

CITIZENS' RIGHTS NEWSLETTER

An update for UK nationals resident in Belgium
under the Withdrawal Agreement

In this month's edition, we are looking at **travel, dual nationals and children.**

[You can find previous editions here.](#)

◆ NEWS UPDATE ◆

A MESSAGE FROM THE STATE SECRETARY FOR ASYLUM AND MIGRATION, SAMMY MAHDI

There are only three weeks left before the M card application deadline. Ambassador Martin Shearman teamed up with Belgian State Secretary Asylum and Migration Sammy Mahdi in a joint message to UK nationals. You can watch the video here, which also includes a reminder of the application process.

BPOST

We are in touch with Bpost on the problems some people are facing with parcel deliveries from the UK. This follows the introduction of new EU customs declarations requirements on 1 July 2021. In the last couple of weeks, Bpost has changed the way that it is implementing these requirements to reflect customer concerns.

Most parcels clearly identified as gifts with a value of less than 45EUR, and with the correct name and address details for the sender and recipient provided, are now being delivered without the recipient needing to supply additional information. If the sender provides the information required, recipients of gifts should see the situation improve.

Do tell family and friends that they must specify the value of the gift. Leaving that blank or writing "unknown" will cause delays.

Dual Nationals

UK/Belgian nationality

If you have acquired Belgian nationality, you do not need to take any action unless you want to stay registered under your UK nationality.

Your commune/gemeente will have received automatic notification of your newly acquired Belgian nationality and will have updated your file to reflect this.

UK/EU nationality

If you have acquired an EU nationality other than Belgian, you need to take action as you can only be registered under **one** nationality at your commune/gemeente.

If you wish to remain registered under your UK nationality, you must apply for an M card by 31 December 2021.

If you wish to be registered under your EU nationality, you must inform your commune/gemeente and get a **new** E or E+ card.

If your existing card shows a UK nationality, it will automatically become void on 31 March 2022, so will stop working when you attend a doctor's appointment from example. It will also stop being accepted as proof of residence when travelling from 1 January 2022 unless accompanied by an annexe/ bijlage56.

Children

Under 12 years

We have recently been informed by the Office for Foreigners that if you have children under 12 with UK nationality, you need to submit an application on their behalf at your commune/gemeente to regularise their status by 31 December 2021.

They will receive an annexe/bijlage 56 as evidence that they have applied for a status under the Withdrawal Agreement (WA), but will **not** be issued an M card. In line with other non-Belgian children, they will receive an updated 'identity document' with a specific reference to the WA.

Between 12 and 18 years

If you have children between 12 and 18 with UK nationality, you need to submit their M card application at your commune/gemeente by 31 December 2021. Unlike for under 12s, children between 12 and 18 will receive an M card, but they do **not** need to provide a criminal record extract with their application.

[You can find further information on the Office for Foreigners' online guidance.](#)

Travelling outside of Belgium

Wherever you travel, remember to always carry proof of your residency in Belgium alongside a valid passport. This can be your M card, your annexe/bijlage 56 (certificate of application) or other written evidence that you started the M card application process issued by your commune/gemeente.

Any E or E+ cards showing UK nationality will no longer be valid proof of residency when travelling as of 1 January 2022.

Travel within the Schengen area

UK nationals do not need a visa when travelling to and within the Schengen area for short stays of up to 90 days in a 180-day rolling period. For stays longer than 90 days in a 180-day period, you may require a visa and/or permit.

Short stays may include holidays, attending business meetings, travel for journalistic or media purposes, attending cultural or sports events or exchanges, travel for short-term studies or training, etc.

As a UK national living in the EU, if you are visiting another EU Member State that is not your country of residence, then you will be subject to the EU's "90 in 180 day" visa-free rule.

You are responsible for counting your own days of stay and for complying with these conditions. [You can use the Commission's online calculator](#) to work out how many travel days you have left in a given period.

