



About us

UKCEN is a Facebook group established in August 2016 for the express purpose of assisting EEA nationals, and their family members, who wish to apply for documents certifying their residence and rights in the UK, and for those who ultimately wish to apply for British citizenship.

The group has a membership of nearly 15,000, an admin team of 17 and seven volunteer lawyers. The lawyers maintain individual registration with either the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC), the Bar Standards Board or the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

The ethos of the group has always been to look for solutions for members within the system as it stands, rather than as a discussion forum on the flaws within the system.

Our efforts are focused on:

1. Providing accessible and up-to-date information to those who wish to apply for: EEA/QP (Registration Certificate), EEA/PR (Permanent Resident certification), UK citizenship and UK passport. This is done by providing a range of resources, such as the FAQs document, which is easy to use and responds to a vast range of questions often found in the forum. The FAQs document is regularly updated by the legal team with the support of the admin team.
2. Providing online support to individual members with basic application queries via direct access to the forum. The online service is managed by the administrators who, in turn, approve posts on the forum and tag a member of the legal team when advice or more in-depth considerations are needed. Many queries are managed by the admin team if this involves only providing information to individual members.

EU - UK negotiation period – Our action

- Continue to encourage EU/EEA citizens living in the UK to apply for Registration Certificate (less than 5 years residents), Permanent Resident certification and UK citizenship (when it is advisable to do so).
- Continue to support applicants via our resources and online forum.
- Lobbying for the improvements of the current application system, this includes the review of the current application forms for RC, PR UK citizenship – NCS issues – streamlining straightforward cases.
- Lobbying with other organisations and EU groups for the protection of the rights of the current EU citizens living in the UK.

C) Voting Rights

As per the current laws, EU nationals resident in the UK have the right to vote in EU Parliamentary elections and local government elections. * Once the UK leaves the EU, there is the fear that their voting rights will be removed. Many of the people affected will be those from countries who do not allow dual citizenship, and indeed those who cannot afford the £1282 it currently costs to naturalise as British. These people are long-time residents and usually tax payers and family members of UK nationals, and they will be disenfranchised.

UKCEN Recommendation

- To retain the voting rights of EU nationals to allow them to vote and stand in local government, Scottish Parliament, and Welsh and Northern Irish Assembly elections
- To give the same rights to nationals of those EEA countries who do not currently have these rights (Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Lichtenstein)
- To consider extending the franchise to allow those with PR/settled status/ILR to vote in Westminster Parliamentary elections and referenda

D) Family Reunion

Many EEA nationals have family in other EEA countries and have lived with the expectation that if the need were to arise their families could join them in the UK. This relates especially to parents and grandparents who are elderly or infirm. There is a great concern that on leaving the EU, when the rights of these family members to live in the UK will be curtailed, that the only way an EU national with 'settled status'/ILR can bring elderly relatives into the UK would be under the Immigration Rules (Paragraph FM). This immigration rule is particularly harsh and it is unlikely that any elderly parent currently living in an EEA country would qualify.

UKCEN Recommendation

- To allow EEA nationals with 'settled status' / ILR to bring EEA national family members in ill health or over the age of 65 to live with them in the UK, with the caveat that they will not be reliant on public funds
- To ensure that EEA nationals do not have an advantage over UK nationals with overseas national parents, it is also recommended that the Immigration Rules on 'elderly dependent relatives' revert to the pre-July 2012 rules.

*Maltese and Cypriot nationals, as Commonwealth Members, have the right to vote in all elections and this will not change. Irish nationals will also retain their voting rights

E) A8 Nationals

A8 nationals on entry to the UK, if they intended to work as an employee, were required to apply for the Worker Registration Scheme (up until its abolition on 30th April 2011). The requirement was that they had to register within one month of starting work and had to re-register with each new employer until they had spent a period of 12 months with the same employer. The onus was always on the applicant to register, many were unaware of how the scheme worked, and many employers were also unaware of the need to re-register. As a consequence, many A8 nationals have found that they may have been working in breach of immigration law. The time spent working outwith the WRS when it should have been complied with a) cannot be counted as employment within the five year qualifying period for PR and b) may prohibit or delay an application for citizenship as per the Good Character Requirement.

UKCEN Recommendation

- That the Secretary of State make a commitment that time spent in the UK by A8 nationals who should have registered for the Worker Registration Scheme but failed to do so will not be considered as having worked unlawfully and will therefore have no need to delay applying for citizenship until 10 years has passed since the 'breach'

F) Further UKCEN recommendations

- That the right to use the NHS is guaranteed for EEA nationals without the need for payment of a 'Migrant Health Surcharge' and regardless of economic activity
- That refusals of 'settled status'/ILR have access to a timely and transparent appeals process
- That access to pensions is guaranteed unilaterally, uncapped, and is not linked to status in the UK at the time of retirement
- That EEA Nationals with 'settled status'/ILR/PR and their families are still allocated a separate fast track entry procedure at UK immigration desk at port of entry

If you wish to join our Facebook group and receive support – please send a request to: - Please answer ALL THREE admission questions straight after sending request to join.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/132887737155325/>

Claudia Holmes
UKCEN - Chair