



Rt Hon. Yvette Cooper MP
Chair, Home Affairs Select Committee
House of Commons
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12 January 2021

Dear Chair,

I write further to your letter dated 21 December, where you raised a number of points regarding family reunion following the UK's exit from the EU.

Helping vulnerable children unite with family members while negotiations with EU states continue and the UK consults on and assesses its immigration rules

I recognise the Committee's concern relating to the end of the transition period and its impact on procedures relating to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in Europe; however, my letter of 11 December set out in detail the adequate provisions within the Immigration Rules for unaccompanied children to be reunited with family in the United Kingdom. Published guidance is now available on GOV.UK here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overview-of-family-reunion-options-in-the-immigration-rules>

Children referred for transfer to the UK under the Dublin III Regulation before 1 January

The UK will continue to deal with any Dublin family unity cases which entered our system through the Regulation's inter-State mechanism before the end of the transition period, as provided for in Part 3 of Schedule 2 to the Immigration, Nationality and Asylum (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. However, it would be wrong for me to be drawn into a running commentary on the number of individuals this involves. This information will form part of the statistics we routinely publish on the number of individuals transferred under the Dublin Regulation.

Negotiation plans and priorities

The UK made a genuine and sincere offer to the EU on new arrangements for the family reunion of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. While the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the United Kingdom does not include provisions on family reunion for unaccompanied minors, the parties agreed a joint political declaration on asylum and returns. This declaration took note of the UK's intention to engage in bilateral discussions with the most concerned Member States to discuss suitable practical arrangements on asylum, family reunion for unaccompanied minors or illegal migration, in accordance with the Parties' respective laws and regulations. This declaration aligns with the commitment the Government already made in Parliament,

during the passage of the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Act 2020, to pursue bilateral negotiations on post-transition migration issues with key countries with whom we have a mutual interest, including on the family reunion of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Changes

I trust my answers in the House on the 16 December and my letter of 22 December address any further concerns about the Statement of Changes to the Immigration Rules that we laid on 10 December and which came into force at 23h00 on 31 December 2020.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Philp', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Philp MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Immigration, Compliance and the Courts