

## UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group

13 January 2023

### 1. Members of the Working Group

Rupert Reece - Partner, Gide Loyrette Nouel, Chair  
Kevin Braund - France Country Director, Gleeds  
Edmund Butcher - Head of Business Development, High Speed 1 (HS1)  
Sarah Curtis - Vice President Human Resources, Safran  
Nicola Hetherington - Head of European Trade, Confederation of British Industry  
Jonathan Lewis - Partner, Clifford Chance  
Katie Roscoe - Head of UK Public Affairs, Airbus  
Renaud Thillaye - Head of Public Affairs, Eurostar

### 2. Mobility Problem Statement

Business Forum Members have adapted or are in the process of adapting to working within the framework now applicable to the movement of persons between the UK and France.

There has been a learning curve for Members and personnel in coming to grips with the new visa framework and processes.

Moving personnel between the UK and France, whether short or long term, remains possible for many categories of workers. However, in all cases it is more difficult. The application process typically takes several weeks. There are direct costs in fees and indirect costs in management and employee time.

In addition, border checks are increasing the overall journey time.

Many Members have made the investment in HR capacity and sponsor licenses. Others have found it more difficult or resolved not to try. Costs ultimately land on consumers or shareholders. Some Members have identified a loss of opportunity caused by reduced mobility.

Members report particular obstacles faced by those at the start of their careers.

### 3. Mission Statement

As an apolitical grouping, the mandate of the Working Group is to identify business-led opportunities to address some of the difficulties being faced by employers on both sides of the Channel.

The Working Group has identified three areas of focus:

- (1) Reducing friction at the borders;
- (2) Facilitating the current Visa application process;
- (3) Youth mobility.

#### **4. Evidence Gathering**

In the period since our first meeting on 5 October 2021, the Working Group has:

- Collected evidence from Forum Members and other interested third party organisations: Responses to Questionnaires in Annex 1;
- Collected evidence from individuals: Responses to Questionnaires in Annex 2;
- Collected reports and data from published sources: References in Annex 3 and Annex 4;
- Consulted British and French consulates; Department of International Trade France, CBI and Business France.

#### **5. Summary of recommendations**

In accordance with our Mission Statement, we have sought to make recommendations which are consistent with the framework which exists in both the UK and France, suggesting improvements where we can.

Having considered the submissions from Members and the evidence gathered, the Working Group proposes the following recommendations:

##### **(1) Reducing friction at borders:**

The Working Group proposes to give technology a greater role at juxtaposed controls border crossing points by deploying a solution combining pre-travel passenger registration and biometric checks at the terminals. Technology has recently been tested by Eurostar, which offers to lead this project in Paris Nord and St. Pancras. This could be complemented by trusted travellers' schemes enabling frequent/business travellers to undergo less in-depth controls. To bring closer French and UK visions on the matter and design a model for seamless, customer-centric juxtaposed controls, the Working Group proposes to establish an innovation taskforce bringing together Channel Tunnel operators and representatives of relevant authorities with the objective to design a joint model for a seamless, customer-centric and secure border.

##### **(2) Facilitating current visa application process:**

There a number of ways in which the existing visa system could be modified in order to alleviate certain existing logistical and financial challenges. The Working Group would be happy to recommend to the Forum the proposals recently tabled by the Confederation of British Industry.<sup>1</sup> Of these, the proposal which would appear to offer the most tangible benefit while remaining consistent with existing

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<sup>1</sup> **Ref-12**, Trade in Services Council, *10 steps to boost trade in services through business mobility*, The Confederation of British Industry, 6 November 2022, Accessible at: <https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/0kcgjfu2/10-steps-to-boost-trade-in-services-through-business-mobility.pdf>

government policy would be the implementation of a Youth Mobility Scheme between the UK and France (see (3) below).

**(3) Bilateral Youth Mobility programme:**

The Working Group proposes that the UK and France should enter into a bilateral agreement to establish a UK-France Youth Mobility Scheme.

## (1) Reducing friction at borders:

### Summary

To address ongoing friction at UK-French borders, we propose to accelerate the use of mobile technology and biometric recognition. This would reduce transaction time at borders whilst enabling advance security and immigration controls. The solution would serve both UK and French regulatory purposes. Eurostar offers to lead this project in Paris Nord and St. Pancras.

### The business impact of slower border controls

Seamless and secure borders have been a key enabler of dynamic business relations between France and the UK since the end of the last century. Until 2019, it was estimated that international visitors coming to the UK via HS1 created over £400m of annual trade between Southeast England and Europe and supported £2bn of tourist expenditure each year.<sup>2</sup>

Both countries have cooperated very effectively to modernise their common border and harness innovative technology. The implementation of juxtaposed controls for land and sea Channel crossings has been a massive success for customers and police forces. More recently, e-gates have offered more capacity and helped to reduce friction as governments were reinforcing immigration controls.

With the double impact of Covid and Brexit, this dynamic has come a halt. Even since the lifting of Covid restrictions in spring 2022, transaction times at the border have not been able to return at the pre-pandemics, pre-Brexit levels. Long queues regularly affect freight traffic at Dover and Eurotunnel. Eurostar has only been able to protect its operations by maintaining a reduced timetable, therefore not servicing all of the existing demand. An estimated 10 000 passengers do not travel every week compared to 2019.

These difficulties result from reinforced customs and passport controls unmatched by additional processing capacity. Eurostar finds that it has lost 30% of its 'throughout' capacity compared to 2019 records. In these conditions, and unless a significant shift in reducing border friction, it is impossible to grow traffic. Less capacity and less offer also tend to push prices up. This situation is a drag on Franco-British trade and tourism links. It is a threat to major sports events taking place in France, namely the Rugby World Cup in 2023 and the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2024.

### The potential for a world-leading innovative border

Additional police resources could alleviate the impact and help to regain capacity. But given budgetary constraints on both UK and French sides, members of the mobility subgroup are realistic that they would be limited. Channel terminals are also characterised by a lack of space, especially Eurostar and ports. Adding more police booth might not be an option.

It is therefore time to rely much more on technology that can save space and time at the border. The Franco-British border of the future should combine:

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<sup>2</sup> Ref-5, Steer/HS1, *Delivering for Britain and Beyond, The Economic Impact of HS1*, March 2020, Available at: <https://highspeed1.co.uk/media/vemkxmot/delivering-for-britain-and-beyond-the-economic-impact-of-hs1-march-2020.pdf>

1. **Advanced travel preparation and, if required, authorisation, via mobile applications.** This is common practice in the air sector. It should become the norm in land and sea transport. Passengers should not just be able to check in, but also to scan their passport and upload biometric data. Governments might want to use the opportunity to authorise people to travel, as foreseen by the UK Universal Permission to Travel (UPT) scheme.
2. **Fast border crossing thanks to biometric technology.** Today passengers queue up to a border booth or an e-gate to present their passport. The actual control can take up to one minute, depending on the passenger's status. Tomorrow, it should be possible for pre-registered passengers to cross the border instantly by a biometric check taking only a few seconds. This can also be arranged on the go via biometric corridors.

### Technology and best practices exist

Channel Tunnel operators have recently tested smart solutions that could prefigure what juxtaposed controls could look like in the future.

During Covid, Eurotunnel developed a solution called 'Digital Wallet' inviting passengers to collect all required documents (passport, PLF, vaccine certificates, test results, sworn statements...) into one place. This helped to push compliance up, better manage queues and accelerate police controls, even if documents were checked again at the border. The solution didn't involve biometrics.

In early 2022, Eurostar, together with technology providers Entrust and iProov, successfully trialled an end-to-end biometric verification system at UK exit controls in St. Pancras. The pilot demonstrated the feasibility of shifting security-sensitive data collection processes from the border to the user's home via a mobile application called 'SmartCheck'. At the station, passengers could check-in and cross the UK border using a fast-track lane and undergoing a single face recognition check of a few seconds. In 2023, Eurostar will make 'SmartCheck' available to all business/carte blanche customers, as well to test it on UK entry in Amsterdam.

Numerous examples of border innovations exist around the world that could provide an inspiration. The US Global Entry programme gives trusted travellers arriving from overseas the opportunity of a rapid, automatic border control after the apply in advance of their travel. At Dubai airport, Emirates passengers can check in for their flight, complete immigration formalities, enter the Emirates Lounge, and board their flights, simply by strolling through the airport, thanks to a "Biometric Path".<sup>3</sup>

### Proposals for the Franco-British summit to:

- Implement an **advance registration and biometric check solution** which could work both at the UK and French borders. Eurostar is particularly interested in implementing SmartCheck on French exit at Paris Nord and, ultimately, on UK entry in Paris Nord and French entry in St. Pancras.