[You can find more information on travel in our Living in Belgium guide.](#)

Outside the Schengen area, including UK

Make sure you [check the FCDO Travel Advice of the country you are visiting](#) before you travel to ensure that you comply with relevant entry requirements.

Passport stamping

As a UK national, you do not need to have your passport stamped upon entry to their country of residence, if you can prove you were resident there before 1 January 2021 and continue to live there. This also applies when transiting through another EU Member State to reach your country of residence.

Make sure to proactively show proof of your residence in Belgium to a border guard when going through passport control.

Some UK nationals have had their passports stamped when leaving or returning to Belgium, including from the UK. If you are a resident in Belgium, this stamp is **null** and **void**. Your rights in Belgium are not affected as a result of your passport being stamped. We have raised this with the Belgian authorities who have updated their guidance to border guards.

[You can find more information on our Living in Belgium guide.](#)

Healthcare while you travel

Make sure to check that you have your healthcare covered before you travel!

If you make social security contributions in Belgium

You should be entitled to a Belgian-issued European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). All EU-issued EHICs remain valid for necessary care when visiting the UK and other EU Member States. We still recommend taking out comprehensive travel insurance when travelling, including health cover, as an EHIC provides limited coverage. For more information on getting a Belgian EHIC, get in touch with your mutuelle/ziekenfond.

If your healthcare is covered by the UK

You should be entitled to a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). Existing UK-issued EHICs also remain valid for necessary care when visiting EU Member States until the expiration date on the card. They do not need to be replaced immediately. Once it expires, it can be replaced with a new GHIC issued by the UK.

[You can find more information on EHICs/GHICs on our Healthcare in Belgium guide.](#)

December Facebook Q&A - key issues

Issues obtaining an M card

If you are having trouble submitting an M card application or obtaining an M card, and you are unable to obtain any clear guidance from your commune/gemeente, email the Office for Foreigners (infodesk@ibz.fgov.be) explaining your situation.

Update on M card and nationality

As a reminder, the M card is valid for Belgian nationality applications. The Royal Decree which added the M card to the list of accepted residence documents for the purposes of applying for Belgian nationality was adopted on 30 August 2021 and published in the Belgian official gazette on 11 September 2021.

Applications forwarded to the immigration office for assessment

There are a few situations in which the M card applications of UK nationals will be sent to the immigration office for assessment, for example:

→ If a UK national does not have a valid annexe 8/8bis or a valid E/E+/F/F+ card;

→ If a UK national has a criminal record;

→ If a UK national takes longer than 3 months (the validity of their annexe/bijlage 56 certificate of application) to provide the commune/gemeente with requested documents;

→ If the UK national needs to prove they were meeting Freedom of Movement criteria

New arrivals

[Check the Brussels Commissioners' online guidance](#) for information on visa applications, residency, and potential eligibility for family reunification if you have an EU or Belgian family member.



Duke of Kent visit

His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent visited Ypres on 16 and 17 November to take part in a reburial ceremony at Tyne Cot Cemetery, in his capacity as President of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Just over 104 years after they paid the ultimate sacrifice serving their country, nine British soldiers of the First World War were laid to rest with full military honours.

On 8 June 2018, human remains were found during civil engineering works on Oude Wervikstraat in Beselare. Through a combination of military research, anthropology and DNA, the MOD War Detectives successfully identified seven of the nine casualties of the 11th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers. An eighth casualty is believed to have served with the same regiment and was buried as an "Unknown Soldier of the Northumberland Fusiliers". The ninth and final casualty was buried as an "Unknown Soldier of the Great War".

After the ceremony, HRH The Duke of Kent met the family members of the fallen. He also attended the Last Post at Menin Gate, a solemn ceremony where each night the fallen of the First World War are commemorated.



Upcoming Embassy Events

5 January from 18:00 to 20:00

Q&A Session on [British Embassy Brussels Facebook page](#)

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Stay in Touch

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If you have any questions not answered by the online information, you can send us your queries via our [webform](#).

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