



## *Carte de Séjour- Terry and Irene O'Neill*

Rob And I'm here with Terry and Irene O'Neill, who are about to go through the process of getting a Carte de Séjour, to become resident in France. Can you tell me first of all, Terry, why you want to go through this long, drawn-out process?

Terry We hope it isn't a long, drawn-out process, but we've lived here for eight years, and we've retired to France. We don't have property in the UK, we're not going to go back there, although I do have business interests there and I go back periodically, but we're not going back to live. So if we're going to stay here in the light of Brexit, and the ramifications of what might happen in the next two years, we thought it would be advisable to at least register formally our intention to stay. Simple as that.

Rob Irene, what do you hope to get from becoming residents in this official way?

Irene Peace of mind that I can stay here, and there's no possibility of being told that I got to leave. It's a place we love - obviously want to stay here.

Rob What have you had to do to apply for this Carte de Séjour? What are the kind of criteria that you need to cover?

Terry It's been a complicated process simply because we didn't know what we were doing. We assumed, because of what we'd heard from various people, that we'd have to provide copious details about our background and our existence here, our ability to support ourselves et cetera, and because nobody would give a definite comment on how we should do that, we've collected copious information and trying to collate it into a file in readiness for our meeting at the end of the month. That's the only problem - it's just not knowing quite what to do.

Rob Where do you get information from eventually?

Terry Well, it's all from our own information. For instance, I was certainly under the impression that we would have to show detailed documents for the last five years, but subsequently we hear that is not the case and that we know somebody who's had a meeting very recently, and they showed their opening statements and the current statements, and the period in between - eight or nine years in between - was immaterial.

Rob I understand that you have to be in France for a certain length of time before you can apply for this. Is this correct?

Terry Five years, Rob, yes. We've been here for eight, so that isn't a problem. We think it's going to be a fairly straightforward process but we'll find out at the end of the month. (Laughter)

Rob It's a question of feeling a little bit more secure about your residence here in France that you're going through this?

Irene Yes, it is. Yes.

Terry Quite definitely.

Rob And have there been any effects of the Brexit referendum for you up to now?

Irene Not so far.

Terry No.

Irene Apart from the exchange rate going, you know, the pound's value dropping so much, that's been the biggest ...

Terry That's been the biggest impact so far, yes. And of course, it could go a lot worse. But if you think back five or six years, sterling was at parity with the euro, it was one pound for one, one Euro. So it isn't as bad as that yet, but we all tend to forget that. So it really isn't .. not that serious.

Rob What would you say to people who might think that this is unnecessary? That there isn't going to be a great upheaval in the relationship between France and England, that people aren't actually at risk of being sent home?

Terry I don't know. It's very difficult to form an opinion on that The French presidency is coming up for election next year, as in Germany. We have disruption in Europe, because a certain number of opinion polls that I've seen carried out in Germany and in France voted very seriously in favour of, of exiting the EC. Now if that were to happen and Europe were to break up, then it could be a crazy situation, and nobody knows where we would stand, but we thought it would be sensible to register our sincerity and our interest in showing that we are going to stay here.

Rob Can I just go back a step to ask how you found out about what's required in terms of documentation for this move?

Terry That's interesting. It was word of mouth to begin with, but then we saw a letter that somebody who had applied for a Carte de Séjour had been given and the requirements were quite clear and stated on that. The only complication that we have is that I'm still a director of a company in the UK, and I earn dividends from the UK company, and therefore that is a slight ... I wouldn't say therefore but it is a slight complication as to how the French authorities might view it. But I mean we submit our tax returns and there's never been a problem thus far. So we'll wait and see.

Rob Well, I'm looking forward to hearing about your meeting in Quimper, because we're in Finistère here at the moment, today, and maybe we can talk when we've been to this meeting and find out what you've had to go through at the final stage – at least, I hope it's the final stage for you.

Terry Well we hope so too. But no problem, we'd be pleased to do that.

Rob Terry, Irene, thank you very much for your time.

Terry Thank you, Rob.

Irene Thank you.

