

Brexit newsletter for migrants

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This is the second Brexit newsletter for British citizens living in the Netherlands, issued by the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND). In the newsletter we look at how British citizens and the IND are preparing for a potential Brexit. Find out what you can do now to ensure you receive a digital version of the temporary residence permit that IND will send by post to British citizens in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Subsequent issues will be published as developments unfold.

Preparing for Brexit



(Pictured from left to right: Richard, Betty and Jonathan. Photo by Kick Smeets.)

How will Brexit affect me? Will I still be able to work or live here? What about travelling without a visa? All these questions are important for United Kingdom nationals living in the Netherlands. Now that Brexit is looming ever closer, they are preparing for the future. So is the IND, which has set up a special project to keep Brexit on the right track.

For the 45,000 Britons living in the Netherlands, it's a tense time. Because even though Brexit is fast approaching, there is still no clarity regarding exactly how it is going to affect them. And that means waiting. "A hugely uncertain period," explains UK national, Jonathan Briers. "I have been living in the Netherlands for 12 years and can say that it has really become my home. But Brexit has thrown things upside down: can I still continue to work here? Travel? Can my mother still come to live with us soon? All questions I had never thought about before and which now suddenly have to be answered." Brexit is also an important topic for British restaurateur and entrepreneur, Richard de Fontaine. "I am closely following the news about Brexit," he explains. "I have been living in the Netherlands since 1989 and have my own restaurant in The Hague. For me it is therefore also important to know what Brexit will mean for my work and my life here."

Logistical challenge

It is familiar story for Betty Sieperda, Brexit project leader at the IND. "We already started our preparations a year ago," she explains.

“First we had to map the legal possibilities. Up to and including the 29 March, these UK nationals all have lawful residence on the basis of European law. They do not need a residence document, but from 30 March, everything changes. Then all 45,000 UK nationals in the Netherlands need to have a residence document. For the IND, that is a huge logistical challenge: usually we process around 100,000 regular applications a year, but thanks to Brexit this could suddenly increase to around 150,000 applications. To provide all these UK nationals with a residence document by this date is quite simply not possible. That’s why we are going to invite them to submit an application to the IND.”

Two scenarios

For this purpose, we formulated two starting points. If there is a deal, there will be a national transition period of two years. During this time, 5,0000 invitation letters will be sent out every month. In this way, over the course of two years, the entire population of 45,000 UK nationals can be covered. In the event of a no-deal Brexit, all UK nationals living in the Netherlands shortly before Brexit will receive a letter from the IND. The letter acts as a temporary residence permit and will be valid for 15 months. During this time, all UK nationals will be invited to submit an application for a residence permit. “We are preparing ourselves for both situations. With this in mind, we have developed two different application forms, one for each situation.”

Reassuring

However, de Fontaine is not worried about Brexit. “I trust the Dutch government,” he says. “That’s in strong contrast to [or There’s a big difference with] the British government. My experience with the IND is that they follow every development and immediately inform us if there are any developments. For example, I recently received the IND’s information letter that explains that our right of residence is not affected. The letter really set my mind at rest.”

Briers did not wait for things to become clear. “Last September I became a Dutch citizen through naturalization,” he explains. “I am married to a Dutch national, live here for 12 years, work here and pay tax, so I also want to be have a say in things - by being able to vote, for example. I had already been planning to become Dutch for some time, so Brexit just speeded things up.”

Compassion

In spite of becoming Dutch, Briers is following developments closely. “I feel abandoned by the British government,” he explains. “In my own country there is absolutely no preparation for what is coming. As a citizen, you are nothing more than a pawn in the whole story. In the Netherlands it is quite different. Of course the Dutch government also doesn’t know what will happen after 29 March, but the IND is providing information very proactively. They are saying: we also don’t know what the future brings, but we are going to help you find out the answers. I am being treated with compassion by the Dutch government, but not by the British.”

Clear information

Sieperda is happy with the praise received from de Fontaine and Briers. “We have been seeking a lot of contact with UK nationals in the Netherlands,” she explains. “We have proactively asked them which information they are looking for and have constantly tried to answer their questions as well as possible. UK nationals in the Netherlands recently received a letter explaining that they can continue to live, work and study in the Netherlands after Brexit. In the letter we explained that they will receive an application to submit an application. The fact that we are only receiving a few telephone calls about Brexit is a good sign. Apparently the information we are providing is clear.”

[Visit IND's Brexit web pages](#)

Make sure you receive your temporary residence permit digitally!



In the event of a no-deal Brexit, we will send you a temporary residence permit by post before 29 March. Make sure you also receive this letter digitally by taking the action below as soon as possible at the beginning of March, or check whether you have already taken the necessary steps.

The IND is connected to the [Message Box](#) of MijnOverheid (MyGovernment). The Message Box is your personal, secure mailbox for digital mail from government organizations. So you can receive personal correspondence like your temporary residence permit in the event of a no-deal Brexit directly from the IND in your Message Box.

What do I need to do to receive my temporary residence permit digitally?

1. Use your DigiD to log in to MijnOverheid at <https://mijnoverheid.nl>

If you do not have a DigiD yet, apply for it at <https://www.digid.nl/en/> (in Dutch only).

2. Choose to receive messages from the IND

In [MijnOverheid](#), go to *Instellingen* (Settings). Under *Organisaties Berichtenbox* (Organisations Message Box), *Landelijke organisaties* (National organisations) check *Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst* (the IND).

What are the advantages of receiving the residence permit digitally?

Convenient backup – You can always print it out. Very handy if for any reason you lose the original sent to you by post. If you do not have the digital copy, you will need to apply to the IND for a new document.

Direct and fast – if you have switched on email notifications, you will receive an email as soon as the digital version of your residence permit arrives in your Message Box.

Secure – messages in your Message Box are protected through DigiD.

How do I know when I have received my residence permit digitally?

You can choose to receive emails notifying you when a new message is waiting for you in your Message Box.

In [MijnOverheid](#) also under *Instellingen*, and then *Meldingen* (Notifications), *Berichtenbox* switch the button to *AAN* (on).

Colophon

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