

Implementing the agreement on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community:

RESIDENCE RIGHTS AND RESIDENCE DOCUMENTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS





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This document aims to assist all interested parties in comprehending how Cyprus intends to practically implement the provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement concerning residence rights of United Kingdom (UK) nationals and their family members, including family members who are third country nationals, in view of the UK leaving the European Union (EU). However, all parties are reminded that the text of the Agreement on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community is the only authentic legal reference and that the information in this document does not constitute legal advice. Usage of the information remains under the sole responsibility of the reader.



Summary

This paper sets out how Cyprus intends to practically implement the provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement concerning residence rights of United Kingdom (UK) nationals and their family members, including family members who are third country nationals, in view of the UK leaving the European Union (EU).

In line with the draft Withdrawal Agreement published in March, its implementation will mean that:

- UK nationals and their family members who, by 31 December 2020, have been continuously resident in Cyprus for five years will be eligible for permanent residence.
- UK nationals and their family members who already reside in Cyprus or arrive by 31 December 2020, but will not yet have been continuously resident in Cyprus for five years, will be eligible for residence, enabling them to stay until they have reached the five-year threshold, allowing them to apply for permanent residence.
- UK nationals and their family members who are covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, will be able to continue their lives in Cyprus, with the same access to work, study, benefits and public services that they enjoy now, subject to the specific provisions provided for in Withdrawal Agreement.

Key issues:

Withdrawal Agreement: The EU has reached an agreement with the UK on citizens' rights, ahead of the UK leaving the EU on 29 March 2019. This Agreement will become legally binding once it is set into force.

Who it covers: The Withdrawal Agreement will protect those UK nationals and their family members who have already exercised or will exercise their free movement rights in Cyprus before 1 January 2021 (before the end of the transition period).

Transition period: It is the period immediately after the UK leaves the EU, which starts on 30 March 2019 and lasts until 31 December 2020. During this period free movement of UK nationals and their family members will continue.



How it works for UK nationals:

- a. UK nationals and their family member who have already exercised or will exercise free movement in Cyprus before 1 January 2021 but, until 31 December 2020 will not have completed continuous residence of five years, will be eligible for residence.
- b. Those who will have completed five years of continuous residence in Cyprus before 31 December 2020 will be eligible to acquire permanent residence.
- c. Those who will not have completed five years of continuous residence in Cyprus, will be able to remain in Cyprus to build-up five years continuous residence. Commencement of this five-year period for both cases starts at the moment of exercising free movement rights, which may be at any time before and during the transition period.
- d. UK citizens who want to come to Cyprus after the 31 December 2020 (end of the transition period), will need to meet Cyprus immigration rules.

How it works for UK nationals' family members:

- a. Existing family members of UK nationals covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, who are living in a country other than Cyprus on 31 December 2020 (end of the transition period), will be able to reunite in Cyprus with the UK national as a family member at any time in the future. They will then be eligible to qualify for permanent residence after completing five years of continuous residence.
- b. Children born or adopted after the transition period by a UK national or their spouse/ partner in a civil union covered by the Withdrawal Agreement will enjoy the same rights as pre-existing family members. Future spouses and partners of UK citizens who want to come to Cyprus after the 31 December 2020 (end of the transition period), will need to meet Cyprus immigration rules.

Resident documents:

Holders of current resident documents (MEU1, MEU2, MEU3) will be able to continue to use them as means of proof for residence rights in Cyprus. Applications received up until the end of the transition period will be examined on the basis of the current free movement rules, and, if approved, will result to the issuance of the current residence documents. After the end of the transition period, holders of residence documents and eligible persons arriving in Cyprus will have the right, upon application, to receive a new type of residence document, which will include a statement that it has been issued in accordance with the Withdrawal Agreement.

Key dates:

UK leaving the EU:

29 March 2019

Transition period:

30 March 2019 – 31 December 2020



1. The Withdrawal Agreement

The EU has reached [an Agreement](#) with the UK on citizens' rights, ahead of the UK leaving the EU on 29 March 2019. This Agreement will become legally binding once it is set into force.

Under the Agreement, UK nationals who are eligible for residence rights along with their family members (including family members that are third country nationals), will be able to stay and continue their lives in Cyprus.

1.1. Transition Period

The Agreement covers the period immediately after the UK leaves the EU, known as the transition period. This period will run from 30 March 2019 to 31 December 2020.

The Agreement extends the current free movement rights to UK nationals and their family members arriving in Cyprus during the transition period.

