



Home Office

Home Secretary

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Dame Diana Johnson MP
Chair, Home Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
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04 June 2022

Dear Dame Diana,

Thank you for your letter dated 16 June, in which you raised a number of questions relating to the implementation of the European Entry and Exit System (EES), with a particular focus on implementation at the Port of Dover following the Committee's visit there on 7 June. I will address each of your questions in turn.

Officials from the Home Office, Department for Transport, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and Cabinet Office have continued to liaise with French officials from the Ministry of Interior, and have secured formal responses from them to a number of detailed legal and operational questions that arise from implementation considerations. A key part of this has included the challenges at Dover, as well as the Eurotunnel terminal in Cheriton and at London St Pancras Station for Eurostar.

Following a joint UK/French visit and meeting with the Port of Dover in April, the last formal meeting with French officials on EES implementation was on 17 May, however further technical discussions have continued in the meantime as part of engagement between UK and French officials, including Border Force and their Police aux Frontières (PAF) counterparts, and UK officials within the British Embassy in Paris. In the 17 May meeting, we discussed Dover implementation in particular and established that there was a need for a greater understanding of France's modelling of the impact of their proposals for implementation in Dover. The Home Office is also undertaking its own analysis to assist with better articulating the risks, and we are due to

meet with Port of Dover representatives on 27 June to work through this in more detail to aid further discussion with France and the European Commission. We will be meeting with the French Ministry of Interior again on 29 June.

In exploring the many issues related to EES implementation, we have explored the potential for the biometric enrolment process to take place without physical oversight by a French border official. Our French counterparts have confirmed that they see this complying with the Regulation by using remote camera supervision of registration kiosks for example, but there are other methods of pre-enrolment that do require the physical presence of a border official. Remote supervision, where feasible, also raises a number of technical considerations to explore before this can be confirmed as a workable solution. We are continuing to discuss these challenges with the port and terminal operators, as well as the French Government.

While you are correct that biometric enrolment is technically feasible to take place in advance of arrival at the port, the Regulation that implements EES does not make provision for this. We have addressed this point to both the French Government and European Commission, but they have both refused this is an option. We continue to engage on this matter in particular, as we know that port operators and other industry experts are keen to explore it for EES implementation.

This continues to be an important issue that we wish to address with partners across Government, and with the operators concerned. In the case of the Port of Dover, we anticipate that our meeting with them on 27 June, and with the French Government on 29 June will be significant next steps.

With all good wishes


Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary