

State Pension April 11, 2019

# EU member states urged to protect social security rights



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**T**he European Commission is encouraging European Union member states to protect people's pensions post-Brexit.

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Marianne Thyssen, commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, said on Monday (April 9) the EC has put in place a contingency regulation at EU level to protect citizens in case of a hard Brexit.

These rules ensure that the time

periods an individual has worked as an EU citizen in the UK or as a UK citizen in the EU before Brexit will continue to be recognised for social security purposes.

"This can be relevant for example for your entitlement to an old age pension at the end of your career," she said in a speech about Brexit preparedness.

Ms Thyssen also explained the EC was giving guidance to member states and was coordinating their common contingency measures, which include certain social security rights such as pensions and medical coverage.

"In particular, we have discussed with member states that they will continue to allow citizens to export their pension benefits to the UK," she noted.

Former pensions minister Baroness Ros Altmann has previously warned of the risks to British expats in a no-deal Brexit, as state pensions will only be uprated if host countries reciprocate.

According to guidance issued in December, the UK government is committed to uprating the state pension across the EU in 2019/20.

"We would wish to continue uprating pensions beyond that but would take decisions in light of whether, as we would hope and expect, reciprocal arrangements with the EU are in place," it stated.

Ms Thyssen said a withdrawal agreement offers "clearly the best possible protection" of citizens' rights.

She said: "If the withdrawal agreement is ratified, citizens' rights are legally secured in the EU and in the UK.

"Conversely, in the absence of a ratified withdrawal agreement – this means in case of a 'hard Brexit' - there will inevitably be a degree of legal uncertainty.

"The Commission is working hard with the other EU institutions and the member states to minimise the uncertainty."

Meanwhile it was announced this morning (April 11) that European Union leaders and the UK agreed a six-month extension to the Brexit deadline, with the hopes that the country can reach a deal before the new deadline on October 31.