



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

**The Rt Hon. Baroness Chapman of
Darlington**

Minister of State for International
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Rt Hon Dame Emily Thornberry DBE MP
Foreign Affairs Committee Chair
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

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6 August 2025

Dear Emily,

Last week, the United Kingdom and the Republic of France signed a critical, groundbreaking agreement on the prevention of dangerous journeys (“the Hillmore Treaty”) to trial a pilot to deter illegal journeys across Europe to the UK and dangerous small boat crossings. The Prime Minister and President Macron have stressed the urgency of implementing the Treaty - an innovative approach to reduce the risk to life at sea and to break the business model of organised gangs.

To this end, the Home Secretary is moving swiftly towards ratification and implementation of the Treaty. The Treaty has been laid and published today. The Home Secretary is writing to colleagues in both Houses to set out the details of the Treaty.

As indicated in the Home Secretary’s letter, I am of the opinion that in accordance with Section 22 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (CRAG) the Hillmore Treaty should be ratified without the requirements of Section 20 CRAG having been met. The circumstances in this case are exceptional, and the Home Secretary has set those out in her letter.

Over the next weeks the already-increasing number of irregular boat crossings is likely to grow, with an unacceptable risk to human life. The Treaty is intended to create a deterrent effect, and if it is not ratified and implemented as soon as possible, then an opportunity to prevent dangerous crossings will be lost. If we were to wait until Parliament had returned, and then fulfil the 21 sitting day scrutiny period, we would not be able to ratify and implement the Treaty until the end of October at the earliest.

The Government will also lay a statement in accordance with section 22(3)(c) at the earliest time that such a statement can be laid.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Baroness Chapman'.

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington
Minister of State for International Development,
Latin America and the Caribbean**