

## BREXIT – Talk by British Consul Sarah-Jane Morris 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018

With José Chulvi, Gloria Diego/LexTax Consulting, Richard Hill/BrexPats, Ignacio Peliceres[?] [*couldn't read his sign*] and Doris Courcelles

S-J said **the most important thing re Brexit and the Withdrawal Agreement is to get yourself registered:**

1. Check you have the correct paperwork and request to be on the *Padrón* [*for those of you worried about being on that and tax issues, read on – editor!*]
2. Go to the Police and get your Resident's Certificate.

What we know so far [and based on queries raised at the last meeting].

Definite

- **Health care** will continue for those already here; what happens post March 2019, we don't yet know. Using the EHIC card – also not yet sure how/if that will be affected.
- **Pensions:** are currently up-lifted and triple locked i.e. including increase in pensions and this will continue. In some countries, such as Australia, this is not the case. Pensions will be respected in the EU.
- **Qualifications:** if obtained before the UK leaves the EU, they will be respected. Afterwards... as yet unknown.

Not yet agreed

- **Right to Vote:** there have been bilateral agreements between UK and Spain. Re the next elections in May 2019, assume that you will be able to vote.
- **Free movement:** you can continue to live in Spain [or UK]. Not yet sure how it will affect migrant workers from/in other EU countries.
- **Rights of family members** – jury still out.

For more information go to: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk):

- **Living in Spain:** gives current rights and obligations re residency, pets, voting, health care
- **BREXIT:** what's been agreed so far and this will be up-dated.

If you hear things on the rumour mill, contact us via **Facebook: Brits in Spain**.

Richard Hill heads up Brexpats [based in Malaga]: <https://brexpats.es/contact-us/>. He apologised for being a little late but commented on our lovely town, which he had just seen from three different directions!

They are a fully legal organisation dealing with BREXIT in Spain. They work with other groups in Europe including in the Netherlands. They are not campaigning against BREXIT – c. 50% of people voted for it.... – which would be counter-productive.

Rights of expats: he disagreed with the Consul, saying the Withdrawal Agreement wasn't a special agreement, rather an Accord. He advocates that the Agreement should be ring-fenced; expats shouldn't be part of the negotiation.

Per Theresa May: "Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed". Sensible minds are working together on the Agreement.

Richard added it's a numbers game. His group has 4,500 members, there are 300,000 within Europe: greater voice, better protection. The ramifications will be social, financial and [*can't decipher my shorthand!*]. A lot of people have questions about wills, tax, travel, pet passports: we're not experts and don't yet have all the answers.

Ignacio [connected with Brexpats] says they have a lawyer in Valencia and a financial expert.

It was stated at the beginning of the meeting that individual, personal questions would not be answered, but that the Panel would remain behind for a while after the meeting to try to help people with specific worries. Sarah-Jane also said she would return in the autumn to give another up-date.

Votes for Life: current ruling is that after more than 15 years of not living in the UK/being on an electoral roll, Brits abroad cannot vote. There is a move to change that, with discussion in the Commons on 23.2 and after that in the Lords.

Gloria Diego: stressed the importance of getting registered.

1. Town Hall in Jávea to get put on the *Padrón*, and have local voting rights. It also ensures that Jávea receives more money = can better serve the population.
2. Go to the *Policia* in Denia [currently a 6-week waiting period for appointments as lot of people now worried about proving they're residents]. If you've lived here for more than three consecutive months you can obtain a Resident's Permit [like a visa]; more than five years and you can apply for Permanent Resident status.

#### Questions from the floor

- Is anyone representing the rights of the two million expats in Spain, any parliamentary body?

There are MPs and MEPs, but no recognised organisation.

- Residency paper: it's valid but 5+ year Permanent Resident card is better [further proof of your right to live in Spain]. It costs about €11.00.
- Voting: very few had the chance to vote – do you know what %?

A lot were unable to vote on the Referendum... you will be able to do so in due course, including Brits worldwide, if an agreement is reached.

- Query about Resident's certificate [obtained in 2001] and the Permanent Resident's card [2010]. The certificate expires after three months and there's a date for renewal on it. For Permanent Residents there's no expiry date.

Sarah-Jane said she'd ask the Spanish authorities about the waiting times [could be quicker, or not, in another town!].

- People with properties in the UK and Spain: anyone looking after us?

You'll be outside the Withdrawal Agreement.

- Health care?

If not retired, you should have an EHIC card. Spain has a reciprocal agreement with UK who reimburses Spain for any care here. It's not totally free as you have to pay a portion of prescriptions. Local authorities vary and some public hospitals are privately run. EHIC is really for people visiting on holiday. Some cancer patients have consequently had their treatment stopped...

For more information see [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) / Health page

- Status of tax residents after BREXIT?

There's a bilateral agreement = double taxation which stays. Any information on the *Padrón* does not go to the *Hacienda* [central government] so you don't need to worry on that score. However, the *Hacienda* is very communicative with HMRC – bilateral agreement.

- Wills?

Nothing will change. The law changed in 2015 so do check and make a Will to avoid undue hassle! Non-residents fall under British law. Not yet sure what will happen about inheritance, it should be treated the same. Husband to wife [and vice versa] OK, money to children? Don't yet know. Keep checking our website.

- Any restrictions of moving money to the UK?

Don't know.

- Green residency paper - now a card?

Yes, you don't need the paper. You need to advise any changes to your status e.g. change of address, marriage [likewise the *Padrón*]

NB: there are more than 5,000 Brits living in Jávea [could be more if not on *Padrón*] and some 87,000 in the Alicante/Valencia area.