

# *British Citizens Seek Irish Passport in Drove*

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London, April 21 (RHC)-- According to news reports from London, there has been a significant surge in the number of Britons seeking to become citizens of Ireland, following the Brexit vote.

The Irish foreign ministry received over 50,000 passport applications from Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the first quarter of 2017 alone, compared to approximately 30,000 over the same period last year – a 69 percent increase.

The demand is enough that the foreign department is said to be hiring extra staff and has launched an online passport renewal service. At the start of this year, it was revealed that 733,060 Irish passports were issued last year, a rise of nine percent over 2015, with an estimated 65,000 given to Britons – a 42 percent increase.

After the Brexit referendum, Ireland saw an 83 percent rise in applications, from the U.K., for Irish passports. Ten members of parliament are reportedly among the number of persons who have applied for Irish passports.

Charlie Flanagan, Ireland's foreign minister and a member of the ruling Fine Gael party, said: "I am very concerned about the impact of the U.K.'s withdrawal from the EU on our economy here in Ireland, and I am really anxious to make sure the Good Friday agreement is not disturbed. I am saddened that the U.K.

is leaving the EU formally, but I of course very much accept the desire and will of the majority in the U.K.” Under the Good Friday agreement, the 1.8 million people resident in Northern Ireland are entitled to Irish and EU citizenship.

British citizens retention of their right to freedom of movement post-Brexit is currently uncertain. But, Guy Verhofstadt, the European parliament’s Brexit coordinator, has said that he will try to persuade EU leaders to make the case.

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