Agreement were agreed between the UK and the EU early on in negotiations as a priority. In a No Deal scenario the UK has made it clear that EU nationals living in the UK are welcome to remain and to maintain their current rights, under the EU Settlement Scheme. Over 1 million EU nationals have now applied under the scheme. The UK's offer to EU nationals is a generous one. We welcome the Italian offer to UK nationals as detailed in the No Deal legislation which protects the current rights of UK nationals living here. We continue to engage with the Italian government on where we believe the offer lacks reciprocity. Both countries have now passed legislation to protect the rights of its respective citizens. The UK and EU have always been clear that the protection of citizens' rights is a priority in any scenario.

### **What should I be doing now?**

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- Before the UK leaves the EU, if you are a UK national living in Italy and you haven't yet registered officially as a resident, you should do so immediately. You may be able to apply for residency electronically if you have an electronic signature and a PEC address. Your comune's website should have more details as to how to do so. If you are unable to get a face to face appointment with your comune until after the 31 October, you should retain all evidence of having tried to do so, as well as evidence of living in Italy on Exit day.
- If you are still driving on a UK driving licence, you should exchange your licence for an Italian one before 31 October. If you do not, then you may be required to re-take your test after Exit day.
- If your UK passport is nearing the end of its validity, you should renew it now. After the UK leaves the EU, your UK passport will need to have at least 6 months validity remaining to travel to EU countries.
- Please continue to check our [Living in Italy](#) page, which we keep regularly updated, on how to secure your rights in Italy. When changes are made, you can receive email alerts by signing up here. [UK Nationals in the EU](#) has a wealth of official information on Brexit and how it might affect you. Lastly you can follow us on Facebook and Twitter as well as my own [@JillMorrisFCO](#) for further updates.

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Best Regards

Jill Morris CMG

Her Majesty's Ambassador to Italy

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