

Priti Patel and new French Interior Minister agree action on Channel crossings

Press release

Agreement reached to create an intelligence cell to crack down on gangs facilitating illegal crossings and people smuggling



Priti Patel met the new French Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin today (Sunday 12 July) to discuss how the French and UK governments can do more to tackle illegally-facilitated Channel crossings by small boats.

It was the newly appointed French Interior Minister's first meeting with an international counterpart. The two ministers reiterated their determination to stop the crossings and bring the ruthless criminal gangs behind them to justice.

The Home Secretary and M Darmanin reaffirmed their shared commitment to returning boats in the Channel to France, rather than allowing them to reach the UK.

Through a Declaration of Intent, it was agreed that a Franco-British Operational Research Unit to combat migrant smuggling will be established.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

I have been in France today seeing first-hand the significant work undertaken on that side of the Channel to address the unacceptably high levels of small boats, alongside the efforts of Border Force and the National Crime Agency in the UK.

But despite all of the action taken by law enforcement to date – intercepting the boats, making arrests, returning people back to

France and putting the criminals responsible behind bars – the numbers continue to increase.

This simply cannot be allowed to go on. Today, I have signed an agreement with the French to create a joint intelligence cell which will crack down on the gangs behind this vile people-smuggling operation and impressed on my French counterpart the need to stop these illegal crossings for the benefit of both our countries. This is the start of a new operational approach with the newly appointed French Interior Minister.

The new unit will collate, centralise and analyse operational intelligence to prevent crossings from taking place and to dismantle the gangs behind them.

It will be staffed by French and UK officers and will feed into the already established teams working tirelessly to end the illegally-facilitated crossings.

Both the Home Secretary and M Darmanin stressed that migrants should not risk their lives to reach the UK, given France is a safe country with a well-run asylum system.

The Home Secretary also paid tribute to the work of law enforcement agencies on both sides of the Channel. In 2019 UK Immigration Enforcement made 418 arrests, leading to 203 convictions for a total of 437 years. Of these 259 arrests and 101 convictions were for people smuggling.

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£705 million investment for GB-EU border

- Unprecedented £705 million investment for new infrastructure, jobs and technology at GB-EU border
- This will include £470 million to build infrastructure such as border control posts, and allocating £235m for IT systems and staffing, including 500 more Border Force personnel to ensure our borders are safe and secure and that the UK is ready to take full advantage of its newly sovereign status

Today (Sunday 12 July) the government has announced an £705 million funding package in 20/21 for border infrastructure, jobs and technology to ensure GB border systems are fully operational when the UK takes back control of its border after the end of the transition period.

The new funding will include up to £470 million to build the port and inland infrastructure needed to ensure compliance with new customs procedures and controls, and take the UK's border facilities to the next level. The government is taking exceptional action to build new border infrastructure inland where there is no space at ports. Where ports have space to build on site they will get one-off financial support to ensure the right infrastructure is in place.

The government has been intensively engaging with industry in recent months to ensure that the processes we introduce and the infrastructure we develop is fit for purpose, and that they are ready to manage changes and capitalise on opportunities at the end of the transition period.

Today's announcement also includes a significant £235 million investment in staffing and IT systems. This includes:

- £10 million to recruit around 500 more Border Force personnel and £20 million for new equipment so they can continue to keep our country safe and secure;
- More than £100 million to develop HMRC systems to reduce the burden on traders, alongside additional investment in technology to ensure that new controls can be fully implemented in the "Roll On, Roll Off" environment;
- £15 million to build new data infrastructure to enhance border management and flow helping us on our way to the world's most effective border by 2025 .

This package is on top of the £84 million already provided in grants to ensure there is sufficient capacity in the customs intermediary sector to support traders. This funding will support intermediaries through increased recruitment, training, and by supplying IT equipment to help handle customs declarations.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove said:

We are taking back control of our borders, and leaving the single market and the customs union at the end of this year bringing both changes and significant opportunities for which we all need to prepare. That is why we are announcing this major package of investment today.

