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Alberto Costa MP  
House of Commons  
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Dear Alberto,

I am writing to inform you that I have received a response from Michel Barnier to my letter of 4 March in which I sought the views of the EU institutions on ring-fencing the citizens' rights section of the Withdrawal Agreement whatever the outcome of negotiations. I have attached Mr Barnier's letter for your reference.

I can assure you that the Government will continue to put the rights of citizens first. We remain committed to our unilateral offer to EU citizens in the UK, whereby in a 'no deal' scenario those resident here by exit day would be able to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to secure their status. The Scheme will be opened fully later this week and 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.

I am depositing a copy of Mr Barnier's letter and this letter in the libraries of both Houses.

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