



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

# **INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGES, INTERNATIONAL SOLUTIONS: MANAGING THE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS**

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# FOREWORD



The combined effects of globalisation, liberalised labour markets, and the relative ease of international travel mean that the movement of goods and people around the world is now occurring at an unprecedented rate. The complex nature of today's global movement means that, while we benefit from immigration, we also need to control it. The same is true of the international trade in goods, where our challenge is to welcome legitimate trade while protecting the UK against the serious threats posed by the smuggling of drugs and other harmful goods.

We have already accomplished much. Together, the UK Border Agency and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have shown an ability to adapt to greatly changed circumstances, while maintaining a capability and flexibility to see us through challenging times. For example we have overhauled our visa system to ensure that we can attract skilled workers while at the same time cracking down on irregular migrants who do not provide economic benefits, or who may even pose a threat to UK interests in terms of terrorism or wider criminality. We have also developed stronger relationships with foreign governments to improve cooperation on the return of migrants who are not entitled to be in the UK.

We intend to build on our achievements and continue to strengthen our overseas border with a greater focus on using risk and intelligence tools and better data. We are also looking to extend our reach into new areas. For example, there is more we can do to provide protection to those in need; the earlier they have access to this,

the better. We can also do more to support developing countries. While migration can bring real development benefits, it can also cause problems if skilled citizens migrate to developed countries in search of increased opportunities.

This is a joint publication between the UK Border Agency and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. It reflects the strong partnership between our departments and our close cooperation on the international stage to develop relationships that help to secure our border and control migration for the benefit of our country.

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# INTRODUCTION

1. People and goods are moving around the world on an unprecedented scale. By 2030 the number of air passenger journeys is forecast to increase to between 410 and 480 million;<sup>1</sup> container traffic volume is forecast to be 183% higher than in 2005 and the number of HGVs to have doubled over the same period.<sup>2</sup> While future migration trends are difficult to forecast, the increasing world population, predicted by the UN to exceed 9 billion by 2050, means that an increase in global movement is likely, even if the proportion of people migrating stays the same.<sup>3</sup>
2. In the face of this increasing movement our challenge is to secure our border and control migration for the benefit of our country. We will aim to boost Britain's economy by bringing the right skills here from around the world, ensuring that our borders are open to those people, trade and goods which benefit the UK. We will also welcome the world's most vulnerable people who need our protection and close our borders to those who might cause us harm. The strategic objectives of the UK Border Agency reflect this:
  - We will protect our border and our national interests
  - We will tackle border and tax fraud, smuggling and immigration crime
  - We will implement fast and fair decisions
3. As set out in our 2007 strategy 'Securing the Border' and the Cabinet Secretary's report 'Security in a Global Hub', published in the same year, we have responded to the increasing global challenges by "exporting the border". For example we have established UK immigration controls in Northern France and Belgium. We have also improved document integrity, particularly through the use of biometrics; made better use of data, with more information being collected at an earlier stage; developed our technology to improve risk profiling and detection of particular threats; and improved our ability to use intelligence to target our activity at high risk movements.
4. But we cannot work alone. Movement of people and goods is inherently international so we rely on joint working and information sharing with governments and other partners across the world. We have built strong international relationships and we will continue to develop these in order to maximise the benefits, and minimise the risks, which come with an increasingly mobile world.
5. The UK Border Agency and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) work in close partnership to pursue British interests overseas. The creation of the UK Border Agency in April 2008, with approximately 25,000 staff based in 135 countries, has enabled us to develop a more coherent focus on the migration and goods agenda at an international level. The FCO, which has staff based in 261 posts overseas representing all of the UK's interests, works closely with the Agency to manage migration for the benefit of Britain. That objective is now firmly embedded in UK foreign policy and, since April 2008, has formed one of the FCO's strategic objectives.

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<sup>1</sup> UK Air Passenger Demand and CO2 Forecasts, Department for Transport, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Update of UK Port Demand Forecasts to 2030 & Economic Value of Transshipment Study, MDS Transmodal (for the Department of Transport), 2007.

<sup>3</sup> UN Population Division Policy Brief, No 2009/1, March 2009.

6. In our 2007 publication, ‘Managing Global Migration: a strategy to build stronger international alliances to manage migration’, we set out our key principles for working at an international level to deliver our migration objectives. These included:
  - Putting migration at the heart of many of our bilateral and multilateral relationships;
  - Making greater use of biometric data and sharing data with our international partners;
  - Intensifying our efforts to work with our partners to tackle human smuggling and trafficking;
  - Continuing to offer protection to genuine refugees but working with EU partners to reduce ‘asylum shopping’ across Europe and increasing our efforts to deter and return those who have no legitimate claim; and
  - Promoting legal migration to the UK to boost the economy and provide the skills we need.
7. A great deal has been achieved in pursuit of these principles. We have strengthened our overseas border controls with better use of risk and intelligence tools; we have improved our ability to fix people’s identities by collecting biometrics from all visa applicants; we have introduced the Points Based System to ensure the right people are allowed to come here; and we have developed stronger relationships with foreign governments to improve cooperation on the return of migrants who are not entitled to be in the UK.
8. The principles we set out in 2007 remain key features of our strategy for future international working. The purpose of this document is to update on progress against the strategy and to set out how the UK Border Agency and the FCO will strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones to deliver our objectives overseas. We are also widening our focus to consider how we can do more to mitigate the negative effects of migration where they occur.
9. We highlight our international engagements at three key points along the journey to the UK:
  - In **countries of origin** our policies aim to help developing countries maximise the development benefits of migration through supporting international development. This might be through supporting ‘circular migration’ to reduce the impact of skills loss from developing countries; by facilitating remittances which are an important source of capital for developing countries; or by helping third countries to ensure protection for refugees as close to home as possible. We also support countries in addressing access to justice issues.
  - During the **journey to the UK** we are increasing our upstream activities to facilitate smooth entry to the UK for legitimate travellers and trade, while also deterring and intercepting those seeking to cause us harm. So, for example, we are working with international partners to tackle visa document fraud at source; we are helping transit countries to develop the capability to intercept illegal migrants en route to the UK; and we are working with partners overseas to intercept consignments of harmful goods before they reach the UK.
  - **At the border and within the UK** we are committed to working with international partners to ensure the integrity of the immigration system. For example we are sharing more data and intelligence with international partners to better target risks and threats; we are strengthening juxtaposed controls in French and Belgian ports to enhance the searches of vehicles and goods heading for the UK; and we work closely with overseas governments to allow the return to their country of individuals who have no right to be in the UK.
10. At each point of the journey to the UK our aim is to work with **our international partners** to control migration in a way that benefits not only the UK, but also migrants and their countries of origin.

# CHAPTER 1: OUR WORK IN SOURCE COUNTRIES

11. Migration plays a vital role in the economic, social and cultural life of the United Kingdom. There are countless examples of migrants who have contributed to business, the arts, literature, science, sport and public life of the UK, not to mention the thousands of foreign students who add to the academic vigour and reputation of our world-class universities. HM Treasury has estimated that migration added around 0.5% per annum (20% of trend) to output growth between 2001 and 2006, stimulating investment, innovation and entrepreneurship.<sup>4</sup>
12. Migrant communities have also strengthened the UK's connections with the global economy, and these connections will become even more important as emerging markets mature in countries such as Brazil, Russia, India and China. It is therefore vital that we maintain the UK's position as an attractive place to set up and carry out business. At the same time we need to control migration carefully so that we continue to attract the brightest and the best while protecting opportunities for resident workers and responding to changing economic conditions.
13. But while the UK makes significant economic and cultural gains from migration we must not lose sight of our responsibility to manage the negative impacts of migration where they occur. We also want to ensure that people are not forced to migrate because they feel they have little choice. This chapter sets out how we are working with source countries to enable individuals to access opportunities, or protection, closer to home. We are doing this by supporting countries to

better assist regionally displaced people in need of protection; working to encourage economic development; and by implementing actions designed to mitigate the impact on developing countries caused by the loss of human capital.

