



Home Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: [Immigration: the situation in Calais](#), HC 318

Tuesday 14 July 2015

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Written evidence from witnesses:

- None

[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Mr Keith Vaz (Chair), Victoria Atkins, Nusrat Ghani, Mr Ranil Jayawardena, Tim Loughton, Stuart C. McDonald, Keir Starmer and Anna Turley.

Questions 1 – 137

Witness: **Alan Pughsley QPM**, Chief Constable, Kent Police, gave evidence.

Q1 Chair: Could I call the Committee to order and welcome the new Members and the returning Members who have been elected for this Parliament? Can I also refer everyone present to the Register of Members' Interests, where the interests of all Members of this Committee are noted? There are no separate interests to be declared for the purpose of this session.

Chief Constable, welcome to this session and thank you for coming at such short notice.

Alan Pughsley: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: This is the Committee's revisit of our report into Calais and our ongoing interest in matters to do with immigration in Calais. We are very grateful to you for coming because, of course, it is Kent Police that have to deal with the situation on this side of the English Channel. Could I ask you what kind of impact the situation in Calais is having on the police and policing in Kent, and particularly around Dover?

Alan Pughsley: Thank you, Chair. I think for the last three to four weeks the biggest impact I have seen, in six years of policing in Kent, is probably on three broad spectrums: one, the local people in Kent, local communities and local people, are struggling to get around certain parts of Kent when Stack—as you know, which is the lorry park—is on the M20 because of the reasons it is taking place; second, a huge impact on my staff. For almost the last three weeks my staff have had to police some of the biggest congestion that we have had for a sustained period of time and, probably most importantly of course, the impact of people losing their lives and getting seriously injured by trying to travel over in to Europe and in to Britain. It is significant. We have a great working relationship with partners who are all trying very hard to absolutely solve the problem.

As you know, the police have primacy around trying to keep people safe, trying to keep people as safe as they possibly can when this congestion is taking place.

Q2 Chair: Yes. Tell me something, in terms of the numbers of people that you apprehend, you are involved in the process of removing migrants from vehicles because the transport authorities do not have authority to go in, do they, it is a policing issue?

Alan Pughsley: Yes, to put—

Q3 Chair: Do you have any figures for this Committee as to how many that you have found in the last, say, six months since the start of the year?

Alan Pughsley: Yes, Chair, I do and maybe if I could explain the exact powers of how that takes place. If it is in Eurotunnel, for example, Eurotunnel have security staff that search the vehicles with my staff who are the Channel Tunnel policing unit. We have the power. We are the policing authority there who have the power then to detain, along with the immigration enforcement officers who are not there full-time. We are there full-time. Having explained that, numbers this year: there has been a significant increase in the last four to five weeks. From January until May of this year, people who have been found hiding on vehicles and/or trains numbered about 26. Then for the five weeks of June and July we had 405 finds, so 405 in a five-week period from all of June until the first week of July.

Chair: Could you repeat the figures from 1 January?

Alan Pughsley: 1 January until the end of May, 26; five weeks, June until the first week of July, 405 and at the peak on one day, which I think was 8 July, we had 96 people found.

Q4 Chair: Was that as a direct result of the strike? Is it because of the strike that the numbers rose so dramatically?

Alan Pughsley: I think that is a contributing factor, Chair. The strike has caused—and I am sure others can tell you exactly what is happening over in France and particularly around Eurotunnel—more opportunity for people to try to access vehicles, whether they be trains or lorries. It absolutely has a contributing factor to cause easier access, if there is such a way. It is certainly not easy because, again, you will have seen overnight very serious injuries to people.

Q5 Chair: Sure. It seems to me the situation is getting worse not better.

Alan Pughsley: I think the biggest problem to fix, of course, is the illegal immigrant status and the camp over at Calais. What we are policing is the problem of that coming then through the tunnel in whichever way that it may or may not come. We speak to Eurotunnel regularly as partner agencies and my lead chief officer speaks regularly with them. They see that as one of their biggest priorities. They are desperately trying to work around better security around their platforms and around their security over there, to stop the very dangerous—and it is very dangerous, as you can imagine—situation of people trying to board those freight trains.

Q6 Chair: In respect of people who have been arrested, have you arrested many people?

Alan Pughsley: Out of those figures that we have just talked about the process simply is that those 405, which I talked about in the four to five-week period, get taken to Immigration, Home Office detention centres. We have three in the county. Then they are processed through Home Office immigration officials, whether it be the visa staff or, indeed, the immigration enforcement

staff. There are not many of those so, again, in terms of the impact in on my staff, if we take last night, there were 22 overnight— 22 illegal immigrants came into the country last night in the way that we have described.

Q7 Chair: Despite all the security measures and everything that is being done in Calais, you are still seeing an inflow of migrants?

Alan Pughsley: Yes, we are. Last night there were three people seriously injured in Calais and 22 illegal immigrants then found on the UK side by Eurotunnel staff and my officers.

Q8 Chair: Would you describe this as a crisis?

Alan Pughsley: Unless something significant is done to stop the amount of people trying to come in to the country, in the way that we have just described over the last four to five weeks, there will be a stage where the resilience of my officers dealing with it will become a significant problem.

Q9 Keir Starmer: Thank you, Chief Constable. Can I follow up on your last answer and ask you about the sustainability of the operations? Clearly, it has been an ongoing operation but intense at the moment.

Alan Pughsley: Yes.

Q10 Keir Starmer: For how much longer is it sustainable at this level and what support are you being given at the moment, or what are you being promised for the future, if you need to sustain it for a much longer period than you think?

Alan Pughsley: Yes, thank you. I would start with and repeat that the three week period is the most intense we have ever had with Stack and, therefore, that impression from Saturday just gone. We are starting to ease a little from a resources point of view for my officers and my staff but, as you can imagine, they now need a period of recovery. We have worked and spoken very much with our south-east regional partners, the other police agencies for mutual aid but we did not get to that stage. We did not get to calling in mutual aid. We were able to deal with it from a policing perspective internally within Kent. What we had to do, though, was speak to our south-east partners and say that, if there was something else within the region that needed mutual aid from Kent, we could not provide that. The other forces would have had to provide first.

I hope it doesn't get worse than that three week period and I think it was almost a perfect storm in that three week period. If it happens regularly again there will be a concern for me about my officers, my staff and their resilience, in the way that you have just talked about it. Of course I can call on mutual aid and that would be our first port of call from other forces to help and assist us.

Q11 Keir Starmer: Has the reality been that, for this intense period, you have had to pull officers away from other work in Kent that they would otherwise be doing and, therefore, lessen the priority for other work that you need to do?

Alan Pughsley: Yes. The simple way that we were able to deal with it to start with has been my specialist officers, so if you start at the Eurotunnel the specialist officers there within the Channel Tunnel policing them. They are the staff that attend around the immigration problem. Then, when we start dealing with the traffic problem on the M20—everybody knows it as Operation Stack—when Stack is on as a tactic the first people who call again are my specialist road traffic officers. They work in 12-hour shifts and then return in every 12 hours to do the job. We are then

calling on other officers from elsewhere to come and assist and, of course, calling officers in off their days leave to backfill all of the time.

Q12 Keir Starmer: That is officers from all other areas of your usual operations, is it?

Alan Pughsley: That is officers from other areas of operation, so right across the county, to come and assist with this critical incident. That is what we are dealing with and we are dealing with it as a critical incident. They come from other parts of the county but a very good and a very successful planning operation has meant that the overtime commitment, which is the resilience piece, is very low for this style of operation. The last two to three weeks have probably caused policing, as a total, maybe £500,000.

Q13 Anna Turley: Thank you very much for joining us today, Chief Constable. You mentioned at the beginning the impact on the people of Kent as a result of Operation Stack. Could you say a little bit more about the disruption that has caused and also whether there are any issues there around community safety, public order or anything like that?

Alan Pughsley: Public safety and public order, no. There is nothing there. We have no concerns with regards to the community or any of the community trying to perform that sort of demonstration, for want of a better description. There is, as we speak, a petition within Kent to try to make sure this is not just a Kent issue, that it is raised as a national issue. Of course, as the Chief of Kent, I support that totally because I believe it is a national issue. We are just a throughput to Europe so it absolutely is a national issue.

As for the impact locally, we have had some work done with the Kent County Council—so again one of our key partners—around things like lorry parks, if and when we get into that sort of conversation in due course. They have done some work with us for my team around the impact over that period locally on local communities and they have brought three broad themes. First, of course is people not getting to the business meetings that they are trying to get to. The second then is tourism and the third is the road hauliers themselves. The best estimation we can come up with on a five-day period—and as we say this lasted for some period longer than five days—is a £7 million impact on Kent. That is significant.

Chair: A £7 million what?

Anna Turley: Impact.

Alan Pughsley: A £7 million impact—

Chair: Impact on Kent?

Alan Pughsley: —on the communities under those three broader themes, Chair.

Chair: Right, thank you. Yes, Anna, please continue.

Q14 Anna Turley: Thank you. On that I was interested to hear that you have conversations with Kent County Council on identifying other sites. Could you say a bit more about what that looks like and what might be put in place to ensure there are other areas that are more suitable for keeping lorries than on a main arterial motorway?

Alan Pughsley: Yes, I can, and I think it is important to say who has what primacy around what at this stage. With regards to lorry parks, it is Kent County Council and not the police, and I stress that we are working closely with all of our partners. The free flow and the fluidity of the M20 and other strategic road networks is Highways England. My priority is Kent Police, to keep people safe

when and if this happens, working with those key agencies who have primacy, so Kent County Council, to explore all of the options that come on the table. I simply then say to my planning team—a few who are in the room with me today—“Is that logistically doable?” One idea at this moment in time is Manston Airport. My team would say, “We cannot logistically do that because you would have to escort the lorries from the M20 all the way over to, for example, Manston Airport”. If the Highways Agency or Highways England decided they could escort that there may be another conversation around that. Our preference would be a lorry park or lorry parks, and our preference would be close to the M20 because we could logistically manage that.

Q15 Chair: The Home Secretary has announced today a secure area in Calais but nothing for Dover or Kent. Would you like to see a secure area in Kent, which will mean you will not have—I think the worst of Operation Stack was 4,600 lorries over 30 miles, is that right? Is that the worst day?

Alan Pughsley: The worst day was 7,000 lorries.

Q16 Chair: 7,000 lorries over how many miles?

Alan Pughsley: I would have to write to you on how many miles that equated to, I am afraid, but it was 7,000 lorries.

Q17 Chair: 7,000, so it is double what I said.

Alan Pughsley: Yes.

Q18 Chair: Would you like a secure area in Kent where—

Alan Pughsley: I would love a secure area in Kent where we could park vehicles. If you were able to help us with that I would ask for one more, if I may, because—

Chair: We do not actually give, we recommend. Tell us your wish list and maybe I will pass it on to the Minister.

Alan Pughsley: I will wish, Chair, if I may?

Chair: Yes, of course.

Alan Pughsley: We are in a grey area around the legislation. That means I can direct lorries on the highway but as soon as you put them into a private parking areas I lose my powers, so I would need an additional power—Highways England, first; back to that primacy bit—that we could then work with about directing the lorries to stay in a private parking area.

Q19 Chair: Presumably you would need this now. You cannot wait for the next Queen’s Speech. This is emergency stuff that you need for an emergency situation?

Alan Pughsley: We would need that now. The small lorry parks that we have we would need it for now. Any additional build for a lorry park we would need those additional powers for Highways England complemented by Kent Police.

Q20 Tim Loughton: Chief Constable, if we come back to the illegal migrants you are picking up, you say you picked up 22 yesterday.

Alan Pughsley: This morning we picked up 22 illegal immigrants at about 5 o’clock.

Q21 Tim Loughton: Where were they picked up and what happens to them now?

Alan Pughsley: They were picked up at Eurotunnel on the UK side, so three were injured in France, 22 then found on the UK side. What happened exactly with those today was with Eurotunnel security staff and my ports unit policing team, we called in the immigration enforcement officers. In Kent for every 24 hours we have two of those, which is not a huge amount. Those two immigration enforcement officers and their vehicle came and escorted four illegal immigrants to one of the holding cells. We also had some support from visas and immigration and passport who took another four, which left the best part of eight illegal immigrants for my officers and my staff to deal with. So we escorted them and we took them to the holding areas—as I say, there are three in the county—down in Dover where they are then progressed and processed by immigration staff from the Home Office, and they look at two things: one asylum and/or return to France.

Q22 Tim Loughton: It is taking up quite a lot of police time to act as escorts to take them to immigration places. Am I right in thinking that your counterparts in France, who have detective people on the other side of the Eurotunnel, hand it over to police who tend to take them two miles outside of Calais and let them go without any processing?

Alan Pughsley: I think they would probably have to answer that question rather than myself.

Q23 Tim Loughton: But are you seeing the same sort of people coming back again?

Alan Pughsley: I think probably we would have to do some more research and I would have to write back to you to see whether we have repeat people being stopped and then taken to the holding cell areas. I do not have that information. I have not been given that as information recently on very regular briefings I get from the team. That is something our intelligence would look at and I could certainly write back, Chair, if you would like.

Q24 Tim Loughton: It is quite an important point because part of the criticism has been that it is the same people. It is not, however, many thousands of people trying to come through the tunnel. It is the same people multiply trying because they have been let go. So those 22 people, again if it is typical, they have not made it beyond the Eurotunnel terminal. They are not beyond all the borders effectively?

Alan Pughsley: That is correct.

Q25 Tim Loughton: Do you think many are succeeding in getting in to the UK proper through that route or do you think we are fairly secure? Certainly, on our visit to Calais last year, the Border Force seemed to be doing an extremely good job. In fact, the morning we were there they picked up 33 in the lorries that were being scanned. It seemed to be pretty tight. But you are now saying quite a few are getting through and what about those who get through then into the UK at liberty at large?

Alan Pughsley: Sure. I think it is fairly secure. I think that is a fair description. The 22 were found today by Eurotunnel security staff with my officers then supporting them. There were no others on that freight that we did not see on this occasion by way of an example. I do not think I could promise you that nobody is getting into the United Kingdom, through whatever means, whether it be Dover Port or whether it be Eurotunnel, to be fair.

Q26 Stuart C. McDonald: Chief Constable, if I could take you back again to what you said about resources, and clearly all of this is putting a considerable strain on your resources. In fact, it seems

almost that your officers have to take on some roles that you would usually see as the role of Home Office employees. I think you gave a figure of £500,000. Was that related to overtime costs alone?

Alan Pughsley: No, that is the total cost. As I say, with partners we estimate at this moment in time—and I have to find these figures for local residents of Kent through my Police and Crime Commissioner, as you can imagine—£750,000 as a partnership spend. Out of that we would estimate £550,000 or so of that is police spend. So not just overtime. That is total costs.

Q27 Stuart C. McDonald: Okay. Have you been provided with any additional resources to cope with this crisis?

Alan Pughsley: No, we haven't from a policing point of view, which is an interesting challenge. As I say, we did not quite get to that stage of: where would the additional resource come from? It would have come from my colleagues and Chief Constables in other force areas and we would call for that as mutual aid. One more element of Stack and we would have asked for that. In simple terms for me, Stack is every time you put a junction on: Stack 1, Stack 2, Stack 3, and Stack 4. We got to Stack 4. Had we got to Stack 5 I think we would have been calling for mutual aid.

Q28 Stuart C. McDonald: What about in terms of just simple additional funding from central government? Would you consider asking for that?

Alan Pughsley: I would love it, please. Thank you very much. That would be very kind.

Q29 Stuart C. McDonald: Obviously much of this has come about because of the strike in Calais but how would you describe the situation before that strike took place? How were things functioning?

Alan Pughsley: I think we have to make sure that our intentions and our conversation is not skewed just by the strike. I think there are probably many elements and any one of those, or two of those elements coming together, can cause this sort of problem. It can be a train strike. It can be damage to a train. It can be the ferries not working. All of those elements coming together, sometimes collectively, cause the big problem that we have had in the last two or three weeks but I think it is wider than that. If the industrial action was not taking place then we must not think that is the end of the problem and it will not be a problem. In my humble opinion the problem is—at my last figure—5,000 illegal immigrants sitting over in Calais. So the question earlier about: are they repeats? I do not know because there are 5,000 of them sitting over there trying to come into the United Kingdom. We must not be swayed—or I hope I have not given the impression that it is just the industrial action that is the cause of this problem.

Q30 Chair: Have you been over to Calais?

Alan Pughsley: I have not been over there recently, Chair. I was over there some time as the Chief, as you can imagine, seeing what the setup is like. I am booked in in the near future with my chief officer lead—who is sitting behind me—to go over again and review what is happening over in Calais.

Q31 Chair: The numbers have increased from 1 January from 600. You say 5,000. When I was there about a fortnight ago it was about 3,000. Presumably they are not just all in the reception centre; they are all over the place. What we saw was they were running on to motorways and going into depots and so on. The volume is increasing enormously, is it not?

Alan Pughsley: The volume is increasing enormously. The 5,000 figure I had this morning, Chair, was a "5,000 and it is growing". That was exactly the brief that I had.

Chair: This is your new figure for this Committee?

Alan Pughsley: This morning it was 5,000.

Chair: In Calais itself?

Alan Pughsley: In Calais itself and growing.

Chair: I should say, we did ask the French authorities to come but it is Bastille Day and therefore they are taking the salute somewhere.

Q32 Nusrat Ghani: Thank you, Chief Constable. I wonder how often you are able to communicate with your French counterpart so that, if there is a spike in activity or movement over in France, you are able to prepare yourselves over here.

Alan Pughsley: Very frequently. We have juxtaposed staff. I have staff sitting and working over in Coquelles in France, over in Calais, and vice versa over here in the United Kingdom. The communication flow is very slick and very fast and we work jointly together. If we have to escalate it up to a strategic level then either myself, a very easy contact, or indeed my chief officer lead.

Q33 Nusrat Ghani: How swiftly are you able to mobilise yourselves? What measures do you have in place so that if, as you mention, there was a spike in activity over a short period of time, you know that there are going to be a vast number of people arriving? How quickly can you mobilise your resources?

Alan Pughsley: My planning team fortunately have great experience, very experienced in this part of the business. Operation Stack, which is a culmination of course on this occasion of the immigration issue, has been planned for years and years and years and years, so we escalate it up accordingly. The plan is well made. One of the reasons the overtime is so low is because of the great planning for that. To mobilise in a controlled environment with many numbers of illegal immigrants tends to be, to be fair, if you do it in the Eurotunnel. We do not tend to have a disorder style issue because the illegal immigrants are here so they are not trying to cause a fight. They are not trying to cause a big problem. They are here and they want to be documented and/or brought to the holding areas in the United Kingdom. We can mobilise very quickly. We are a very successful police force around mobilising that way, very slick around escalating up if we have to and I am very comfortable with that.

Q34 Chair: Can you tell this Committee do you ever find anyone trying to leave the country? In Kent, do you find lorries where people are inside actually trying to go or is it all about people coming in?

Alan Pughsley: Chair, I am wracking my brain for any time that that has happened in my time. I cannot remember one. I remember finding money and such like, that was trying to get out of the country, by my officers searching, but I do not remember any people.

Q35 Chair: Chief Constable, you have painted a very depressing picture for this Committee and we are very grateful for your openness and transparency. You have told us that the numbers are increasing and that the proposals announced today, which will only take effect in the autumn, are not going to make that much difference to the people of Kent, that you need your own proposals for Kent and for dealing with this side of the English Channel, irrespective of what is happening on the other side. We are going to see the Minister shortly so he will tell us about those proposals. As far as

Kent is concerned and the people of Kent, you need something much more. You need more resources to deal with policing issues. You need a secure area to put the lorries in. You need additional policing powers and if you do not get all of this what is the outcome that you see?

Alan Pughsley: I think the Home Secretary's announcement of what is taking place in Calais and in Paris will help, Chair. I need the three things that you have articulated and talked about over here in Kent. If we have none of those three elements, so if we do not have in due course some form of lorry park, then I think my communities, my people in Kent, will continue to suffer. They do suffer and, like I say, it is a national issue but impacting in Kent, which seems pretty unfair to me, and my officers and my staff will again be doing a magnificent job, a huge amount of effort, but there is only so much and for so long I can keep asking them to do that.

Q36 Chair: There is also a view that no matter how much money you spend in Calais it is not going to make any difference. Eurotunnel have spent €150 million in the last 15 years. The Government has spent £12 million. The Home Secretary repeated her announcement of another £1 million being spent there. That is not going to stop people who are part of a determined criminally organised gang who have crossed the Sahara Desert, crossed the Mediterranean, entered Italy, gone into France and arrived in Calais. This is perhaps the easiest bit, isn't it, because they are dealing with a police force that routinely collects them out of these lorries and then releases them down the road and they try again? No matter what you spend they are going to continue to try to get over the Channel and you need a much more fundamental solution to this.

Alan Pughsley: I do not disagree with that as a headline, Chair. That is the organised criminality at the top end. I think if we do some security and better security—and Eurotunnel are doing that over in France—if you can minimise maybe some of the opportunity at the lower level of organised crime we might stop the impact in Kent and save a few more lives over in France.

Q37 Victoria Atkins: On that point, the Home Secretary in her statement today mentioned the 900 bogus colleges that have been closed and the more than 2,900 operations into sham marriages. What is being done to reinforce the message to British residents who may be tempted to earn a bit of cash by helping illegal immigrants into the country? What is being done to tell these British residents that this is a serious criminal offence they are committing if they do that?

Alan Pughsley: Certainly in Kent illegal immigrants and all the offences that follow that—whether it is human trafficking or sexual exploitation—are a priority; continue to be a priority in Kent. We have dedicated policing units in Kent who deal with those sorts of vulnerable people and, indeed, a Special Branch resource that makes sure that we get the messages accordingly both to our local communities. I think for the bigger media national story, of course, that is national picture. Maybe the National Crime Agency can help us out with that sort of messaging but in Kent everything you have talked about is an absolute priority.

Q38 Mr Jayawardena: Chief Constable, you talked about additional powers in respect of directing traffic. Also just a moment ago you referenced organised crime and, indeed, lower level organised crime. Are there any additional powers on that that you would benefit from to help not only the people of Kent but, indeed, across the country?

Alan Pughsley: No. I think from a criminality point of view we have the powers, we absolutely have the powers and we have the right oversight of those powers. If we go to the top end of criminality and want to use covert tactics then we have RIPA and we are tested, and quite rightly tested, around how we use that appropriately. At the top end of criminality, no, I do not think so. On this particular issue it is that one issue for us that has been a grey area for all of my six years in

Kent—and I am sure before—around who can and how. As I say, I think it should be Highways England as the primary agency: do they direct those lorries into the lorry park and then make sure those lorries stay in the lorry park? Additional to that are the small lorry parks that we have at the moment people have to stay there over night, well, you know—

Chair: A final quick supplementary from Mr Loughton.

Q39 Tim Loughton: Just to come back to the entry points, I have a coastal constituency in Sussex down the coast from you. I have had reports of people coming in small boats, getting on to the beach and disappearing into the ether. Do you think, and have you experienced, that with all the concentration on Dover/Calais—and we had the incident at Harwich recently with 63 people being found—that it is shifting the problem so that we have some small-scale entries coming in non-port areas. Have you seen any evidence of that?

Alan Pughsley: I do not have evidence of that in Kent, at this moment in time, and it is in the TSLs. We have lots of small beaches and lots of small areas where that may or may not be happening. I have no evidence of that. Is there a risk that you displace criminal activity? Of course there is and we would have to jointly, collectively all the partners—particularly law enforcement—think about that if we displace the Calais problem shall we say.

Chair: Chief Constable, thank you very much for coming. We know you have a meeting at New Scotland Yard but we are most grateful to you for coming in and for sharing this important information with us. We will put your shopping list to the Minister and to others and we will get back to you. I would be grateful if you could send me the information that you promised by midday on Friday.

Alan Pughsley: I certainly will, Chair.

Chair: Thank you very much. Thank you, Chief Constable.

Examination of Witness

Witnesses: **Richard Burnett**, Chief Executive, Road Haulage Association, **James Hookham**, Deputy Chief Executive, Freight Transport Association, and **John Keefe**, Director of Public Affairs, Eurotunnel, gave evidence.

Q40 Chair: Gentlemen, thank you for coming in. You know that we are looking at the issue of Calais and can I add another declaration of interest? Mr Keefe was my host when I went to Calais. By “my host” I mean he drove me around to the tunnel, rather than provided me with any refreshments or anything of that kind, so I am most grateful for that and the Committee may well want to visit again and we would be grateful for your co-operation on that occasion.

Can I ask each of you in turn, starting with you, Mr Keefe, how bad is it at the moment?

John Keefe: I think the figure that you cited earlier on, Chairman, is a start point. There were 600 migrants in Calais estimated in January. There are now, as the Chief Constable has just told us, 5,000. That increase is something that is continuing apace, and it is the simple volume that is causing the most difficulty for operators. It is causing the most difficulty on the roads and it is causing the most difficulty in terms of additional criminality in the area. We have never seen

numbers like this before and we have not in the past seen the degree of organisation that goes with the numbers either.

Q41 Chair: What is alarming to me is that when I saw you in Calais two weeks ago it was 3,000. We have been given a figure of 5,000 now. This is a huge increase. Do you think that the publicity of the strike and people running into the tunnel actually encourages more people to come to Calais?

John Keefe: No, I do not think the strike is a draw. I think that what we are seeing is the natural consequence of all of the crossings of the Mediterranean that we saw in the early part of the spring, when the Mediterranean and the dreadful deaths that were happening in that area were in the news every day. There is a flow that comes from the countries of origin, across the Sahara and across the Mediterranean. It is very well mapped by the authorities and we know that there are a lot of people in that flow heading north as we speak.

Q42 Chair: Would you describe it as a crisis?

John Keefe: We do describe it as “the migrant crisis” at the moment.

Q43 Chair: Mr Hookham, your chief executive wrote to the Prime Minister on 7 July. Thank you for supplying the letter to the Committee. Has he received a reply from the Prime Minister?

James Hookham: Not formally, no, Chair.

Q44 Chair: Do you stand by what he said in that letter? How bad is it as far as your members are concerned? Perhaps you can paint us a picture of how important your industry is to this country.

James Hookham: Certainly, yes.

Chair: Not a long history, just figures would be fine.

James Hookham: No, of course. Clearly we are concerned about the impact of all of this on drivers and vehicles, but one of the things that we are particularly anxious that this Committee understands, and indeed the Government, is that in the back of every vehicle there is a load destined for this country, destined for the economy, and although the cost to the vehicle is high often the consequential loss of the load is a magnitude greater in expense, and the economic impact and the disruption of supply chains is significant.

Q45 Chair: I will come on to cost in a moment, just describe how serious is the situation in terms of your drivers.

James Hookham: Because of the infiltration into loads by immigrants whole loads are written off because of the fear of contamination. This could range from hundreds of pounds for certain types of loads right up to consignments, say, of pharmaceuticals or other high value products such as that, where the actual value to our members who may be importing the goods could run into millions.

Q46 Chair: Put a figure on it for this Committee so we understand the cost of what is happening in Calais. You wrote us a letter and you gave us some figures. How much has it cost your industry?

James Hookham: We do not have an estimate of the cost, Chair. It is impossible to estimate the value to the loss of loads. Often these are—

Chair: You have put up some figures saying it is £2 million a week. That is why I ask you.

James Hookham: Yes, that would be the cost of the vehicles and to the drivers that are being affected and delayed. The consequential loss of loads is something that we have not been able to establish a firm figure for.

Chair: Is it high? Is it low? Does it run into millions?

James Hookham: It is high and often hidden as it does not receive quite the attention that the immediate actions in Calais do.

Q47 Chair: The figure of £250,000 a day was given by some in the industry of the figure during the strike. Is that a figure you stand by?

James Hookham: Yes, it is and that is because of the standing time, the loss of productivity of the vehicles and the drivers, so the actual loss to the hauliers themselves as well as other costs. For example, many hauliers attempted to divert around Calais to enter the country through other ports, through other crossings. That clearly involves longer journeys, more time away for the driver and we have attempted to estimate those costs as well.

Q48 Chair: Mr Burnett, what about your members and your industry?

Richard Burnett: We feel it is a crisis. We feel that the situation is out of control. I think it is out of control on a number of points. Clearly there are two sides to this. There is the strike action that has caused a massive impact to the industry but there is also the migrant issue. It has been a long-term issue and it continues to be an issue now. So the financial impact on the industry is significant. I think it is a hidden cost. In terms of—

Q49 Chair: How much is it, roughly?

Richard Burnett: Per annum it could be as much £1 billion—

Chair: £1 billion?

Richard Burnett: —in terms of write-off to product because what we are talking about are full loads that are being destroyed. If you take £30,000, for instance, is an average cost per load of the goods on a vehicle. It does not take many loads per day, per week to rack up that kind of number over a year. So I think the cost to the industry is significant and it is a hidden cost. The cost of the industrial action was significant and the standing charge per day per vehicle, if you have as many as 7,000 vehicles in Dover the cost of that on its own is probably close to about £4 million in terms of standing charge and then you have the same in Calais. But you have the knock-on effect upstream as well because you have that blockage in the ports but we are actually waiting for product upstream in the UK.

Q50 Chair: Mr Keefe, you spent €150 million—not you personally but the Eurotunnel—on security but what I saw and what we heard about yesterday, with people trying to jump on lorries and on to freight at Eurotunnel, must cause a lot of distress to the people watching, because obviously they are sitting in the control tower, but also distress to the migrants themselves who keep coming back again and again. You spent €150 million. The Home Secretary has made an announcement today about a secure area. Does that solve the problem for you?

John Keefe: No. That secure area that she has announced is at the Port of Calais. We had already made moves to increase our reception capacity for trucks two years ago and we have just delivered that capacity on our own terminal in a protected zone, fenced and off the motorway. So we are already bringing trucks off the motorway and helping them to avoid the attacks by

migrants on that public highway. There are a couple of things that are very important here. One is as soon as you remove an opportunity the organised criminals who are managing the migrant attacks are moving to the next opportunity, they are moving to the next weak spot. We have a terminal that covers 650 hectares. It has something in the order of 20 kilometres of double fencing around it, and the next approach by the migrants has been to move around the terminal and make co-ordinated diversionary attacks and try to break in that way. So the authorities on the ground are doing a valiant job but struggling with the simple numbers who are around, and if we have grown to 5,000 migrants in the Calais area on a regular basis that is the number of people who are making attempts to get through. What we are picking up, handing over to the authorities and seeing removed is more in the region of 27,000 to 28,000 in the past six months.

Q51 Chair: 27,000 to 28,000 you have found in your area and you have handed back to the authorities?

John Keefe: At the fences and in our pre-checking truck controls we have delivered that many people to the authorities. So I think what—

Q52 Chair: As you know, I saw this for myself and we saw five coming out of that German lorry driven by the Romanian driver.

Mr Hookham, these proposals announced today, do you agree with Mr Keefe that they will not solve the problem here. They will just move it somewhere else. Because what the lorry drivers were saying to me when I was there is that people jump on to the lorries well before they come to Calais, either at the depot or along the way from Spain or wherever, so having a secure area in Calais will not solve the problem. What do you say?

James Hookham: I accept Mr Keefe's point that this will help in the port and for traffic destined for the ferries. I think it will help but an important thing I would like the Committee to understand is that this crisis is not going to be solved by tactical action such as this. It will certainly be a reduction in opportunity, the more traffic that can be removed from the motorway and processed and dealt with in secure areas. So we are welcoming what is offered but what my members are certainly looking for is an enduring solution to this and a recognition by the British and, indeed, the French Government, that this is a very serious crisis within their territory and this needs to be dealt with, that this is not something that the haulage industry can be expected to sort out on its own, it needs—

Q53 Chair: How is it sorted out then?

James Hookham: Clearly the incidents of large numbers of migrants camping around Calais and, therefore, having the opportunity to attack vehicles in this way have to be tackled. In our view it is simply not tolerable that, in a modern western democracy and part of a single trading block called the European Union, this kind of behaviour is tolerated.

Q54 Chair: Which means the French police need to do much more. That is what you are saying.

James Hookham: And the wider French Government authorities as well. I sympathise with the gendarmes in the north of France. They appear to be very under-resourced and unable to respond as quickly as we would like to calls of help from our members, for example.

Q55 Chair: Thank you. Mr Burnett, finally for you from me, is this going to solve the problem, the announcements made today?

Richard Burnett: I do not think it is going to solve the problem. I think it is a solution. We need to understand the detail of that solution. We do not understand that yet. We do not understand how it is going to be applied, how it is going to work. The devil is always in the detail.

Q56 Chair: Were you consulted before the announcement was made?

Richard Burnett: We have not been consulted, no.

Chair: You have not been consulted at all?

Richard Burnett: No, we have not been consulted in terms of what the approach should be. I think for me this is not fast enough either. We have a problem right now. We have drivers that are facing threats and taunts, who are being threatened with bars, with knives. We have had an example of a driver being threatened with a gun. This is unprecedented and it is escalating and I think to wait until November for something like this to be applied and put in place is simply too late. We need action now and we need our drivers to be given a safe passage.

Q57 Chair: Do you think your drivers, those of whom are British citizens, are being let down by the Government?

Richard Burnett: Absolutely, yes. The Government need to be influencing the French Government in order to put more resource on the ground now. We need more police and, if it is not the police, then the military because this is an unprecedented situation.

Chair: The military, you would like to see the military in there.

Q58 Stuart C. McDonald: If I could take you back just a little bit. We have heard from the Secretary of State and the Government that when the strike broke there were contingency plans in place. They swung into action and I get the impression that the Secretary of State's view was that they were working pretty well. Have you or members of your industries been able to see what these contingency plans were on the ground and, in your view, were they effective?

James Hookham: I think the contingency plans that are normally referred to are the way in which the Border Agency steps up its checks and controls at the border to ensure that because of the increased opportunities represented by standing traffic and, therefore, the increased risk of infiltration of vehicles, that a higher degree of scrutiny and checks is carried out. As I understand it, they are the contingency plans so, while that might give greater assurances of a defence at the border, it does not do a lot to deal with the causes of the delays in the first place nor the protection of drivers and vehicles that are stood standing in the queues approaching the ports or the terminal. How we are hearing about it is the fact that our drivers are finding themselves being held for long periods of time at the approaches to the port coming under attack and threats from migrants milling around the vehicles, because there are no real controls on access to the auto routes, feeling intimidated, possibly believing that their vehicle has been broken into, attempting to summons help from the French authorities and not receiving the level of response that they would expect. Sometimes it can take hours before they are being attended to.

Q59 Stuart C. McDonald: Mr Burnett or Mr Keefe, do you have any views on the contingency plans and terms of that?

Richard Burnett: In terms of the contingency plans that were executed on this side, from a Dover perspective I think the police did a fantastic job in terms of Operation Stack, in terms of how it was executed. Again it was unprecedented in terms of the scale, the size of it, and how it was executed. I think the welfare of drivers that were waiting in those queues in heat, which was exceptional, was not catered for and we worked very hard as an industry and also with the authorities to get water and food to those drivers. That worked well but I think in terms of facilities, when you have something of that scale and that size, drivers without toilets or places to wash and rest, in this day and age is not on. If you look at what happened over in France the situation was dire. It was chaos.

John Keefe: In a situation like this a lot more needs to be done in terms of co-ordinated response. The contingency planning that focused on searching trucks at the border crossing point may very well have been efficient at pulling people off those trucks but it also created longer queues and slower transition through the terminal itself. Those longer queues and slower transitions led to migrants seeking other routes to get past the border. Instead of jumping on a truck to get through the border they started breaking through the fences to get around the border and that was the beginning of the massed incursions that we have seen over the last three weeks. So there has to be a concerted effort not just to stop and search but also to maintain flows as much as possible at all times.

Q60 Mr Jayawardena: The Chairman said that Mr Keefe and Eurotunnel had invested €150 million into security. Clearly there is still a problem but what is the road haulage doing to also help drivers from within, as migrants are clearly taking increasing risks and increasing action against drivers?

James Hookham: The Border Agency has for some years had a code of practice on the safe and effective security of vehicles, nearly all of the members of the Freight Transport Association that I speak to adopt that as a code of practice that they conform to. Most of them have sought and received accreditation by the Border Agency to confirm that that is indeed the standard of protection that is in place. I understand that the Minister is intending to publish the list of accredited hauliers, both to enable buyers of freight haulage, consigners of goods to make informed decisions but also I expect as a signal to the insurance industry as well that these are clearly responsible hauliers. I think the majority—not all British hauliers—having lived with this challenge and issue for a very long period of time, have certainly met if not exceeded these basic standards.

Richard Burnett: I would absolutely agree with that. In terms of the Civil Penalty Regime that is in place, that process I think British hauliers are absolutely delivering against and I think we are doing a very good job. What we are talking about, though, are hauliers and drivers that are facing attacks from migrants that, again, are unprecedented. Put yourself in the position of a driver driving a vehicle and he is surrounded by 10 or 20 migrants trying to get in, and they are bolt popping, tearing hard cords off, they are taking locks off. They are actually getting in through the roofs of trailers. They are opening powder tankers and getting into powder tankers as well. They are taking great risks in order to undertake that journey.

Q61 Mr Jayawardena: Is there anything more, though, that you could do, in particular, to protect the drivers from these threats as an industry from within?

Richard Burnett: I go back to the point that I made before, which is this is unprecedented. I think it has almost been described as “civil war” in terms of what the drivers have to cope with. Is it right that we do anymore? If you look at the UK, if this was happening in the UK we would be policing this. We would be making sure that we have the right people on the ground to address

the situation. That is simply not happening in France at the moment and that is what we are asking for. We are asking for our drivers to be protected to do their day-to-day job.

Q62 Mr Jayawardena: That is helpful. One more point if I may, in respect of the changes that have been introduced to improve security, is that having an effect on traffic flow and, therefore, increasing the chance of migrants trying to get into vehicles?

James Hookham: Any delay would increase the opportunity. I think though we should acknowledge that additional services have been put in. Processing is done very efficiently by the Border Agency staff but one of the things that our drivers are reporting is that they are voluntarily submitting themselves for screening because they cannot be sure that they have not been invaded and, of course, with the Civil Penalty Regime in place at such high punitive rates, nobody wants to take that risk. In some respects the additional screening is almost self-defeating in that way. We do need to see more provision for safe holding of vehicles while the screening takes place.

Q63 Anna Turley: The statistics that you sent us, it was quite clear that a huge proportion of those lorry drivers who at the moment are receiving penalties are international. Do you have any thoughts on what steps they could be taking to do more? Do you think in a way the international drivers are a weaker link than the British drivers? What are your thoughts on anything we can do to try to mitigate that?

James Hookham: The risk of loss of load is becoming a more serious issue and I would imagine that is driving a reaction among those that are procuring haulage. This is not just retailers and other importers but also forwarders that are seeking hauliers to carry loads, so I would hope that those hauliers that have invested in the driver awareness and in the other physical security measures would be good business on the strength of that. That is something I think we are keen to promote and identify. The real challenge though is: how can you enforce these measures on non-British registered vehicles? I know that the Traffic Commissioners are taking an interest in the repute of British operators that do not follow these measures. There are no similar sanctions available to operators not licensed in this country, however, so that does remain an open question.

Q64 Victoria Atkins: I am determined to ask my first question, so thank you for that. I want to go back to the threats to drivers. To be clear these threats are happening on French soil and drivers are reporting these incidents to the French police and they are meeting what response?

Richard Burnett: I think it is fair to say that there is some immediate action. We have examples of drivers that are being threatened and they are trying to find police to help on the ground at that point in time. We have examples of drivers that have been surrounded. They have the CRS Police and they have come with tear gas to disperse the migrants. That simply is not good enough. These migrants are getting too close to the vehicles. They are creating the mayhem and chaos and our drivers should not have to cope with that on a daily basis. We have endless examples that we are happy to share with the Committee in terms of real incidents that are happening on a daily basis to a vast proportion of drivers.

Chair: Would you write to us about those incidents?

Richard Burnett: Of course.

Q65 Victoria Atkins: May I make it clear that obviously this is getting in the way of free trade across the European continent, goods going in and goods going out of the UK and beyond, and the conduct of the French Police is in stark contrast to the policing response we have heard about here in Kent and in the UK?

Richard Burnett: Absolutely. To compare, there is no comparison. In terms of our experience, in terms of what I experienced when I was over there two weeks ago, the gendarme were simply not doing enough. They were sitting around. They were watching what was going on but there was very little action, and for me it goes back to we have to protect the drivers that are doing their jobs.

John Keefe: May I intervene on that from a slightly different perspective? A great deal of criminal damage is also caused to the terminals of the transport operators and we regularly bring charges against the perpetrators of damage to fences, to different installations around our terminals and until very recently, when some charges were followed up in relation to strikers who got on to our tracks, hundreds of charges that we had pressed were simply classified “No further action”. So there is impunity for the criminal gangs who are organising the migrants around Calais.

Q66 Nusrat Ghani: I think Ms Atkins has asked the bulk of my questions but just going back, Mr Keefe and Mr Burnett, you alluded to the evidence that you have. Is that evidence being shared to the French policing authorities and are they registering it, and are your drivers noticing a change in police activity in France?

Richard Burnett: That information is certainly being shared across borders. I do not think we are seeing any change in terms of the strengthening of the policing in France at this point in time. Hearing the news today about the parking, it concerns me that that is going to be such a long time away when we have an immediate issue now and we are not seeing an improvement in terms of the numbers of police on the ground to protect our drivers.

John Keefe: I think I would go along with that. The police forces that are there are running around all the time trying to prevent crime being committed, trying to look after the safety of the people, the drivers who are on the motorways. The simple volume of 5,000 migrants in the area, who come and go at will, who are not processed and not managed away from the area, means that this is a circular problem. Until it is dealt with it will continue to go round and round.

Q67 Keir Starmer: I think this is for you, Mr Keefe, and it is about the response and anticipating the response. You said in reply to the Chair—who put the figures of 500 going to 3,000—3,000 to 5,000. You then introduced the figures of 27,000 to 28,000, not necessarily trying directly to get through. In terms of anticipating the future, presumably there is sharing of information with other authorities, with other countries, and you suggested that the real cause of this is obviously the consequence of the crossings rather than the strike. Is there an anticipated number that this is going to grow to that you and others are operating to? In other words, sharing the information as best you can, what is the feeling about whether that 27,000 to 28,000 is going to go up and, if so, what are you anticipating because the response is going to have to be based on what the anticipated numbers are going to rise to. Is there a number out there of how high we think it is going to go this year?

John Keefe: Can I just be very careful with the 27,000 to 28,000. That is the number of people we take off trucks. It is regularly the same people coming back again and again and again, sometimes several times in a night. It was the 3,000, it is now the 5,000 population simply rotating around being taken away and coming back again.

To take your longer term point, as many people as come across the Sahara and the Mediterranean to the southern shores of Europe, a percentage of them, single figures we understand, will make their way to the northern coast of France and try to get to the UK. The rest spread out into the other European countries, so we do not have that degree of intelligence to tell you exactly what that number is with detail. These are figures that would come to you from Frontex and from other agencies. But the indications are that those flows are continuing and, so long as they continue, then we will likely see the same scale of increase as we have done this year already. That does concern us greatly because we do not believe that there are sufficient resources present in the Calais area to manage any increase and we would like to see more action by the Governments across Europe in a co-ordinated way to—working back upstream—break up the trafficking rings, reduce the flows, work in the countries of origin to prevent people leaving because the conditions that they are fleeing from are so dreadful.

