

Caroline Nokes MP
Minister for Immigration
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

6th November 2018

Dear Ms Nokes,

With only a few months to go until the United Kingdom formally leaves the European Union the future remains uncertain for over three million EU citizens living in the UK. These people were not able to vote in the referendum in 2016 but face the possibility of having their rights fundamentally altered by the decision to leave.

Science and innovation are vital to the UK's future prosperity, wealth and contribution to the world. The success of these sectors is derived from the talents and contribution of our science and research workforce, including the many thousands of EU citizens involved in UK endeavours.

We are deeply concerned by the mounting confusion about additional checks and barriers that may be introduced for EU citizens working in the UK as a result of the 'settled status' scheme not being rolled out in time. Reassurances about protecting the rights of EU citizens resident in the UK before March 2019 are hollow without the practical plans in place to make that happen.

We are urging the government, agencies and other employers to now provide clarity to EU citizen employees by meeting the cost of applying for settled status. Whilst this will have a financial cost, it will be insignificant compared to the sense of value it will provide to colleagues and friends, as well as the benefits of certainty to UK research and innovation.

We are delighted that some employers such as the Scottish Government, the University of Cambridge, the Natural History Museum, and the Building Research Establishment have already committed to meet the £65 charge per application. We are now calling for other employers to follow their lead and make the same pledge to their own employees.

New Prospect House, 8 Leake Street, London SE1 7NN

T 020 7902 6600 F 020 7902 6667 E enquiries@prospect.org.uk W www.prospect.org.uk

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It is shameful that the UK government is lagging behind other public and private sector organisations on this. The government should immediately commit to meeting the cost of settled status applications for all EU citizens working for the public sector and publically encourage private sector employers to do the same.

Both the public and private sectors rely on the talent and dedication of EU citizens, they deserve much better than the uncertainty and confusion they have been subjected to as a result of the Brexit negotiations.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Ferns, senior deputy general secretary, Prospect
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