By email: Jo White MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Migration and Citizenship)

10 November 2026

Dear Minister,

Impact of Earned Settlement proposals on EU Settlement Scheme status holders

We would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister for Migration and Citizenship. I am writing on behalf of the3million, the largest grassroots organisation representing EU citizens who made the UK their home, to request a meeting. We have had very constructive meetings with several of your predecessors since the Brexit referendum, and would welcome the opportunity to discuss our work and to share with you a summary of the main concerns faced by those we represent.

In particular, we would like to discuss the impact of the recent Earned Settlement proposals on families where the sponsor has EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) status, but their family member is not eligible for EUSS status due to their relationship having started after 31 December 2020. In such cases, the family member will have needed to apply for a visa under Appendix FM instead, with associated visa costs, health surcharges and minimum income requirements.

On 2 November, the Government announced changes to settlement policy, which include moving the majority of such visa holders to a longer qualifying period for settlement. We hope to raise the concerns of our community members whose family member's pathway to settlement will now be doubled.

We welcome the reconsideration of transitional arrangements for social care workers, and the decision to allow people on dependent visas to settle at a similar time to their sponsor, keeping families on the same path towards stability. However, we believe that excluding family members sponsored by someone with indefinite leave to remain, or with status under the EU Settlement Scheme, from the five-year path to settlement does not reflect their families' connection to the UK. The Government's original proposals included that the shorter 5-year pathway to settlement would be retained for those who have a "uniquely strong attachment" to the UK[1]. The response to the consultation clarifies that this strong connection is only satisfied by the family members of British citizens or Commonwealth citizens qualifying through the UK Ancestry route.

According to the Home Office, 39,000 people in total will face a wait of up to 10 years to settle, resulting in a far longer period of uncertainty, and substantial additional costs over many years in the form of visa fees and Immigration Health Surcharges.

The UK/EU Summit is scheduled to take place on 20 November, and the 16th Joint Committee meeting between the EU and the UK is taking place today, 10 November. At the last Joint Committee meeting, both UK and EU counterparts reiterated their joint priority in "*protecting the rights of UK nationals in the EU and EU citizens in the UK, now and in the future*."[2]

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/earned-settlement

[2] 2 February 2026 - Joint statement on the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee and Trade and Cooperation Agreement Partnership Council meetings

In 2018, the Government's response to a Home Affairs Committee report on the delivery of Brexit said of "***Family reunion rights for future spouses of EU and UK citizens***": "*Future spouses and partners of EU citizens with leave under the settlement scheme will need to meet the UK's domestic immigration requirements, which are currently set out in Appendix FM to the Immigration Rules.* ***This will mean equal treatment for EU and British citizens who marry foreign nationals.***"[3]

We are hearing from many families of EUSS settled status holders who are uncertain whether their family members will be able to remain in the UK because of the changes. Several sponsors with settled status under the EUSS who have contacted us spoke of the particularly unfair impact on them because they have long wanted to become British citizens but for the fact that their country of origin does not allow dual citizenship (for example the Netherlands). They would like to demonstrate a "British Connection" but are unable to do so, resulting in these cohorts being at a distinct disadvantage in achieving stability for their families.

the3million submitted evidence to the Lord Justice and Home Affairs inquiry on Settlement, Citizenship and Integration, setting out our concerns on the impact earned settlement would have on EU citizens whose family members did not qualify for EUSS for reasons including getting married after the transition period.[4] Other organisations including Reunite Families[5] and the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA)[6] both submitted written evidence outlining how the proposed changes will deeply impact families' ability to live, plan and feel secure in the UK.

While you were a member of the Home Affairs Select Committee, its report on Routes to Settlement was published. This report highlighted how the reforms would impact "*almost everyone currently on a route to settlement—including family members of British citizens and people with settled status*" and warned longer routes to settlement would impact families.[7] We share those concerns for families currently living and building their lives in the UK.

We would welcome a meeting with you, so that we can introduce our organisation and share some of the messages we are receiving from EU citizens with status under the EU Settlement Scheme, who are extremely anxious about their family's future as a result of the announced Earned Settlement changes.

Yours sincerely,

Monique Hawkins

Head of Policy and Advocacy, and Acting CEO, the3million

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[3] https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhaff/1075/1075.pdf

[4] 23 January 2026 - the3million's written evidence to the House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Select Committee on their Settlement, Citizenship and Integration inquiry.

[5] 27 February 2026 - Reunite Families UK written evidence to the House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Select Committee on their Settlement, Citizenship and Integration inquiry.

[6] 27 February 2026 - Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA) written evidence to the House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Select Committee on their Settlement, Citizenship and Integration inquiry.

[7] 10 March 2026 - Home Affairs Select Committee - Earned Settlement: Examining the Government's proposed reforms