## **Our international responsibility to protect refugees**

14. The international community has a collective responsibility under the 1951 Geneva Convention (broadened by the 1967 Protocol and the African and Latin American regional conventions) to provide protection to individuals forced to flee their home countries for fear of persecution, conflict or generalised violence. But too often refugees find that their only chance of finding protection is to make dangerous journeys thousands of miles across the world to reach a safe country. Helping third countries offer access to protection as close to home and as quickly as possible allows us to make use of our resources at the earliest opportunity and prevents refugees from having to make dangerous journeys to seek asylum in the EU.

## **Regional Protection Programmes**

15. In 2006 the UK began working with other EU Member States, the European Commission and the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), to set up the first EU Regional Protection Programmes (RPPs). RPPs were designed to respond specifically to the world's protracted refugee situations – some thirty-three situations affecting 5.7 million refugees – in which

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<sup>4</sup> Globalisation and the changing UK economy, Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, February 2008.

the great majority of refugees continue to live in a state of limbo.<sup>5</sup> Two RPPs were established, one in the Great Lakes region in Africa, centred around Tanzania, and one focused on Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. Their objective was to enhance the protection capacity of third

countries and create the conditions for one of three durable solutions to take place – voluntary return to the country of origin, local integration in the first country of asylum, or resettlement to a third country.

### Regional Protection Programme

The UK contributed to a Regional Protection Programme led by Caritas Austria in Ukraine, which was funded by the European Commission, and which ran for two years ending in December 2008. The RPP assisted refugees and asylum seekers in detention camps, improving on the prior situation when only unstructured and sporadic legal, social and medical counselling was available to detained migrants. The project also supported the Ukrainian government to develop a national integration strategy, provide language classes for refugees and organise information campaigns to build public tolerance of reintegrated peoples. In addition, the RPP served to build and enhance relationships between non-Governmental organisations and State bodies for future cooperation.

16. Building on experience gained with these programmes we will explore new initiatives with countries in the Horn of Africa, working closely with UNHCR, other European countries and the European Commission to provide protection to people displaced by war and conflict.

### Gateway

17. Some of the world's most vulnerable people will continue to need resettlement away from their region of origin. The UK's Gateway Protection Programme works with UNHCR to identify such individuals and bring them to the UK to start new lives. Since the scheme was set up in 2004, we have resettled over 2,540 individuals including Liberian refugees from Guinea and Sierra Leone, Burmese refugees from Thailand and Bangladesh, and more recently Iraqi refugees from Jordan.<sup>6</sup> Building on the programme's early success we increased Gateway's annual quota in 2008 from 500 to 750 refugees.

18. We strongly believe in the value of practical cooperation on resettlement between countries. We have mentored other countries wishing to set up their own programmes and we will continue to share best practice. We also support the European Commission's proposals for a voluntary EU Joint Resettlement Programme and the associated amendments to receive European Refugee Funding. As part of our role as the GDISC secretariat we are scoping areas of cooperation between GDISC members in Kenya. This will be delivered under a Resettlement Plus umbrella which will encourage closer links between resettlement, capacity building and aid and development. We have sought Commission funding to implement this.



<sup>5</sup> United Nations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *The State of the World's Refugees: Human Displacement in the New Millennium* (Oxford University Press, 2006), p.10. This figure does not include the 4.3 million displaced Palestinians who fall under the mandate of UNRWA – UNHCR, '2005 Global Refugee Trends', 3.

<sup>6</sup> The figures quoted are not provided under National Statistics protocols and have been derived from local management information and are therefore provisional and subject to change.



## Anglo-Irish Trans-national resettlement project

In September 2008 Belgium and Slovenia shadowed UK and Irish officials during a selection mission to Tanzania to interview Congolese (DRC) refugees for resettlement. The refugees have since been resettled and the UK is arranging for Belgian officials to visit the participating, local authorities including front line integration support, in order to inform Belgium's integration programme. Since the start of the project, Belgium has resettled its first refugees and we are now evaluating the model with a view to using it for other trans-national resettlement projects.

## The story of Kassech

Kassech Shiferaw fled Ethiopia in 1993 and spent 13 years living in a refugee camp where she taught secondary school students. She was resettled to the UK in 2006. On arrival she studied English intensively for 6 months then began volunteering with Bury Council in the Safeguarding Children's Team. Less than a year later she secured a full time job as an Induction Support Assistant at the Starting Point Programme in Bolton. She now assists new international arrivals to Bolton by preparing children from around the world for a smooth transition into mainstream schools and supporting new families in integrating into the community. Kassech said that "coming to England has been beyond my imagination. I am very happy here. I love working with the children and I love helping them and seeing them gain their confidence and going out to new schools."



Kassech Shiferaw (Photo: Starting Point)

## The impact of migration on development

19. Economies across the world are sustained by the contribution of migrants who bring skills, experience and cultural richness to the societies they join. Migration can also have real benefits for the countries they leave, in the form of remittances, trade and investment links, capital and new skills brought back home by returning migrants. There can also be ‘social remittances’

and cultural benefits. One study of Jamaica, for example, showed that the majority of returned migrants said that the experience of living abroad had made them more committed to the need for gender equality in Jamaica.<sup>7</sup> But migration can also have costs. It can be risky for the migrants themselves, and can sometimes create problems for countries of origin if too many of those with vital skills leave.

Remittances – transfers of money to their home countries by family and community members living overseas – are now understood to play a significant role in the economies of developing countries and the lives of receiving communities. They account for more than 10% of GDP in 17 developing countries including Moldova (38.3%), Nepal (15.5%) and Jamaica (19.4%), and more than 5% of GDP in countries like Kenya, Uganda, Bangladesh and Nigeria.<sup>8</sup>

Remittances sent by migrant workers to their families reached \$328 billion in 2008, up from \$285 billion in 2007 and in 2008, the World Bank estimated the total remittances sent just from the UK to developing countries to be in the region of £5.0 billion.<sup>9</sup>

20. In recent years there has been a greater focus in the international arena on how to harness more effectively the synergies that exist between migration and development policy. Since 1999 the EU has sought to integrate migration into its dialogue with countries outside the EU, arguing that it is closely linked to issues such as development. Under the UK’s Presidency in 2005, the EU adopted the Global Approach to Migration, a strategy which seeks to address the broad range of migration-related issues. The aim is to develop balanced policies on migration in partnership with third countries, in the interests of the EU, the partner countries and the migrants themselves.

promote a range of initiatives aimed at increasing the benefits of migration for development. For example, in 2009 the UK set up the EU’s first ‘Cooperation Platform’ on migration and development with the Ethiopian Government, the European Commission and other Member States. Its aim is to promote coherence in policy implementation by bringing together migration and development actors to share best practice and experience, and coordinate projects that seek to develop migration initiatives for development ends.