1.2. Who is covered by the Withdrawal Agreement?

The Withdrawal Agreement applies to:

- a. UK nationals and their family members who have already exercised or will exercise their right to reside in Cyprus in accordance with Union law, before the end of the transition period and continue to reside in Cyprus thereafter.
- b. UK nationals and their family members who at the end of the transition period are not residing in Cyprus but had previously resided in Cyprus without acquiring permanent residence right, provided that after the end of the transition period they will still maintain continuity of residence as defined in current free movement rules.
- c. UK nationals and their family members who at the end of the transition period are not residing in Cyprus but had previously resided in Cyprus and had acquired permanent residence right, provided that their absence will not exceed a period exceeding five consecutive years.
- d. family members residing overseas on 31 December 2020 wishing to join a UK national covered by the Agreement after this date, given that the relationship existed at or before that date and it continues to exist when the person wishes to come to Cyprus.



Family members of a UK national include¹:

- a spouse,
- a civil partner,
- direct descendants who are under the age of 21 or are dependents (including of those of the spouse or civil partner)
- dependent direct relatives in the ascending line (including of those of the spouse or civil partner).
- children born or adopted after the transition period by a UK national or their spouse/ partner covered by the Withdrawal Agreement.

1.3 Examples

- a. A UK national and her family are continuously residing in Cyprus from 2009 but happen to be abroad for holiday on 31 December 2020. They all enjoy residence rights provided by the Agreement.
- b. A UK national covered by the Agreement marries an Indian national on March 2021. The spouse wishes to join the UK national in Cyprus. The spouse will need to meet Cyprus' immigration rules.
- c. A UK national covered by the Agreement marries a USA national on April 2020. The spouse wishes to join the UK national in Cyprus. The spouse will enjoy residence rights provided by the Agreement.
- d. A UK national not covered by the Agreement marries a Chinese national on August 2022. Both wish to reside in Cyprus. Both will need to meet Cyprus' immigration rules.
- e. In February 2023, a UK national covered by the Agreement wishes to be joined in Cyprus by his 8-year-old daughter. The daughter will enjoy residence rights provided by the Agreement.
- f. In October 2024, a UK national covered by the Agreement adopts a 16-year-old boy. In November 2024 the UK national wishes to be joined his son. The son will enjoy residence rights provided by the Agreement.
- g. A UK national was living in Cyprus from January 2020 until November 2020. He then departed for participating in a student exchange programme abroad. He stayed abroad until March 2021. He wishes to return and reside in Cyprus. He enjoys residence rights provided by the Agreement.
- h. A UK national was living in Cyprus from June 2010 until September 2017 and she acquired permanent residence in Cyprus. She then departed from Cyprus and stayed abroad until 2024 when she decided to return. She does not enjoy residence rights provided by the Agreement. She will need to meet Cyprus' immigration rules.

¹ More details on the family members who are covered can be found in the Withdrawal Agreement (articles 8 and 9).



2. How it Works?

2.1 Before the end of the transition period (today - 31 December 2020)

1.1.1 Residence Documents

Current free movement rules apply. Upon application, provided that the free movement requirements are met, one of the following current documents are issued (also known as yellow slips):

- ***Certificate of Registration (MEU1)***
Document certifying residence for European Union citizens and for their family members who are also European Union citizens.
- ***Residence Card (MEU2)***
Document certifying residence for family members of a European Union citizen who are not nationals of a Member State of the European Union.
- ***Certificate of Permanent Residence (MEU3)***
Document certifying permanent residence for European Union citizens and for their family members who are also European Union citizens.
- ***Card of Permanent Residence (MEU3)***
Document certifying permanent residence for family members of a European Union citizen who are not nationals of a Member State of the European Union.

UK nationals and their family members:

- Who reside in Cyprus and are holders of a residence document:** Current free movement rules apply. No need to do anything within the transition period.
- Who reside in Cyprus and are NOT holders of a residence document:** Current free movement rules apply. Upon application, one of the current residence documents (Certificate of Registration, Residence Card or Certificate/Card of Permanent Residence) will be issued, provided that the free movement requirements are met.

PLEASE NOTE: After the transition period, UK nationals and their family members who are covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, will have the right to receive, in accordance with the conditions set out in Directive 2004/38/EC, a new residence document, which will include a statement that it has been issued in accordance with the Withdrawal Agreement.



Holders of current residence documents (which will continue to be issued up until the end of the transition period) will fall into a much simpler procedure, should they choose to apply for the new residence document provided by the Withdrawal Agreement (which will be issued after the end of the transition period – for more information see section 2.2).

ATTENTION: Non-holders of current residence documents are therefore encouraged to apply for them as soon as possible.

