

## THE CLOCK IS TICKING

Before and after the referendum, UK and EU leaders promised UK citizens living in the EU that our daily lives would not change. **Their promises have not been kept.** Our rights have been reduced and in 13 countries we have to apply to live in our own homes, in five of them by the **end of June**.

The [third report on the implementation of residence rights](#) under the Withdrawal Agreement was finally published at the end of last week. Prepared for the meeting of the Specialised Committee on Citizens' Rights on 28 April 2021, the publishing of the report has been inexplicably delayed for a month while the clock ticks down.

**The report makes for depressing reading.** By mid-April, less than half of the estimated 148,000 UK citizens living in France had applied for and received a decision on their application. In Luxembourg, the figure stood at just over 50% and in Malta, a paltry 37% of UK citizens had applied and received a decision. **Overall, nearly one in five UK citizens in the countries with a 30 June deadline** (France, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta and the Netherlands) had not even applied.

**These figures are shocking and should be a wake-up call** to the Member States in question, as well as the European Commission and the UK. It is clear that thousands of UK citizens who are currently legally resident in their host states **face waking up on 1 July as undocumented migrants**. They could be fired from their jobs, made homeless, and lose access to social security, student grants and loans, and non-emergency healthcare yet **no-one has spelled out the consequences of missing the deadline**.

**For four years British in Europe has warned of this.** For two years we have asked for comprehensive information and awareness-raising plans to be put in place to inform vulnerable and hard-to-reach UK citizens resident in the constitutive countries. **Indeed, this is an obligation under Article 37 of the WA.**

The communication plans and activities outlined in this report **bear little or no relation to the reality** we are seeing in host countries. Although Member States have published website pages containing information about how to apply for a permit or request a card, only a handful have carried out any active outreach or awareness-raising campaigns via local, national or social media. The UK government too has an obligation here towards us which it is also not meeting.

Having negotiated and ratified an **international treaty that removes the rights** of hundreds of thousands of citizens, there is an overwhelming moral obligation on all signatories to ensure that every single one of those citizens and residents is aware of the change in their status and what the consequences will be if they miss the deadline to reapply to keep those rights. Having made speeches promising that daily lives will not change, all parties have an obligation to keep those promises.

**British in Europe calls on the Member States, the UK and the European Commission to recognise their responsibilities towards UK citizens resident in the EU. The deadlines for application need to be extended in all constitutive countries until the end of December 2021, full outreach and awareness campaigns must be run with a focus on reaching the vulnerable and people who largely lead an analogue rather than a digital life, and above all the full consequences of not registering for WA status must be spelled out.**