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<sup>3</sup> Ref-6, Emirates, *Emirates launches integrated biometric path at the airport for added convenience*, 23 October 2020, Accessible at: <https://www.emirates.com/media-centre/emirates-launches-integrated-biometric-path-at-the-airport-for-added-convenience/>

- If a prerequisite, work with authorities to launch **trusted traveller schemes**, for instance using the possibilities available with EU national facilitation programmes.
- Set up a **border innovation taskforce** bringing together Channel operators and representatives of relevant authorities with the objective to bring closer French and UK visons and to design a model for seamless, customer-centric juxtaposed controls

## (2) Facilitating the current visa process:

### Summary

The responses from the Business Forum Members illustrate the time and cost impact of being required to obtain visas for business travel between the UK and France. The anecdotal evidence is consistent with the published data from more comprehensive studies. Many companies are managing to work within the new regime. Others have decided to curtail certain activities in order to avoid the attendant costs and difficulties. Various suggestions have been offered to simplify and/or accelerate certain aspects of the process.

### The Overall Picture

Businesses in a wide range of sectors are experiencing increased costs and delays as a result of having to obtain visas for workers, whether short term or long term.

Responses to the Questionnaires have been received from:

#### Forum Members<sup>4</sup>:

- Gleeds France
- Veolia
- Total Energies
- HSBC Continental Europe
- Safran UK Ltd
- Gide Loyrette Nouel LLP
- L'Oréal UK
- Clifford Chance LLP
- Eurostar
- British Airways
- Bouygues
- Airbus

#### Others:

- Linklaters LLP
- Hogan Lovells LLP
- Newland Chase
- Business France

The responses from businesses are attached in Annex 1.

The Working Group also considered responses submitted by individuals to a separate questionnaire attached in Annex 2.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In chronological order by date of response.

<sup>5</sup> Note that only a very few responses have been submitted from individuals to date. They cannot be considered a comprehensive survey but do offer an anecdotal description of the visa process in both the UK and France from the point of view of an applicant.

The results of the survey are not surprising. They reflect the predictable results of a visa regime on both sides of the Channel following the end of free movement.

Visas are typically taking 6-8 weeks or more to obtain.

Fees are in the thousands of pounds, up to £12,000 for a five year visa in the UK.

There are differences between the UK and French regimes. With some members finding the UK easier to navigate and some preferring the French system.

In both countries, a principle source of difficulty comes from the fact that a future employer has to obtain a sponsorship license before recruiting a candidate from abroad. The time and cost involved is prohibitive for some.

Both countries have routes available for skilled candidates and people of high potential. However, the steps required in order to demonstrate that a candidate meets the relevant criteria can be daunting to the point of dissuasive.

The costs are regarded as particularly prohibitive for smaller firms and secondments of young professionals, even intra-group.

Even for short term visits to carry out 'permitted paid engagements' which do not require a visa, Members are required to commit increased administrative resources in order to verify (and demonstrate if necessary) that travel complies with the relevant requirements.

The consequence which appears from the evidence collected from Members is a reduced level of mobility between the UK and France.

The evidence from Members appears consistent with more comprehensive reports in a number of published papers<sup>6</sup>.

## Recommendations

The general thrust of suggestions from the Forum Members is "anything that could reduce the cost and time of making visa applications".

Specific suggestions include:

- Introducing greater clarity around and/or expanding the list of permitted paid activities for which no visa is required;
- reducing visa application fees;

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<sup>6</sup> For example, **Ref-10**, *MAC Annual Report*, Migration Advisory Committee, December 2021, Accessible at: [MAC Annual Report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk); **Ref-11**, Alberti, G., Forder, C., Sumption, M., and Walsh, P. W., *How is the End of Free Movement Affecting the Low-wage Labour Force in the UK?*, The Migration Observatory, Oxford University, 15 August 2022, Accessible at: <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/reports/how-is-the-end-of-free-movement-affecting-the-low-wage-labour-force-in-the-uk/>; **Ref-14**, *MAC Annual Report*, Migration Advisory Committee, December 2022, Accessible at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1123358/Annual\\_Report\\_22\\_Compiled\\_Draft\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1123358/Annual_Report_22_Compiled_Draft_FINAL.pdf); **Ref-9**, *Intra-Company Transfers*, Migration Advisory Committee, October 2021, Accessible at: [Intra-Company Transfers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk); **Ref-13**, *Closed shop, Why business immigration isn't working*, The Law Society Gazette, 18 November 2022, Accessible at: [Law Society Gazette \(pagesuite.com\)](https://www.law-society.org.uk/gazette).

- offering an accelerated service in return for an increased fee;
- removing the requirement of a sponsorship license for certain job types or short-term visas;
- expanding graduate visas (currently only open to those who have studied in the UK) to those who have studied in qualifying universities abroad;
- expanding the list of qualifying universities for the UK "High Potential" visa. The only French university presently listed is *Université Paris Sciences et Lettres*;
- expanding the Youth Mobility Scheme to French and other nationalities;
- removing requirements for paper documentation and wet signatures.

Many of these suggestions reflect suggestions which have already been made by the CBI in a recent paper<sup>7</sup>.

***"Summary of recommendations:***

***Domestic innovations***

1. *Remove the requirement for companies to acquire an Intra-Company Transfer visa for international employees coming to the UK for short-term work*
2. *Create a hybrid short-term stream within the new Global Business Mobility Route to allow employees to enter the UK for short-term productive activity without a work visa*
3. *Increase Home Office capacity to ensure work visas are processed within the 3-week government service time and build resilience into the system*
4. *Immediately grant temporary visas to roles in obvious shortage as an interim measure until a new Shortage Occupation List is finalised*
5. *Modernise a wide range of practical process*
6. *Increase flexibility in the Shortage Occupation List by adding lower skill roles that meet the salary requirement because they are in shortage*

***International opportunities***

7. *Negotiate improved form of commitments around immigration requirements in free trade agreements (FTAs), with a clear, standardised and reciprocal list of permissible and prohibited activities and for how visa applications are submitted and processed.*
8. *Continue to prioritise the expansion of reciprocal Youth Mobility schemes*
9. *Enhance outward mobility by working with international partners to improve guidance*
10. *Negotiate the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications with international partners to maximise business mobility opportunities".*

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<sup>7</sup> **Ref-12**, Trade in Services Council, *10 steps to boost trade in services through business mobility*, The Confederation of British Industry, 6 November 2022, Accessible at: <https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/0kcgjfu2/10-steps-to-boost-trade-in-services-through-business-mobility.pdf>

The CBI recommendations nos. 1, 2 and 8 are particularly relevant to the concerns and suggestions identified by Forum Members.

The Working Group would be happy to recommend the CBI proposals in principle to the Forum, although each would likely require further work to define in detail.

The Working Group also recognises that there are potential policy issues associated with these solutions to the extent that they go beyond a 'technical' correction to the existing rules. They would also involve a modification to the rules which would not necessarily be targeted to mobility between the UK and France (only).

For these reasons and those set out in the next chapter, the implementation of a bi-lateral Youth Mobility Scheme between the UK and France would appear to be the most likely to offer tangible benefits while remaining consistent with present government policy.

### **(3) UK-FR Youth Mobility Scheme:**

#### **Summary**

Implementing a bilateral UK-FR Youth Mobility Scheme, along the lines of the schemes which the UK and France have each already signed with other countries, could offer a way of creating opportunities for young professionals in both countries to gain educational and cross-cultural experience, without increasing the administrative burden on employers.

#### **Existing arrangements**

The UK presently has agreements on youth mobility with 10 countries. Some are current or ex-members of the Commonwealth. Others are outside.

France has agreements with 29 countries across a wide range of cultures.

Many member states of the EU have youth mobility agreements with non-EU countries. Member states have different agreements with different countries. There is no uniformity of approach. France has agreements with more countries than any other member state.

A list of the YMS agreements entered into by the UK and EU member states is attached at Annex 4.

#### **Outline of a YMS**

Youth Mobility Schemes in both the UK and France typically follow an internationally accepted model. Variations may exist on a case by case basis. The key elements are usually:

- Open to persons between 18-30;
- Who can demonstrate financial means (e.g. £2,530 in a bank account);
- Valid for 2 years;
- Ability to change employers;
- Employers do not have to obtain sponsorship or follow specific regulations, and only have to comply with normal employment laws;
- No specific skill level;
- No right to bring dependants;
- No right to benefits in host state;
- Granted to any individual only once;
- Can be converted into other types of visa upon application.

#### **Benefits of a YMS**

Several studies have highlighted the benefits of Youth Mobility Schemes for business.

One particular advantage for employers is that it allows future employees to take the initiative in commencing and managing the visa application process themselves, thus saving time and reducing the burden for employers.

The Oxford Migration Observatory<sup>8</sup> highlights this advantage:

*"An alternative to employer-sponsored visas that does not face the same problems is an unsponsored visa route such as the Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) in which workers can do any work and are not tied to specific employers or jobs. YMS visas are open to 18-30-year-old nationals from a limited number of countries with which the UK has concluded bilateral agreements, and last for 2 years. YMS visa grants dropped substantially during the pandemic, from over 20,000 per year in 2018 and 2019 to only around 8,000 per year in both 2020 and 2021 (Home Office, 2022). This source of workers has thus declined at the same time that free movement ended. The government has in the past said that it wants to negotiate youth mobility agreements with EU countries following the end of free movement (Foster, 2021) but no agreements have materialised. Some business-focused organisations have suggested expanding YMS because it offers a recruitment option that is less administratively burdensome for employers (CIPD, 2021<sup>9</sup>). YMS visas have the advantage of not being tied to specific jobs, which allows workers to move more easily between jobs and increases their bargaining power. However, the visas are relatively short and strictly temporary, and thus contribute to turnover of employees and reduce the time horizon for workers to learn English and gain knowledge about their rights. Youth Mobility visas also cannot easily be targeted at particular sectors (see Sumption and Fernandez Reino, 2018<sup>10</sup>, for more discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of YMS visas in low-wage work)."*

During the negotiation of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the UK proposed a UK-EU Youth Mobility Scheme.<sup>11</sup> At that time, the Government acknowledged the benefits of a YMS from a cultural and educational perspective and also for business:

*"Such a scheme will be designed in broadly the same way as existing YMS schemes, taking account of EU specificities, and will be reciprocal. It will provide an additional source of labour for the UK labour market and provide continuing opportunities for British people to gain experience of living and working in the EU."*<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> **Ref-11**, Alberti, G., Forder, C., Sumption, M., and Walsh, P. W., *How is the End of Free Movement Affecting the Low-wage Labour Force in the UK?*, The Migration Observatory, Oxford University, 15 August 2022, Accessible at: <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/reports/how-is-the-end-of-free-movement-affecting-the-low-wage-labour-force-in-the-uk/>

<sup>9</sup> **Ref-8**, Davies, G., *Addressing skills and labour shortages post-Brexit*, London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, October 2021, Accessible at: [https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/addressing-skills-labour-shortages-post-brexit\\_tcm18-102313.pdf](https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/addressing-skills-labour-shortages-post-brexit_tcm18-102313.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> **Ref-2**, Fernandez Reino, M., and Sumption M., *Exploiting the Opportunity? Low-Skilled Work Migration After Brexit*, Migration Observatory, Oxford University, 30 August 2018, Accessible at: <https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Exploiting-the-Opportunity-Low-Skilled-Work-Migration-After-Brexit-1.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> **Ref-3**, Home Office and UK visas and Immigration, *The UK's future skills-based immigration System*, HM Government, 19 December 2018, Accessible at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/766465/The-UKs-future-skills-based-immigration-system-print-ready.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/766465/The-UKs-future-skills-based-immigration-system-print-ready.pdf), §6.58, p55: "We have proposed a UK-EU YMS as part of our Mobility Framework to ensure that young people can continue to enjoy the social, cultural and educational benefits of living in the EU and the UK."

<sup>12</sup> **Ref-3**, Home Office and UK visas and Immigration, *The UK's future skills-based immigration System*, HM Government, 19 December 2018, Accessible at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/766465/The-UKs-future-skills-based-immigration-system-print-ready.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/766465/The-UKs-future-skills-based-immigration-system-print-ready.pdf), §6.59, p55

A UK-France YMS would offer the same benefits on a bilateral scale.

For France, the benefits of such a YMS are recorded on the website of the *Ministère de l'Intérieur*<sup>13</sup>:

*"Le dispositif « jeune professionnel » est mis en œuvre dans le cadre d'accords bilatéraux conclus par la France avec [17] États signataires. Il permet à des jeunes déjà engagés dans la vie active d'approfondir leurs connaissances professionnelles, linguistiques et culturelles grâce à la mobilité internationale et d'acquérir par une expérience de travail dans une entreprise en France, des gains de compétences qui vont permettre d'améliorer leur perspective de carrière lors de leur retour dans leur pays d'origine."*

### Benefits identified by Forum Members

A UK-France YMS would respond to a number of the concerns registered by Members in their responses to the Questionnaires.

- A candidate can apply for a YMS visa and then make spontaneous application to employers in the host country;
- The employment can start without delay or fees for the employer;
- The YMS visa can also be used by employers to second or recruit interns or trainees easily;
- From the French perspective, a YMS visa would allow participants in the state-sponsored VIE (*volontariat international en entreprise*) to come to the UK for the full two-year duration of the programme;
- Young graduates could use the YMS visa to look for opportunities with first jobs abroad;
- The YMS visa would also address the needs of students in their third year at university looking to work abroad as part of (for example) a language degree.

A UK-France YMS would complement existing visa routes and create additional opportunities for young workers on both sides of the Channel.

### Answers to possible objections

A UK-France YMS would not be the same as reintroducing free movement.<sup>14</sup> The conditions to entry would be clearly defined. From the UK perspective, the UK government would retain control over its borders. From the French perspective, the agreement would operate in the same way as the programmes signed by France with other countries. The visa granted to a young UK person to work in France would not carry with it the right to work in another EU country.

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<sup>13</sup> **Ref-7**, Ministère de l'Intérieur et des Outre-Mer, *Les accords bilatéraux relatifs à la mobilité professionnelle*, 11 August 2021, Accessible at: <https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Europe-et-International/Les-accords-bilateraux/Les-accords-bilateraux-relatifs-a-la-mobilite-professionnelle>, - paragraphe II.A Echange de jeunes professionnels. See also **Ref-4**, Conseil d'orientation des Politiques de Jeunesse, Commission Insertion des Jeunes, *Mobilités des Jeunes*, 23 January 2019, Accessible at: <https://www.vie-publique.fr/sites/default/files/rapport/pdf/278006.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> **Ref-2**, Fernandez Reino, M., and Sumption M., *Exploiting the Opportunity? Low-Skilled Work Migration After Brexit*, Migration Observatory, Oxford University, 30 August 2021, Accessible at: <https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Exploiting-the-Opportunity-Low-Skilled-Work-Migration-After-Brexit-1.pdf>, p.13

A UK-France YMS would apply to UK and France only. It would not allow UK persons to work in the whole of the EU and, vice versa, would not allow all EU nationals to work in the UK. The fact that France is in the Schengen zone does not mean that UK persons with permission to work in France would also be allowed to work in other countries in the zone.

A UK-France YMS would not be contrary to any rules of EU law. Youth mobility is not a matter which is the subject of harmonisation at a European level. Member States remain competent and can take unilateral commitments vis-à-vis third countries, including the UK. As noted above, individual member states already have youth mobility schemes in place with a variety of different non-EU states.

A YMS can facilitate the exchange of skilled workers<sup>15</sup> and is less open to potential exploitative practices than visa routes which tie the employee to a single employer<sup>16</sup>

A UK-France YMS would be unlikely to result in a flood of unskilled migrants. The application criteria would exclude that possibility by itself. Only self-sufficient, motivated candidates, with an identified opportunity or good prospects of gainful employment are likely to apply. Furthermore, historical data from existing YMS in the UK indicates that applications are generally significantly lower than the agreed quotas:<sup>17</sup>

**Table 5: Youth Mobility Scheme entry clearance visas issued and caps, 2017**

	Places available	2017 visas issued
<b>Australia</b>	34,000	10,500
<b>New Zealand</b>	14,000	3,851
<b>Canada</b>	6,000	3,228
<b>Japan</b>	1,000	1,005
<b>Hong Kong</b>	1,000	1,186
<b>Taiwan</b>	1,000	868
<b>South Korea</b>	1,000	945
<b>Monaco</b>	1,000	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>59,000</b>	<b>21,589</b>

Source: Immigration Rules Appendix G and Home Office Immigration Statistics table vi\_06\_q\_w. Note: entry clearance visas will not always be granted in the same calendar year as applications are submitted or invitations to apply issued, which may account for visa grants being slightly higher or lower than cap level

<sup>15</sup> For example, it has been used by teachers (from outside the EU): **Ref-1**, *Partial review of the Shortage Occupation List*, Migration Advisory Committee, January 2017, Accessible at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/585998/2017\\_01\\_26\\_MAC\\_report\\_teachers\\_SOL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/585998/2017_01_26_MAC_report_teachers_SOL.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> **Ref-11**, Alberti, G., Forder, C., Sumption, M., and Walsh, P. W., *How is the End of Free Movement Affecting the Low-wage Labour Force in the UK?*, The Migration Observatory, Oxford University, 15 August 2022, Accessible at: <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/reports/how-is-the-end-of-free-movement-affecting-the-low-wage-labour-force-in-the-uk/> and **Ref-14**, *MAC Annual Report*, Migration Advisory Committee, December 2022, Accessible at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1123358/Annual\\_Report\\_22\\_Compiled\\_Draft\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1123358/Annual_Report_22_Compiled_Draft_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> **Ref-2**, Fernandez Reino, M., and Sumption M., *Exploiting the Opportunity? Low-Skilled Work Migration After Brexit*, Migration Observatory, Oxford University, 30 August 2018, Accessible at: <https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Exploiting-the-Opportunity-Low-Skilled-Work-Migration-After-Brexit-1.pdf> , p.13

## **Conclusion**

While the UK was part of the EU, there was no need for a Youth Mobility Scheme between the UK and France. Now that the UK has left the EU, while remaining a close neighbour and trading partner with France, there is a natural opportunity and interest in the two countries putting in place an agreement for the benefit of their respective young persons.

There are direct benefits for business identified by the Forum Members.

The Working Group therefore invites the Forum Members to recommend that the UK and France implement a bilateral Youth Mobility Scheme.

## **Annexes**

1. Responses to Questionnaires by Forum Members and others
2. Responses to Questionnaires by individuals
3. Reference documents
4. Existing YMS for the UK and EU Member States

**UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group**

**Annex 1 - Responses to Questionnaires by Forum Members and others**

No.	Date	Company	Page
<b>Forum Members</b>			
1.	18.10.2022	Gleeds France	18
2.	31.10.2022	Veolia	19
3.	02.11.2022	Total Energies	20-22
4.	04.11.2022	HSBC Continental Europe	23-25
5.	04.11.2022	Safran UK Ltd	26-28
6.	07.11.2022	Gide Loyrette Nouel LLP	29-30
7.	08.11.2022	L'Oréal UK	31-32
8.	09.11.2022	Clifford Chance LLP	33-37
9.	14.11.2022	Eurostar	38-39
10.	24.11.2022	British Airways	40-41
11.	10.12.2022	Bouygues	42-43
12.	06.01.2023	Airbus	44-45
<b>Law Firms</b>			
13.	03.11.2022	Linklaters LLP	46-47
14.	08.11.2022	Hogan Lovells LLP	48-49
<b>Others</b>			
15.	09.11.2022	Newland Chase	50-51
16.	08.12.2022	Business France	52-53

## UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group

### Questionnaire

#### 1. YOUR COMPANY

1. Gleeds France is a consultant in project management, quantity surveying, technical due diligence, assessment ESG and phase 1 environmental due diligence. We are part of Gleeds international, parent company based in the UK and presence around the world.

In France we are 32 employees with 27 technical staff and 5 administrative/ financial. We have a Country Director and four heads of departments.

#### 2. CROSS-CHANNEL MOBILITY NEEDS

2. Please describe your company's mobility needs for cross-channel workers:

(i) business meetings/visits – we work with international clients often with offices in UK

(ii) secondments; - we have had internal secondments from our UK offices and also sent people to the UK for secondment

#### 3. THE CURRENT REGIME

3. We have not yet had any issues as it has simply been one or two day visits.

4. Time as appears to take longer to clear customs than before.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

5. It would be helpful to have more flexibility for students so as to not be restricted when they have been on holiday and so the 3 months is reduced.

## **UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group**

### **Questionnaire**

#### **1. YOUR COMPANY**

1. Please describe your company and the sector(s) in which you operate. Our company, Veolia, operates globally in the Water, Waste and Energy sectors, providing sustainable solution to business and private sector clients
2. Please provide an overview of your company structure and workforce. Or organisation is split into Waste (Treatment, Municipal), Commercial, Water and Energy, along with corporate functions (IS&T, Finance, HR, Legal, Marketing etc) reporting into a Northern Europe executive committee. The workforce in the UK and Ireland consists of 9000 operatives and 4000 staff.

#### **2. CROSS-CHANNEL MOBILITY NEEDS**

3. Please describe your company's mobility needs for cross-channel workers:
  - (i) business meetings/visits; Occasional visits required between corporate functions
  - (ii) secondments; N/A
  - (iii) interns and trainees. N/A

#### **3. THE CURRENT REGIME**

4. Please describe your company's experience of moving workers between France and the UK in the current visa framework. Post Brexit we have seen a decrease in mobility between France and the UK due to EU citizens now required to have visas to work in the UK if they are not a settled worker or do not otherwise have immigration permission to work in the UK
5. Please describe any impact you may have observed in terms of time, cost, or loss of opportunity. Due to the length of time it takes to sponsor an employee and the costs associated that would be borne by the business unit, this can sometimes put a block on managers wishing to recruit outside of the UK.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. Would you like to offer any recommendations to improve the current visa regime / process? To enable the organisation to recruit more overseas workers, additional funds need to be made available to increase the number of sponsorship licences we hold.
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## UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group

### Questionnaire

#### 1. YOUR COMPANY

1. Please describe your company and the sector(s) in which you operate.

TotalEnergies operate in the UK energy industry with a presence in the renewables sector;

TotalEnergies E&P UK Ltd – Exploration & Production

TotalEnergies Renewables UK Ltd – Renewables

TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd – Gas & Power

TotalEnergies Marketing UK – Marketing

2. Please provide an overview of your company structure and workforce.

TotalEnergies E&P UK Ltd – Exploration & Production

- Over 850 employees & contractors covering various disciplines (Engineering, HSE, Legal, Onshore support functions incl HR, Finance, Strategy Business & Offshore operations both on and offshore locations in UK Continental Shelf).

TotalEnergies Renewables UK Ltd – Renewables

- 44 employees covering various project teams (technical disciplines, Consents, Wind Energy Yield, Metocean, Development) Engineering, HSE, Legal, onshore support functions.

TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd – Gas & Power

- 550 employees covering various disciplines - Sales, Customer Service, Commercial, Support functions IT, HR, Legal & Compliance, Finance, office services.

TotalEnergies Marketing UK Ltd – Marketing

- 210 Employees. Bitumen & Lubricants production, sales, distribution support functions - HSE/HR/Legal/Finance/Marketing & Comms. Aviation sales. Special Fluids sales.

TotalEnergies Charging Solutions UK Ltd

- 30 Employees - EV charging points installation, sales & retail invoicing & management  
AS24- 11 unmanned fuelling stations for HGV & toll & other logistics business service.

#### 2. CROSS-CHANNEL MOBILITY NEEDS

3. Please describe your company's mobility needs for cross-channel workers:

- (i) business meetings/visits;

We have regular Business Visitors travelling to and from the UK and France to attend meetings and carry out short-term visits. Adhering to Government guidelines in the respect

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of Business Visitors to UK. For British business visitors travelling to France we seek our travel providers and our colleagues in HQ in France' support to ensure we adhere to immigration guidelines in France.

(ii) secondments

Our assignments are managed by our Global employment company under formal Expatriate terms & conditions. Regular commuters between Paris & London on company projects. Larger population of residential assignees based in Aberdeen from Paris & Pau.

(iii) interns and trainees.

Our company's requirements for Le Volontariat international en Entreprise (VIE) programme remains unchanged. However, the current UK immigration rules post Brexit restrict this route for the time being. Resolution required for this.

- Youth Mobility Scheme. We continue to await expansion of this to French (and other) Nationals.
- Or other resolutions

Trainees with British Citizenship travelling to France apply for a training visa by the French Authorities, with the support of our Colleagues in Paris to ensure compliance.

**3. THE CURRENT REGIME**

4. Please describe your company's experience of moving workers between France and the UK in the current visa framework.

For assignees coming to the UK - apply for suitable visas in line with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) for the appropriate immigration route. Support provided by our Immigration Advisors to ensure efficient processing to maximise the success of application. Global Business Mobility Visas and Skilled Worker Visas are the visa applications we typically make. Experience so far has been smooth in terms of application, standard processing times can take approx. 6-8 weeks. Priority services have recently been reinstated.

For assignees travelling to France from the UK – we support our Internal Immigration Advisors based in France with the application process with the support of an external agent. Smooth process from our side and waiting times can be approx.. 6 weeks.

5. Please describe any impact you may have observed in terms of time, cost, or loss of opportunity.

Time is the biggest impact we have experienced around immigration processes and of course post Brexit this now incurs a significant cost which we didn't have before. As a company we try our best to avoid loss of opportunity and to date this has not impacted us. We have, where practically possible to do so and in line with the relevant guidelines, implemented short term remote working arrangements between affiliates to ensure loss of opportunity does not happen.

#### 4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. Would you like to offer any recommendations to improve the current visa regime / process?

Le Volontariat international en Entreprise (VIE) programme. Continued lobbying by French Government and organisations in UK to illustrate the impact of this route to include further nationalities including many EU nationalities in the eligibly criteria for the Youth Mobility Scheme visa category. This is available to those aged 18-30 who want to live and work in UK for up to 2 years, post graduate. This has been under discussion for over a year with no change to the immigration rules.

- Youth Mobility Scheme. We continue to await expansion of this to French (and other) Nationals.
- Or other resolutions

**UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group**

**Questionnaire**

**1. YOUR COMPANY**

1. Please describe your company and the sector(s) in which you operate.

*HSBC is one of the first financial group in the world. It proposes to more than 39 Million clients the following services: retail banking, commercial banking, financial banking and private banking for wealth management. The network covers more than 66 countries in Europe, Asia, Middle East, Africa and Americas. Mentioned in the London, Hong-Kong, New York, Paris and Bermudes stock exchanges HSBC shares are hold by more than 200 000 people in 130 countries and territories.*

*HSBC wants to gather people, ideas and capitals that are aiming for progress as well as gross while contributing to a better world for clients, collaborators, investors, communities.*

2. Please provide an overview of your company structure and workforce.

*Our company's structured as followed:*

*Global Banking Markets*

*Commercial Banking*

*Retail Banking*

*Global Functions*

**2. CROSS-CHANNEL MOBILITY NEEDS**

3. Please describe your company's mobility needs for cross-channel workers:

*(i) business meetings/visits; 130 in 2021, 445 in 2022*

*(ii) secondments; 43 in 2021 - 25 in 2022*

*(iii) interns and trainees.0 in 2021 – 1 in 2022*

**3. THE CURRENT REGIME**

4. Please describe your company's experience of moving workers between France and the UK in the current visa framework.

*Within the current Visa framework, our company regularly moves workers from the UK to France. Most of them are within an intra group mobility and the global experience is good.*

*However, the process might be sometimes too long and the requested steps to be completed are difficult to achieve without our provider's help.*

5. Please describe any impact you may have observed in terms of time, cost, or loss of opportunity.

*We have not observed any impact in term of loss of opportunity as most of our attended collaborators have been able to join France when needed.*

*However, as of the process' length we have had to sometimes delay the arrival date which impacted the business.*

*Nevertheless, the costs are reasonable.*

**4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. Would you like to offer any recommendations to improve the current visa regime / process?

*We thought about the following points as recommendations:*

- *Possibility to add a payment option in order to obtain a quicker and preferential treatment for any urgent business needs. This will avoid any operational risk.*
- *Currently the immigration process has 2 steps, ie the initial visa request in the country of origin and then, the resident permit request in France. It would be more efficient if the visa would be issued for the whole period of stay even if the person arrives in France for more than 12 months.*
- *In peak period, obtaining an appointment with the consulate can be sometimes too long, ie several weeks.*
- *After the arrival of the employee, the following process appears:*
  1. Obtaining the resident permit can be long, the required documents are hard to gather (proof of address, necessary to submit the resident permit request, school certificate and so on)
  2. Consequently, it will be great to explore some options with the prefecture to speed up the process
- *With the new platform (ANEF), it is mandatory for the main employee to request its own resident permit before his/her whole family can do the same. According to our experience, the family Visa expires at the moment when the resident permit claim can be*

*submitted. Also, during this period, the family cannot travel abroad which is impacting for the employee and his family.*

- *The French Immigration Office (OFII), needs to report the employee's name for any statement. However, penalties will apply and it will be difficult to identify the assignee's name. It will be very useful for the company to obtain contact numbers instead of an e-mail address, particularly when large amounts are due.*

**UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group**

**Questionnaire**

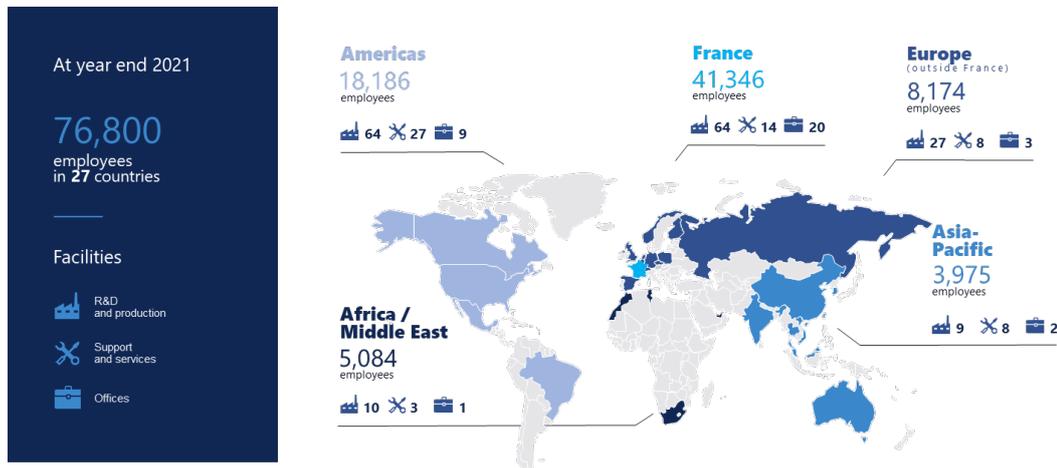
**1. YOUR COMPANY – SAFRAN UK SITES**

1. Please describe your company and the sector(s) in which you operate.

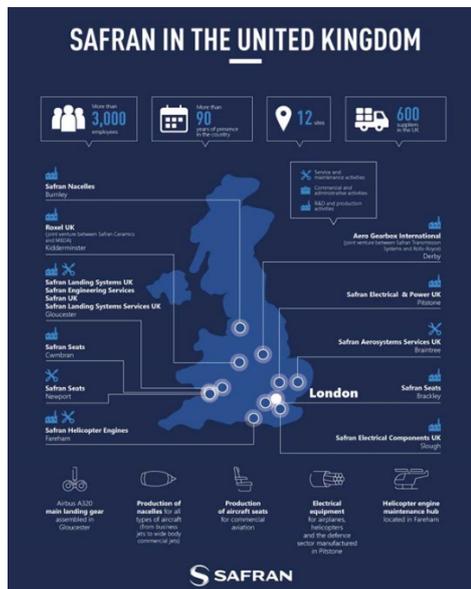
Safran is a French owned Aerospace company. The company has divisions in Aircraft Propulsion, Aircraft Equipment, Aircraft Interiors, and Defence & Space. The group has employees in 27 countries around the world and employed 76,800 people at the end of 2021. Outside of France, the UK is the largest part of the Group in Europe, employee over 3,000 people in 12 businesses across the UK. The history of the UK sites and businesses goes back over 90 years.