21. Migration and development is a key pillar of this strategy and we have worked with EU partners to

22. The UK also participates in the Global Forum on Migration and Development, an informal framework set up under the auspices of the United Nations in 2006. The Global Forum promotes practical, evidence-based outcomes and cooperation between governments, to improve

<sup>7</sup> Thomas-Hope E, Kirton C, Knight P, Mortley N, Urquhart M-A, with Claudel N, Robertson-Hickling H and Williams E (2009) A Study of Migration’s Impacts on Development in Jamaica and how Policy Might Respond Development on the Move: Measuring and Optimising Migration’s Economic and Social Impacts London: ippr, available at <http://www.ippr.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=671>

<sup>8</sup> ODI Working Paper 303, June 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Outlook for Remittance Flows 2009-2011 World Bank, July 2009.

understanding of the linkages between migration and development to amplify the benefits of both. Discussions with other participating states include ways to facilitate remittance transfers and the developmental impact they may have; initiatives to better involve diaspora communities in the development of their countries of origin; and opportunities for circular migration (including integration and reintegration) to make the best use of migrants' skills both in countries of destination and of origin.

## Skilled migration

23. While the UK has made significant economic and cultural gains from migration, the negative impacts need to be managed where they occur. We have already established an NHS scheme to prevent aggravation of skills loss in the health sector in some of the world's poorest countries. But we want to go further to make it easier for people from developing countries who have been working in the UK to take the skills and experience they have gained here back to their countries of origin, and to retain their links back home.
24. The consultation 'Earning the right to stay: A new points test for citizenship', published on 3 August 2009, set out the Government's proposal to do more to facilitate 'circular migration'. Circular migration means migrants are able to come, leave and come back again, without it adversely affecting their immigration status. This can provide gains for host countries, home countries and migrants themselves, contributing to accelerated economic growth, remittances, relative high wages and the acquisition of skills. In the citizenship consultation we asked whether the Government should facilitate circular migration in order to reduce the negative impact of brain drain on developing countries.
25. Separately we commissioned the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) to assess the developmental benefits of a number of options for facilitating circular migration, and to suggest possible alternatives. The IPPR recommended the creation of a 'pause button' for temporary residents on the citizenship journey who are on Tiers 1 and 2 of the Points Based System (PBS). This would allow migrants already in the UK to return to their home country for a period of time, and then return to the UK without losing their previous leave entitlement and to count all of their time in the UK (even if interrupted) towards an application for citizenship.

## Case study

The Department of Health has worked together with the Department for International Development (DfID) to produce a definitive list of developing countries from which we should not actively recruit. This list is based on the Organisation for Economic Development Corporation/Development Assistance Committee list of aid recipients. The rationale for the list is based upon the economic status of the countries and their relative position with regards to numbers of health personnel. Countries come on and off the list depending on DfID in-country expertise, independent review from partners such as the World Health Organisation, and requests from individual countries.

The Medical Training Initiative (MTI) accommodates overseas post-graduate medical specialists to undertake a fixed period of training in the UK for up to two years, normally within the NHS. It is a temporary route, and seeks to promote circular migration so that participants in a particular scheme can return to their home country and apply the skills and knowledge developed during their time in the UK. This ensures that the continued exchange of medical expertise and experience can continue.

The Department of Health has worked closely with the UK Border Agency to ensure a streamlined MTI can work effectively under the immigration rules, operating under Tier 5 as a Government Authorised Exchange.

26. We agree with IPPR that this could facilitate circular migration. It could help mitigate the effects of the 'brain drain' by enabling migrants who have added to their skill sets while in the UK to bring those extra skills to their countries of origin. It could also bring cultural benefits in that returning migrants will take back new knowledge and financial assets, all of which can contribute to development and which they could not have gained without emigrating.
  
27. We will therefore examine further the feasibility of introducing a 'pause button' for PBS Tiers 1 and 2 migrants.

# CHAPTER 2: THE JOURNEY TO THE UK

28. The UK Border Agency and the FCO work together internationally to ensure that, while responding flexibly to changing economic conditions and continuing to thrive as a global hub, the UK is protected from the people and goods that pose a threat to our society. Increasing flows around the world make this a tough challenge. There were over 240 million passengers at UK airports in 2007, and this is expected to grow to between 410 and 480 million passengers by 2030.<sup>10</sup> In 2007, the total value of UK imports was over £300 billion.<sup>11</sup>
29. Our presence overseas is vital to ensure that we are in the right place, at the right time, to facilitate those who wish legitimately to travel to or trade with the UK, and to intercept those who pose a threat to our national interests and security at the earliest point.

## Providing a first-class visa service

30. Approximately three quarters of the world's population needs a visa to be able to enter the UK. As a consequence our visa services network, currently spanning 135 countries, handled 2.5 million visa applications in 2008-9. Since 2007 we have delivered fundamental changes to the visa system to enable us to better control migration for the benefit of the UK.
31. In February 2008 we launched the Points Based System (PBS) to ensure that only those with the

right skills or the right contribution to make can come to the UK to work or study. The new system consolidated over 80 different work and study routes into 5 tiers. Points are awarded according to individuals' skills, to reflect their aptitude, experience and age and also the demand for those skills in any given sector.

32. The PBS has delivered a clearer, more streamlined system which allows us to manage all non-EEA nationals coming to the UK to work or study, and to adapt entry criteria based on economic or labour market conditions in the UK. In response to current economic conditions we have already taken the advice of the Migration Advisory Committee, an independent body which advises the Government on migration issues, to use the flexibility of the PBS to be more selective about the skills levels of migrants coming to the UK.
33. We have also made fundamental changes to the international delivery of visa services. Under our 'hub and spoke' visa services model we can move applications from the collection point – the spoke – to where we want to process them – the hub. This has provided an increased number of application points through our commercial partners, while allowing us to strengthen our border through fewer decision making centres. This has led to more consistent decision making, improved quality of decisions and increased value for money.

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<sup>10</sup> UK Air Passenger Demand and CO2 Forecasts, Department for Transport, January 2009.

<sup>11</sup> UK Trade in Goods Estimates for 2007, HMRC and ONS.

## Visas – key changes

- **Online applications:** over 50% of 2008's 2.4m applications were online.
- **Visa application centres:** there are now over 250 locations worldwide where applicants may give biometrics and apply for a visa, compared with 150 prior to 2006. These are run by commercial partners (or, in the US and New Zealand, by the host Government) on our behalf.
- **Biometrics:** all visa applicants must now give electronic fingerprints (even if they have applied online). These details are checked against police as well as immigration databases, allowing us to stop those who have previously had an adverse contact with the UK Border Agency or the police, including those who have subsequently changed their biographic identity. We have also begun to check the biometrics of UK visa applicants in the US against its Government Ident database.

34. The introduction of regional management structures has led to greater local accountability and better tailored services. We have transferred decision-making to locations where our staff are secure and where we can concentrate resources to maximise efficiency and effectiveness. We have also revised our customer service standards to reflect our new business model and we publish our end-to-end processing times on our website to ensure customers have the best possible information about when they need to apply.

35. But while we have introduced global customer service standards we are also considering what more can be done to tailor eligibility and security checks so that we are able to make more detailed investigations where the risk of potential abuse is judged to be high. Customer service standards already reflect the fact that processing times may vary; and, in the future, we may extend this to give customers an even clearer idea of the time we will take to make a decision on a local or regional basis

on the overall level of harm posed by travellers from a particular country. The test took into account considerations such as levels of illegal immigration, crime and security concerns; it also considered the likely economic, cultural and political consequences to the UK of introducing a visa regime on a particular country.

