



Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP
Chair, Exiting the European Union Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

5 March 2019

Dear Hilary,

PUBLICATION OF LETTER TO EU INSTITUTIONS: COSTA AMENDMENT

I am writing to inform you that I have written to the EU institutions seeking views on ring-fencing the citizens' rights agreement whatever the outcome of negotiations. This follows the proposal put forward by Alberto Costa MP that was supported by the House of Commons on 27 February 2019.

As you know, citizens have always been our first priority in Exit negotiations. The Withdrawal Agreement will provide certainty to around three million EU citizens in the UK and almost one million UK nationals in the EU, enshrining their rights in international law. The Government is clear that the reciprocal deal with the EU, as set out in the Withdrawal Agreement, is the best way to fully protect the rights of both UK nationals in the EU and EU citizens in the UK.

The UK Government set out its unilateral offer to EU citizens in the UK in the event of a no deal scenario on 6 December 2018. This will ensure that EU citizens in the UK can continue to work, study and access benefits and services in the UK on the same basis as now. We have been urging our EU counterparts to make the same commitment to UK nationals living in the EU.

Last week, the House of Commons passed a motion by Alberto Costa MP to seek to ring-fence the citizens' rights part of the Withdrawal Agreement. The Government supported the intention of this amendment and I have written to the EU Institutions to seek clarity on their position.

I have attached a copy of my letter and will be depositing the letter in both House libraries.

Yours sincerely,

RT HON STEVE BARCLAY MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION