

UK CITIZENS & BREXIT

UK citizens are an important part of the cosmopolitan tapestry of life in Brussels. The Brussels-Capital Region has for many decades had a large community of British “expats” - residents who are UK citizens. Like all of Brussels diverse communities, the British in Brussels contribute significantly to the economic prosperity and intellectual capital of the Region, as well as its cultural vibrancy. Brexit does nothing to change these facts, but it did have a major impact on the Region’s long-term and newly arrived UK residents.

As the one of the Region’s primary providers of advice to International Brusselers, especially through our Expat Welcome Desk, commissioner.brussels has supported UK citizens in these difficult times. We have thereby become a hub of expertise on the administrative difficulties which impact the British in Brussels. With this dedicated UK Citizens & Brexit Helpdesk on our website, accompanied by series of webinars and newsletters throughout 2023, we hope to offer UK citizens a useful guide to life in Brussels in the post-Brexit era.

The content of this Helpdesk is divided into parallel chapters for UK citizens who were already registered in Belgium before the end of the Brexit transition period (31 December 2020) and those arriving after this cut-off date. The legal context for these two groups is radically different, so make sure that you are reading the right pages for your status!

What is my status?

UK citizens residing in Belgium prior to the end of the transition period (31 December 2020) were able to safeguard their work and residence rights in Belgium by applying for an M-card. This status protects many of your rights, but there some important differences and limitations in comparison with EU citizenship.

The deadline for M-Card applications was 31 December 2021. If you have applied for an M-card but have not yet received a decision on your application, you will continue to hold an Annex 56 (which proves you applied for an M-card), renewable as long as no decision is taken. If you did not apply in time or if your application was refused, there are limited options for late applications and appeal cases.

- **Late application:** If you did not apply for an M-card before the end of the application period on 31 December 2021 while you believe you qualify, you may still submit an application where you can demonstrate reasonable grounds for not meeting the deadline. These circumstances must be communicated when the application is submitted. Specific arrangements exist for certain family members (see below 6) and for Special Identity Card (SIC) holders (see below 7)
- **Refusal:** If you applied for an M-card but it was refused, you have the right to appeal before the Council for Alien Law Litigation (CALL) within 30 days of the notification of the decision. You will receive a temporary residence document (Annex 35) pending the appeal.

UK citizens who were frontier workers in Belgium prior to the end of the transition period were able to safeguard their rights in Belgium by applying for an N-card. Since you do not live in Belgium, you are not affected by all of the topics covered here. However, you will find more information about your status in some of the "Pre-Brexit Residents" pages.

UK citizens who have settled in Brussels since the end of the transition period, or who are now thinking of doing so, are subject to the same conditions applicable to all third-country nationals. *Third-country national* refers to an individual who does not have the citizenship of a state which is a member of the EU or the Schengen Zone, nor of an associated state (Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein or Switzerland). You will find information about your status in the "Post-Brexit Arrivals" pages of this Brexit Helpdesk. Any other information on this site targeting non-EU citizens is also relevant to your situation, as there is no difference between UK citizens and other third-country nationals after Brexit.

UK citizens who have become frontier workers in Belgium since the end of the transition period, or who are now thinking of doing so, are not affected by all of the topics covered here because you will not be resident in Belgium. However, you will find useful information in some of the "Post-Brexit Arrivals" pages.

Where can I get further advice?

If you still have questions after reading the information in this Helpdesk, our Expat Welcome Desk is ready to help. The team can give you tailored advice and support with your administrative challenges.

- **Read more about our services and learn how to get in touch.**

Project funding

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BREXIT NEWS AND EVENTS