



Home Office

Direct Communications Unit  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Tel: 020 7035 4848  
Fax: 020 7035 4745  
[www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

DECS reference: TRO/0155644/21

15 June 2021

Dear Sir George Howarth,

Thank you for your email of 10 June to the Home Secretary on behalf of [redacted] about the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) Please note you are receiving a response from a policy official.

The Government has repeatedly emphasised EU citizens are our friends, family and neighbours and we want them to stay. The EUSS makes it easy for EU citizens resident in the UK by the end of the transition period and their family members to obtain the UK immigration status they need in order to remain here permanently, with the same rights to work, study and access benefits and services as they had before we left the EU. This status is underpinned in UK law by the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020, which protects the rights here of EU citizens in line with the Withdrawal Agreement.

We have continued to receive and process thousands of applications a day throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest published statistics to 31 May 2021 show there have been more than 5.6 million applications received, more than 5.2 million applications concluded and more than 5 million grants of status. Given this the Government will not be altering the 30 June 2021 deadline for applications to the EUSS by those resident in the UK by the end of the transition period.

The application process for the EUSS is simple, streamlined and free of charge. Applicants only need to complete three key steps: prove their identity, show they live in the UK and declare any criminal convictions. Where the applicant chooses to provide their National Insurance number, we use automated checks of data held by HM Revenue & Customs and the Department for Work and Pensions to help applicants to establish their continuous residence in the UK. This keeps any documentary evidence they need to provide to a minimum. Applicants who need to do so may provide a wide variety of other evidence of their UK residence and Home Office staff will work with them to help them demonstrate their eligibility for status.

Guidance on how to apply and the types of evidence applicants can provide, and details of the support available to them (as it has been throughout the pandemic), including from the EU Settlement Resolution Centre which is open seven days a week to provide assistance over the telephone and by email, can be found here:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/eu-settlement-scheme-applicant-information](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/eu-settlement-scheme-applicant-information)

Additional support is also available through Assisted Digital for those who do not have the appropriate access, skills or confidence to apply online. This support is offered over the telephone. More information can be found at:

[www.gov.uk/assisted-digital-help-online-applications](http://www.gov.uk/assisted-digital-help-online-applications)

The Government has worked extensively to promote awareness of the EUSS. The Home Office has invested nearly £8 million in marketing campaigns to encourage EU citizens and their family members to apply to the scheme. We recently launched a new wave of UK advertising to ensure EU citizens and their family members are aware of the deadline and know they need to apply. We are also working closely with employers, local authorities and charities to raise awareness.

The Government has awarded £22 million of funding to a network of now 72 organisations across the UK. This has been used to ensure important information and assistance gets through to those who are hardest to reach and no one is left behind. These organisations have helped more than 250,000 vulnerable people to apply to the EUSS already. A list of the organisations is available to view at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-community-support-for-vulnerable-citizens/list-of-organisations](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-community-support-for-vulnerable-citizens/list-of-organisations)

The EUSS is the best approach to protecting citizens' rights under the Withdrawal Agreement. It provides EU citizens, and their family members, with clarity about what they need to apply for and by when, and with the secure evidence of their status they need for decades to come. A person's rights will continue to be protected where they apply before the 30 June 2021 deadline and their application is decided after it.

By contrast, a declaratory or automatic system, under which people automatically acquired an immigration status and right to stay by Act of Parliament, would cause confusion. Employers and service providers would struggle to identify those EU citizens who benefit from residence rights under the Withdrawal Agreement from those moving here after the transition period who do not. This could lead to EU citizens who have made the UK their home struggling to prove their rights and entitlements here in decades to come or the status their parents held at the time of their birth in the UK. This is not something we can allow to happen.

The EUSS has been open since March 2019. We encourage all those eligible to apply now to secure their rights. We have also been clear EU citizens and their family members may apply after the deadline where there are reasonable grounds for having missed it. We have published guidance for caseworkers on reasonable grounds for making a late EUSS application, but the guidance is non-exhaustive and all cases will be considered on a flexible and pragmatic basis in light of their particular circumstances.

For the guidance, see 'Making an application: deadline' in 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-caseworker-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-caseworker-guidance)

Yours sincerely,

**EEA Citizens' Rights & Hong Kong Unit**  
Email: [Public.Enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:Public.Enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk)