

UK and France reach new English Channel migration control agreement

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Migrants continue to make the potentially perilous journey across the English Channel on small and unsafe boats. (Photo: Reuters)

London, November 28 (RHC)-- After a year of record migrant crossings across the English Channel, the UK and France have reached a new agreement to tackle illegal migrant crossings. According to the Home Office, the new enhanced agreement will see more French officers patrolling beaches with “cutting edge” surveillance technology being deployed.

The latest agreement follows the one Home Secretary, Priti Patel, agreed with the French authorities in the port city of Calais back in July. There is now widespread recognition that the summer agreement has been a failure, as demonstrated by the continuing large numbers of people who cross the Channel on a daily basis.

According to the latest figures, more than 8,000 people have reached the UK after crossing the English Channel in small vessels this year alone. The significant surge in numbers is a big blow to Patel who only last year vowed to render such crossings an “infrequent phenomenon.”

A private row is brewing between the Home Office and the Ministry of Defense over the government. As part of the latest agreement, Patel and her French counterpart, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin, have “reaffirmed their commitment to make this route [English Channel] unviable”.

According to the Home Office, the number of French officers patrolling beaches will double from December 01, but the full numbers have not been disclosed due to “operational sensitivities”. In addition, an “enhanced package” of cutting edge surveillance technology, including drones, radar equipment, optronic binoculars and fixed cameras, will be deployed against migrants and people smugglers.

Furthermore, the latest agreement contains softer measures, including “steps to support migrants into appropriate accommodation in France.” This new Anglo-French agreement on controlling migration comes ahead of the imminent end of the Brexit transition period (December 31).

Recently there has been speculation that once Brexit has been fully implemented, migration across the Channel may surge in part due to inadequate Anglo-French cooperation.

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