



To: Michel Barnier, Chief Brexit negotiator, European Commission
Guy Verhofstadt MEP, Brexit negotiator for the EU Parliament

CC: Donald Tusk, President of the European Council
Claude Moraes MEP, Chair Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee
Danuta Maria Hübner MEP, Chair of Constitutional Affairs Committee
Sophia in 't Veld MEP
The Rt Hon David Davis MP, Secretary of State, Department for Exiting the EU

15 February 2017

I am writing to you on behalf of **the3million**, a grassroots support and pressure group for EU nationals in the UK created in the aftermath of the referendum on leaving the EU. The organisation currently has over 16,000 users on its Facebook forum and has been very active in UK politics and the media.

We are very concerned about recent reports that ‘the 1.2 million Britons living in the EU could pay a penalty for the prime minister’s failure to offer a secure future for EU nationals in the UK’¹.

The3million has been campaigning for the UK Government to issue a unilateral guarantee of the rights of EU Citizens living in the UK. We have urged the government to reform the overly complex and discriminatory system to certify our Permanent Residency status. We have also been demanding that UK politicians stop referring to us as “bargaining chips” or “negotiating capital”.

The UK Prime Minister Theresa May and the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU have repeatedly stated that it is their intention to guarantee our rights in the UK and that the only circumstance in which they would not be able to do so is if the UK citizens living in the EU do not receive the same assurances from other EU Member States.

Reaching a reciprocal agreement on citizens’ rights must therefore be the top priority for the UK and the EU member states in the upcoming negotiations after article 50 is triggered. What happens to people’s ability to move to the UK and from the UK to the EU after “Brexit” will be a focus of discussion. But EU citizens’ acquired rights – whether those of EU nationals in the UK or British people in the EU - should not and must not be up for negotiation.

¹ Britons living in the EU face Brexit backlash, leaked paper warns’, The Guardian, 13 February, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/feb/13/uk-treatment-of-eu-nationals-could-lead-to-backlash-against-britons-living-in-the-eu>

We call on all parties to guarantee all existing rights of EU citizens living in the UK and of UK citizens living in the EU immediately. We would welcome a clear and urgent statement from all sides supporting and respecting the principle of indivisibility of EU citizens' acquired rights². This would put an end to months of uncertainty and anxiety we have all experienced and ensure that the upcoming negotiations start on the right foot.

The guarantee of our rights must be secured through an **EU-wide process and not through bilateral (country by country) agreements with the UK**³. This is a recurrent theme amongst our members, who stand united as EU citizens and who strongly believe this is the only sensible approach to achieve a workable and fair outcome. We urge all parties to bear in mind that they are dealing with human lives, with families, with children, with people who have made their homes in host countries in good faith.

We expect the negotiations for the UK's departure from the EU to be carried out in a constructive manner, with due regard for their effects on the lives of millions of people on either side of the English Channel and in line with the democratic and human rights values embodied by the European Union.

As EU citizens who have made their lives in the UK, we wish to see both our adopted home and the EU prosper. The UK and the EU must now set the example for the rest of the world on how to achieve a new partnership without unnecessary political games and without undermining people's lives in the process.

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² See House of Lords' Brexit Acquired Rights report: Brexit Acquired Rights:
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201617/ldselect/ldcom/82/8202.htm>

³ The3million alternative White Paper:
https://media.wix.com/ugd/0d3854_7a8d92ae83074d41a84d4a2026aa7243.pdf