



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

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From the General Secretary – Rev. Christopher Thomas

06 February 2020

To the members of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

Dear Brother Bishops,

Following the UK's exit from the European Union, I am writing with an update about the Settlement Scheme for European citizens who have made their homes here and wish to remain.

Given the very large proportion of European citizens who are Catholic, this affects many of our parishioners across England and Wales.

To remind you of the Settlement Scheme's main points:

- Any EU, EEA or Swiss citizen living here is required by the government to apply online by **30 June 2021** in order to protect their existing rights
- To be eligible people must be living here by **31 December 2020**
- Some non-European family members of EU, EEA or Swiss citizens are also eligible
- Irish citizens do not need to apply
- **All details and links to the application process can be found at gov.uk/eusettledstatus**

While a significant number of people have already completed the process, almost 25% of European citizens living in the UK have not yet applied. This leaves them at risk of losing their rights to live and work here or access important services such as healthcare.

We are particularly concerned about older and vulnerable people who may struggle to navigate the process, require assistance with the online application or not even know that their status is at risk. In many cases their main point of contact with society will be through the Church.

I therefore hope that you may be able to raise awareness about the Settlement Scheme in your Diocese by encouraging all parishes to include text along the following lines in their newsletters:

All EU, EEA and Swiss citizens living in the UK are required by the government to apply through its Settlement Scheme to continue living, working and accessing services here. The deadline for applications is 30 June 2021. Details and links to the application process can be found at: [gov.uk/eusetledstatus](https://www.gov.uk/eusetledstatus)

Please bring this to the attention of friends, family members and fellow parishioners who may need to apply. Information on assistance for those who may have difficulty applying is available at: [gov.uk/help-eu-settlement-scheme](https://www.gov.uk/help-eu-settlement-scheme)

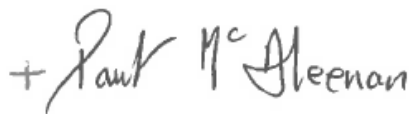
The Catholic Church in England and Wales stands in solidarity with all European citizens who have made their homes here. They are a valued part of our parishes, schools and communities.

Please also make this information available to your Vicar General, Director of Education, Vicar for Religious and those responsible for social action in the Diocese.

The European Commission has launched a dedicated website at eurights.uk including details of local information sessions across the country and an option for parishes, groups or organisations to book an immigration solicitor free of charge. I know that several dioceses are already making use of this valuable resource and encourage you to circulate it widely.

The Bishops' Conference is in regular contact with both the Home Office and the European Commission about the Settlement Scheme. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss this in further detail.

With my prayers and best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Paul McAleenan". The signature is written in a cursive style.

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