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## THE IMPACT OF BREXIT IN THE LIFE OF BRITISH CITIZENS RESIDING IN PORTUGAL

Law No. 27-A/2019, which establishes the contingency measures to be applied in case the United Kingdom (UK) leaves the European Union (EU) without an agreement, entered into force on 29 March 2019 by means of the “principle of equivalent treatment “. This means that the application of this law, with the exception of access to healthcare services by non-residents, requires the British authorities provide the same treatment to Portuguese citizens residing in the UK, under the penalty of total or partial suspension of this law.

This law protects the rights of British citizens and respective families who reside in the national territory (hereinafter “citizens”) at the time the UK leaves the EU.

The citizens who have their permanent residence in Portugal at the time the UK leaves the EU shall continue to be considered residents without interruption.

However, those who intend to establish residence in the national territory after 31 December 2020 must, until that date, apply for their residence permits at the service counters of the city councils or at the registry offices equipped with the technical means for that purpose. For this application, the following documents must be submitted: the registration certificate, the residence card of a family member of a EU citizen, the permanent residence permit or the permanent residence card, depending on their status.

The residence permit to be granted will be either temporary or permanent, depending on whether the citizen has resided in the national territory for less than five years or for at least five years, respectively.

International student status will not apply to higher education students who until the end of the course of study in which they were initially enrolled or to which they were transferred. Furthermore, said status does not apply to citizens who enrol in a Portuguese higher education institution until 31 December 2020.

For the purposes of recognizing the social security rights of persons who have completed periods of insurance in the UK, this Law sets forth that the periods of insurance completed in a UK statutory social security scheme shall be taken into account until the date when the UK leaves the EU.

As regards access to health services, citizens continue to be beneficiaries of the National Health Service.

With regard to driving licenses, citizens must exchange their license until 31 December 2020.

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For more information contact [apdt@abreuadvogados.com](mailto:apdt@abreuadvogados.com)

Lisbon  
Av. Infante D. Henrique, 26  
1149-096 Lisbon  
☎ (+351) 217 231 800  
☎ (+351) 217 231 899  
✉ [lisboa@abreuadvogados.com](mailto:lisboa@abreuadvogados.com)

Porto  
Rua S. João de Brito, 605 E - 4º  
4100-455 Porto  
☎ (+351) 226 056 400  
☎ (+351) 226 001 816  
✉ [porto@abreuadvogados.com](mailto:porto@abreuadvogados.com)

Madeira  
Rua Dr. Brito da Câmara, 20  
9000-039 Funchal  
☎ (+351) 291 209 900  
☎ (+351) 291 209 920  
✉ [madeira@abreuadvogados.com](mailto:madeira@abreuadvogados.com)

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