2. Please provide an overview of your company structure and workforce.

Below is a map of the Safran global workforce



Below is a map of the UK showing the UK sites



2. **CROSS-CHANNEL MOBILITY NEEDS**

3. Please describe your company's mobility needs for cross-channel workers:

- (i) business meetings/visits; The UK sites report into the divisional companies with the head office being in Paris, France. Hence, there are regular, as well as adhoc internal business reviews and site visits/ cascades. We also have a global customer base, which require business meetings in support of the customer programs.
- (ii) secondments; As part of the business Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy, and in support of diversity, Safran supports the mobility of its employees to develop skills and experience. The interaction between different cultures and backgrounds, supports innovation as well as the development of the individuals and the business. Safran therefore has international secondments both into the UK and out of the UK for internships, graduate and VIE development, particularly projects, and business roles (in some cases individuals/ families may move on an expat visa and then decide to apply for a longer residence).
- (iii) interns and trainees. Safran has a learning and development centre in Paris, France (Safran University) to support internal training and development. In addition we support Student Internships, and Graduate placements both into and out of the UK as well as the French VIE scheme.

3. **THE CURRENT REGIME**

4. Please describe your company's experience of moving workers between France and the UK in the current visa framework.

Safran utilises the Skilled Worker and Global Business Mobility visa routes for formal secondments. Safran has worked with third party government approved sponsors under the GAE Temporary visa route for UK internships and the VIE scheme.

Safran has utilised ICT and Talent visas for UK workers seconded to Safran in France.

Safran must now also carefully monitor Business Travellers to France against the 90 days Schengen rule.

5. Please describe any impact you may have observed in terms of time, cost, or loss of opportunity.

The UK visa application process has faced severe delays in 2022, partly due to the impact of the war in Ukraine and the suspension of the priority service, but also because of the increased volume following Brexit and the available caseworkers at the UK immigration office.

It is not possible to track the status of a visa application once submitted, which often means uncertainty on the arrival date given the delays that the individuals face.

The costs associated with sponsorships under Skilled Worker and GBM routes have meant that some short-term projects have not ultimately been transferred to the UK due to the limited ability to scale up the resource with high visas costs and time delays.

The administration and business resource involved with the sponsorship process under a GAE visa in particular is disproportionate to the amount of the time and resource with respect to the short term the interns spend in the UK with Safran. This has meant the level of internship opportunities has decreased.

There are often delays in obtaining visa appointments at the French embassy, where this is required on an urgent basis. However in general, French visas for UK workers are significantly cheaper than UK visas for French workers.

#### 4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### 6. Would you like to offer any recommendations to improve the current visa regime / process?

We are using the GAE visa for VIE students from France to the UK. This is now more expensive and also is limited to one year. In addition we cannot offer internships for French workers unless they are on a degree level course or recently graduated. This places a restriction on placements for apprentices.

It would be quicker and cheaper if Safran were able to sponsor GAE visas directly, instead of having to engage with external government approved sponsors. This would benefit both VIEs and Internships.

An extension to 2 years visas for young professional under a GAE visa would make the application more useful. For example, this could work similar to a Youth Mobility visa which other nationalities are currently able to utilise in the UK.

Some frequent travellers to France, who hold a French visa, face delays at border control at the French airports as they must enter the non-EU channel. This often means queuing for 1-2 hours at peak times each week to pass through as there is no priority lane for low cost airline traveller.

The costs under the GBM visa need to be reduced for at least Senior Specialist workers as when you consider that these individuals often bring their families with them to the UK, the total costs from the application, IMS, NHS charges are very high. These individuals contribute a considerable amount in taxes to the UK economy, development of the business in the UK and do not rely on public benefits.

Some of the minimum salary thresholds connected to the skilled worker visa are not benchmarked appropriately to all regions of the UK and all industries. It may be useful to have a London salary threshold vs regional salary thresholds.

## UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group

### Questionnaire

#### 1. YOUR COMPANY

1. Please describe your company and the sector(s) in which you operate.

*Gide Loyrette Nouel is an international law firm with 500 lawyers practising in 11 offices worldwide.*

*In London, we practice principally in the areas of Dispute Resolution, Finance, Tax, Energy and Infrastructure. We cover English and French law and have a mixture of French, UK and other nationals on the staff.*

2. Please provide an overview of your company structure and workforce.

*In London, Gide Loyrette Nouel LLP is a limited liability partnership with a total of 41 staff currently, comprising 7 Partners, 5 Counsel, 11 Associates, 5 Trainee Solicitors, 4 Stagiaires and 9 Support Staff.*

*In Paris, Gide Loyrette Nouel AARPI has 89 Partners, 39 Counsel, 236 Associates, 70 Stagiaires and approx. 200 Support Staff*

#### 2. CROSS-CHANNEL MOBILITY NEEDS

3. Please describe your company's mobility needs for cross-channel workers:

(i) business meetings/visits; *We often need to attend business meetings with clients in France, and French colleagues often have to do the same in the UK; we also have occasional social events which are necessary to maintain cohesion throughout our network. We have been advised that there are no visa requirements for such attendance.*

(ii) secondments; *We have in the past seconded UK based lawyers to clients in France and vice versa but not since Brexit. We regularly transfer French avocats to the London office and English solicitors to Paris, generally for business or career development, but sometimes for personal reasons. These transfers generally last anything between 6 months and several years; consequently we usually apply for a five year visa, which adds to the expense but at least avoids having to repeat the application process in a shorter period.*

*Visas typically take 8-10 weeks to obtain and fees are between £3,900 for 6 months and £ 12,500 for 5 years*

(iii) interns and trainees. *We send UK solicitor trainees to Paris for six months' training, which requires a visa; [this is handled by our colleagues in Paris, can we please describe the process (ask Paris if necessary). We also recruit 6-8 French stagiaires per year for 6 month*

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*internships in London. We need to request a Certificate of Sponsorship for each student before they can apply for a UK visa themselves.*

*The French visa process for interns takes around 2 months and costs around £280; The UK visas for stagiaires take approximately 4 weeks and cost £ 1000 .*

*We have in the past hired French interns under the Volontariat International en Entreprise (VIE) programme, but we have not had any applications since the programme was suspended during COVID, so we have no current experience of obtaining visas for it but we understand it is problematic.*

### **THE CURRENT REGIME**

4. Please describe your company's experience of moving workers between France and the UK in the current visa framework. *We use a service provider, GTI intern visa, to obtain the Certificates of Sponsorship, and an external adviser, Newland Chase, to handle the visa applications; this adds to the cost but is unavoidable. We have successfully obtained group status for the AARPI and LLP, so that transfers between London and Paris qualify as intragroup, which eliminates the requirement for a language test.*
5. Please describe any impact you may have observed in terms of time, cost, or loss of opportunity. *The process of obtaining visas is not cheap, uses up management time and often delays the arrival of the lawyer, especially if there are family members involved. These delays are inefficient from a business perspective and personally unsettling for the individuals and families involved. Spontaneity is lost and we cannot move staff as soon as required in the event of an immediate need. There are also compliance concerns where lawyers are making regular visits to another office without actually relocating.*

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. Would you like to offer any recommendations to improve the current visa regime / process?

*Anything that could be done to simplify the process and reduce time and cost would be helpful.*

*A Youth Mobility Agreement between France and the UK would allow young candidates / secondees to apply for the visa themselves which would widen the pool of candidates and remove a considerable burden for us seconding or recruiting young lawyers.*

## UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group

### Questionnaire

#### 1. YOUR COMPANY

1. Please describe your company and the sector(s) in which you operate.

Established in 1932, L’Oreal UK and Ireland is the leading beauty player in the market, with 30+ leading brands across cosmetics, skincare, haircare and fragrance.

2. Please provide an overview of your company structure and workforce.

With more than 3000 employees in UK and Ireland, our 30+ brands are present in all retail channels including boutiques, department stores, grocery, hair salons, pharmacies, medispas, travel retail and e-commerce.

#### 2. CROSS-CHANNEL MOBILITY NEEDS

3. Please describe your company's mobility needs for cross-channel workers:

- (i) business meetings/visits;

We still have regular Business trips between France and the UK for business meetings or short-term visits. For both ways, our Business visitors check with our travel and immigration providers to ensure we adhere to immigration guidelines in France.

- (ii) secondments;

Our Global Assignment are managed directly by the Corporate Mobility Team in Paris who ensure our international assignees are provided with an immigration service (provided by our immigration lawyer).

- (iii) interns and trainees.

We have some VIE contracts in Ireland.

#### 3. THE CURRENT REGIME

4. Please describe your company's experience of moving workers between France and the UK in the current visa framework.

All of our employees moving between France and the UK are supported by our Immigration lawyers in France and in the UK. Sometimes, the process could be long, especially when from France to the UK – postponed sometimes for a proof of English Proficiency – but generally speaking, it doesn't exceed two months.

