



# A message from Jill Morris

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

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I wanted to update you following the European Council outcome last night, and other developments in the UK and Italy. Following a lengthy discussion, European Union Leaders agreed, subject to a successful vote in the UK Parliament next week, that in order to provide time for the UK Parliament to agree and ratify a Brexit deal the date of our departure will now be extended to 22 May.

If Parliament does not agree a deal next week, the EU Council will extend Article 50 until 12 April. At this point, we would either leave with no deal, or put forward an alternative plan. If this involved a further extension it would mean participation in the European Parliamentary elections. As the Prime Minister repeated in her statement last night, the government believes strongly that it would be wrong to ask people in the UK to participate in these elections three years after voting to leave the EU.

The Prime Minister stressed last night that this underlines the importance of the House of Commons passing a Brexit deal next week, so that we can bring an end to the uncertainty and leave in a smooth and orderly manner.

### **Costa Amendment and Citizens Rights**

On the 27 February, Parliament supported a proposal by Alberto Costa MP which requires the Government to seek a joint UK-EU commitment to preserve **the citizens' rights section of the Withdrawal Agreement regardless of the outcome of negotiations**. Following this mandate, the UK Government has written to the EU to seek clarification on their position of ring-fencing the citizens' rights part of the Withdrawal Agreement.

### **No Deal contingency planning**

An **orderly exit from the EU**, with a deal in place, remains the top priority of the UK Government. However, the legal default in UK and EU law remains that the UK will leave the EU without a deal unless something else is agreed. Therefore we continue with our contingency planning for a potential No Deal scenario. In the UK, we have reassured [EU citizens](#) and their family members living in the UK that they are welcome to stay in the event of a No Deal scenario. We have based our approach on the Withdrawal Agreement,

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and unilaterally guaranteed that EU citizens resident in the UK by 29 March 2019 and their family members will be able to stay. They will continue to be able to work, study, and access benefits and services on broadly the same terms as now.

On 21 December, and as outlined in my last newsletter, the [Italian Government announced](#) that British citizens officially resident as of March 29, 2019 in Italy would have the time required to request and obtain long-term resident status and in this way they would continue to enjoy their rights. It called upon UK Nationals in Italy to register as a resident before 29 March.

The '*DECRETO LEGGE RECANTE MISURE URGENTI PER GARANTIRE LA STABILITÀ FINANZIARIA E L'INTEGRITÀ DEI MERCATI NEL CONTESTO INTERNAZIONALE*' currently being prepared by the Italian government will provide further details on the future regulation of citizens' rights for UK nationals here. I and my team continue to hold meetings with the Italian government to learn more about that offer. As soon as we have further information, including a detailed analysis of the Decree when published, we will update you in my next newsletter as well as on our [Living in Italy](#) page.

### **Citizens' Rights – Q & A**

I am keen to use this newsletter to answer a selection of questions I am asked most often, or am asked in Town Hall meetings (most recently in Trieste, Padova, Milan and Catania). You can find previous Q&As in previous newsletters [here](#). I hope you will find the selection below helpful.

#### **How do I register as a resident in Italy? What do I ask for?**

Residency applications (*iscrizione anagrafica*) are dealt with by the local town hall – *comuni*. Applicants must provide a passport and the following documentation:

- work contract or are self-employed in Italy
- evidence of sufficient economic resources as well as personal health insurance or a UK social security form, such as an S1 form for pensioners
- evidence that you are an immediate family member joining an EU citizen who fulfils one of the above

See [Living in Italy](#) for information and [here](#) (in Italian) for further details.

If you have been resident in Italy for 5 years, you can apply to your town hall for a [permanent resident certificate](#) (*attestazione/attestato di soggiorno permanente per cittadini UE*)

Note that residency certificates are called by a variety of names in Italy including: *attestazione di regolarità di soggiorno/ certificate* or *attestazione di iscrizione anagrafica/ attestazione di soggiorno permanente* for longer-term residents.

**I've already got a residency certificate – what do I need to do after the 29<sup>th</sup> March?**

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We await to see what process will be put in place for UK nationals to exchange their current residency status for a new one. The Italian government has said that, in a Deal Scenario, they would introduce a 'declaratory' procedure *'that recognizes these rights for UK citizens resident in Italy at the end of the transition period (December 31, 2020). A simple and quick method to protect the tens of thousands of Britons who have chosen to live in Italy'*.

In a No Deal Scenario, the Italian government has said that legislative measures are being prepared to ensure that British citizens resident as of March 29, 2019 in Italy will have the time required to request and obtain long-term resident status. In this way, UK nationals will continue to enjoy rights such as access to medical care, employment, education, social benefits and family reunification. Therefore, if you have been living in Italy for 5 years or more, you will be protected. If you have been living here for less than 5 years, you will be able to stay and accumulate the 5 years.

