

News story: Home Secretary and French counterpart discuss illegal migration

Home Secretary Sajid Javid spoke with French Interior Minister Christophe Castaner on Friday (7 June) to discuss the two countries' ongoing efforts to tackle illegal migration via small boats leaving France seeking to get to the UK.

During a productive conversation, both Ministers welcomed the close and ongoing cooperation between the two countries and agreed to continue to explore options to reinforce the efforts already being made.

Minister Castaner suggested to look at ways to enhance the aerial surveillance already being undertaken by helicopter and by drone along the French coast line, potentially with additional use of drones at night to assess its impact on numbers being stopped from crossing the channel.

Minister Castaner confirmed that in addition to looking at surveillance, he was ensuring mobilisation of additional coastal patrols.

The two Ministers agreed that their teams should continue to discuss methods to disrupt and return migrants seeking to enter the UK illegally via dangerous small boat crossings.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

I would like to thank Minister Castaner for a productive conversation.

The suggestion from Minister Castaner to mobilise additional coastal patrols and explore aerial surveillance options is exactly the type of action which will build on the progress we have already made.

Both myself and Minister Castaner are in agreement that our countries' continued close working is crucial in finding solutions to the issue of men, women and children risking their lives in dangerous Channel crossings.

Friday's conversation builds further on work already underway to tackle the issue of small boat crossings. This includes agreeing a Joint Action Plan in January 2019, as well as working closely with France to return more migrants who have entered the UK by small boat.

Since January, over 35 people who entered the UK illegally on small boats have been returned to Europe. Additionally, since April 2018, Immigration Enforcement have disrupted 57 organised crime groups involved in people smuggling.