



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Dear Brother Bishops,

Following my letter in December, I am writing with further details about the Settlement Scheme for EU/EEA citizens who wish to remain in the UK after Brexit.

Given the very large proportion of EU citizens who are Catholic, this is likely to affect many parishioners across England and Wales in the coming months.

The Settlement Scheme is due to fully open by the end of March. All the details and links to the application process can now be found at: www.gov.uk/eusettledstatus

As you know, since I last wrote, the Prime Minister has announced that there will not be a charge when applying to settle here. This is a very welcome move, for as we had conveyed to the government, previous proposals to charge people for securing their existing rights would not only be unjust but would also create an unnecessary barrier to applying.

Nevertheless, many of those who have made their homes here and wish to stay will still be facing uncertainty and confusion about what they need to do. The Bishops' Conference is therefore continuing to engage with both the Home Office and the European Commission to address problems with the scheme and help make people aware of their rights.

At this stage I would particularly like to draw your attention to a dedicated website recently launched by the European Commission: www.eurights.uk

This site includes:

- Impartial information about the Settlement Scheme
- Details of local information sessions across the country
- An option for parishes, groups or organisations to book an immigration solicitor free of charge to attend information sessions that they are hosting

I know that several dioceses are already making use of this valuable resource and encourage you to circulate it widely including to your Vicar General, Director of Education, Vicar for Religious and those responsible for social action in the Diocese.

With my prayers and best wishes,

Rt Rev Paul McAleenan
Lead Bishop for Migration and Asylum
Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales