



Transport Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Tel 020 7219 3266 Email: transcom@parliament.uk

Robert Courts MP,
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,
Department for Transport,
Great Minster House,
33 Horseferry Rd,
London,
SW1P 4DR

19 January 2021

Dear Robert

I have recently held discussions with representatives of the cruise industry in light of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Prior to the pandemic, the cruise industry generated an estimated £10 billion a year for the UK economy and supported 88,000 jobs. As you will be aware, the industry has been in voluntary suspension since March 2020 to control the spread of coronavirus. According to the industry, this has resulted in a loss of £7 billion to the UK economy and 52,000 jobs.

The industry representatives are urging the Government to take speedy action to aid the recovery of the sector and allow it to mobilise in time for the 2021 holiday season. Historically, the industry takes 35% of its bookings in December and January and cruise lines usually need at least 12 weeks to restart operations.

The cruise industry is concerned that the current FCDO advice against all cruise travel has remained in place throughout the pandemic and has not shifted to destination-based advice as has been the case for air travel.

The representatives highlighted to me the measures taken by the cruise industry to minimise the risks of the introduction, or transmission, of Covid-19 on cruise ships. This includes collaborating with Public Health England, health experts, and the Government on developing the 'Framework for UK Cruise Operations during COVID-19'. The Framework contains individual cruise line protocols on health screening, cleaning, social distancing and shoreside procedures that have been recognised by the UN maritime and tourism agencies as best practice.

The Committee would be grateful if you were able to set out clearly the Government's required criteria for the removal of FCDO advice against all cruise travel to allow—at the right time—a phased restart of the cruise industry.

I would be grateful for a response by **2 February 2020**.



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Yours sincerely,

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

Huw Merriman MP

Chair of the Transport Committee