



British Embassy
Rome



A message from Jill Morris

A MESSAGE FROM JILL MORRIS, HER MAJESTY'S AMBASSADOR

British Embassy Rome

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Following the adoption of the Joint Progress Report on the first phase of the negotiations and the December European Council, I would like to update you on the latest Brexit developments.

Developments in the negotiations

As the Prime Minister said in her [message to UK nationals](#) living in the EU, from the very beginning of the UK's negotiations to leave the European Union the Prime Minister has been consistently clear that protecting the rights of both EU citizens living in the UK and UK nationals living in the EU was her first priority. That is why, at the beginning of the negotiating process, we made it clear that any deal guaranteeing the rights of EU citizens living in the UK would be dependent on such an offer being reciprocated for our UK nationals in the remaining Member States. And, in concluding the first phase of the negotiations, that is exactly what we have achieved.

Since June we have worked intensively with our European partners to settle the issues in the first phase of our negotiations to leave the EU. We have made good progress and have reached agreement with the EU's negotiators on some very difficult issues. Both sides have had to show give and take to meet the other's concerns, as the Prime Minister always said would be needed.

On 8 December, the UK and EU negotiating teams issued a joint report on the progress made on the three areas covered in the first phase of negotiations. It set out:

- a fair deal on citizens' rights that allows for UK and EU citizens to get on with their lives broadly as now in the country they live;
- a financial settlement that honours the commitments we undertook as members of the EU - as we said we would. It is a fair delivery of our obligations, in light of the spirit of our future partnership;
- and an agreement on the island of Ireland that preserves the territorial integrity of the UK and the stability that has been brought about by the Belfast Agreement. The solution will see no hard border or physical infrastructure.

At the December European Council in Brussels, the EU27 agreed that this report represented sufficient progress and that we should now move on to the talks about our future partnership. Now we have arrived at an agreement, two documents have been published jointly by the UK and EU covering the citizens' rights deal:

- the final version of the joint [UK-EU technical table](#), which shows all of the lines as having been agreed – in green; and
- the final text of the citizens' rights chapter of the [Joint Progress Report](#).

What this means for you

This agreement guarantees that your rights as residents in the EU will be protected in the Withdrawal Agreement, so you can have certainty that you will be able to receive healthcare rights, pension and other benefits provisions as you do today. You can also benefit from existing rules for past and future social security contributions.

Furthermore, we have agreed that close family members will be able to join you in the Member State where you live, after the UK has left. This includes existing spouses and civil partners, unmarried partners, children, dependent parents and grandparents, as well as children born or adopted outside of the UK after 29th March 2019.

Outstanding issues

While I hope this agreement will bring you some reassurance, we know there are a few important issues that have yet to be concluded. We raised these concerns, including the ability of UK nationals living in the EU to retain certain rights if they move within the EU, but the EU was not ready to discuss them in this phase of the negotiations. We will continue to raise these issues with the EU in the New Year:

- reciprocal voting rights (this was outside the EU's mandate, and faced opposition from several Member States);
- future healthcare arrangements (considered by the Commission as linked to a 'future life choice');
- onward free movement (i.e. the ability for a UK national resident in one EU member state protected by the deal to move to another EU Member State after exit and maintain that protection - also deemed a 'future life choice' by the Commission);
- protections for existing Posted Workers;
- the ability of UK lawyers to continue to practise under their home state title without having to transfer to the host state profession.

We want to focus our efforts now on quickly agreeing the detail of a time-limited implementation period that gives further certainty to people and businesses, and to settling the terms of a future partnership that delivers prosperity and security for all our people. The constructive way in which these talks have been conducted gives us confidence that we will achieve a final deal that reflects the strong partnership between the UK and our European partners, and is in the mutual interest of citizens living across the continent.

Engagement events

Earlier this month, Ken O’Flaherty, Deputy Ambassador to Italy, held a town hall meeting on citizens’ rights with the British community in Naples. Key concerns were mutual recognition of professional qualifications, the ability of British nationals to work in the EU post-Brexit, and how to apply for Italian citizenship. I am holding another engagement event with British nationals in Milan on January 15 at 4.30pm at All Saint’s Milan. If you are interested in attending, please contact Anita Nappo (by replying to this email).

As ever, I and my team value your engagement. We very much look forward to hearing from you.

May I also take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Best regards,

Jill Morris CMG

Her Majesty’s Ambassador to Italy