Q68 Keir Starmer: Just to be clear, although you do not necessarily know the percentage figure, there is a percentage of those that will make it to the northern coast of France and therefore, within reason, it ought to be possible to predict—

John Keefe: They ought to be able to predict, yes.

Keir Starmer: —how high this is going to go over the coming months in order to determine what the response is. Second, to be clear, what you are saying is that without action upstream at the transit points and even at source, this is a problem that it is impossible to deal with?

John Keefe: If we look at the transport terminals in the Calais region and compare them to other international transport hubs, international airports, international ports around the world occasionally a group of protestors will break into an international airport, for example, as we saw yesterday but it will be a group of four or five people and they will have a very, very specific intent. Heathrow is not surrounded by 5,000 people with one single goal, which is to get into that airport and get to a destination that it serves. That is the situation that is happening in Calais at the moment. So it is an absolutely unprecedented situation in international transport and one that until the volume, the number, of migrants present and arriving can be stemmed will continue to get worse.

Q69 Tim Loughton: In some sense do you characterise this as the French trying to make it a British problem rather than a continental one.

John Keefe: Yes, I do. I think this is genuinely a European problem. Beyond that if we look outside our own continent, the number of migrants on the move around the world we know is in the tens of millions. So this is a worldwide issue today. Concentrating on our own particular local problem, this is one that cannot be dealt with in Calais because the migrants are coming from countries outside the European Union. It cannot be dealt with in Dover either. It has to be dealt with on a European-wide scale with co-ordinated efforts by European governments to stop the flows coming from their points of origin.

Q70 Tim Loughton: I think we will all agree with that and certainly the chairman described this as by the time they reach Calais it is too late. But you have said that more needs to be done by the French authorities, both in terms of immigration and the police around Calais, rather than just picking them up and releasing them two miles outside Calais so you have these multiple attempts even in the space of one night, as you have said. So for whatever reason there seems to be an intent

to shift the problem across the Channel for us to deal with rather than deal with it rather more thoroughly on the French side. Is that right?

John Keefe: I think there are voices that are certainly trying to do that but looking at the reality of the situation and the efforts of those police authorities on the ground they are doing a pretty impressive job with the resources they have. We should not be looking to point the finger at the resources trying to solve the problem; we should be looking at the volume, the numbers, of migrants involved, which is growing beyond anybody's expectations and is therefore overwhelming the resources.

Q71 Tim Loughton: Very diplomatically answered but let's look at one specific thing. I remember when you took us around Calais before, pointing to groups of migrants in houses, in squats, as well as in the camps, with known people-traffickers—benefiting, profiting, from this business—in residence as well and yet we hear very little about the authorities taking action to prosecute and take out of the equation those people without whom there may be fewer people in transit to Calais.

John Keefe: Since you visited as a Committee last year quite a lot has been done in terms of removing many of the illegal squats and concentrating the migrant population into one area. That is the area in the dunes behind the Jules ferry centre. That has advantages and disadvantages. It means that there is a greater population concentrated in one area that can be observed better. It has led to violence within the camp itself and to extremely unsanitary and, some would say inhumane conditions. It also leads to an opportunity for better organisation and better planning and that is certainly something that we have seen in recent months.

Q72 Chair: We will hear from the Minister shortly. Just some quick summing-up questions.

You are against this reception centre, Mr Keefe, are you not? You think it is a magnet for people coming there and more and more will come; the message will go out from the people traffickers, "Come to Calais and you get showers and meals and all kinds of things": you are against it.

John Keefe: We remember Sangatte.

Q73 Chair: It is the same thing?

John Keefe: It is exactly the same thing. We believe that the population of migrants who are allowed to come round and round and go from 3,000 present to 27,000 contacts should be removed.

Q74 Chair: Mr Hookham, extra security measures for Dunkerque were announced today by the Home Secretary. Is that because part of the problem as Mr Keefe told this Committee when he was here six months ago, is "You strengthen security around Calais; they will move to the mouth of Channel tunnel. You put more security over there, they will go to Dunkerque". Are we seeing examples of increased migrant activity in Dunkerque?

John Keefe: I assume that is the reason, Chairman. We have seen examples of traffickers moving people through other ports as well. The incidents in Tilbury last year and Harwich earlier this year are examples of even Dutch ports being targeted as well.

Q75 Chair: Mr Burnett, the Home Secretary has announced the new secure zone; it apparently is not going to start until autumn. As we in Parliament know, under successive governments the seasons of the year can get extended in order to fit in with an announcement. Is that enough? Or would you like to see it start now?

Richard Burnett: It needs to start now. We have described the situation and the scale of it and the threat to drivers very clearly. We need action now. We need something in place right now. We cannot afford to wait.

Q76 Chair: Because if the criminal gangs know it is all going to start in the autumn they presumably will double their price and try to get people over before it starts.

Richard Burnett: Absolutely. When I was over there two weeks ago, in the camp and talking to migrants, they are getting through. They are demonstrating that it is probably taking about two months to get through but people are disappearing from that camp and making it through to the UK. So we need to act now.

Chair: Do you agree with that, Mr Hookham, that it really needs to start now to be effective?

James Hookham: Absolutely, yes.

Chair: Mr Keefe?

John Keefe: Reinforcing one port at a time will lead to further displacement. We have seen it before. We will see it again.

Q77 Chair: Finally, you have issued some leaflets in several languages that you distribute around Calais warning migrants of the danger of death and obviously there is the danger of death; we have seen it with the two young men who died in the last week or so. Does this have any impact, do you think? Bear in mind these people have gone through hell to get there; they have gone through the Sahara desert; there is a new video on YouTube that shows what they have been through to get there. It is only a tiny little leap, isn't it, if you have been through all that?

John Keefe: It is.

Q78 Chair: Does it make much of an impact?

John Keefe: If it makes an impact for one person it is worth the effort. We do not expect to stop the flow with this approach; what we are doing is providing the same level of information to migrants, even though they are on our site illegally, as we would provide to our staff and our contractors and our customers. We run the busiest railway in the world. It is a dangerous place to wander about on the tracks. We saw it in the last two weeks; we saw it again last night with three people electrocuted and injured trying to jump on trains to get to the UK. It is a dangerous thing to try to do.

Q79 Chair: And the message is still not getting across to these people?

John Keefe: We started the distribution on Friday. We will carry on distributing. We are posting on all our fences around the terminal. We are hoping that these leaflets will also be distributed by the humanitarian associations in the Jules ferry camp. We hope it makes some difference but we certainly do not expect it to stop the flow.

Chair: Mr Burnett, Mr Hookham, Mr Keefe, thank, you very much for coming in. I am sure this is going to be an ongoing dialogue with the Committee. We look forward to visiting Calais in the future to see what is happening there. Thank you for coming.

Could we call the Minister, please?

Examination of Witnesses

Witness: **Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, Minister for Immigration**, gave evidence.

Chair: Could I welcome the Minister for Immigration to the dais and pass on the warm congratulations of this Committee on your reappointment? I think you must be the first Immigration Minister in history to be reappointed to the same job.

James Brokenshire: I am not aware. You referenced this in a debate in Parliament the other day, Mr Vaz, and I have not been able to correct you or anything like that today, so you are probably right, sir.

Q80 Chair: Excellent. Being probably right is fine by me. When you last appeared before us, of course, you were the Security and Immigration Minister and this Committee was very firm when we told the Prime Minister we thought that—though you were very capable of doing several jobs—immigration was a big enough job for you to do and you have now had the security portfolio reallocated. Does that enable you to concentrate much more fully on the work of immigration?

James Brokenshire: I think I attended the final session before dissolution and therefore I welcome the opportunity to be here at your first session of the new Parliament and to welcome all the new members of the Committee.

With the Government's renewed focus on migration, immigration, the pressures that we see from the Mediterranean and no doubt the issues that we will discuss in this session today, the decision has been taken to ensure that I have the single role in relation to immigration. John Hayes has taken up the post as the Security Minister. Lord Ahmad has taken up the post in respect of the extremism agenda. No doubt you will be taking evidence from them in future sessions.

Q81 Chair: We will be seeing them all. Can I start by thanking you for the speed with which you replied to the letter I sent asking for the new organisational chart? This is a new record for the Home Office. You met the deadline—I think you were late by about half an hour but we will forgive you for that—and if you carry on doing that we would be very grateful as a Committee.

James Brokenshire: I know we have an outstanding report to reply to you from the last session—next week is, I understand, the normal timeline to report back—and I hope that we will be able to do that within the timeframe and meet this continued expectation.

Q82 Chair: I forgot about that, so thanks for reminding me. I look forward to receiving it. For the historians among us among us, one of the Queen Marys had said that when she died and was opened up she would have Calais written on her heart. I was going to ask you which part of your anatomy you would like to have Calais written on but let me just start by asking you how serious is this an issue for you. Where is it in the Government's agenda?

James Brokenshire: This is a very significant priority for me and this is not simply about Calais. This is a point that I know that you and other members of the Committee have highlighted in respect of the whole flow of what I think is in EU terms "irregular migrants" from various different parts of the world to the shores of Italy and other parts of the southern EU as well. This is certainly one of the significant parts of my work now and I am sure for the near-term in terms

of dealing with the immediate challenges that we see in northern France but also how we address and break that flow of people coming up from North Africa and the Middle East and elsewhere to try to come to the EU.

Q83 Chair: We will come to that later but we would like to concentrate on Calais for the moment. We have had some very compelling evidence from the Chief Constable of Kent, from the road hauliers and freight industry and Eurotunnel. If you had sat through the evidence—I am sure you will see the transcript—you would be pretty depressed because all of them describe this as a crisis and all of them say that although the Home Secretary’s announcement this morning—obviously brilliantly timed for your appearance before this Committee—was helpful, it is absolutely not going to solve the problem. There is a crisis in Calais. One of the witnesses previously talked about British citizens being attacked abroad and feeling let down by the British Government. We have had billions lost in terms of the costs to various industries and people are dying in the mouth of the Channel tunnel. Do you feel that the Government has a grip of this crisis and that the proposals announced by the Home Secretary today are going to solve this problem once and for all?

James Brokenshire: I think it is important to understand how the additional things that the Home Secretary talked about today build on a number of other measures that have already been announced and that we probably have discussed in part at this Committee. What I mean by that is that the additional investment in the Port of Calais itself to make it stronger and more secure in terms of its fencing and equally the approach roads to the port as well that mean that if there are queues leading out of the port it makes it that much harder for migrants to try to break into vehicles, whether they be lorries or whether they be just normal passenger vehicles trying to make that crossing.

Q84 Chair: Let’s just stop there because the issue of the lorry secure unit is important. Let’s break this up and members can come in and question you on it.

All our witnesses have said that having a secure area in Calais is not going to solve the problem because first it is not starting until the autumn, which those of us in Parliament know is quite an extendable season; we don’t know when that is. They feel it should start now rather than in the autumn.

Secondly they say the problem lies beyond the secure unit because the evidence we have received, and that you have heard from colleagues in the House, is that migrants are jumping on before they even get to Calais. So by the time they get to the secure area it is too late. As I saw for myself, once they are in there they just get released by the French police and then they try again. How can a secure unit stop this happening?

James Brokenshire: There are a number of different things that we are talking about here and it is useful to break this down into its component parts.

We looked at the immediate vicinity of the Port of Calais and we should also reflect on the port of Coquelles here in terms of the Eurotunnel terminal. What we have done as part of the £12 million investment that the Home Secretary announced last September is to increase the security around the Port of Calais and equally we now have work at the port of Coquelles. Both works on that physical security are intended to be completed at the end of this month. So there has been that investment.

Chair: But that was last year.

James Brokenshire: Yes

Chair: We are talking about the proposals today.

James Brokenshire: Yes. And that is why I am breaking this down. I will come on to the proposals for today. That is about ensuring that we have tighter security and less permeability in and around the vicinity of those two ports so that if we do have slow-moving traffic, that means that it is much harder to break into those vehicles.

Allied to that is the work at the Port of Calais to improve the flow rate through that port. Again, what that means is additional booths for passenger and coach traffic to see that there is speedier movement through the port and therefore less likelihood that you will get queues and less likelihood therefore through stationary or slow-moving traffic of migrants being able to break into vehicles or attempt to do so in those circumstances. That is work that has been undertaken to be completed for July. That, I suppose you could say, is the first phase of the work.

Q85 Chair: On that first phase, even though that work has been done and all this very important amount of taxpayers' money has been spent, the number of migrants has gone up from 600 in January. We have just been told today it has gone up to 5,000. So while we are busy building fences, which on occasions blow down as you know, and which on occasion migrants themselves cut through as I saw when I went there, the number of migrants is increasing, not decreasing.

James Brokenshire: The estimate that we have received from the French authorities is that it is in the region of around 3,000. That is what the French Government have said to us. I certainly recognise the pressures that are seen across the whole of the EU with the flow of people coming from the southern Mediterranean or the eastern route, which is why I couched it in those terms of looking at what can be done close at hand and the security at work; and equally some of the organised immigration-crime work that is taking place because there are two threats here. First there is the opportunistic threat of people trying to break into stationary or slow-moving traffic. Secondly there is the organised-crime threat with people-traffickers and others receiving sums of money to place people deep inside vehicles in very insecure and dangerous conditions.

Q86 Chair: We will come on to organised crime. When was the last time you went down to Calais?

James Brokenshire: I have not had the opportunity to go to the Port of Calais.

Q87 Chair: As Immigration Minister you have never been to Calais?

James Brokenshire: I have not.

Q88 Chair: May I suggest that you do that? The Committee has been twice. I went a fortnight ago. I would have thought that since it is a priority for you—and I know the Home Secretary went to Paris—you really need to go down there to have a look. When the Committee went—I went with Mr Loughton and Mr Winnick, who sadly is not here today—the fact is the migrants do not operate in this way. They do not see a fence and go, “Here is a fence”. They try to get into the vehicles before it gets into the fenced area. If you talk to any of the migrants—and I suggest that you do that as well; Ministers ought to, as the professionals who gave evidence today have done—all they say is, “If we fail today, we’ll try tomorrow”. We are dealing with the same people going round and round and round. I know that there is this great interest in physical security, and that is very welcome, but the point made by Mr Keefe and the Road Haulage Association and the Freight Transport Association people, is that the problem is just moved somewhere else and it is the French authorities who do not seem to be doing enough. There are British citizens being threatened and nobody is stopping them.

James Brokenshire: Can I say it is much more than simple, physical security? That is part of any proposal that you would need to put in place around securing an asset. It is about policing and I think it is important to note that the French police numbers have increased quite significantly with around six and a half CRS Police—their riot police—being deployed to Calais, which amounts to around 450 riot police. I think it is important to recognise those steps that the French authorities are taking.

The point you make about talking to migrants, understanding what is being said in the camps, indeed some of that communication message to underline that in this country the streets are not paved with gold—that is the clear message we give through our Immigration Act; that you have to be here lawfully to access public services.

Q89 Chair: They do not read our Immigration Act, with the greatest of respect, do they?

James Brokenshire: I just make the point that there are a number of different themes —welfare entitlement and other issues—that we are providing communication messages on in the camps. We are also taking feedback from them. So it is not just standing back and not listening; absolutely not.

Chair: I understand that. Thank you for that answer. Very helpful.

Q90 Mr Jayawardena: Minister, to follow on from what you are saying around communicating with the migrants, the mayor of Calais said that migrants that are in Calais are a British problem because the British border operates there and because the UK has such an attractive regime for migrants. She goes on to say it is easy to find work in Britain, and accommodation; that the state will give them money every week, and so on. So even if the British Government is communicating certain things, it might not be true of people in other countries. What is the Government doing beyond the immediate communication that you referred to earlier to get this message across and indeed perhaps strengthen the regime here to ensure that people do not believe that they can come here and get exactly what she referred to?

James Brokenshire: I think it is important to underline that the UK is subject to the same rules and requirements as France in terms of our processes and protocols. Indeed when you look at some of the asylum rates the UK is much less generous than a number of other European countries and some of the single rates I see, France is more generous. Also the asylum-claim rate in France is currently double that of the UK; around 60,000 to 30,000. It is about getting that communication into the camps—that is part of the £12 million investment—but it is also working with the French Government to see that people are claiming asylum in France where appropriate.

It is worth noting that there were roughly 455 asylum claims in Calais for the first four months of this year as compared to around 450 asylum claims in Calais per year between 2011 and 2013 and 885 in 2014. So we are supporting and working with the French Government to see that where claims should and can be made in France that that is what takes place.

Q91 Mr Jayawardena: I welcomed that close working with the French Government in the statement earlier. I also said further that work needed to be undertaken with the Italian Government and others to ensure that they were doing their job because of course under agreements that exist people should be claiming asylum in the first country they enter and if fingerprinting and such was being undertaken then this would be possible to be proven. What is the British Government doing to ensure that that is the case?

James Brokenshire: I think the Home Secretary's response underlined the joint working with the French and other European partners to put pressure on the Italians and other governments to see that those coming into the Mediterranean are properly screened; that appropriate fingerprinting is taking place.

At the EU Council last October the Justice and Home Affairs Council underlined that need for member states to bolster their capacity to do that. However, it is not simply just saying that. The UK is one of the largest supporters—probably the largest supporter—of what is known as EASO—the European Asylum Support Office, providing direct support to a number of countries to assist with technical or other capabilities for the processing of recently arrived migrants. That is something we are actively doing in countries such as Greece, Italy, Bulgaria and Cyprus and obviously we will continue to do so.

Q92 Mr Jayawardena: Clearly at the moment the processing in some countries, perhaps including Italy is too slow. Migrants are leaving the country before their application for asylum is even considered. What more will either the European Union or others do to ensure that further pressure is put on Italy and other countries to speed up that processing?

James Brokenshire: I think that will come through the Justice and Home Affairs Council, the Council of Ministers; also in how support through EASO—this body—is able to give capacity and capability support to countries that need that assistance and that is precisely what it stands ready to do.

Q93 Mr Jayawardena: One last question. You referred to the £12 million that we spent on further security. How will you demonstrate that money has been well spent? Will it be in terms of the number of occurrences dropping? Or some other measure?

James Brokenshire: With the French authorities we are looking at joint protocols to establish those outcomes. Part of that work is for example around organised-immigration crime. We are in the final stages of establishing a joint working protocol that will formalise structures, objectives and the resources each country is committing to tackle organised-immigration crime. That is one example of how we are doing so. The primary objective is to see that the ports in northern France continue to flow; that we have the trade that goes there as well as holidaymakers wanting to make their passage from or to the European Union and further afield.

Q94 Mr Jayawardena: May I follow up very quickly on that very last item? In relation to the flow you referred to, are you planning to make any changes to the current arrangements that allow passengers to be checked in France before they board a cross-channel train or ferry?

James Brokenshire: Perhaps you are highlighting the juxtaposed controls and the Treaty of Calais itself. Mr Vaz talked about history on this. The juxtaposed controls in Calais, Dunkerque and Boulogne were established in response to an overall settlement of previous pressures in northern France. Absolutely they work in the best interests of the UK and France to assist in that flow of people and indeed, Coquelles, the Channel tunnel, the structures, the whole process, is underpinned by juxtaposed control arrangements; having those two controls side by side.

Chair: Indeed. We are all in favour.

James Brokenshire: But I think some have questioned and challenged—certainly in France—as to the impact of this.

Q95 Chair: In response to Mr Jayawardena's specific question about the relaxation: do you have an answer to that?

James Brokenshire: The relaxation of the controls?

Chair: To make them flow.

James Brokenshire: No. The flow rates are intended to be improved as a consequence of the investments in the additional—

Q96 Chair: Not changing any of the processes? That's what we are after.

James Brokenshire: No, no. Indeed we keep this under careful review as to the steps. I can say that for example we are increasing the number of (inaudible PTV 16:12:57) desks from 13 to 17 and increasing the number of tourist control booths from 10 to 14, as part of the overall plan.

Q97 Chair: That is very helpful. In response To Mr Jayawardena's question, it would be very helpful, because this £12 million seems to have gone around a lot in the last year, including the £1 million announced today, which I think was announced in June, for the additional support for dogs—I think that has already been announced. That is not a new announcement, is it?

James Brokenshire: No. That is not a new announcement.

Chair: There is no new money announced today.

James Brokenshire: No. To create the new zone, this new secure zone, will require around €2 million extra in terms of investment.

Q98 Chair: Was that announced today?

James Brokenshire: No. That is part of what the Home Secretary is announcing in terms of the creation and establishment of that new area within Calais.

Q99 Chair: This is €2 million, you say, not pounds?

James Brokenshire: Correct.

Chair: Do you say the word "euros" because it is coming from someone other than the British Government?

James Brokenshire: No. I think it is rather that the works are taking place in Calais itself. So that is why, obviously, I am using the local currency that clearly the Calais Chamber of Commerce, which obviously is very involved in delivering this, has estimated that it will cost.

Q100 Chair: It does sound a little bit higher, so that's good, isn't it? The £12 million, if we go back to our currency, could you please give us a breakdown—not today; could you write to us—and tell us exactly how that has been spent?

James Brokenshire: Yes. I am happy to do so. I am just looking at the schedule I have in front of me. I will write to you, certainly.

Q101 Keith Starmer: Minister, to some extent we are obviously discussing the tactics to deal with the immediate problem and some are more effective than others and some need more money than others. In the long term this has to be dealt with further upstream. Various numbers have been given today as to the numbers arriving at Calais and attempting to get across to the UK. We have heard a figure now of about 5,000—you gave a figure of about 3,000—but as I understand it there is a measurable flow. In other words, sharing the intelligence as best we can with other countries, which I assume we are doing, and mapping it as best we can and knowing the numbers arriving in some shape or form in Europe, there must be an anticipated number, or high-level number, for the rest of this year that we are planning jointly the response to. Do you know what that figure is? Is it going to go up? What do we anticipate is the maximum figure for let's say the rest of this year based on the best intelligence we have?

