

## **Annex B**

### **Information for UK students enrolled in a Bulgarian university before 31 December 2020**

#### **Residence permits**

##### **1. How do I protect my rights after 1 January 2021?**

In order to be protected by the Withdrawal Agreement, you need to register for residency with the Migration Directorate of the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior, like all other UK nationals residing in Bulgaria. You can find the full details of the new residency scheme on the [Ministry of Interior's website](#).

The date by which you need to apply, renew or exchange your residence permit will depend on your personal circumstances, but it has to be no later than 31 December 2021.

##### **2. I already have a residence permit (obtained before 31 January 2020), which expires before 31 December 2021. When do I need to exchange it and what documents do I need?**

If your current residence permit expires before 31 December 2021, you need to renew it before its expiry date, as you would normally. You will need to provide the same supporting documents as all EU citizens:

- Application form
- Valid passport
- Evidence that you are enrolled in a Bulgarian university
- Proof of health insurance (e.g. private insurance, EHIC or proof that your Bulgarian university has paid medical insurance on your behalf)
- Proof of sufficient financial means (e.g. copy of a bank card)
- Proof of address (e.g. notary deed of ownership, rental contract)
- Payment receipt

##### **3. I already have a residence permit (obtained before 31 January 2020), which expires after 31 December 2021. When do I need to exchange it and what documents do I need?**

If your current residence permit expires after 31 December 2021, you will only need to exchange it for the new format at any point before 31 December 2021, and will have to present an application form, your passport and your current residence permit.

##### **4. I was already enrolled in a Bulgarian university before 31 January 2020, but never applied for a residence permit. What do I need to do?**

If you were lawfully resident in Bulgaria before 31 January 2020, but have not yet registered with the Ministry of Interior, you need to do so by 31 December 2021. You will need to provide the same supporting documents as EU citizens (see Q. 2).

##### **5. I enrolled in a Bulgarian university after 31 January 2020, but have not applied for a residence permit. What do I need to do?**

If you arrived in Bulgaria during the Transition period between 1 February 2020 and 31 December 2020, you need to register with the Ministry of Interior within 90 days of your arrival. You will need to provide the same supporting documents as EU citizens (see Q. 2).

**6. I enrolled in a Bulgarian university after 31 January 2020, and already have a residence permit. What do I need to do?**

If you applied for a residence permit before 7 July 2020, you will need to exchange or renew your residence permit by its date of validity or 31 December 2020, whichever date comes first.

If you applied for a residence permit after 7 July 2020, you already hold the new format of permit and therefore don't need to take any further action at this stage. You will need to renew your permit as normal shortly before its expiry date.

**7. What happens if I don't meet the application deadline?**

If you fail to meet these deadlines, you may face a fine of 50 to 300 leva. However, as long as you were lawfully residing in Bulgaria before 31 December 2020, you will not lose your rights and will continue to be protected by the Withdrawal Agreement. When you go to apply for your new document, you will need proof that you were resident in Bulgaria by 31 December 2020.

**Travel to Bulgaria from 1 January 2021**

**8. I am enrolled in a Bulgarian university and want to travel back to the UK, returning to Bulgaria in 2021. I have a residence permit. Do I need a visa type D to travel back to Bulgaria after 31 December 2020?**

If you are legally resident in Bulgaria before 31 December 2020, you do not need a visa to enter the country from 1 January 2021. Being registered as a resident (holding a residence permit) will allow you to enter and exit the country as you do now. You will need to show your residence permit at the border.

**9. I am enrolled in a Bulgarian university and want to travel back to the UK, returning to Bulgaria in 2021. I don't have a residence permit. Do I need a visa type D to travel back to Bulgaria after 31 December 2020?**

If you are legally resident in Bulgaria before 31 December 2020 (e.g. you are enrolled in a Bulgarian university), but you don't hold a residence permit, you will still be able to enter the country without a visa from 1 January 2021. However, you should be prepared to have your passport stamped and show proof that you were resident in Bulgaria before 31 December 2020 (e.g. by showing a letter of enrolment from your university). You should then apply for a residence permit as soon as possible to be able to travel in and out of Bulgaria freely.

**10. After 31 December 2020, can I only spend 90/180 days in Bulgaria?**

If you are legally resident in Bulgaria before 31 December 2020 and hold a valid residence permit, you will not be subject to any restriction on the time you can spend in Bulgaria. The "90 out of every 180 days" rule applies only to those arriving in Bulgaria after 1 January 2021.

**11. What validity period do I need on my passport to continue traveling to Bulgaria?**

Until 31 December 2020, you will be able to enter Bulgaria with your UK passport up to its date of validity. From 1 January 2021, you will have to have at least 3 months validity on your passport upon entering Bulgaria.

Remember that you will need to show your passport when exchanging or renewing your residence permit, so make sure to renew it if it is due to expire.

**12. How do I renew my UK passport from Bulgaria?**

You can renew your UK passport from Bulgaria, following the [instructions here](#).

**13. Can my family/ friends from the UK visit me in Bulgaria after 1 January 2021? What rules do they need to follow?**

From 1 January 2021, UK nationals who are not resident in Bulgaria will still be able to visit the country without a visa, if the duration of their stay does not exceed more than 90 days out of every 180-day period. For longer visits, a visa may be required, depending on the purpose of travel. Their passport will have to be valid for at least 3 months from the date they plan to leave Bulgaria.

**Healthcare and EHICs**

**14. Will my EHIC still be valid after 31 December 2020?**

UK students who are legally resident (have registered for residency) in the EU before 31 December 2020, including in Bulgaria, will continue to be entitled to a UK EHIC for the duration of their academic course. The EHIC will continue covering the same types of treatments as now. However, the EHIC will only be valid for use in Bulgaria, and not for travel across the EU.

**15. Why is there a new EHIC and who is eligible for it?**

The new EHIC is for UK-insured people in scope of the Withdrawal Agreement to demonstrate their continued entitlement to EHIC cover from 1 January 2021. A new card is required to make this status clear. This also applies to UK students in Bulgaria, who enrolled in their course and moved here before 31 December 2020.

**16. I have recently renewed my EHIC. Should I re-apply for this new card or is my old card the same and will it still be valid?**

You can continue to use your current EHIC as normal until at least 31 December 2020. However, as the continuity of EHIC (and all reciprocal healthcare arrangements after the end of the year) are subject to negotiations with the EU, your current card may not be valid after this date. Therefore, you should apply for the new EHIC.

The Online Portal for applying opened on 9th November. Please check this link: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-ehic-european-health-insurance-card/>

**17. When should I apply for my new EHIC card?**

You can continue to use your current EHIC as normal until at least 31 December 2020. However, as the continuity of EHIC (and all reciprocal healthcare arrangements after the end of the year) are subject to negotiations with the EU, your current card may not be valid after this date.

**18. Will the new card provide any different entitlements?**

No, the new EHIC will provide exactly the same entitlements as now. However, EHIC does not replace travel insurance, and you should have both if you are travelling to the EU.

**19. How long will the new UK EHICs be issued for?**

The length of validity depends on your circumstances. If you are a student, it is valid until the end of the study period abroad.

**20. Is there a deadline to apply? Do I have to apply before the end of the year?**

No, but we recommend that you apply early, especially if you are planning to travel in other EU countries over the end of the year or in early 2021, as your current EHIC may not be valid then.

**21. How long will it take for me to receive the card after applying?**

You will receive notification of the outcome of your application within 5 working days of submitting your application and any evidence we ask for. Provided you register early, your new EHIC will be sent to you for use by 1 January 2021. If you currently have a valid EHIC, you can continue to use it until 31 December 2020.

**22. Can I keep my old card until the new one arrives?**

Yes – as current EHICs will be valid until at least 31 December 2020 (unless the expiry date is sooner), we recommend that you keep your old card until your new card arrives if you are intending to travel before the end of the year.

**23. What do I do if I need to travel before my new card arrives?**

If you need to travel before your new EHIC arrives, you can use your current EHIC as long as it is in date and your trip concludes before 31 December 2020.

