

From: secretariat@nifishermen.com <secretariat@nifishermen.com>

Sent: 17 February 2022 16:50

To: kevin.foster.mp@parliament.uk; 'Victoria Prentis MP' <ps.victoria.prentis@defra.gov.uk>; 'PS, Victoria Prentis' <ps.victoria.prentis@defra.gov.uk>; allan.dorans.mp@parliament.uk; jim.shannon.mp@parliament.uk; david.duguid.mp@parliament.uk; philippa.whitford.mp@parliament.uk; 'O'HARA, Brendan' <brendan.ohara.mp@parliament.uk>; ronnie.cowan.mp@parliament.uk; deidre.brock.mp@parliament.uk; macneila@parliament.uk; ian.blackford.mp@parliament.uk; carmichaela@parliament.uk; alister.jack.mp@parliament.uk; brandon.lewis.mp@parliament.uk; carla.lockhart.mp@parliament.uk; Private Office DAERA <Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk>

Cc: 'Freeman, Anne' <anne.freeman@defra.gov.uk>; <[redacted]@defra.gov.uk>; 'Rowe, Mike' <mike.rowe@defra.gov.uk>; [redacted]@ukgovscotland.gov.uk; [redacted]@daera-ni.gov.uk; [redacted]@anifpo.com; [redacted]@swfpa.com; <[redacted]@clydefish.com>; <[redacted]@wiggins.co.uk>; [redacted]@marfisheco.com>

Subject: Urgent Meeting Request

Importance: High

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Dear Ministers, All,

Whilst this communication might originate from an email address in Northern Ireland the concerns in the attached letter are expressed jointly between the Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation, the Scottish Whitefish Producer's Association and the Clyde Fishermen's Association. The issues therein either fall under your Ministerial or party portfolios and / or pose a stark and imminent risk to the economic well-being of your constituency.

The headline is simple. Border Force's current interpretation and application of immigration policy, with reference to the transit visas used to employ fishermen from outside the UK, has given UK vessel owners based in the Clyde 2 weeks' notice to repatriate their foreign crew. Those 2 weeks expire on 18th Feb 22. Our analysis shows that such a sudden application will result in a loss of revenue of up to £109M and threaten over 600 jobs in the Clyde and NI. If the issue of visas is handled in a similar fashion nationally then these figures would be scaled up significantly.

Minister Foster is already aware of the ongoing effort within the fishing industry to advance from Transit to Skilled visas. We request a pause in the instruction to repatriate crew and an urgent meeting with him to discuss how such an outcome might be reached within a realistic timeframe, without either the local devastation as assessed in the attachment or the broader harm that would be done to the fishing industry should this change of approach be applied nationally.

Kind Regards,

[Redacted]

CEOs Northern Ireland Fish Producers' Organisation, Scottish Whitefish Producers' Association, Anglo North Irish Fish Producers' Organisation, Clyde Fishermen's Association

From: secretariat@nifishermen.com <secretariat@nifishermen.com>

Sent: 02 March 2022 17:00

To: kevin.foster.mp@parliament.uk; 'Victoria Prentis MP' <ps.victoria.prentis@defra.gov.uk>; 'PS, Victoria Prentis' <ps.victoria.prentis@defra.gov.uk>; allan.dorans.mp@parliament.uk; jim.shannon.mp@parliament.uk; david.duguid.mp@parliament.uk; philippa.whitford.mp@parliament.uk; 'O'HARA, Brendan' <brendan.ohara.mp@parliament.uk>; ronnie.cowan.mp@parliament.uk; deidre.brock.mp@parliament.uk; macneila@parliament.uk; ian.blackford.mp@parliament.uk; carmichaela@parliament.uk; alister.jack.mp@parliament.uk; brandon.lewis.mp@parliament.uk; carla.lockhart.mp@parliament.uk; Private Office DAERA <Private.Office@daera-ni.gov.uk>

Cc: 'Freeman, Anne' <anne.freeman@defra.gov.uk>; <[redacted]@defra.gov.uk>; mike.rowe@defra.gov.uk; [redacted]@ukgovscotland.gov.uk; [redacted]@daera-ni.gov.uk; [redacted]@anifpo.com; [redacted]@swfpa.com; [redacted]@clydefish.com; [redacted]@wiggin.co.uk; [redacted]@marfisheco.com; [redacted]@seafish.co.uk>

Subject: Non UK Crew and the Implications of Ongoing Events in Ukraine

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Dear Ministers and Political Representatives,

Further to our correspondence on the 17th February the Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation, Scottish Whitefish Producers' Association and the Clyde Fishermen's Association would like to engage on the concerns and opportunities expressed in the attached letter, supported by the enclosed Seafish analysis.

Kind Regards,

[Redacted], NIFF

[Redacted] NIFF

[Redacted] SWFPA

[Redacted] CFA

Victoria Prentis MP

Minister of State for Farming, Fisheries and Food

Kevin Foster MP

Minister for Safe and Legal Migration

2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

02 March 2022

Dear Ministers,

Non-UK crew serving on vessels that operate within territorial waters and the implications of ongoing events in Ukraine

We last wrote to you on the 17th Feb 22 highlighting the impact of Border Force's enforcement of Home Office policy in the Clyde region. We are sorry to report that given there has been no shift, either in that policy or interpretation, those impacts have begun to be observed.

Currently this is manifesting as both boats placed up for sale and a significant reduction in the fishing effort that would usually be observed at this time of year. All for a want of crew. Whilst some few boats are still fishing, reports are that they are doing so "short handed". Having lost migrant crew the economic pressures of trying to pay household bills are forcing fishermen to sea with fewer crew than would be ideally be considered safe, for little more than a desperate attempt to bring at least some money into their households.

The positive news is that it isn't too late. Whilst the pressures are taking a toll we are not yet at the point where this policy has caused irreparable degradation to the local industry. As a reminder there are up to 600 jobs and £109M at stake and swift action may yet secure both however the time in which do so is measured in a very few weeks, not months.

If that isn't problem enough events in the past week mean there is now so much more at risk. Enclosed is a Seafish paper "Russian invasion of Ukraine: Implications for the UK Seafood Supply Chain". The analysis it provides paints a very clear picture of an uncertain future. It tells us Russia accounts for nearly 45% of global whitefish production. Disruptions to processing operations from either a change or loss of supply will cause significant delays to production and increases in costs. It states Russia and Ukraine account for around 25% of the world's wheat supply and alludes to rising oil prices alongside the rise in energy prices widely reported elsewhere.

Yesterday the Deputy prime Minister warned that we could expect an extended conflict. We do not know whether sanctions will be extended to Russian food sources, nor can we predict what food Russia will allow to leave their country when they face economic collapse as a result of these sanctions. What we can predict, and indeed what we can already see is that the price of food in UK supermarkets is rising rapidly and fuel prices along with energy bills are rising almost daily.

In the context of these events one thing is abundantly clear; now is not the time to jeopardise UK fishermen's ability to supply the people of the UK with a well-priced and sustainable source of food. We don't doubt that HMG is contingency planning for food, fuel and energy costs to remain at their highest ever levels for an extended period, it is the responsible thing to do. The fishing industry operating around the Clyde can offer some help in that regard but without at least temporarily embracing the solutions offered in our previous correspondence, or developing another more expeditious solution the Home Office risks choosing exacerbating these issues over mitigating them.

If we are to look to pluck positives out of what promises to be a dark time for Europe it is a resurgence in the willingness of everyday people to do their bit. The fishermen and fisherwomen we represent are no exception. Of course immigration needs to be controlled, but we ask you recognise that ordinary people in the UK would much rather see their government take action to mitigate spiralling costs of living than they would see our fishermen prevented from doing their bit simply because some workers, already here from outside the UK, have one kind of visa and not another.

It is within the Home Office's gift to help and whilst we in industry will work concurrently to develop the skilled visa route all we ask is that you take a temporary and pragmatic view on the issue of Transit visas such as will allow us to continue food production for the UK domestic market.

Our willingness to help extends further. Yesterday the Home Secretary announced planning was underway for a scheme that would enable businesses to support refugees from the Ukraine being brought to the UK. Our organisations stand ready to engage with this scheme and discuss what we can do to help any fisher who finds themselves a refugee from the war in Ukraine.

On behalf of the Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation, the Clyde Fishermen's Association and the Scottish Whitefish Producer's Association;

Your's Sincerely,

[Redacted],
[Redacted],
[Redacted],
[Redacted]

Enclosure: Russian invasion of Ukraine: Implications for the UK Seafood Supply Chain