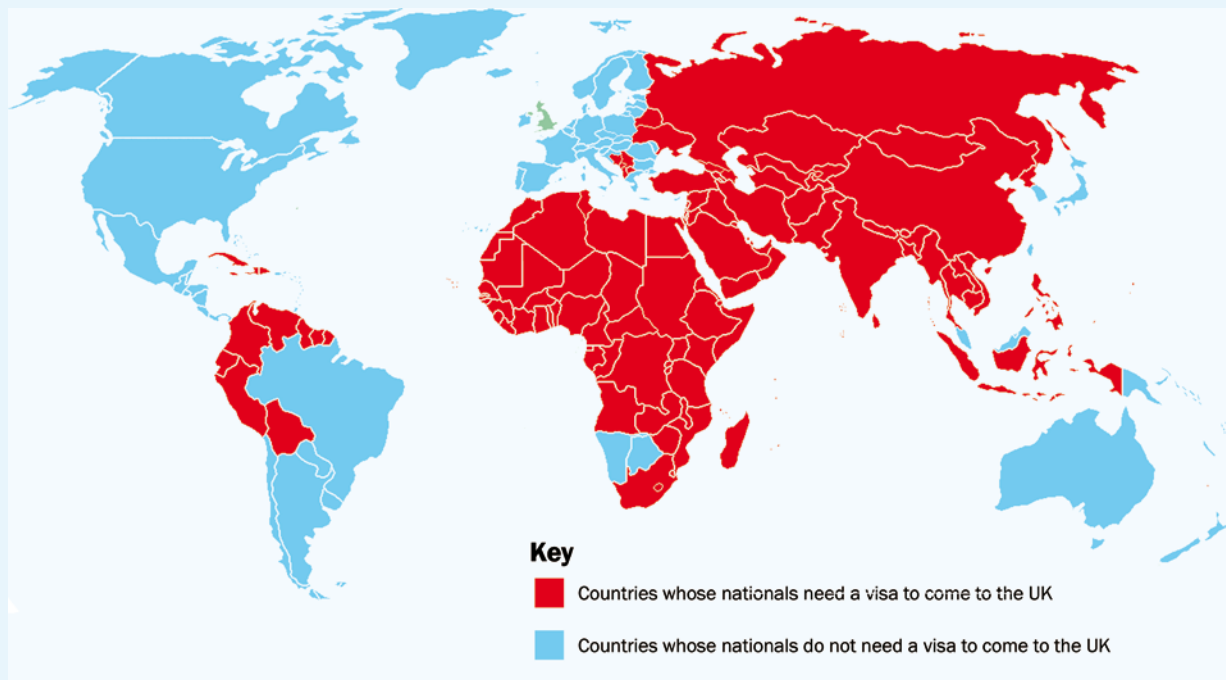
37. Eleven countries fell short of the standard required to avoid a visa regime so the UK Border Agency and the FCO worked closely with those countries to improve their passport and border control systems. After careful consideration it was decided to introduce visa regimes for five of these countries. Nationals of Bolivia, Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa now need to apply for a visa before travelling to the UK if they are visiting for less than six months. Nationals of Venezuela are now subject to a partial visa regime; holders of new biometric passports are exempt from applying for a visa to visit the UK, but all other passport holders have to apply.

## Visa Waiver Test

36. The Visa Waiver Test, our first global review of our existing visitor visa regimes, was announced in March 2007. This replaced the traditional, largely reactive, process of imposing or lifting visa regimes with a new transparent test for all non-European Economic Area countries based

38. The results of the review also led us to introduce the requirement for Jamaican nationals to apply for a Direct Airside Transit Visa when passing through the UK for less than 24 hours en route to another destination. We also removed the requirement for Taiwanese nationals to apply for a visa if coming to the UK for less than 6 months.

**Figure 1:** Visa and non-visa nationals worldwide



### Managing Risk

39. A key function of our presence overseas is to facilitate legitimate travel and entry to the UK, welcoming those who bring skills, industry and creativity to our economy and society. To that end we work closely with UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), Visit Britain and the British Council to ensure that the UK remains an attractive place for tourists, students and investors. But we also have a responsibility to identify at the earliest possible stage those people and goods that pose a threat to our society.
40. In the last few years we have significantly increased our use of risk and intelligence tools in order to strengthen the UK's border overseas. We have also introduced a new system for real-time automated biographic watchlist checks which gives our overseas posts access to a wider range of information, such as the Interpol Lost and Found Database.
41. All entry clearance staff are trained in fraud detection and in 2008 we introduced new rules which allow us to ban applicants who use

forged or fraudulent documents in visa applications from entering the UK for up to 10 years. We are also increasing cooperation with local law enforcement agencies so that further action can be taken against those who present us with forged documentation. Our Police Referrals Programme currently operates in 19 countries and, to September 2009, has resulted in a total of 1,281 arrests worldwide.

## Working with the Ghanaian authorities to tackle document and visa fraud

UK Border Agency staff at the British High Commission in Accra are working in close partnership with the Ghanaian authorities to tackle document and visa abuse emanating from Ghana.

Projects over the last five years have included:

**An arrest programme:** individuals applying for visas with false or forged supporting documentation, or in a multiple identities, are now routinely referred to the Ghanaian police. In the five years since introduction, there have been over 3,000 arrests with numerous prosecutions.

**A radio call-in:** Along with counterparts from the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands, Agency staff took part in a radio call-in fielding questions on visa fraud.

**Intelligence training for Ghana CID and Immigration staff:** As a result of this, the Ghana Immigration Service has now developed its own Intelligence Unit.

42. In 2008 we established the Risk and Liaison Overseas Network (RALON), a network of 100 dedicated risk and liaison officers who provide risk-assessment support to visa services. RALON officers also help us to build relationships with and provide training to host governments, foreign missions, local law enforcement and airline staff. They are posted in airports around the world, providing a presence to help prevent those with no right to enter the UK boarding the plane in the first place. In 2008/9, approximately 67,000 inadequately documented passengers were stopped before they boarded planes to the UK.

In early October, the RALON Immigration Liaison Manager in Moscow received intelligence from Ukrainian law enforcement that four Latvian nationals were suspected of intending to smuggle cigarettes on a flight out of Kiev. This information was passed on to Agency colleagues in Heathrow with the result that all four passengers were intercepted and 59,000 cigarettes confiscated.

43. We are also determined to prevent “visa shopping”, which is the practice of applying for visas at multiple locations or in different identities. The requirement for all applicants to give biometric data has already led to 4,000 detections of false identities. We will build on this by piloting data sharing between visa posts with a number of international partners later this year.

44. Ahead of the next round of the Visa Waiver Test, we will develop a more flexible and intelligence-led approach to visas. This will allow us to impose or lighten regimes according to both our assessment of immigration risk and evidence of cooperation on a range of migration issues.

## Communications

45. Our ability to communicate overseas is an important tool in delivering deterrent messages, for example by warning of the risks of paying traffickers, and in assisting legitimate travellers through high quality customer information. Overseas, UK Border Agency and the FCO work with partners including the UKTI, British Council and Education UK to inform customers about our visa system, immigration controls and restrictions at the UK border, including rules covering restrictions on goods entering the UK.



## Promoting compliance in Kenya

FCO and UK Border Agency staff in Nairobi have been working with the producers of popular Kenyan soap opera 'Makutano Junction' to promote messages about illegal migration.

The main story involves one of the most popular characters in the soap, the aptly named Dodgy. Having sold all of his belongings, Dodgy and his friend Toni hand over large sums of money – intended to buy a UK visa – to a man in a car with blacked out windows. Inevitably the man speeds off, leaving Dodgy and Toni standing in a cloud of dust. The story continues in the next series, showing the effect this has on one of their families.

