



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
The Minister

Nicosia, 13 February, 2019.

Dear Colleague,

Dear Jeremy,

Thank you for your letter dated 23 January 2019 regarding the extremely important issue of Citizens' Rights.

Despite the fact that we deeply regret the UK's withdrawal from the EU, it is a decision that we respect. At the same time, Cyprus advocates for a strong relationship between the EU and the UK post Brexit; undoubtedly, maintaining close cooperation with the UK in crucial fields will be beneficial to us all.

We also believe that the best way for securing an ambitious EU-UK future relationship is through an orderly withdrawal. The agreed Withdrawal Agreement, as it stands, is the best way forward and provides much needed certainty for our citizens and businesses, whilst mitigating, to the extent possible, the negative Brexit repercussions.

As you very rightly point out, safeguarding the rights of our citizens has been one of Cyprus' main priorities from the outset. Thousands of Cyprus' citizens reside in the UK and a sizeable British community resides in Cyprus. During the Withdrawal Agreement negotiations, we strongly supported an ambitious approach on this issue, which was finally adopted in the Agreement itself. Moreover, we decided that British citizens in Cyprus, who went through the necessary registration procedures, should not undergo the same process post Brexit, thereby opting for the least complicated approach.

At the same time, Cyprus is preparing, in close cooperation with the EU and other Member States, for all outcomes, including that of a no deal exit. Citizens' rights remain high on our agenda. We welcomed the UK's government decision to unilaterally apply the same approach provided for in the Withdrawal Agreement, for all EU citizens residing in the UK, safeguarding in this way their rights of residence and access to benefits on the same terms as they presently enjoy.

The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London

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In the case of a no deal Brexit, on the basis of reciprocity, Cyprus stands ready to secure that those British citizens residing in Cyprus presently, and until 29 March 2019, will be able to continue residing and enjoying the same rights as provided for in the Withdrawal Agreement. Necessary arrangements mirroring the provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement will be taken, so as to protect, to the extent possible, their current rights. It is noted that some of the above measures will be implemented independently by the Member States, particularly as regards required procedures. At the same time, in certain areas, such as social security, we should, for the benefit of the citizens, secure a uniform application of such rights by all Member States. To this end, further coordination is necessary. The measures are therefore to be taken at Union level and reciprocal arrangements should be sought.

I will be sharing internally your letter with other responsible Ministers so as to examine the best way forward on all of these matters. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in close cooperation with all other government services, is coordinating related issues and remains at the disposal of your services and the UK High Commission in Nicosia.

I look forward to continuing to work with you on all areas of mutual interest.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of overlapping, stylized lines that form the name 'Nikos Christodoulides'.

Nikos Christodoulides