

“Lack of proper and full implementation of legal solutions on citizens’ rights would have a massive impact on people’s lives”. Plenary debate on "Implementing and monitoring the provisions on citizens’ rights in the Withdrawal Agreement", European Parliament – Plenary session Strasbourg, 14 January 2020

In this House throughout the Brexit process, we have had many meetings with EU citizens, including British nationals. We have listened to their stories and understood better the consequences of Brexit for their rights as European citizens. In all its resolutions, the EP dealt with citizen’s rights. Their concerns have become ours. But we see risks to the sustainability of commitments agreed in the Withdrawal Agreement. Hence this resolution. The lack of proper and full implementation of legal solutions on citizens’ rights would have a massive impact on people’s lives and their life choices. The implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement matters because it provides a minimum of legal certainty people need. We regret that in spite of the option presented in article 18 (4) of the Withdrawal Agreement, the UK has chosen to use the application approach for settled status scheme. I regret also that only half of Member States seem to use the approach based on declaration. We also deeply regret that the UK government has announced its intention to end free movement of people under the future framework for cooperation. UK citizens have greatly benefitted from the free movement of people, and I hope that the government changes its mind on this issue. It would further be crucial, that we find the ways toward mutual recognition of qualifications, that it will be possible for citizens to participate in local elections, that there will be good cooperation in the field of family law on the basis of relevant provisions in international law, that potential regulatory divergence will not affect citizens’ rights. I appreciate the assurances given to us by the UK government with regard to the functioning of the Independent Monitoring Authority. The European Parliament will nevertheless keep a watchful eye on the implementation process. As we have pointed out in our resolution, the shortened

transition period means that there is less time to operationalise governance of Withdrawal Agreement regarding citizens' rights. I call on both sides to do it as a matter of priority. Ultimately, the proper and full implementation of citizens' rights would help to build trust, needed for successful negotiations on the future.