



Home Office

Ben Wallace MP
Minister of State for Security

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP
Chair, Home Affairs Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

17th March 2017

Dear Yvette,

I am writing to update you on arrangements with France about their deployment of 'sea marshals' – predominately *gendarmes maritimes* – on French-flagged cross-channel ferries operating between France and the UK. I previously wrote to you on this matter last December.

You will recall that we have granted legal authority for these armed sea marshals to operate in UK territory, including UK territorial waters. This was initially for a short trial period from December 2016 until the end of March 2017.

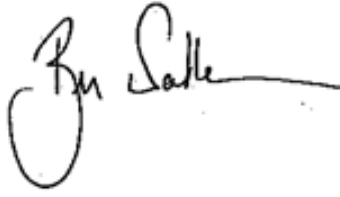
This trial period has shown that the process is working. We now need further evidence to judge the effectiveness of the scheme. We intend to extend this trial period by six months, until the end of September 2017.

As I set out in my letter last December, the arrangement which we have agreed with the French authorities ensures the right safeguards are in place. This includes measures to ensure that the French understand the relevant sections of the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice (Armed Policing) and arrangements while the ferries are in UK ports.

These sea marshals are not being deployed in response to a specific threat. The French authorities intend them as a general deterrent to any possible attack.

We continue to keep security measures in the maritime sector under review and will look closely at all options to ensure we have measures in place which are proportionate to the threat.

I will arrange for a copy of this letter to be placed in the House Library.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Wallace". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ben Wallace MP
Minister of State for Security