With or without further agreement with the EU, this £705 million will ensure that the necessary infrastructure, tech and border personnel are in place so that our traders and the border industry are able to manage the changes and seize the opportunities as we lay the foundations for the world's most effective and secure border.

On 1 January 2021 the transition period with the European Union will end and the UK will leave the single market and customs union, regardless of the agreement the UK reaches with the European Union on its future trade relationship. The government has been working closely with industry to help them prepare for these changes and will shortly be publishing the Border Operating Model setting out in detail how the GB-EU border will operate.

This major funding package comes ahead of the launch of a new public information campaign to ensure the UK is ready to seize global opportunities at the end of the transition period. As part of this campaign, detailed guidance will be given to traders and hauliers explaining what they may need to do to prepare for the end of the transition period.

[Outside the EU, a bright future awaits Britain](#)

Leaving the European Union is, I've often argued, a bit like moving house. Instead of being lodgers under someone else's roof we are choosing a new place in the world where we're in control. Four years after we made the decision to leave the EU, the reasons for moving are stronger than ever. Taking back control of our economy means we can put in place the right measures for our Covid recovery.

Taking back control of the money we send to Brussels means we can spend it on our priorities: investing in the NHS, spreading opportunity more equally across the UK and strengthening our Union. We can build a trading relationship with our European neighbours that serves all our interests and develop new economic partnerships across the world.

The deal the Prime Minister struck last year, and which the country backed in the general election, ensured we left the EU in January and means we can look forward with confidence to the end of the transition period on December 31. But, just like a house move, we need to make sure all the practical arrangements for our new future are in place.

Everyone has their part to play, starting with the government.

That's why on Sunday we're investing £705 million to make sure our borders

are ready for full independence. We're investing in new infrastructure, more jobs and better technology to help goods move smoothly, make our country more secure and our citizens safer. The money will ensure that Great Britain's new borders will be ready when the UK takes back control on January 1 2021, and will also lay the foundations for us to build the world's most effective border by 2025.

Modernising our border means we can introduce a migration policy that ensures we're open to the world's best talent. A new points-based immigration system will ensure we can attract the scientists, innovators and entrepreneurs who can power future economic growth. It will also help us ensure our NHS has the very best professionals from across the world working in our hospitals. And the new technology we're introducing will allow us to monitor with far greater precision exactly who, and what, is coming in and out of the country, enabling us to deal more effectively with organised crime and other security threats.

Alongside the investment we are making in infrastructure we're also launching a major new public information campaign, "The UK's new start: let's get going" to give everyone the facts we need to be ready for January 1 2021. Whether you're the managing director of a multinational conglomerate or a family business; a UK citizen resident in the EU or planning to work abroad, the new campaign will clearly set out the steps that will help this big change go as smoothly as possible.

A straightforward checker tool at gov.uk/transition will quickly identify the specific steps any business or individual needs to take to be ready, and will allow companies and citizens to sign up for bespoke updates. Taking these steps will equip everyone for this new chapter in our country's story.

Helping businesses adjust to life outside the EU Customs Union will enable them to more easily access the new opportunities being an independent trading nation will bring, such as those presented by trade deals with the Japan, Australia, New Zealand and other growing Pacific economies as well as deeper ties with North America and the developing world.

We're negotiating hard, of course, to get the best possible trading relationship with our neighbours in the EU but we won't back down on the essential principles the country voted for when we chose to leave. We won't accept control of our laws by the EU or allow our new-found independence to be compromised. Whatever the nature of our trading relationship with the EU we'll be outside the single market and the customs union – and that means the preparations for new export arrangements and new border processes will be needed whatever the negotiations bring.

These have been challenging times for our country, but, as the Chancellor reminded us this week, government can help lay the foundations for recovery and future growth. That's what we're doing this week as we prepare for our new life fully outside the EU. We're building the border that allows us to take back control. Let's get going.

New planning rules to protect our cultural heritage

Changes to the planning system will save theatres, concert halls and live music performance venues for future generations, Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced today (12 July 2020).

With the changes taking effect next week, cultural institutions across England will be saved from being redeveloped or demolished.

