

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson,
10 Downing Street,
City of Westminster,
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

12th May 2020

Dear Prime Minister,
Dear Foreign Secretary,
Dear Home Secretary,

We write on behalf of British in Europe representing 1.2 million UK nationals living in the EU. We note that the Prime Minister confirmed in the House of Commons that the UK will implement a period of quarantine/self-isolation by the end of May for all travellers arriving in the UK except for those coming from France or Ireland.¹

We are asking you to review this decision and to expand the exempted category to all UK and EU/EEA/EFTA citizens arriving from EU/EEA/EFTA countries, be it by air, rail or sea.

It is discriminatory to exempt a UK national living in France from 14 days self-isolation but not a UK national living in Greece. Furthermore, there is no scientific basis for this decision given that very many countries in the EU/EEA/EFTA region have had far fewer cases of COVID-19 and recorded far fewer deaths from it than France.

The COVID-19 pandemic is going to be with us for a long time - certainly until we have a safe, effective and widely available vaccine - but that is months, if not years away. Implementing this quarantine decision without an exemption for UK and EU/EEA/EFTA nationals means that tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of us will be effectively prevented from returning to the UK, be it for business, leisure or family reasons, for the foreseeable future. Those of us who need to work in the UK on a cross-border basis may find ourselves unable to keep our jobs or businesses running in our EU state of residence. In turn, this could affect our ability to meet economic requirements for residence in our host states under the Withdrawal Agreement. And, as death rates climb in the UK, those of us with family there may simply not see them again unless we can travel to the UK over the summer.

We hope that you will reconsider this decision - as President Macron did when France contemplated a similar step two weeks ago - and provide the requested exemption. This is a time of great unease and concern for everyone and this simple step would at least remove this key concern.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

Yours sincerely

Jane Golding
Co-Chair, British in Europe

Fiona Godfrey
Co-Chair, British in Europe