5. Please describe any impact you may have observed in terms of time, cost, or loss of opportunity.

The most important impact is in our way to manage our Human Resources function as we absolutely need to include these 2 months delay in our population management and in the turnover on the positions, what could be an issue in case of emergency for certain functions.

As a result we are not taking as many young European nationals as we would expect because of the visa costs and delays

4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. Would you like to offer any recommendations to improve the current visa regime / process?

**De :** [REECE Rupert](#)  
**A :** [pearn james.](#)  
**Cc :** [POLLARD Charlotte](#)  
**Objet :** Fwd: Franco-British Business Forum  
**Date :** mercredi 9 novembre 2022 12:25:59  
**Pièces jointes :** [Webinar\\_UK\\_25\\_10\\_2022.pptx\\_1\\_.pdf](#)

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**Rupert Reece**

Barrister | Partner

Avocat au Barreau de Paris

**GIDE LOYRETTE NOUEL LLP**

125 Old Broad Street | London EC2N 1AR | United Kingdom

T +44 (0)20 7382 5757 | M +44 (0) 78 5200-6832

reece@gide.com | [gide.com](http://gide.com)

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** jonathan.lewis@cliffordchance.com  
**Date:** 9 November 2022 at 11:23:51 GMT  
**To:** REECE Rupert <REECE@gide.com>  
**Subject:** FW: Franco-British Business Forum

Good morning,

With my excuses for the late reply please find below a note prepared by our DRH team.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of the changes we have seen and experienced since Brexit in terms of our HR processes where issues are causing friction, delays or costs :

<b>Trainee solicitor, lawyer secondment or Business Trip:</b>	<b>Interns (stagiaire support)</b>	<b>Paris Bar</b>
<p><u>From France to UK :</u></p> <p>-</p> <p>There is generally no issue with the production of visas for French nationals to work in the UK, apart from the recent delay problems experienced. However, the home office appears to have reinstated the 5 processing day fast track</p>	<p><u>From France to UK :</u></p> <p>-</p> <p>London regularly offer visas to non-British trainee lawyers so it is generally not a problem from their side.</p> <p>However, EU students have to obtain a new Visa (Graduate trainee) which is integrated into the "Global Business Mobility Visa".</p> <p>There is 1 further visa : the</p>	<p>Unfortunately, since 2020, the Paris Bar no longer treats UK qualified solicitors as "avocat communautaire".</p> <p>The process has not been shortened but they must now be registered as foreign legal consultants with the Paris Bar (we had 1 case last year and 2</p>

service for Europeans which was suspended for a while.

Once the visa application has been submitted, the secondnee cannot enter the UK during the processing period – if they do so then the visa application is automatically cancelled. Therefore if any trips to the UK are planned, they need to be completed prior to the application being made.

For business trips, people just need a specific invitation letter to go to the UK for some time.

As always, if a visa holder is required to work at a client's office rather than at CC London, the client secondment role would need to meet the requirements set out by the UK home office to be eligible otherwise it cannot proceed.

There have been some changes as far as visas for posted workers are concerned :

There is a new visa called "Global Business Mobility Visa" : this macro-group contains 5 specific types of visa which are applicable to different kinds of workers:

1. Senior or Specialist Worker (which replaces the ICT

High Potential individual visa which applies to people who have studied in a renowned university across the globe . To apply, they must have been awarded a qualification by an eligible university in the last 5 years.

#### From UK to France:

- Students studying/working abroad as part of their degree are no longer eligible for Erasmus funding, which has led to a decline in the number of UK students choosing to spend time in the EU.
- The visa application process for students takes a long time (between 4 to 7 months) and there are lots of important documents needed.
- Moreover, to be able to obtain a visa, UK students need to have their internship agreement validated by the Ministry (DREETS), which takes a very long time too. It is the Employer duty to send the documentation to the Ministry.
- Securing accommodation in France is also challenging. In order

are ongoing).

Another distinction is their accession to the title of "avocat à la cour". As in other European countries, solicitors have been able to pass the Article 99 examinations to take the oath.

As of 2020, solicitors who wish to become "avocat à la cour" must now pass Article 100, which is a more difficult examination.

visa for temporary work assignments in the UK)

2. Graduate trainee
3. UK expansion worker
4. Secondment worker
5. Service Supplier

A significant fact about the Global Business Mobility Visa and its different types is the fact that the applicant will need a sponsorship to obtain the visa. To obtain any one of the new Global Business Mobility visas, a migrant worker will need to be sponsored by a Home Office approved license-holder, authorized to sponsor the specific category of worker in question. In order to be able to sponsor an individual, the firm needs to apply for a license.

As far as timing is concerned, for a Senior or Specialist Worker visa : you can apply for a visa up to 3 months before the day you are due to start your working period in the UK. After a person has applied online, proved their identity and provided the documents the applicant will receive a decision within : 3 weeks if the person is outside the UK, 8 weeks if the person is already in the UK.

to obtain a visa, proof of a signed accommodation contract and a French address is required. However, many rental agencies refuse to allow students to sign a lease without having a valid residence permit first which leads to a lot of back and forth communication between the agency and the consulate and creates unnecessary delays.

From UK to France:

-

*Trainee solicitors:*

British citizens must now apply for a **residence permit** with the usual "Seconded ICT employee".

This process requires an immigration consultant and could take 2 to 3 months in general.

Additional cost :  
approximately €2,000 per case.

Before Brexit, the usual "ICT secondee" was sufficient. We are therefore faced with a very long and complex immigration process and de facto additional costs for the company.

*Salaried lawyer in a local contract:*

British citizens must now also apply for a **residence permit** and a 'Passeport talent' which should take approximately 3 to 6 months.

Additional cost :  
approximately €3,000 per case.

Overall, it is clear that the problems encountered are related to immigration procedures that take much longer for all concerned.

These procedures have also resulted in higher costs for the Paris office for example.

On the side of our ordinal institutions, we now have foreign legal consultants and different examination procedures to become 'avocat à la cour'.

As a result of these lengthy procedures, UK students and employees willing to

relocate to France risk suffering greater barriers against as compared with European candidates that can start a new job immediately after their interview. In the long term this might have a negative impact on British citizens as far as equal opportunities in the job market are concerned.

We attended a webinar with France Immigration about the main changes for visas and mobility from the EU to the UK and have attached their presentation.

Many thanks,

Thomas

**Thomas Tollet**

HR Manager

Clifford Chance Europe LLP

1 rue d'Astorg, CS 60058, 75377 Paris Cedex 08

Ligne directe : +33 (0)1 44 05 59 88

Standard : +33 (0)1 44 05 52 52

[thomas.tollet@cliffordchance.com](mailto:thomas.tollet@cliffordchance.com)

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## UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group

### Questionnaire

#### 1. YOUR COMPANY

1. Please describe your company and the sector(s) in which you operate.

Eurostar International Ltd is the high-speed passenger train operator linking London to Continental Europe.

2. Please provide an overview of your company structure and workforce.

Eurostar is headquartered in London but has a footprint in France and Belgium. It has approximately 1100 UK-based employees, 200 employees based in our Paris offices and 10 in Belgium. Another 300 staff members, mainly train drivers and station/on-board crew, are on secondment from SNCF and SNCB (Belgium).

#### 2. CROSS-CHANNEL MOBILITY NEEDS

3. Please describe your company's mobility needs for cross-channel workers:

- (i) business meetings/visits;

Frequent travel for the ExCo and the senior management team

- (ii) secondments;

They are arranged in each country of operation. No cross-Channel mobility needs involved.

- (iii) interns and trainees.

Same

#### 3. THE CURRENT REGIME

4. Please describe your company's experience of moving workers between France and the UK in the current visa framework.

We had to arrange work permits for our new ExCo members (BE / FR – UK), this worked well. Smooth, efficient processes allowing the ExCo member to operate fully in their roles, across borders from Sept 2022.

We have not used our sponsorship license to move any other current employees or hire new colleagues, instead often moving the vacancy to secure the best candidate. But this is a short-term strategy. In the future we may look to rely on internal mobility across territories.

In the future, we expect few employees will require a work permit in order to fulfil their roles.

5. Please describe any impact you may have observed in terms of time, cost, or loss of opportunity.

We have an internal consideration regarding the creation of an International Mobility Policy and the resources to be dedicated to this.

**4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. Would you like to offer any recommendations to improve the current visa regime / process?