Examples

- a. A UK national and his Israeli wife are continuously resident in Cyprus since 2017. They have never applied for residence documents. In April 2020 they decide to apply. They fulfill free movement rules. The UK national will receive a Registration Certificate and his wife a Residence Card.
- b. A UK national and her Chinese partner arrive in Cyprus in February 2020. They file applications for residence documents. They fulfill free movement rules. The UK national will receive a Registration Certificate and her partner a Residence Card.
- c. A UK national and her Pakistani son reside in Cyprus since 2016 and are holders of a Registration Certificate and a Residence Card, respectively. During the transition period, they do not have to do anything. They enjoy free movement rights and they are already holders of documents evidencing this.
- d. A UK national is continuously residing in Cyprus since 2009. Although she fulfills free movement rules, she has never applied for a residence document. She was told that there is no need to do anything and that even after the transition period she will maintain her right of residence in Cyprus. This is true, as long as she is covered by the Withdrawal Agreement she maintains her residence rights. Nevertheless, should she wish to apply for a residence document after the end of the transition period, she will need to submit documentary evidence in order to establish that she has been continuously resident in Cyprus. If she had acquired a residence document before the end of the transition period showing only her passport (as proof of identity) and her Certificate of Permanent Residence would be enough. In case she chooses not to apply for residence documents even after the end of the transition period, it is likely to face practical issues in exercising her rights.

1.1.2 Requirements

Requirements for the issuance of current residence documents to UK nationals and their family members remains unchanged. Applications are and will continue to be examined in accordance with the conditions set out in [Directive 2004/38/EC](#).

You can find out information on existing requirements on [this webpage](#).



1.1.3 Application procedure

The application procedure for the issuance of current residence documents to UK nationals and their family members remains unchanged. Applications are and will continue to be submitted to the [Civil Registry and Migration Department](#) in Nicosia and to the [District Units of the Aliens and Immigration Service of the Police](#).

You can find out information on existing procedures on [this webpage](#).

2.2 After the end of the transition period (from 1 January 2021)

2.2.1 Residence Documents

To make the process as simple as possible, Cyprus has opted not to require UK nationals and their family members residing in its territory in accordance with the conditions set out in the Withdrawal Agreement, to apply for a new residence status as a mean of verifying that they are entitled to the residence rights set out in the Withdrawal Agreement.

However, after the end of the transition period:

- holders of current residence documents (yellow slips),
- persons who will receive a current residence document (yellow slip) within the transition period,
- non-holders of current residence documents (yellow slips) who reside in Cyprus and are covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, and
- persons covered by the Withdrawal Agreement arriving and residing in Cyprus after the end of the transition period,

will have the right to receive if they wish to, in accordance with the conditions set out in [Directive 2004/38/EC](#), a new residence document, which will include a statement that it has been issued in accordance with the Withdrawal Agreement.

2.2.2 Requirements

Applications will be examined in accordance with the conditions set out in the Withdrawal Agreement, which are generally in line with current free movement rules.

People will need to file an application and they should not be regarded as a threat to public policy, public security or public health (for more information you can refer to the [Withdrawal Agreement](#) – article 18).



The main requirement for the new residence document to be granted will be residence in Cyprus. Specifically:

- Where a UK national and their family member have been continuously resident in Cyprus for five years (less in some particular circumstances: see section 2.2.3), they will be eligible for **permanent residence** and a subsequent residence document evidencing this. Once acquired, the right of permanent residence shall be lost only through absence from Cyprus for a period exceeding five consecutive years.
- Where a UK national and their family member have been continuously resident in Cyprus for less than five years, they will be eligible for **residence** and a subsequent residence document evidencing this. These people will be eligible to apply for permanent residence as soon as they have completed five years of continuous residence in Cyprus (less in some particular circumstances: see section 2.2.3).

A UK national continuously resident in Cyprus before 31 December 2020 will be able to be joined after that date by close family members resident overseas, if the relationship existed at that date and it continues to exist when the person wishes to come to Cyprus. Children born or adopted after 31 December 2020 by a UK national or their spouse/ partner are also covered by the Withdrawal Agreement.

2.2.3. Continuity of residence

Continuity of residence is not affected by temporary absences not exceeding a total of six months a year, or by absences of a longer duration for compulsory military service, or by one absence of a maximum of twelve consecutive months for important reasons such as pregnancy and childbirth, serious illness, study or vocational training, or a posting. Continuity of residence is broken by any expulsion decision duly enforced against the person concerned.