James Brokenshire: I am certainly not aware of that type of estimate having been created. Obviously there is data that Frontex, the agency that has responsibility for the external EU border, provides in terms of quarterly information on the flows that they see through different routes. We do share intelligence and information with other European partners. We have an embedded National Crime Agency officer at OCRIEST, which is the French agency responsible for illegal immigration. We have someone embedded in Sicily. Various agencies are embedded in Sicily, including MoD. We also have people within Europol. Obviously the announcement of the task force (inaudible PTV 16:16) is absolutely about strengthening that intelligence picture as well as the Common Security and Defence Policy initiative in the Mediterranean itself to understand further upstream—in other words beyond the shores of the EU—in terms of those flows of people across Africa. Some of the estimates that I have seen have given numbers around 500,000 or 600,000 in Libya wanting to make that journey northwards. So we know that there are significant pressures there.

Q102 Keith Starmer: If the figures aren't there, the figures aren't there but do I take it—the announcement today and the measures are being put in place without really knowing what the increased threat is going to be for the rest of the year—are simply taking the here and now?

James Brokenshire: The announcement today, for example, in respect of the secure zone for traffic and lorries in the Port of Calais is intended to meet known and expected demand and problems that are experienced at the port. So for example the capacity that will be created in the Port of Calais will effectively amount to a queue—again, apologies for using probably European units—of around 4 kilometres of stationary traffic when we know that what has generally been experienced around the Port of Calais has been around 3 kilometres. So it is about looking at vehicle capacity and therefore that need to secure and that need to deal with some of those pressures in that way. The announcements are looking at the capacity and flow rates through a port where you may have disruption, you may have busy periods, and therefore mitigating and dealing with that threat and impact. So it is rather looking at it in that context.

Q103 Anna Turley: As I understand it, prior to 2010 when clandestines were caught at our juxtaposed controls in Calais or at Coquelles the Border Force used to take biometric information like fingerprints, process them and then reject them, because obviously they had attempted to come here illegally and so they were formally refused. I understand that since 2010 the practice was stopped because of limited detention facilities and that now clandestines are handed over to the French police, which we have heard quite a lot about today, which simply quite often means being tipped back into the countryside for them to come back and try again. Could you say a bit about why that practice was stopped in 2010 and whether that could be a quite helpful step that we could look at again to try to limit people trying to come back each time?

James Brokenshire: It is something that we keep under review but to perform routine fingerprinting would need the space, custody facilities and extra warranted staff normally associated with a police station. Obviously that would require French consent. It is a question of balancing the benefits that may be attached against the costs and the proportionality of doing so. I think our focus has rather been to see that when people arrive on the shores of the EU we are seeing greater fingerprinting and those checks and steps taking place there so that you are dealing with it much earlier in the process and indeed therefore dealing with the challenge of those flows across the open Schengen area, to be able to pinpoint people back to when they arrived in the EU in the first place. I think that is where our emphasis has been.

Q104 Anna Turley: That is absolutely the right approach. It is much better to stop it upstream but we have heard today, not least from the police but from our other witnesses, that a huge number of the people that we are seeing are the same people trying again and again and will often stay in the camp for up to a month, pretty much knowing that eventually they may well be successful. If we are able to process these people and say to them, “You won’t get in now because we have your fingerprints; we have your data; we will refuse you; there is no point in trying” is that not going to at least help end this problem?

James Brokenshire: I think it is about supporting the French authorities to get people to claim asylum in France if they are entitled to a humanitarian asylum claim. Obviously you want to see that someone is receiving humanitarian protection in the first available country that is accessible. It underpins our Dublin arrangements in the EU and therefore that sense that you want that to take place there. That is why I referenced some of those increasing numbers that we have seen of people claiming asylum in Calais as contrasting with what we have seen before. So it is about that support, including in the southern Mediterranean, and we stand ready to work with the French authorities to assist them with that type of activity as well as giving some of those communication messages into the camps to be able to relieve some of that pressure.

Q105 Anna Turley: I am not entirely convinced that we are seeing them getting processed and having an alternative. As the Chair has very helpfully pointed out, when you have fought your way across the Sahara and across the Mediterranean and you have travelled through several countries, you are going to keep trying. There has not been enough evidence today about what the alternatives are for them if they are not getting through, how they are being processed. They are not going to just turn around and go home again. What is being done for them with the relevant authorities? You mentioned the Dublin Convention. As I understand it, in 2010 we had 1,545 people returned under the Dublin Convention. In 2014, less than half—740—despite seeing more people trying to come over. How come we are not removing as many people under the Dublin Convention back to the country they first tried to come through?

James Brokenshire: One of the challenges we have had around Dublin in particular affected Greece and a court case that in essence said that their processes were not human-rights compliant and therefore put a stop to Dublin returns to Greece. That is why I make the point about the work that we do through the European Asylum Support Office to strengthen some of the capabilities within a number of these countries. It is not simply about dealing with the flow there. It is to uphold and underpin processes like Dublin, which I do take to be very important. We should not be supporting asylum shopping. It should be the case that if someone is fleeing persecution they should be able to, and should, claim asylum in the first country where they are able to do so, underpinning some of those basic tenets, which is why I certainly support the work the UK is doing with the European Asylum Support Office to achieve that.

Q106 Nusrat Ghani I think the Minister answered my question before I asked it but talking about the pressures on Calais I wonder if you could share what work is being done, not only with France but with our European partners, to reduce the level of migration to Calais and relieve some of the pressures there.

James Brokenshire: This is a very significant piece of work that we are engaged in with our European partners in terms of breaking that flow. You will probably have heard the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary use that phrase. That is about combating organised-immigration crime; the work of the new task force that has been established; also the Common Security and Defence Policy work, the first phase of that, to build the intelligence around activity and flows. There is the work between the European Union and the African Union as well through something called the Khartoum process. We will have a further round of meetings on that in Valetta, again, to ensure that we are having that focus in that way.

As well as regional development work, international development work, to look at ways of stopping those flows across Africa, there is an initiative to establish a centre in Niger that we hope can be developed for potential voluntary returns and other mechanisms.

So there is a lot of work taking place—and clearly we are pushing our European partners to see that work that is more long-term, yes; is looking further afield—that I think is absolutely imperative to deal with the underlying issues rather than simply responding to some of the symptoms that we are seeing closer to home.

Q107 Stuart C. McDonald: First I think we would be doing the Chief Constable a disservice if we did not put his shopping list to the Minister. He mentioned in evidence that he would like new resources and also some new powers as regards traffic flow, I believe. Finally and most importantly he was looking for a lorry park on this side of the Channel as well. Are these things that the Minister is looking at?

James Brokenshire: On the latter the Department for Transport keeps Operation Stack under careful review. There are limitations and challenges in terms of physical space that I know the Department for Transport has sought to understand and sought to confront. One of the issues about the ports of Dover and Cheriton, which is the Eurotunnel terminal near Folkestone, is that there is very limited space there. We do have greater space and capacity around Calais and Coquelles, which has supported that work, but obviously we are reliant on Operation Stack to deal with those pressures. I know that representations have been made by Kent MPs to the Transport Secretary and the Home Secretary has committed to meet with Kent MPs to listen to the continuing concerns, recognising the huge disruption that does take place when this is brought into effect, to consider further what options might be available. I think they are limited in terms of their scope.

In terms of resourcing for policing, obviously police forces are able to make claims under the exceptional expenses and exceptional costs formula and Kent is able to do that, but our immigration enforcement teams are working closely with Kent and other police forces to assist them, to ease some of the pressures that they can experience where detections take place, to assist them in making that process as speedy and as effective as possible.

Q108 Stuart C. McDonald: Turning to the people who have already made their way to Calais and want to gain entry to the United Kingdom, have we any analysis or estimates about the nationalities of the 3,000 to 5,000 people that are currently in Calais?

James Brokenshire: Certainly when I look at, for example, our overall asylum-claim numbers that we see in this country, it does vary. When we see different flows you can certainly point to

countries like Eritrea or Sudan or Syria in terms of some of those claims but if it would help the Committee I am certainly happy to write with our latest highest nationalities that we see in that way.

It is also worth highlighting that Frontex itself carries out certain studies and work of the debriefing and other work that they see at the external European border—in other words the southern Mediterranean; on the different flows through different routes. So there is information out there that gives a sense of some of the very different nationalities there and how through the southern Mediterranean route that is largely from West African countries and across the whole of the African continent, whereas the eastern Mediterranean route has a very different complexion.

Q109 Stuart C. McDonald: The three countries you just mentioned: is it fair to say that it would be pretty much impossible for people from these countries to be returned if they were making claims for example in the United Kingdom?

James Brokenshire: Not necessarily because obviously some people will claim to be one nationality when they are not, sadly, and therefore part of the screening and assessment process is to understand and assess where someone has lawfully come from. There are certainly barriers to removal and some of the challenges that we know in respect of countries like Eritrea, because of the human rights issues, but we keep our analysis and review under close consideration. However, it does not necessarily mean that there should be a barrier to removal in all cases because of those nationalities and because as I say the whole issue of whether someone claims to be one nationality rather than another.

Q110 Stuart C. McDonald: To put it another way, the number of removals to those three countries must be pretty small over the last few years.

James Brokenshire: Certainly in terms of the ongoing conflict in Syria, absolutely; and obviously we have granted asylum to around 4,200 people from Syria, rightly and properly, over and above other humanitarian groups that exist. Obviously in countries like Sudan and some other countries of Africa there may be routes and options for return and clearly if someone does not have the right to be here, does not have a lawful humanitarian claim, then it is right and proper that we should seek to remove them.

Q111 Stuart C. McDonald: You mentioned earlier that you would expect some of these people's claims to be processed in France. Is that something you have discussed with the French authorities? What has the response been?

James Brokenshire: There has been discussion work with the French Government in respect of asylum claims taking place in France and this is something they are seeking to work on in the camps as part of the communications work that I have highlighted. Part of our investment and work with the French Government is about that communication into the camps, and not only highlighting that some of the false messages that the people traffickers have given to migrants about what it is like in the UK, that we puncture some of those myths, but also that the French Government are seeking to assert and underline that if you have a humanitarian claim, to claim it here in France and obviously we have seen increases in the number of asylum claims taking place in Calais, as contrasted to recent years.

Q112 Stuart C. McDonald: As regards to puncturing myths, is the idea of government literature puncturing myths not in itself a myth? Is there any research to back up the idea that you can really put people off with a government leaflet or advice?

James Brokenshire: I think that you can take a number of steps, and equally we are trying to establish clearly—and this goes to the broader work on understanding flows, understanding exploitation by organised immigration crime groups, around messaging, using social media, so not simply looking in the immediate vicinity of the Port of Calais and that area. Obviously, that is where we have that manifestation of people who are there seeking to try to make the journey across to the UK. But what more we are able to do using a number of different techniques and tactics, and that is something that we are examining closely and carefully to underline the false messages that I think are being given by the people traffickers, and encouraging people to take great risks, where we know that those people traffickers have no compunction and no care about the welfare, or whether some of these people live or die, and that is why the work that we are doing around the organised immigration crime piece I think matters so much.

