Leaving the EU and Citizens’ Rights

Dear Jeremy,

I am writing in connection with the Committee’s continuing interest in the Citizens’ Rights part of the EU Withdrawal Agreement.

We have commented in several reports on the effect of the UK leaving the EU on EU citizens currently resident in the UK, but also on UK citizens resident in the EU and we would like to establish what firm plans there are for British nationals across the EU 27 in the event that the House of Commons approves the Withdrawal Agreement and the UK leaves the EU with a deal.

The Secretary of State for Exiting the EU provided the Committee with an update on progress in respect of UK nationals across the other 27 Member States on 7 February 2019. In that letter, he explained that the UK had been “engaging extensively with Member States and UK nationals across the EU through our embassy and consular networks”. He further explained that you, as Foreign Secretary, had discussed these matters with EU Ambassadors and at the EU Foreign Affairs Council in January, and had written to Ministerial colleagues in EU Member States. In addition, I understand that Foreign and Commonwealth Office staff have been holding outreach activities with UK nationals in each Member State to ensure that British residents have the latest information, and to address their concerns. FCO staff are clearly well placed to understand how each Member State aims to protect the rights of UK nationals on their territory when free movement ends.

I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with a further update on progress, based on the work your Department has been doing and set out whether the commitments made by each Member State still require legislation to put them into effect. I would also be grateful if you could provide a separate summary, by country, of the concerns raised by UK nationals at the FCO outreach events.

Yours sincerely,

Hilary Benn
Chair of the Committee