2.2.4 Application procedure

Applications will be submitted to the [Civil Registry and Migration Department](#) in Nicosia and to the [District Units of the Aliens and Immigration Service of the Police](#).

We are aiming to implement a simple and straightforward procedure. Most applicants will need only to demonstrate that they are a UK national or family member and prove their continuous residence in Cyprus (and that of the UK national if they are a non-UK national family member).

The process will be particularly straightforward for those UK nationals and their family members who are holders of a Certificate of Registration, Residence Card or Certificate/Card of Permanent Residence (so-called yellow slips). To keep documentary evidence to a minimum, holders of these residence documents, should they choose to apply for the new residence document, will not need to submit anything else with their application other than a valid passport as proof of identity.



Persons who are not holders of a Certificate of Registration, Residence Card or Certificate/Card of Permanent Residence will be able to submit documentary evidence of their residence. Where appropriate, they will be granted a permanent residence document, otherwise, where their documentary evidence establish that they have been continuously residing in Cyprus for a period of less than five years, they will be granted a residence document.

Recommended documentary evidence may - for example - include the following (not all required in every case, nor individually, but as appropriate depending on the case):

- Rental agreement or property sale contract, or title deed, for the last five years.
- Utility bills or statements of accounts from the relevant Authority (water, or telephone or electricity) dating back five years.
- Bank statement dating back five years.
- Social Insurance Certificate for contributions over the last five years by month.
- Any other document proving the completion of a continuous period of residency of five years in of Cyprus.

Eligible persons will be able to start applying from 1 January 2021 or even earlier. As provided by the Withdrawal Agreement there is a possibility to allow the submission of applications for the above-mentioned residence documents at a date before the end of the transition period. We will update this webpage with information as it becomes available, with a particular focus on the relevant practical arrangements, including the date of application commencement.

An application will involve payment of a required fee. Subject to a cost analysis and Parliamentary consideration, it is expected that the fee will not exceed the required fee for applications filed by Cypriot nationals for the issuance of an identity card. Currently these application fees are €30.

Applicants who are holders of a valid Certificate of Registration, Residence Card or Certificate/Card of Permanent Residence issued before the end of the transition period or before the possible date referred to above will not need to submit any further documents with their applications, apart from a valid passport, as proof of identity. All other applicants will need to submit with their applications the documents, which are generally provided in [the current free movement rules](#).

The EU is currently considering the possibility to introduce a uniform format for the residence document, which will be issued to eligible persons under the Withdrawal Agreement. Should this be the case, all applicants will also need to enroll their biometric data (fingerprints for persons over 6 years of age and facial image) and their signature (for persons over 6 years of age), so that a biometric residence document will be produced.

We will update [this webpage](#) with information as it becomes available, with a particular focus on the relevant practical arrangements.



3. Residence Documents as proof of residence right

The residence documents granted to UK nationals and their family members (either current documents, which will continue to be issued until the end of the transition period or the new documents, which will be issued after the end of the transition period) will enable them to continue their lives in Cyprus. These documents can be used as proof of their right to live and work in Cyprus.

In this respect, these documents will also be used (with a valid passport for UK nationals and for their family members who are not UK nationals) to travel to and from Cyprus. Non-UK family members who are holders of these documents will not be subject to a visa requirement. Family members who are EU nationals will only need a valid passport or national identity card.

After the end of the transition period, where a family member wishing to join a UK national in Cyprus and an entry visa is required, such person will be facilitated to obtain the necessary visa (free of charge and on the basis of an accelerated procedure). You can find out information on current visa policy [here](#).

The following table shows which documents UK nationals and their family members will be able to use to evidence their right to reside in Cyprus (note that **highlighted** documents are not currently issued):

	DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD	AFTER THE END OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD
UK national	Passport, or	Valid Certificate of Registration, or
	Valid Certificate of Registration, or	Valid Certificate of Permanent Residence, or
	Valid Certificate of Permanent Residence.	Valid Residence document, which includes a statement that it has been issued in accordance with the withdrawal agreement.
Family member (non-UK, non-EU)	Valid Residence Card, or	Valid Residence Card, or
	Valid Card of Permanent Residence, or	Valid Card of Permanent Residence, or
	Valid Residence Permit, or	Valid Residence Permit, or
	Proof of existence of a family relationship with a UK national residing in Cyprus (please be advised that choosing to rely only on this may result in practical difficulties and delays).	Valid Residence document, which includes a statement that it has been issued in accordance with the withdrawal agreement.
		Proof of existence of a family relationship with a UK national who is eligible to reside in Cyprus on the basis of the withdrawal agreement (please be advised that choosing to rely only on this may result in practical difficulties and delays).