



British Embassy
Ljubljana

Trg republike 3
1000 Ljubljana
Slovenia

Tel: +386 1 200 3920
Fax: +386 1 425 0174
ukinslovenia.fco.gov.uk

From the Ambassador

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Dear All,

Update for British Nationals in Slovenia

Over the last year I have met many of you across Slovenia to discuss what the UK's departure from the European Union means for British nationals. One of the most important parts of my role in Slovenia is to understand your views, answer your questions, and to update you on the latest with Brexit negotiations. As part of this process, I wanted to let you know that I will be hosting two regional meetings on **28 August** in Murska Sobota and Maribor. Further details about these can be found on our Facebook page or by reply to this letter. I really look forward to seeing you there.

I am also looking to finalise a date in **September** for those of you in or around the Primorska region and will be hosting as many of you as possible at my Residence this year in **November** for drinks and supper. More details on those soon.

I know that many of you will have been following latest Brexit developments closely, so I wanted to give you the latest on the key issues. Good progress has been made since the UK Government reached an agreement with the European Union on citizens' rights in December. UK nationals and their family members covered by the agreement will continue to have the same access as they currently do to healthcare, pensions and other benefits and be able to leave their Member State of residence for up to 5 years without losing their right to return. The UK and European Commission will now continue to negotiate on the detail of these agreements, to be included in the overall Withdrawal Agreement between the UK and the EU which will come in to effect after we leave the EU on 29 March 2018.

What has happened in the negotiations between the EU and the UK?

From the beginning of this process, Prime Minister Theresa May has been clear that safeguarding the rights of EU citizens living in the UK, and UK nationals living in the EU, is her first priority for the negotiations. In December last year the UK and the European Commission reached a comprehensive agreement on reciprocal protection of UK and Union citizens' rights. In March this year, the Commission and the UK announced that the commitments made in December had been translated into legal text. We also agreed the terms of a time-limited implementation period until 31 December 2020 which will give citizens like you more time to make any preparations. This marks an important step towards finalising the full Withdrawal Agreement.

What does that mean in practice?

The agreement means that as UK nationals living in Slovenia, you and your family members will be able to carry on living your lives as you do now. You will be able to carry on living, working or studying in Slovenia for as long as you want to. Your rights to remain in Slovenia will be protected now, during the implementation period and beyond. You will continue (now and in the future) to be able to access entitlements to social security on the same basis as Slovene citizens living in Slovenia. You will be entitled to have your social security contributions made before and after exit in the UK, or in another Member State, count towards a future UK or EU member state pension. Your children will continue to enjoy access to education on the same basis that Slovene children do. In short, most of what you do (or are entitled to do) on a daily basis will not change.

What is still to be agreed?

Citizens' rights remains an important issue in our discussions about our future relationship with the EU. We have secured the right for you to continue living your life as you do now. But we would also like to discuss with the EU27 future life choices. For example the right to onward free movement should you wish to move to another EU Member State? Other areas that we still wish to discuss include the provisions for posted workers, and mutual recognition of qualifications.

Arrangements for travel between the UK and EU beyond 2020 are also being discussed during the second phase of the negotiations. But we already know that up to 31 December 2020 you and your EU family members will continue to be able to travel to the UK as you do now. In some cases where you have resided in an EU Member State for at least three months, your non-EU family members may also travel with you to the UK (please see the links below for more information).

Some UK nationals have raised concerns about what happens if an overall deal between the EU and the UK is not reached. The UK Government does not want or expect a no deal outcome and both it and the Commission have stated that providing certainty for citizens is a priority. We believe it would be very unlikely for any agreed deal on citizens' rights to be reopened.

What preparations should you be making for the future?

The British Government has been clear that we will leave the European Union on 29 March 2019 and that there will be a time-limited implementation period until 31 December 2020. We have agreed with the Commission that you will have a further 6 months after that period (i.e. until 30 June 2021) to make any necessary preparations according to what is required in the final Withdrawal Agreement.

All UK nationals who have been residing in Slovenia for 3 months and wish to continue to live here through self-sufficient means, or wish to continue studying or working here, should legalise their status by registering. This is a long-standing requirement. Further information on how to do this can be found [here](#).

The Slovene government along with other member states are now making plans for the practical elements of applying the Withdrawal Agreement. This includes any administrative procedures UK nationals will need to follow after our departure from the EU. We have been told that your residence documentation will be very similar to what you have now and we are working closely with the Slovene government to ensure information is provided to UK nationals in a timely manner. We will also publish information provided by the Slovene Government when this becomes available.

What if I/my family decide to move back to the UK?

If you wish to move back to the UK, you and your family members (both EU citizens and in some cases non-EU citizens), will be able to do so until 31 December 2020. After that date, the UK Immigration Rules will apply where your family member is not a UK national. The UK Government will be setting out initial proposals for our future immigration arrangements in due course. The UK's departure from the EU does not change nationality law and therefore the processes for registering children and applying for British passports remain the same. UK nationals are able to travel or return to the UK at any time, including after 31 December 2020.

Will I have to pay tax in two countries?

The UK's exit from the European Union will not change existing double taxation agreements. Double taxation agreements ensure that any individual (not just a British citizen) who is living in a country which has a treaty with the UK will not pay tax in two countries on the same income/gain and determines which country has primary taxing rights. The UK has a double taxation agreement with all EU Member States, which will continue to apply on withdrawal.

Will driving licences still be valid after exit day?

The validity of UK driving licences in the EU and other Member State licences in the UK, forms part of the negotiations on the future UK-EU relationship. As such we cannot answer this yet, but the discussions on the future relationship are underway.

Please do follow our Facebook pages and Embassy website where we continue to upload further information on Brexit matters and links to latest information on citizens' rights, which can be found [here](#).

I look forward to meeting with as many of you as possible, either on 28 August, during September or at my Residence in November.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'S. Honey', enclosed within a circular scribble.

Sophie Honey
HM Ambassador
British Embassy Ljubljana