



## Guarantee rights for newly hired EU employees, urge business leaders

Annie Makoff 3 Jan 2017 0 comments

### BCC and TUC call for ‘unequivocal commitment’ that EU workers can stay in the UK

Business groups have called on the government to guarantee that EU staff hired since the June referendum will be granted the right to the stay in the UK.

In an [open letter to Theresa May](#), the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) and the TUC urged the prime minister to “give an unequivocal commitment that EU citizens currently working here will have a permanent right to remain in the UK”.

The two organisations expressed concern that May had yet to guarantee the rights of EU citizens and asked the prime minister to “break the deadlock”.

Marcus Mason, BCC head of business, education and skills, said: “It is crucial that the government

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commits to reassuring EU citizens working in the UK that they will have a permanent right to remain. Such a move would boost business confidence during a period of transition, but it is also the right thing to do for business, for the economy and for the individuals and families concerned.”

Chris Brazier, a business immigration lawyer at BP Collins, added: “This request is the latest attempt to encourage the government to provide some certainty for both EU nationals currently working in the UK and those businesses that employ those nationals. It is clear to all concerned that the current position cannot be maintained for much longer.

“The number of EU nationals applying for permanent residency has increased substantially since the referendum and the system is struggling to cope with those applications.”

In December, the [Independent](#) reported that the number of permanent residency applications had tripled since 2015, with just fewer than 100,000 applications for permanent residency in the UK being processed by July 2016. An [earlier poll](#) by the same paper revealed that two-thirds (66 per cent) wanted the prime minister to guarantee that EU migrants currently working in the UK would be allowed to stay.

Meanwhile, leading business groups – including the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the BCC, the Institute of Directors, the Federation of Small Business and the EEF – have published a [joint letter](#) calling for “industry input into Brexit negotiations” and “an open and honest dialogue” between government and British businesses.

Josh Hardie, CBI deputy-general, commented: “Maintaining the UK as a leading place to invest and work matters for livelihoods across the country. Given the connection between trade and mobility, government and business must work together to build an immigration system that supports growth and restores public confidence.”

The CIPD’s acting chief economist, Ian Brinkley, has also urged the government to provide more certainty: “The single biggest thing that the government could do to help in 2017 would be to give businesses greater certainty over the direction of travel, the residence status of migrants already in the country and the likely extent of restrictions on new flows of migrants. Very few employers want a ‘hard’ Brexit and the government must consider this when planning its strategy for both the final arrangement and the transition towards it. We simply cannot afford for businesses to live in limbo.”

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