If your current EHIC is not in date, or if you will be travelling next year when your current EHIC may no longer be valid, you can obtain a Provisional Replacement Certificate (PRC) should you require medically necessary treatment whilst abroad if you are within the scope of the WA. Please note that the PRC can only be requested at the point of requiring care; it is not possible to request a PRC in advance of your trip.

Please contact NHSBSA on +44 (0)300 330 1350 should you require a PRC.

**24. Can I still use my EHIC to renew my residence permit in the future, or do I need private health insurance?**

If you are legally resident in Bulgaria by 31 December 2020 and hold a residence permit, you will be protected by the Withdrawal Agreement and eligible for a EHIC. You can continue to use it as proof of health insurance to renew your residence permit.

**Driving licence exchange**

**25. I have a UK driving licence. Do I need to exchange it for a Bulgarian one?**

UK driving licences will continue to be valid in Bulgaria until 31 December 2020, or until their expiry date, whichever comes first. If you are resident in Bulgaria, you should exchange your UK driving licence for a Bulgarian one before 31 December 2020.

**26. When can I exchange my UK driving licence for a Bulgarian one?**

EU rules still apply until 31 December 2020. Therefore, you will be able to exchange your UK licence for a Bulgarian one, at least six months after the date of issue of your current residence permit. The process of exchanging your driving licence is simple and will not require you to take a test.

These rules may change from 1 January 2021, as they are still under negotiation. We will share any new updates are available.

### **27. Can I use my Bulgarian driving licence in the UK for short visits?**

Until 31 December 2020, you can drive on a Bulgarian license when visiting the UK, without requiring an International Driving Permit. Arrangements for January 2021 onwards are still in the process of negotiations and we will share any new developments as soon as they are confirmed.

## **Completing education and recognition of qualifications**

### **28. I am already enrolled in a Bulgarian university and will graduate after 2021. Will anything change for me?**

The Ministry of Education has reassured us that the UK's departure from the EU will not affect those already enrolled in Bulgarian higher education. You will be able to complete your studies under the same terms as when you enrolled.

### **29. My university is increasing its fees for international students. Can the British Embassy do anything to help?**

Each university is an independent institution and has the right to change its fees. If this change applies to all students, this is not a discriminatory practice and the British Embassy cannot intervene. If however, the change only applies to UK students as a result of the UK's departure from the EU, please get in touch with the British Embassy.

### **30. I am due to graduate in 2020. Will my qualification be recognised in the UK?**

Your professional qualification will be recognised in the UK, as long as it was obtained or applied for before 31 December 2020.

### **31. I am due to graduate from 2021 onwards. Will my qualification be recognised in the UK?**

Future recognition of qualifications is subject to the ongoing negotiations between the UK and the EU.

In case the UK and EU don't reach a trade deal, the UK government may put in place a temporary system of recognition that allows holders of EU qualifications to seek recognition of their qualifications in the UK.

We will publish more information on this topic on our Facebook page and Living in Bulgaria Guide as soon as it becomes available.

You should also reach to the relevant regulator for your profession, as they may have separate recognition rules.

## **Information for UK students enrolled in a Bulgarian university from 1 January 2021**

### **32. I plan to enrol in a Bulgarian university in 2021. What do I need to do?**

If you are planning to enrol in a higher education course in Bulgaria beginning in 2021, you will be treated as a Third Country National. You will have to apply for a visa type D and then apply for a residence permit once they arrive in Bulgaria. You can find detailed information about visas on the website of the Bulgarian [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#).

## **USEFUL LINKS**

### General guidance

- [Guidance on the end of the Transition Period](#)
- [Living in Bulgaria Guide](#)
- [Healthcare guide](#)
- [DEFRA – guide to pet travel](#)

### Bulgarian authorities

- [Ministry of Interior – information about Brexit \(residence permits, travel, driving licences\)](#)
- [Ministry of Interior – required documents to renew your residence permit](#)
- [Ministry of Foreign Affairs – information about visas](#)

### Support for UK nationals

- [Contact form for any type of enquiries from UK nationals](#)
- [Consular support](#) from British Embassy
- [AIRE Centre - support for UK nationals](#)

### Travel to the UK (quarantine and future travel rules)

- [Passenger locator form for travel to the UK](#)
- [Schengen calculator](#)