The soap opera regularly attracts around 20 million viewers across the continent and has proven to be a highly effective way of delivering the main message, which is “The only way is the legal way” – or to put that in character, “Don't be like Dodgy”.

## Countering the terrorist threat

46. Maintaining an effective overseas control that severely limits the opportunities for terrorists to enter the UK to cause serious harm continues to be a vital part of the overseas work of the UK Border Agency and the FCO. All applications are now subject to biographic and biometric checks against a range of immigration, terrorism and crime watch-lists. Since March 2007, all new Entry Clearance Officers have received counter-terrorism (CT) awareness training to enable them to identify suspicious applications.
47. Since August 2007 our approach has focused around two key aims: to raise awareness of CT issues by providing training for our overseas staff, and developing links with stakeholders and partners in the UK and internationally on intelligence flows, communication and joint working.
48. These areas remain our focus in 2010 as we refresh this work. But the changing world now also demands a greater understanding of what our expanded and more diverse network needs. We are therefore placing greater focus on how we will develop our partnerships to obtain the intelligence and information to allow us to contribute to the wider Government CT agenda in future years.

## Promoting compliance and deterring illegality

49. While most migrants come to the UK legally and for legitimate reasons, many people put themselves in the hands of smugglers to try to get to Europe. Often these journeys are treacherous and, sadly, many each year end in tragedy. Some of those who do make it to the EU then make onward journeys, entering several EU Member States illegally.
50. It is essential that we, and our international partners, stay ahead of smugglers and traffickers, and so we are increasingly working in key transit countries to reduce flows of illegal migrants. For example we have worked with the European Commission, Italy and the Netherlands to support an assisted voluntary return programme in Libya. This is a key nexus point for migrants travelling to the EU and with a collective EU emphasis on deterring illegal migrants from crossing the Mediterranean, assisted voluntary return offers stranded migrants in Libya a viable alternative. We have done similar work in Ethiopia; starting in April 2009, the UK has supported a project working with Ethiopian officials on a project aimed at training immigration officials to stop illegal migration at source, through improving cross-border cooperation (particularly with Kenya), and providing technical equipment for border posts.

51. We also work with partners in other countries and with international bodies such as Frontex and Europol to improve our knowledge of the threat and to develop national and international responses to prevent trafficking, protect its victims and bring to justice those that exploit them. The UK has a comprehensive strategy to

combat human trafficking which is set out in an annually updated Action Plan. We ratified the Council of Europe Convention against trafficking in December 2008 and introduced a number of changes as a result, including establishing in April 2009 a National Referral Mechanism framework to help identify and protect victims.

### International cooperation to clamp down on child trafficking

The arrival of two unaccompanied minors at Heathrow Terminal 4 triggered a search for the adult linked to their arrival. Investigations showed that the accompanying male was previously known to the UK Border Agency due to his illegal facilitation activities overseas. Having abandoned the children at Terminal 4, he then departed the UK without presenting himself at the arrivals control.

Co-operative working by Agency staff on three continents established the facilitator's intended destination as Thailand and arrangements were put into place to have him met by Thai Police when the flight arrived. He was arrested on his arrival in Bangkok and was subsequently sentenced to 18 months imprisonment by the Thai courts for possession and seeking to sell fake passports.

### Routes into the EU

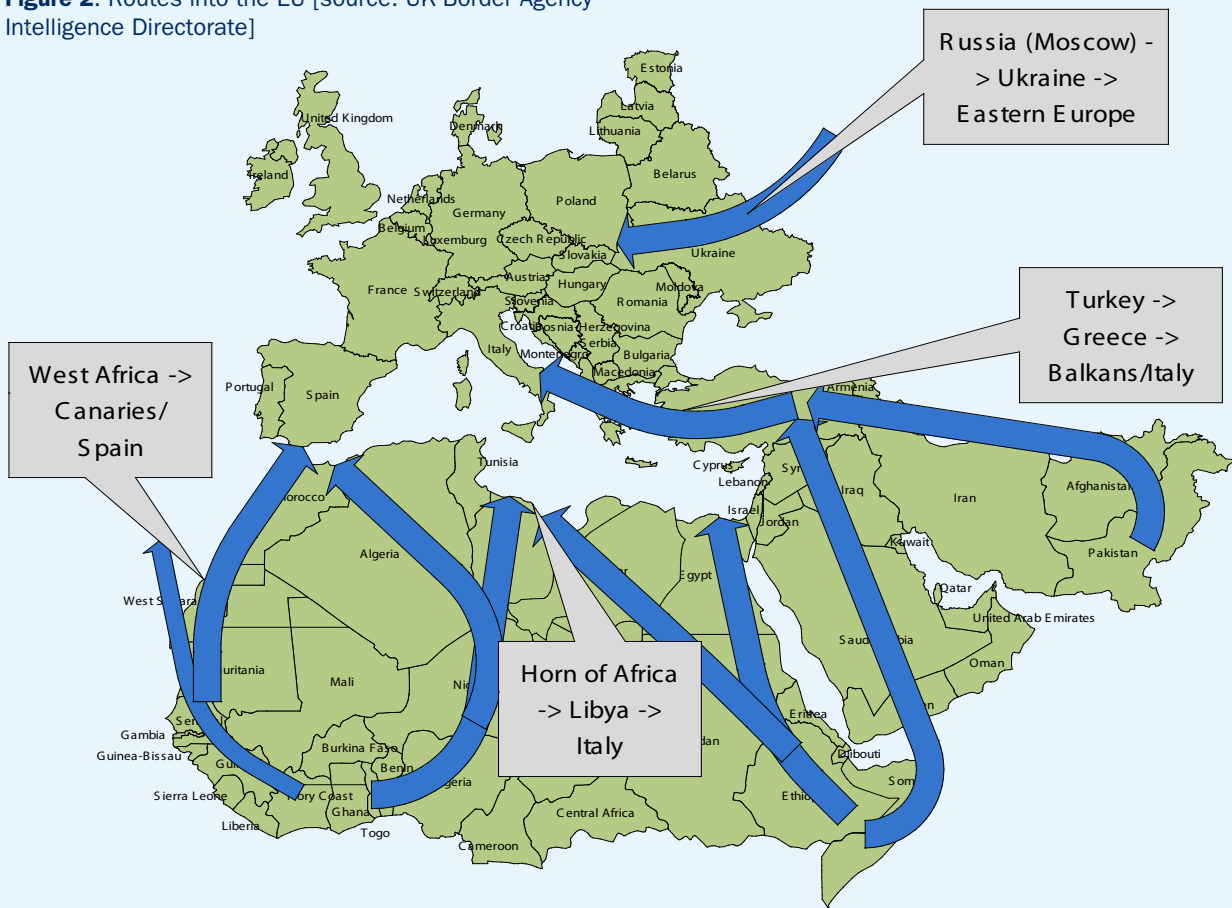
52. Illegal migrants who arrive at the UK's borders employ a variety of routes, which can change frequently in response to interventions by immigration and law enforcement officials. Principal ways into the EU by land and sea-and across Europe to Calais and the UK-include routes:

- through Russia and/or Ukraine;
- through the Eastern Mediterranean (by sea) and the Balkans (by land) and onwards through Turkey into Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus and Italy;
- through Sudan, Libya and Egypt, then across the Mediterranean to Greece, Lampedusa, mainland Italy or Malta; and
- through Western Africa to Spain (via the Canary Islands), Italy or Greece. Illegal migrants also use air routes, in particular those travelling from the Far East and Middle East.

