



Yvette Cooper MP
Home Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

26 March 2018

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 last wrote to you on this matter in September 2017.

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, and then two further six month extensions were agreed, initially to 30 September 2017, then extended to 31 March 2018.

We are working with France to assess the effectiveness and impact of the use of sea marshals. While we do this, we intend to extend this trial period by a further one year, until the end of March 2019.

The arrangement we have agreed with the French authorities ensures the right safeguards are in place. This includes measures to ensure that the French authorities 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 "Amber Rudd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP