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Questions on free movement, red tape linger in Brexit citizens' deal



EU and Britain in Brexit talks.

Britain's agreement with the European Union over key Brexit terms still leaves major issues like freedom of movement undecided, some campaigners said yesterday.

Prime minister Theresa May and EU Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker unveiled an agreement earlier on the Irish border, citizens' rights and the Brexit bill, opening the way for talks on trade and a transition period.

While the status of the EU's only land border with the United Kingdom was perhaps the thorniest issue, the deal safeguarding the rights of 3 million EU citizens in Britain and around 1.2 million Britons living elsewhere in the EU will affect households across the continent. London and Brussels agreed to offer equal treatment in social security, health care, employment and education and to let British judges ask the Euro-

pean Court of Justice to weigh in when necessary for eight years after Brexit.

But Jane Golding, who heads British in Europe, a coalition of 10 citizens' groups representing around 35,000 Britons liv-



ing in the rest of the bloc, said fundamental issues have not been dealt with. "The really big one is free movement,

and we are worried that that is just simply going to be deferred until the next phase," Golding, a Briton who has lived in Berlin for nine years, told Reuters.

"In future, if you don't have the right

of free movement, the right to go and work and live in those other countries and have your qualifications recognised

in those other countries, you could be passed up for those opportunities, and that's going to impact your career," she said. Friday's agreement does not specify whether British citizens may move from one EU state to another and retain the same rights. Getting a deal that works is crucial to both Britain, the world's sixth-largest economy, and the EU, the world's biggest trading bloc.

Britons hold positions in major businesses across the continent and take advantage of overseas study schemes such as Erasmus, while tens of thousands of elderly people rely on EU agreements for access to public services and their pensions in countries such as Spain.

EU citizens fill key roles in Britain's state-run health service, construction sector and many professional jobs, with British business leaders keen to retain unfettered access to the continent's labour market.