53. We believe that the EU's Global Approach to Migration, agreed under the UK's Presidency in 2005, is the right strategy for responding to this situation. The Global Approach calls for comprehensive policies that address the whole migration agenda, working in partnership with countries outside the EU. Key to responding to illegal immigration into the European Union is to step up work with countries of origin where migrants begin their journey, and transit countries through which they pass, to focus work on the conditions pushing people to leave their countries and put their lives in the hand of traffickers and smugglers. Long-term sustainable solutions must be put in place, including regional protection and resettlement for genuine refugees.

54. Once people arrive in the EU, it is vital that we have fast and fair processes in place for those who wish to claim asylum. Those who are not entitled to stay – illegal immigrants or individuals whose asylum claims have failed – must be returned to their country of origin. Some Member States,

**Figure 2:** Routes into the EU [source: UK Border Agency Intelligence Directorate]



particularly those in the south that border the Mediterranean, face particular pressures. Solidarity with these Member States means providing practical assistance to deal with the arrivals of immigrants, ensuring adequate financial assistance, securing more returns and working effectively with source and transit countries.

management and strengthen the security of the external borders of the European Union. We support Frontex by deploying experts to joint operations at sea and activities to train European border guards to a common professional standard, including ensuring proper treatment of intercepted illegal migrants, while contributing to risk analysis and the sharing of information and statistics. We will seek to further strengthen Frontex and the UK's role in it this year.

### Managing the EU's external border

55. An effectively managed and secure external border is in the interest of all Member States, including the UK, not just in terms of combating illegal migration and cross-border crime, but also as a crucial part of the EU-wide counter-terrorism effort.
56. The UK is committed to supporting the work of the European external borders agency, Frontex, which seeks to co-ordinate the efforts of EU Member States to raise standards of border

### Facilitating trade

57. International trade is a key driver for UK economic growth and development, which is why encouraging legitimate trade and investment, while protecting the UK from harm, is a strategic priority for the Government.

58. Understandably, legitimate businesses want compliance with trade, revenue and security regulations to be made simple, predictable, transparent and harmonised across the world. They also want the burden from regulatory requirements to be reduced and for international trading to be fair and secure. But this needs to be balanced against the need to protect the UK from the serious threats posed by the smuggling of drugs and other prohibited and restricted goods.
59. To achieve this balance we work in partnership with a range of international agencies. Within the EU customs union we operate in partnership with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to enforce a wide range of prohibited and restricted goods controlled by EU legislation. We also work within the World Customs Organisation to cooperate on operational matters through customs-to-customs agreements and more generally to work with other countries to modernise international trade rules and procedures and to enhance safety and security across the globe.
- Prohibited and Restricted Goods**
60. The UK continues to face a range of serious threats through the smuggling of prohibited and restricted goods. Routes and methods change, often in response to law enforcement pressure, but the overall picture remains that sophisticated and well-resourced organised criminal groups continue to target the UK with a range of illegal goods that provide the bulk of their profits.
61. Our anti-smuggling controls at the UK border are supported by a range of international engagements:
- We work closely with HMRC and Serious Organised Crime Agency's (SOCA) overseas crime liaison officers to coordinate operational intelligence and upstream disruption;
  - We provide mentoring and training to host agencies in countries who wish to collaborate to stem the flow of drugs through their ports or airports. Examples include operations such as Airbridge and Westbridge in which we have worked in partnership with Jamaican and Ghanaian authorities to identify couriers before they travel;
  - We collaborate with partner countries such as other EU Member States to build an ever tighter grip on supply and transit routes;
  - We work with HMRC under the Government's Tobacco Strategy to strengthen international partnerships to tackle tobacco smuggling.
62. We will maintain and extend these partnerships, ensuring that we can retain sufficient flexibility and agility to respond to changing threats and to maintain value for money for the taxpayer.

### International partnership keeps Class A drugs off the UK streets

In September 2009 around 165kg of heroin, with an estimated street value of £8 million, was discovered by UK Border Agency detection teams hidden in a consignment of souvenirs from South Africa. The find was referred to the Serious Organised Crime Agency, which began an international investigation resulting in the arrest of two men and the seizure of a further 80kg of heroin at an address in Dartford, Kent. Information was also passed on to police in South Africa, who subsequently arrested a further five people, including three UK nationals. Another 115kg of heroin and more than 6,500kg of herbal cannabis and cannabis resin were also found.

The total amount of drugs seized during the operation is estimated to be worth around £25 million. It is thought that all of it was destined for the UK.

## International responsibilities

63. In addition to tackling the smuggling of goods which cause harm in our communities, we work with international partners to tackle a wide range of harms which particularly affect developing nations. This includes enforcing controls on rough diamonds (to address concerns about trafficking from countries suffering internal conflicts to pay for arms); looted cultural goods (illegally excavated or obtained antiquities precious to other nations or peoples); illegally logged timber (which causes depletion of rainforests and similar natural assets) and furs from some species of animals where there is concern about inhumane killing (such as seals, cats and dogs).
64. We also play a vital role in protecting endangered wildlife by enforcing the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). This is an international agreement between governments which aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. Our CITES teams actively target the illegal trade and provide support to frontline officers and international partners by providing training and technical advice. We also work with other countries to ensure the specimens are not lost to conservation, either through repatriation to natural habitats or to a captive breeding programme.

### Protecting Endangered Species

In 1998 UK Customs seized three exceptionally rare Lear's macaws, among a large number of other CITES-listed birds. A particularly complex criminal case meant it was several years before we could release the birds from our legal custody. We went to great lengths to ensure that these macaws, native to Brazil, were able to be returned, either to the wild or to a captive breeding programme. We led extended negotiations between the Brazilian authorities, the FCO, DEFRA and the UK zoological organisation holding the birds. Ultimately we signed an agreement with the Brazilian Conservation Authority to transfer the birds to the Brazilian Lear's Macaw Conservation Programme.



65. We also support HMRC in capacity building in customs administrations in states undergoing reconstruction, for example by providing assistance to post-conflict countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan and countries in the Balkans. This activity is usually in support of wider reconstruction programmes overseen by FCO. Priority countries for us are those where we have a particular interest in bolstering the capacity of host customs and border agencies to bear down on trafficking originating in, or routed through, those countries.

#### Disrupting serious and organised crime

66. Tackling the criminal gangs who smuggle and traffic people and goods into the UK is a vital task for this country. The threat from organised crime is becoming increasingly sophisticated with trafficking in drugs and people, fraud and financial crime costing the UK Exchequer billions. Not only does organised crime blight communities through drug abuse and human trafficking, it lies behind clandestine illegal entry, document abuse, border tax fraud and other abuses of immigration controls. Tackling organised crime is part of the core business of the UK Border Agency and part of the Home Office's role to protect the public. As part of our crime strategy, published in February this year, we will be setting out how the UK Border Agency will contribute to tackling organised crime, amongst a range of crime and enforcement objectives.

# CHAPTER 3: AT THE BORDER AND WITHIN THE UK

67. Border control is no longer a fixed line on a map. As set out in previous chapters, our philosophy is to use new technology, particularly biometrics, and new approaches to managing risk and intelligence, to check individuals as far from the UK as possible. Our aim is to build up as rich an understanding as possible of the travelling public and to use this information to stop those who could cause harm to the UK from coming here.
68. At the border and within the UK we are maintaining this outward focus by situating immigration controls offshore, investing in new technology to identify passengers before they travel, engaging with international partners to share data and intelligence, managing asylum claims more efficiently and working with international partners to facilitate the return of those who have no right to be in the UK.