These buildings cannot be easily replaced and are an intrinsic part of our cultural heritage, which is why the government is clear that temporary social distancing restrictions should not be an excuse for them to be permanently lost.

Councils will now need to take the temporary impact of coronavirus into account when considering permission for change of use, redevelopment or demolition of a theatre, concert hall or live music performance venue.

This move, alongside the £1.57 billion investment to protect Britain's cultural, arts and heritage sector, provides extra security to businesses as they make plans to re-open their premises when it is safe to do so, and in the meantime continue to share their talent and passion for the arts outdoors and virtually.

Housing and Communities Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Our theatres, concert halls and live music performance venues are the envy of the world and are central to our cultural heritage.

That's why we're investing £1.57 billion to protect Britain's cultural, arts and heritage institutions, as well as ensuring these buildings aren't destroyed.

It is vital they are properly protected by the planning system for both people today to enjoy and future generations.

Jon Morgan, Director of the Theatres Trust, said:

We welcome the news of revisions to the planning system, which reinforce and increase protections for our treasured theatres and provide reassurance for the communities that use and value them.

The COVID-19 lockdown has rendered otherwise vibrant theatres vulnerable to permanent closure and we have already seen a number

of theatres fall vacant due to the operator going into liquidation.

These measures will help ensure these vital community assets are protected during the current crisis and can be revived to serve their local communities once again.

Once introduced, this policy will remain in place until 31 December 2022.

A written ministerial statement will be laid to outline the planning changes and will have immediate effect on the planning system.

Find out more about the [next steps for re-opening the performing arts industry](#).

Find our more information on the [£1.57 billion investment to protect Britain's cultural, arts and heritage institutions](#).

[Armed Forces lead tributes to Dame Vera Lynn at her funeral](#)



Military personnel from all three services took part in the ceremonies

The Armed Forces led the nation in saying farewell to the Forces' Sweetheart with a series of ceremonial tributes at the funeral of Dame Vera Lynn today.

Dame Vera enjoyed a special connection with the Armed Forces and personnel from the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force led the tributes in a solemn ceremony at the request of her family.

Personnel from all three services lined the streets and carried Dame Vera's coffin into the private ceremony. Royal Marines bugler Corporal Kimberley Hare sounded The Last Post and Reveille during the service.

Cpl Kimberley Hare of the Royal Marines sounded The Last Post during the

funeral

Paying tribute to Dame Vera, Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Dame Vera's inspirational work in support of our Armed Forces will never be forgotten and my thoughts are with her family and loved ones at this time. In tribute to her life, our services have come together to pay their respects at Dame Vera's funeral and honour her memory.

As we approach the 75th anniversary of VJ Day, we remember her performances for troops in Burma during the Second World War, bringing a welcome reminder of home to those fighting in the Far East. Her support helped to sustain the fortitude of British personnel deployed around the world and those waiting for them to return.

We remember her life with fond memories, and all that she gave to our country in its time of need.

Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir Nick Carter said:

Dame Vera Lynn's stirring performances brought comfort and joy to personnel serving far from home and lifted the nation during the darkest of times. The Armed Forces will forever be grateful to Dame Vera Lynn for her service. Our thoughts today are with her family for their loss, but her lasting legacy of lifting spirits will remain.

Dame Vera has been close to the hearts of generations of soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, and airwomen; she maintained a close connection with the Armed Forces throughout her life. The Royal Navy, the British Army and the Royal Air Force are proud to be part of the final farewell to the Forces' Sweetheart and celebrate a life well-lived.

Personnel from Number 7 Company Coldstream Guards, HMS Collingwood and the Queen's Colour Squadron of the RAF Regiment lined the route of the funeral cortège in Ditchling this afternoon.

Aircraft from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight performed a flypast over Ditchling before returning to RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire.

Two Second World War-era Spitfires from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight performed a tribute flypast

The Armed Forces are honoured to have held such a prominent role in today's

events and to pay tribute to such a significant icon.

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1. 11 July 2020

Correcting the title of Number 7 Company Coldstream Guards

2. 10 July 2020

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