

European Scrutiny Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

Tel (020) 7219 3292 Email escom@parliament.uk Website www.parliament.uk/escom

From: Sir William Cash MP

13 May 2020

Kelly Tolhurst MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
LONDON SW1P 4DR

7055/20 and 7281/20: COVID-19: Commission guidance on air cargo and maritime safety

The Committee have asked me to thank you for your Explanatory Memoranda of 17 April and 29 April 2020, respectively, on the two above listed documents.

We recognise the severe disruption to air cargo and maritime services caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and appreciate the speed with which you have provided your analysis of the two EU documents under consideration.

With regard to document 7055/20 on air cargo, we note the limited information provided on the UK's response to the crisis when set against the Commission's recommendations for Member States. As such, we request further details on:

- the domestic measures that the Government has taken in the ten areas identified by the Commission. This information should be provided under each of the Commission's respective headings (as per your EM).

With regard to document 7281/20 on maritime safety, we are particularly interested in the UK's utilisation of the 'EU Civil Protection Mechanism' and note your statement that as a flag state "...we [the UK] have already taken measures to repatriate more than 19,000 British nationals from nearly 60 cruise ships...". According to a recent UK Chamber of Shipping statement, up to 2,000—or around one in 13—of the UK's 25,750 seafarers are currently stranded on ships around the world.¹ With these points in mind, we request further information on:

¹ Cited in BBC, ['Coronavirus: 'Up to 2,000' UK seafarers stranded'](#) (9 May 2020)

- whether the UK has made use of the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism in the context of maritime-related repatriations e.g. from cruise ships; and if it has, details of the number of UK nationals repatriated, from where and the dates on which these repatriations took place; and
- with regard to UK seafarers stranded overseas, the Government's plans for their rescue and whether the UK can and, if so, will, make use of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism for this purpose.

The Committee also notes with interest the Prime Minister's announcement on the evening of 10 May that the Government is considering introducing a 14-day quarantine period for air passengers arriving in the UK. We request information on whether such plans have been considered for those arriving at UK ports via sea. If thought has not been given to this (or it has and such action was decided against), we seek a full explanation as to why.

We ask that you respond to this letter within 10 working days.

I am copying this letter to Lord Kinnoull and Christopher Johnson in the Lords; to Huw Merriman MP and Marek Kubala, Chair and Clerk of the Transport Committee; to Les Saunders in the Cabinet Office; and to Margaret Browne, Departmental Scrutiny Co-ordinator.

CHAIR