### **I've tried to register but I can't get an appointment before the 29<sup>th</sup> March**

In recent days we have been seeking an urgent clarification from the Italian government on this matter. The latest information we have is that the Italian government will be offering some form of 'grace period' in which UK nationals, who have been unable to get an appointment before the 29<sup>th</sup> March in a no deal scenario, will be able to register with their local comune. However, our advice remains that **all UK nationals need to register before the 29<sup>th</sup> March** if possible. If this is not possible, then **you should keep evidence of having tried to do so**. Be aware that you are likely to be asked to prove you were living in Italy on the 29<sup>th</sup> March when you attend your registration appointment, if that appointment falls after we leave the EU.

### **Should I register to vote in the forthcoming local elections in Italy?**

UK nationals will lose the right to vote in local elections in Italy after the UK leaves the EU in both a Deal or No Deal Scenario. We are seeking as a priority a bilateral agreement to ensure these rights can continue after the UK exits the EU

### **I am a pensioner who currently receives a UK pension and my healthcare via the S1 form. What will happen after the 29<sup>th</sup> March in a No Deal scenario?**

The UK state pension will continue to be paid after we leave the EU. We have guaranteed that it will be uprated in 2019/2020 and after that on a reciprocal basis.

Healthcare access via the S1 form (in which the UK Government reimburses the Italian government for healthcare costs of the S1 holder) cannot be guaranteed after the date of the UK exit from the EU. We are urgently seeking a bilateral agreement with the Italian government to ensure healthcare access will continue for all UK nationals living in Italy after the UK leaves the EU.

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The UK Government has committed to fund healthcare for UK nationals living in the EU and others for whom the UK is responsible (including S1 holders) who have applied for, or are undergoing, treatments in the EU prior to and on exit day, for up to one year, to protect the most vulnerable. S1 holders who return to the UK on a temporary visit will be able to access NHS services if needed, while in the UK.

### **Can I access healthcare back in the UK if I move back to settle?**

UK nationals living in Italy will have an entitlement to NHS services as soon as they take up ordinary residence in England. We will continue to work closely with the NHS in England and across the Devolved Administrations in the UK to ensure returners can appropriately access NHS services. A British citizen who moves to the UK can be considered ordinarily resident upon arrival if it is clear that they are here to reside on a properly settled basis for the time being.

### **Can I continue to use my EHIC to access healthcare in the EU?**

Many people rely on EHICs. In a no deal scenario, these may no longer be valid in Italy. UK nationals living in or travelling to EU Member States should check up to date information [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) and [NHS.UK](https://www.nhs.uk) and ensure they have taken the necessary steps to prepare.

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) has advised that travel insurance policies will cover emergency medical treatment costs as standard that could have been reclaimed through the EHIC, although some routine treatments would not be covered. People should be aware that there are a small number of policies in the market that state they will only provide cover if you have and use an EHIC. The ABI have advised that all individuals should check their current travel insurance thoroughly to ensure they have the correct amount of cover for their requirements. Additional guidance has been published on the ABI website [here](#).

### **I want to travel to the UK for a holiday with my Italian spouse after the 29<sup>th</sup> March. What will happen in a No Deal scenario?**

If the UK leaves the EU without a deal, both the UK and EU has confirmed that short term visitors can travel visa-free. For stays of longer than 90 days in the UK, your Italian spouse can apply for the [European Temporary Leave to Remain](#). This will permit stays in the UK of up to 3 years.

A UK national travelling to the EU - either returning to a place of residency or as a visitor - will need to have at least 6 months validity on their UK passport to enter the Schengen area after the date of our Exit in a No Deal scenario. Use this [passport checker](#) to ensure your passport has the necessary validity for your journey.

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## What's happening with the Overseas Electors Bill?

The Private Member's Bill is due to have its 3<sup>rd</sup> reading on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March. The Government will continue to support this important Bill and we remain committed to removing the arbitrary 15 year time limit ahead of the next scheduled General Election in 2022.

### Keeping up to date

There are a number of ways to stay informed. Please continue to check our [Living in Italy](#) page which we will keep 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 the UK Exit and how it might affect you. You can find information for UK nationals living in the EU in the absence of a withdrawal agreement [here](#). Lastly you can follow us on Facebook and Twitter as well as my own [@JillMorrisFCO](#) for further updates.

In the last two months we have hosted meetings for UK nationals in Trieste, Milan, Padua and Catania. At all events we are able to update those present on current negotiations and to answer questions on a range of issues. We will continue to do regular town hall meetings across Italy so do keep an eye out for [future announcements](#) and let us know what regions you would like us to visit by emailing us at [uknationals.inItaly@fco.gov.uk](mailto:uknationals.inItaly@fco.gov.uk).

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Best Regards

Jill Morris CMG

Her Majesty's Ambassador to Italy

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