

The Lord German OBE
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

23 September 2025

Dear Lord German,

BORDER SECURITY, ASYLUM AND IMMIGRATION BILL: HOUSE OF LORDS COMMITTEE

I am writing further to the debate in the Lords Committee on 8 September, where you asked for (Official Report 8 September Column 1249) further information about UNHCR quotas related to the UK Resettlement Scheme, and details of the UK-France agreement.

UNHCR Resettlement – United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)

As discussed in the House, the UK has a proud history of providing protection to those in need and we continue to welcome refugees and people in need through our safe and legal routes. Between 2010 and 2025, we have welcomed more than 711,000 individuals to the UK who have fled wars from Syria, Ukraine and Afghanistan, as well as those from Hong Kong. Under the UKRS, we have resettled nationals from Burundi, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Pakistan, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Yemen.

Within the debate on 8 September, you raised points regarding the UK's annual quota for the UKRS. It is correct that there is currently no 2025/2026 quota for new referrals to the UKRS. However, there continue to be arrivals under the scheme as we prioritise facilitating the relocation of individuals who have already been accepted for resettlement.

The numbers resettled through the UKRS, and any agreed quota, depend on a range of factors, including the availability of accommodation and integration support in the UK.

It is important that safe and legal routes are sustainable, well managed and in line with the UK's capacity to welcome, accommodate and integrate refugees. The Immigration White Paper committed to a review of our existing refugee sponsorship and resettlement schemes to develop a more cost effective and sustainable framework. Further detail will be set out in due course.

The UK-France agreement and UK/European Applicant Transfer Scheme

Under the UK-France agreement on the prevention of dangerous journeys, small boat arrivals in the UK may be subject to detention and returned to France. In addition, individuals in France can apply to come to the UK under a new safe route: the UK/European Applicant Transfer Scheme. This new route provides a safe alternative to a dangerous small boat crossing, helping to undermine the exploitative business model of organised crime groups. The purpose of this novel agreement is to test the deterrent effect of readmissions to France on the prevention of dangerous journeys to the UK.

The operation of the scheme has been specifically designed to ensure strict identity and security checks are undertaken before an individual travels to the UK and that regularly reviewed prioritisation criteria, set out in guidance, can be applied. Under the process, individuals submit an expression of interest application to the scheme, which is triaged to assess the validity and eligibility of the application, before applicants are selected (in accordance with the prioritisation criteria) and invited to provide their biometrics and a decision is made on their application. Individuals who come to the UK under the scheme may make an asylum claim in the UK.

I hope you find this letter helpful. I am also copying this letter to all Noble Lords who spoke in the debate and will deposit a copy in the Library of the House.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lemos', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lord Lemos
Lord in Waiting (Government Whip)