Q113 Stuart C. McDonald: Absolutely. I do not think anyone on this Committee would disagree with that but if, for example, then we have people from Syria in or around Calais, I would suggest something radical here: why do the British Government and French Government not come to some sort of arrangement whereby the British Government offers asylum or some sort of protection for some of them, and the French Government does likewise?

James Brokenshire: Ultimately, if you have someone in need of humanitarian protection in France, then under normal rules, where countries do not provide asylum outside of their borders, in an extra-territorial sense, their work should be to encourage those people to claim asylum in France. If they are in need of that humanitarian protection surely the thing to do is to see that they receive that protection at the earliest opportunity and that is the most effective way of doing so.

Q114 Chair: We are coming to the end of the session now. Can I just put this point to you? Although of course all of us on this Committee are very grateful for the work the Government are doing, your answers today do not necessarily meet the criticisms made by the previous witnesses, in particular the fact that the secure zone that you are talking about, that the Home Secretary mentioned, is going to start later in the year. I think there is a feeling that to deal with this crisis—and all the witnesses, Minister, talked about a crisis—we need to start this immediately. There is also the feeling that unless that is also backed up by something being done in Kent, this is not going to be an easy summer for people travelling to France, and it just takes one strike by those employees of MyFerryLink to bring the whole thing to a standstill. Do you recognise the fact that this is actually not the end of the problem?

James Brokenshire: I recognise that there remains a risk that workers from MyFerryLink may take further industrial action, and obviously while it is a matter for the French Government, and the French Transport Minister I understand has been meeting with former workers of MyFerryLink in the course of this week to seek to bring about a long-term resolution, that is very important that we do not see wildcat action causing the disruption that we have experienced over the last two weeks. The work that we have put in place does provide that additional security around the two ports, and the enhancements at Coquelles as well, around the Eurotunnel terminal, to prevent people accessing on to the platform areas and some of those immediate issues. That is work that is happening now, and—

Q115 Chair: Yes, but it is not working, because only two weeks ago 150 people ran into the tunnel.

James Brokenshire: It is not—but, Mr Vaz, it is not complete. It is being completed at the end of this month, so this is why I am saying, it is the here and now, and the work that is being done is to complete at the end of July.

Q116 Chair: So by the end of this month nobody will be running into the tunnel in the way they have been in the past?

James Brokenshire: The discussions that we have had with Eurotunnel and in terms of the overall plan for Coquelles and the discussions I have had with Mr Keefe, who I know has given evidence to you today, their belief is that the fencing that is being put up will significantly make a difference in securing that area where the vehicles board the trains, and also down to the tunnel. Because the way that Coquelles is configured, trains effectively come back on a loop to get to—

Q117 Chair: Yes, I have been to Coquelles so I know how it is configured. In respect of the meeting between Bernard Cazeneuve and the Home Secretary on 2 July, you presumably were not there?

James Brokenshire: No.

Q118 Chair: They agreed to increase the joint intervention fund. What has that been increased to?

James Brokenshire: Mr Vaz, I have given a figure today in terms of the additional €2 million —

Q119 Chair: Just the additional joint intervention fund, not what we are doing. It is about €2 million?

James Brokenshire: It is. The joint intervention fund refers to the £12 million that was originally established and therefore the additional funds that obviously this programmes—

Q120 Chair: £12 million is our contribution?

James Brokenshire: Yes, it is.

Q121 Chair: So, it is not a joint contribution, is it?

James Brokenshire: It is—

Q122 Chair: What is the French contribution to match our £12 million?

James Brokenshire: The French are providing the policing, are providing the additional work.

Q123 Chair: All right.

James Brokenshire: So, in other words, that is—

Q124 Chair: What does that come to?

James Brokenshire: That has not been monetised, that has not been calculated in that direct financial sense, so in terms of talking about a joint fund, that is talking about the monetary sum that we are providing, matched by other work that the French Government are doing.

Q125 Chair: It is not monetised? And the €2 million; is that the increase that they were talking about on 2 July?

James Brokenshire: The €2 million deals with the work on this new secure lorry—

Q126 Chair: Sure, but was that what they meant when they made that joint statement on 2 July? They agreed to increase the joint intervention fund, was it by €2 million?

James Brokenshire: It was agreement to examine need and to resolve—

Q127 Chair: No, sorry, there was a statement saying there was agreement to increase the intervention fund; do we have a figure as to how much? That is all. I am just looking for a figure.

James Brokenshire: I do not have that figure to date but there has been an agreement to increase it. I will write to you with a breakdown of, not simply the amounts being spent on each item, but also the overall monetary sum that has been agreed, so that you can see that very clearly.

Q128 Chair: All right, excellent. So there is no more money. They just had a meeting and they said, “We will increase this in the future”.

James Brokenshire: Correct.

Q129 Chair: I see, so no additional money. In respect to the Freight Transport Association, did you see the letter that they sent to the Prime Minister, of 7 July?

James Brokenshire: If I have, I do not have it in front of me, but please, if you are able to share its contents with me then perhaps I can respond.

Q130 Chair: We will give you a copy. No. 10 has been very slow in sending you a copy. In respect of the four things that they asked for, it appears that none of these things have now been met in their shopping list, as Mr McDonald talked to. But the one that concerns me the most is the survey that 70% of drivers have reported threatening and intimidating behaviour, and a quote from a driver that, “Our Government are not doing anything to help and it is only a matter of time before one of us is going to be killed out here”. It is not for the British police to deal with that; it is for the French police to deal with it, be very clear. What are we doing to get the French police to help our British citizens who are driving these vehicles?

James Brokenshire: We have obviously had a number of meetings with the French Government, both with the Home Secretary meeting Bernard Cazeneuve and also with Border Force at operational level with their counterparts at the Police Aux Frontières and the Gendarmerie as well, in underlining the concerns that obviously hauliers and others see. But obviously, I am concerned about the safety and security of those using our Channel ports to facilitate trade and holidays as well, obviously, as the very real need to ensure that people are safe and secure. We have underlined that on a number of occasions.

The French, I think, have responded to that. I have obviously indicated the additional police resourcing that has been given by the French around this, and I think that they recognise this and that is why they have taken those steps. Equally, we are making sure that we are giving hauliers the best up to date information, the numbers that may be required for them to contact the

French police, in extremis, to ensure that they are equipped with the right advice and information, and we keep that under very close review.

Q131 Chair: That is one of the shopping lists I think we can tick off, then. In respect of Calais 2015, the Government presumably is still committed to spending £57 million on widening Calais, making it into a bigger port?

James Brokenshire: You are right, Mr Vaz, in talking about this, I think it is the Calais 2020 project—

Chair: I have added five years; it is the European Union.

James Brokenshire: —which is the overall port redevelopment, which is not being financed by the UK; it is contributions from the European Union, the French state, the Nord-Pas-de-Calais and private money. That, I understand, is estimated to be anywhere in the region of between €270 million and €650 million as part of that overall work.

Q132 Chair: Yes, we are contributing £57 million—

James Brokenshire: I do not recognise that number at all.

Q133 Chair: Maybe you can write and clarify that. The EU are giving €191 million. My worry is that, if we are extending and making Calais bigger, which is obviously very good for what we are seeking to do in trade with France, we need to make sure the security is in place. Maybe you could write to us and clarify that.

James Brokenshire: I say that I do not recognise the number because the UK Government is not paying towards this Calais 2020 redevelopment. It is this work that is taking place by the Chamber of Commerce, these different French bodies, the European Union itself making a contribution. That is what is supporting it, as well as private finance. Absolutely, Border Force will be part and parcel of that process on the overall security work to ensure that our interests in respect of the juxtaposed controls and security of the port are very much reflected in that planning work.

Q134 Chair: Three quick points not related to Calais: first of all the contract of Teleperformance has been suspended in Macedonia. They deal with the applications for visas. If you do not know the answer now, would you write to us and tell us the reasons why it has been taken away?

James Brokenshire: I will certainly do so. I am not familiar with that specific issue but I will make enquiries and make sure that we respond.

Q135 Chair: Secondly, in respect of a case that has been in the public domain, Hani al-Sibai, who has been in this country for a number of years; I think the Government, and that means you as the Immigration Minister, has been trying to remove him for a number of years. He has been kept here under human rights laws. It is claimed he is in receipt of £50,000 a year in disability benefits, although he allegedly can walk, happily. Do you know about this case and do you know what the problem regarding the removal is? Is it another Abu Hamza, for example?

James Brokenshire: I am aware of this case, and there are limitations as to what I can say publicly around it, but there have been issues in relation to removal, but we are actively pursuing the removal of this individual whose presence in the UK is not conducive to the public good. There have been legal challenges and legal cases around it, so this is a complex case, but I can

underline to the Committee the continued resolve of this Government, as we have done in other cases, to see that this man is removed.

Q136 Chair: Finally, HMS Bulwark has stopped its work in the Mediterranean, or is about to stop its work, having saved 2,900 lives. Our thanks to all of those involved in that operation for what they have done. It has been replaced by HMS Enterprise, which is a much smaller boat that seems to be there primarily to deal with intelligence issues. Is that the case? Is it a smaller vehicle for this kind of work?

James Brokenshire: I, too, would like to pay tribute to the work of HMS Bulwark and I think I am right in saying that UK assets—because we have Border Force cutters, we had Merlin helicopters in the region as well—contributed to around 5,000 lives being saved. HMS Enterprise is a different type of vessel. HMS Bulwark was withdrawn because it needed a refit and therefore that is why it left. HMS Enterprise is a multi-role survey ship. It is assisting in tackling the problem of organised immigration crime, and I refer to the Common Security and Defence Policy work and breaking the link around organised immigration crime, and therefore it will support this next phase of the work. Obviously, it is in region and will respond to vessels in distress as any other maritime vessel would, but it is important to note that the cutters will remain and a Merlin helicopter will also be provided. Therefore, it is this balance of resource and support that we remain committed to in working and supporting Frontex in their work in the Mediterranean.

Q137 Chair: Can I thank you for coming in today? We really appreciate the way in which you deal with this Committee, with very open answers to sometimes robust questions. In a sense, this Committee is concerned about illegal migration, and other issues, and we are launching a number of inquiries, one is into the crisis in the Mediterranean; the other is into the area of skill shortages. So, while we try to keep the illegals out, we want to make sure there are good routes for people who want to come here legally to work, in order to work in this country. So, we are going to do both of those things. Can I congratulate you on your appointment to the Privy Council? That must be very pleasing for you, and I am sure, unrelated to your appearances before the Home Affairs Select Committee.

James Brokenshire: Thank you very much, Mr Vaz. It is a privilege. I welcome, even if sometimes the sessions are challenging, the work of this Committee, and wish you and all of the members of this Committee well in your work during this Parliament in holding us to account, but also in your investigations and your inquiries which are important and that do make a difference.

Chair: Thank you and I hope you manage to get to Calais sometime in the future.