## Juxtaposed controls

69. A key element of our border control is our offshore presence in northern France and Belgium at the “juxtaposed controls”. These controls, which are immigration controls performed outside the UK by British immigration staff, are at the forefront of the drive to reduce the intake of illegal migrants and illicit goods to the UK. From April 2008 to the end of March 2009, we searched more than a million freight vehicles for illegal immigrants at the juxtaposed controls, and together with our partners prevented over 30,000 individual attempts by people to cross the Channel illegally. Our offshore presence is also likely to have contributed to the significant reduction in unfounded asylum claims since 2002.
70. We will continue to work with our French partners to build on our joint operations to further reduce the number of illegal immigrants and smugglers of illicit goods attempting to cross the

border. In July 2009, the UK made a commitment to invest an extra £15 million to pay for new technology as part of a hi-tech pilot in Calais. This will see the latest state-of-the-art technology being used to boost searches of vehicles and goods heading for the UK. The UK Border Agency will roll out the latest detection technology to ports in Boulogne, Dunkirk and Coquelles. We will also continue to provide assistance to France as it works to increase the return of illegal migrants from Northern France to their countries of origin.

## e-Borders

71. In May 2009, following a period of testing, the UK Government’s e-Borders system went live. The aim of e-Borders is to collect and analyse information from carriers (including airlines, ferries and rail companies) about everyone who intends to travel to or from the UK before they travel. This comprehensive record of passenger and crew movements will significantly strengthen the security of the United Kingdom by telling us in advance who plans to cross our border so that we can check travellers against lists of people known to pose a threat. It will also enable us to focus staff resources better so that we can stop travellers most likely to pose a risk and allow the vast majority of passengers and crew to pass through our border more quickly.
72. e-Borders will screen 95% of all passenger and crew movements in and out of the UK by December 2010 against watch lists, rising to 100% by March 2014. Passenger screening is already paying dividends: between April 2005 and October 2009 126 million passenger movements had been checked, resulting in over 4,400 arrests for crimes including murder, rape and assault achieved as well as significant counter terrorist interventions being made.

## Data and intelligence sharing with international partners

73. Intelligence and risk analysis underpins all border and visa operations. We are constantly enhancing our watchlists through sharing data internationally and through closer liaison with UK and overseas

law enforcement and security agencies. Our ultimate goal is to enable criminal and migration data to be securely shared, underpinned by strong data protection grounded in the principles of necessity and proportionality, by all countries in the European Economic Area and those with a visa waiver.

### Sharing intelligence between UK and France

The Joint Intelligence Unit in Folkestone was set up in October 2009 to establish closer cooperation between the UK and France in tackling organised immigration crime. The creation of the unit, which is jointly staffed by UK and French officials, means we now have an enhanced ability to share intelligence and to launch cross-border police operations against human traffickers. This will enable us to disrupt more trafficking and people smuggling networks than ever before.

74. We have continued to deepen co-operation with our EU and other international partners to help all stages of our immigration processes. In September 2008 we signed a data sharing agreement between our e-Borders operations centre and its equivalent in the USA, allowing us to share information

on passengers of concern and take action before they arrive. From August 2009 we began operating a data sharing agreement allowing us to check fingerprints of immigration cases with the Canadian and Australian authorities. New Zealand will join in due course.

### Data sharing leads to rape conviction

Data sharing with Australia is already reaping rewards. An individual claiming asylum in the UK as a Somali national was found to have been fingerprinted on arrival in the USA while travelling on an Australian passport. Australia subsequently confirmed that the individual was an Australian citizen wanted for rape in Australia. The individual was deported and is now serving a jail sentence in Australia.

75. We are also using our biometric and data sharing capabilities to maximise returns of illegal immigrants to their countries of origin, and we are increasingly using international checks with these countries to bear down on abuse such as nationality swapping.

make fast and fair decisions so that individuals with a genuine right to international protection are granted asylum as quickly as possible. Since 2007 we have transformed the asylum system by streamlining the process and introducing end-to-end case management by a single case owner. Today we are concluding roughly 60% of end-to-end asylum claims within 6 months, not just initial decisions.

### A fast and fair asylum system

76. The UK is proud to offer protection to those who genuinely need it, in line with our international and human rights obligations. Our aim is to



77. But refugees travel across international borders so we need to work with other countries, particularly our EU partners, to ensure that effective asylum systems are in place. The UK has long advocated the use of practical cooperation in order to achieve a Common European Asylum System and we support the proposed functions of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), which will be established this year as an Executive Agency designed to promote and deepen practical cooperation within the EU. The new office will help Member States' national asylum systems to co-operate more closely – for example by exchanging information on the countries from which asylum seekers come, and co-ordinating their training of caseworkers.
78. A further example of international engagement on asylum is work under the EU Twinning Programme, the purpose of which is to build capacity in countries seeking accession to the EU. The UK is taking part in two EU-funded Twinning projects with Turkey which will set up six reception, screening and accommodation centres for asylum seekers and two centres for accommodation and removal of illegal immigrants. The projects are part of a package of EU projects to help Turkey modernise its law and procedures on asylum, illegal immigration and border controls as well as reducing Turkey's role as a transit country for illegal immigration to the EU.
79. While we are proud of our tradition of offering asylum to individuals in need of protection, we do not tolerate "asylum shopping" – the practice of asylum claims being lodged in more than one EU Member State – and believe that asylum seekers should claim in the first safe country in which they arrive. Since the introduction of the Dublin Regulation and the Eurodac database in

2003, we have been able to combat this practice by preventing and returning asylum seekers to the first EU country of arrival. Over 8,100 asylum applicants have been identified through fingerprint matches and subsequently removed from the UK to other Member States where their claims have been considered.

### **Working with foreign governments to secure returns**

80. Those who come to the UK illegally, overstay their visas, or make asylum claims that fail should return to their country of origin. We prefer people to leave the UK voluntarily, but if necessary we will enforce their return. More people were removed or departed voluntarily from the UK in 2008 than in any calendar year since 2005.
81. The removal of individuals considered to be of most harm to the UK continues to be a priority. In 2008 we removed 5,400 foreign national criminals and are working to increase this figure year on year.
82. Our ability to achieve these challenging targets is in part due to increasing cooperation by foreign governments in accepting back their nationals. Brokering returns can be a complex process, particularly in cases where we have little or no evidence of nationality or identity. We work closely with overseas governments and embassies in the UK to allow removals to take place and in some cases have Memoranda of Understanding that cover the arrangements for the return of failed asylum seekers and illegal migrants. We also benefit from 11 EU level Readmission Agreements to which the UK is party, as well as having our own bilateral readmission agreements with some countries.

### **Working with the Chinese Authorities to return their nationals**

A UK Border Agency Returns Liaison Officer (RLO) based at the British Embassy in Beijing is working in close partnership with the Chinese authorities to improve the re-documentation process for return of Chinese nationals unlawfully in the UK.

Establishment of Chinese identity can be a complex process if no supporting documentation is available. The RLO team in conjunction with the Chinese authorities undertake identity

verification checks. This ensures that we have the best quality evidence available to submit to the Chinese Embassy in London to assist them to re-document their nationals. The Chinese have also based an official at their Embassy in London to facilitate the document issue process.

This cooperation is paying off: returns, including voluntary returns, are increasing year-on-year – in 2006, 2007 and 2008 we returned 630, 1065 and 1680 Chinese nationals respectively.

### Assisted Voluntary Return

83. The UK positively encourages voluntary returns as a sustainable and cost effective means of return that benefits the individual, their home country and the UK. We therefore work with other governments to promote voluntary return schemes. We also work closely with the International Organization for Migration to promote the programme more widely among diaspora communities both in the UK and overseas. Further focus on the development of nationality and person-specific reintegration packages is planned in order to maximise the benefit to that individual upon their return home.
84. Our Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programmes continue to be a success. In return for a voluntary departure, returnees receive a flight home and, in certain cases, help with their reintegration through the provision of training, education or help starting a small business. For the UK it represents a more cost effective option than enforcing an individual's return, which can cost around £11,000. Of the 11,640 failed asylum seekers and their dependants removed in 2008 23% returned to their countries under the AVR programmes.

### The story of Karim

'When I arrived in England, at first I was happy. England was a good country. But I was a foreigner. I kept thinking about my family and my homeland. I first applied for asylum after two years, but Afghanistan was secure at the time and they did not accept my case. I decided to return voluntarily. The migration department gave me money for an airplane ticket and helped me prepare the paperwork. When I arrived back, I was able to get help from the IOM. With the funds I set up a pharmacy and business slowly took off. Since I returned from England, I'm happy with my work and life.'

### Returns and Reintegration Fund

85. The UK has also established a quadrilateral programme fund, the Returns and Reintegration Fund (RRF), drawing on finance and expertise from FCO, DFID, Ministry of Justice and the UK Border Agency. The aim of the fund is to increase the number of foreign national prisoners and failed asylum seekers who are returned to their countries of origin; to reduce the average cost of removals; and to improve reintegration and resettlement once returnees arrive home.
86. The fund focuses on helping Governments to accept back more failed asylum seekers and foreign national prisoners. Measures include improving reintegration support for returnees; improving procedures for issuing travel documents; and building capacity of immigration departments and improving prisons. We aim to develop packages

of projects that not only enable quick wins but also facilitate relationship building, laying the foundations for a sustainable impact on returns in the long term. Taken together such activity

helps build up the capacity and political will for a country to continue to accept back increasing numbers of returnees in a sustainable manner.

### **Returning ex-offenders to Jamaica**

The Returns and Reintegration Fund (RRF) has supported the development of a rehabilitation and reintegration programme for ex-offenders returning to Jamaica from the UK. This scheme has been developed in conjunction with the Jamaican Ministry of National Security. It is providing a detailed base of information, training and infrastructure on rehabilitation issues and will ultimately reduce re-offending rates. The Jamaican Government continues to be supportive of our returns objectives thanks in part to our long term commitment to rehabilitation and reintegration there.

## CHAPTER 4: OUR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

87. At the heart of our international strategy is a commitment to make best use of our presence overseas to build relationships and partnerships which deliver solutions to the challenges thrown up in an increasingly mobile world.
88. The UK Border Agency now has Regional Directors spread across the world. They are responsible for delivering our migration objectives overseas by furthering our international partnerships and delivering our visa operations. Regional Directors are supported by a network of Migration Delivery Officers, run by the FCO, as well as our Ambassadors and staff at our Embassies.
89. In 2008 we established the Country Planning Programme to coordinate and integrate the various strands of international work that the UK Border Agency and the FCO undertake in priority countries. This includes work on visas, the returns agenda, reducing intake of asylum and illegal migration, and tackling immigration and customs crime. The plans identify areas of our work that cut across or complement the work of others and enable us and our partners to streamline resources and direct them towards our highest priorities. We have recently evaluated the programme and we are considering how we can develop it this year.
90. The European Union is one of our key international partnerships. We work closely with other Member States and the European Commission to find ways of joint working on migration. In October 2008, EU Member States agreed the European Pact on Migration, which defines the fundamental principles, priorities and aims of EU migration and asylum policy. The Pact covers five areas: legal migration of third country nationals into the EU; illegal immigration and returns; border controls; asylum; and partnerships with countries of origin and transit.
91. The Migration Pact forms the basis for the EU's new five year work programme for Justice and Home Affairs (the "Stockholm Programme"), which was agreed at the end of 2009 under the Swedish Presidency of the EU. The final text reflects many UK priorities and avoids our issues of most concern. It puts an emphasis on delivering results through practical cooperation and on the need to base legislation on evidence and evaluation. There is a strong focus on tackling illegal immigration and delivering effective returns through enhanced co-operation with source and transit countries. The Stockholm Programme also confirms the importance of securing free movement rights whilst curbing associated abuse and criminality; and it encourages further development of EU data-sharing which the UK is keen to support.
92. Since May 2009 the UK has held the Chair of the General Directors of Immigration Services Conference (GDISC), a European network consisting of 33 states aimed at promoting practical cooperation and exchange best practice. The UK participates in a number of GDISC-led projects aimed at strengthening asylum systems across Europe, including:
- The development of the European Asylum Curriculum - an EU wide training system aimed at improving the quality and consistency of the asylum process through a common approach to training staff;
  - The Interpreter Pooling Project, which allows for sharing of interpreter resources between Member States. This has enabled newer Member States to process claims for international protection more effectively; and
  - The Effective Response to Irregular Transit Migration (ERIT) project, which focuses on building the capacity of governmental

institutions to respond effectively to irregular migration in Ukraine.

93. Beyond the European Union, we play a full role in other multilateral fora to further our migration objectives. In December 2009 we took over the Chair of the Five Country Conference (FCC), an informal group comprising the UK, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The FCC promotes information exchange and practical cooperation on issues ranging from data exchange to migrant health. We also work with international partners in G8 Roma/Lyon working groups, primarily the Migration Experts Sub Group (MESG), which develops policy and best practice in relation to migration, border and travel document issues. We also participate in the Asia-Europe Forum (ASEM), which meets annually to enable EU and Asian countries to exchange information on migration issues of common interest.
94. We have good relations with governments of other countries spread across the world. We are united in our aim of making migration a more positive experience for all – the country of origin, the country of destination and the migrants themselves – and determined to stop the exploitation of individuals and risks they take when migrating illegally. We have bilateral arrangements such as Memoranda of Understanding in place with certain partners covering a range of issues. UK Border Agency country plans set out our priorities on migration with key partner countries and are agreed with the country in question.
95. Our international agenda on customs is integral with those of other UK partners whose responsibilities include elements of the customs function. HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) have retained responsibility as the UK customs authority and the responsibility and resources for criminal investigation and intelligence work on drugs smuggling was transferred to Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) in 2006.
96. We are committed, through the EU Customs Union and our membership of the World Customs Organisation, to cooperation on operational matters through customs-to-customs agreements and more generally working with other countries to modernise international trade rules

and procedures and to enhance safety and security across the globe. We will support HMRC's efforts to influence the design of Community customs procedures to deliver more streamlined processes for legitimate trade as well as improved supply chain security.



97. We will also look to reinvigorate the UK's commitment to customs-to-customs international mutual assistance at EU level and under the WCO's Conventions. These procedures allow us to engage in wide-ranging co-operation with others to help prevent customs fraud, ensure better compliance and enforce national prohibitions and restrictions.
98. Finally, there are a number of international organisations and non-governmental organisations that are vital for delivery of our migration work overseas. To name just two, the International Organization on Migration (IOM) helps us to carry out our Assisted Voluntary Returns programmes, while UNHCR assists us in identifying refugees to bring to the UK under our resettlement programme.
99. We will build on our strong international partnerships to take forward our objectives overseas. Our international work will remain vital in helping us to increase the benefits of migration and address the challenges, and this must remain at the fore as we continue our efforts in the second decade of the twenty-first century and in an ever more globalised and mobile world.





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