

Baroness Coussins
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Dear Baroness Coussins

24th October 2025

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

I am writing following the debate in the Lords Committee on Monday 13th October (Official Report 13 October Column 66) to provide further details in relation to the provision of translation and interpretation services, specifically in relation to any retained EU law, now known as assimilated law, relevant to rights to access such services.

The Asylum (Procedures) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007/3187) implemented basic standards for asylum system procedures including translation provision as part of the UK's transposition of Council Directive 2005/85/EC of 1st December 2005 on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status. Regulation 5 provides for a right to an interpreter during asylum appeals and in proceedings in the higher courts. This regulation remains in force.

As a party to the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights, the UK also remains committed to meeting the rights and obligations under those international frameworks.

Under Paragraph 339ND of the Immigration Rules, the Home Secretary is required to provide an interpreter at public expense, when necessary, particularly during substantive asylum interviews. This ensures that applicants can fully present their case, in line with legal and human rights obligations.

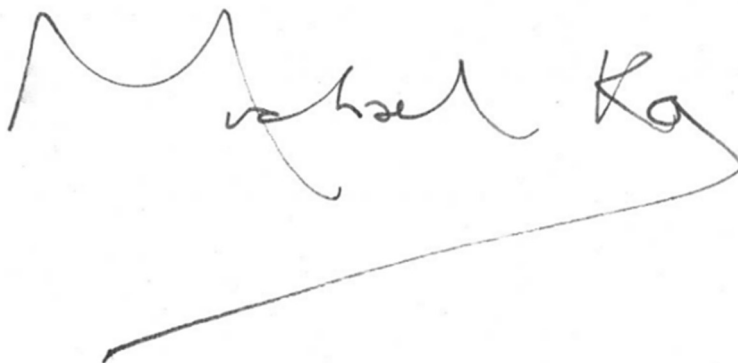
As I said in the debate, the Government's Immigration White Paper rightly underscores the importance of English language proficiency as part of effective integration into British society. However, it is recognised that in some cases the immediate need is protection, not integration, and some individuals will need translation and interpretation services to enable them to navigate the immigration system and access relevant support. As I noted in debate, in addition to the provision within paragraph 339ND of the Immigration Rules, further support is available in the context of criminal investigations and by Migrant Help Asylum Services.

I note that unfortunately our meeting scheduled on Wednesday 22nd October was cancelled due to parliamentary business. I look forward to our meeting on Monday 27th October.

I look forward to further debate of the Bill as it progresses to Report stage, commencing on Tuesday 28th October.

I hope you find this letter helpful. I will also send a copy to those Peers who spoke in the debate and place a copy in the library of the House.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Michael Katz'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

The Lord Katz MBE
Lord in Waiting (Government Whip)