No specific recommendation

## UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group

### Questionnaire

#### 1. YOUR COMPANY

1. Please describe your company and the sector(s) in which you operate. BA is part of the IAG group. It is a transportation sector company – Airline for both passengers and cargo.
2. Please provide an overview of your company structure and workforce. Functional Directorates with c32000 BA direct employees

#### 2. CROSS-CHANNEL MOBILITY NEEDS

3. Please describe your company's mobility needs for cross-channel workers:

(i) business meetings/visits;

(ii) secondments;

We have one employee on assignment to France currently. The Reward department manages several assignments across the company. Immigration support for France is handled by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party supplier.

(iii) interns and trainees.

#### 3. THE CURRENT REGIME

4. Please describe your company's experience of moving workers between France and the UK in the current visa framework.

We have seen a significant decrease in mobility between the UK and EU since Brexit. We currently have only one employee on assignment in France. The initial application for a work visa was a difficult process and it took 5 months for the visa to be finalised. The subsequent application for a work permit extension has also taken around 3 months to complete.

5. Please describe any impact you may have observed in terms of time, cost, or loss of opportunity.

Since Brexit, the cost of obtaining a work visa for a UK national has gone up dramatically due to the time and effort required to get the paperwork ready. This has created a block on managers who want to send employees on assignment.

**4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. Would you like to offer any recommendations to improve the current visa regime / process?

Have a process in place that doesn't require documents with a wet signature and less paperwork overall.

## UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group

### Questionnaire

#### 1. YOUR COMPANY

##### **Please describe your company and the sector(s) in which you operate**

Bouygues UK is one of the country's leading construction companies. We focus on sectors where we can add value through our technical expertise, skills and experience both here in the UK and within the wider global Bouygues Group.

These sectors include residential (social housing, private rented sector, private for sale homes, student accommodation), education (ranging from nursery schools through to higher education) and healthcare as well as technically complex projects across sectors where the company's expertise can be maximised.

Our business comprises three distinct Brands : Bouygues UK, Linkcity UK and Uliving. With approximately 800 employees, we operate across the South West and Wales as well as London and the South East from different offices and numerous construction sites.

##### **Please provide an overview of your company structure and workforce.**

BYUK employs eight hundred employees of which the majority are technical and engineering specialists. Only a small percentage of our employees are site-based operatives.

Bouygues UK operates across England and Wales, from Birmingham to Bristol, Cardiff Cambridge and many points in between. Our Head Office is based in central London at Becket House with a number of regional offices. Our Finance Team is based in Haywards Heath. We have two Regional Business Units (BUs): Region 1 - South West & Wales/ North & Midlands Region 2 – London South East. Both BUs cover our core sectors of Residential, Education and Healthcare and deliver projects of varying size and complexity depending on the needs of our clients.

#### 2. CROSS-CHANNEL MOBILITY NEEDS

##### **Please describe your company's mobility needs for cross-channel workers:**

##### **(i) business meetings/visits**

Given that the Head Office of Bouygues Construction is in Paris, there are regular visits from both sides for business purposes.

**(ii) secondments**

Due to technical complexities of our projects in the UK and limited UK talent pool, the business regularly seconds highly skilled employees from across the Bouygues Group to the UK.

**(iii) interns and trainees**

Due to the company having French origins, we make a commitment to accept a number of interns and trainees from France every year.

**3. THE CURRENT REGIME**

**Please describe your company's experience of moving workers between France and the UK in the current visa framework.**

Since Brexit, the challenges and complexity of bringing workers to the UK have increased dramatically both in terms of cost, time and administration. Therefore, we have recently engaged a visa specialist to support the company with this process.

**Please describe any impact you may have observed in terms of time, cost, or loss of opportunity.**

As above – on average a visa application is now up to 12 weeks and costs much more. For trainee and intern positions, we are now only able to take a limited number of applications per year.

**4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Would you like to offer any recommendations to improve the current visa regime / process?**

We are of the view that any improvement to speed up the process as well as reducing the increased administrative complexity and cost would be appreciated.

## 1.1 UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group

### 1.2 Questionnaire

#### 2. **AIRBUS**

1. Airbus is a global pioneer in the aerospace industry, operating in the commercial aircraft, helicopters, defence and space sectors.
2. Airbus is a leader in designing, manufacturing and delivering aerospace products, services and solutions to customers on a worldwide scale. With around 130,000 employees and as the largest aeronautics and space company in Europe and a worldwide leader, Airbus is at the forefront of the aviation industry. We build the most innovative commercial aircraft and consistently capture about half of all commercial airliner orders. Thanks to our deep understanding of changing market needs, customer focus and technological innovation, we offer products that connect people and places via air and space.

#### 3. **CROSS-CHANNEL MOBILITY NEEDS**

Airbus has a fully-integrated production line in multiple EU nations in the aircraft, satellites, defence and helicopter business lines. Pre-Brexit, an average of 80,000 business trips were made each year between the UK and the EU-27, with 1,900 staff on 'cross-channel' expatriation contracts.

Airbus' contracting model facilitates all sales through the Airbus SE (Netherlands) legal entity meaning Airbus national legal entities are essentially suppliers of parts of aircraft. As our employees in each home country are not part of the commercial contract, they cannot work in France/Germany/Spain without a work permit, work visa or any other notification/permission process.

Airbus UK skilled employees need to be able to move across borders at short notice to fix issues that emerge in our Final Assembly Lines in France/Germany/Spain, whether that be on wing or satellite payload integration or to support customers in service aircraft which are required to be repaired or modified. Post-Brexit visas are required for all employees travelling from the UK to EU-27. Airbus has defined seven 'traveller types' each requiring a different visa process in each EU country. For certain types of visits from the UK to Europe, Airbus is faced with an unbelievably complex, bureaucratic process that can take many weeks to secure the appropriate paperwork to allow UK Airbus employees to work in Germany, Spain and France.

3. Please describe your company's mobility needs for cross-channel workers:
  - (i) business meetings/visits;
  - (ii) secondments;
  - (iii) interns and trainees.

Our people move back and forth across the channel regularly for meetings, training and visits.

Some of our early careers population will have an opportunity to undertake short term placements in other sites, particularly from the UK to Toulouse, as part of their development. People also relocate into new roles in other countries. Airbus therefore needs a swift, simple and cost effective regime that will ensure that our talent can move around as easily as possible. As well as the list above I would also add working parties that need to be deployed quickly to support another Airbus team/department or a customer - where it's an urgent requirement to move people across the channel and elsewhere, it's important that we can be responsive to short notice issues.

#### **4. THE CURRENT REGIME**

4. Please describe your company's experience of moving workers between France and the UK in the current visa framework.
5. Please describe any impact you may have observed in terms of time, cost, or loss of opportunity.

Currently we are not experiencing any significant barriers for short term (less than 90 days) UK entry routes.

The main difficulties we are facing are those for long term visa routes with the time taken for visa processing into the UK. The process of obtaining a visa cant take a number of weeks and be difficult to manage, particularly when there is urgency to the need for travel.

Overall, this has had a negative impact on recruiting and finding talent. This has been experienced for both blue and white-collar workers irrespective of whether they are from the UK or not.

In summary, we used to be able to recruit from the EU relatively easily pre-Brexit and this was very useful as a good source of candidates for our hard to fill roles such as Licensed Engineers.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. Would you like to offer any recommendations to improve the current visa regime / process?

Option for a fast track system for short notice visa requirements particularly for working parties involved in trouble shooting for customers ie engineering and MRO.

## UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group

### Questionnaire

#### 1. YOUR COMPANY

1. Please describe your company and the sector(s) in which you operate.

Linklaters LLP is a leading global law firm, supporting and investing in the future of our clients wherever they do business. We are present in 20 countries, and our 2800+ lawyers assist clients from all sectors.

2. Please provide an overview of your company structure and workforce.

Linklaters was founded in 1838 in London, where our headquarter is still located. Located in our 30 offices across the globe, our 5 300 staff - including 2 300 lawyers and 500 partners – support clients from all sectors, and in all business law areas.

#### 2. CROSS-CHANNEL MOBILITY NEEDS

3. Please describe your company's mobility needs for cross-channel workers:

- (i) business meetings/visits;

There are quite a lot of business meetings/ visits between our London office (our HQ) and our Paris office (an important office in our network), mostly for lawyers and partners. These would include internal meetings, trainings, and meetings with clients.

- (ii) secondments;

We operate between 5 to 10 secondments a year, at all levels of seniority, for durations ranging from 6 months to 24 months.

- (iii) interns and trainees.

In Paris, we hire our interns locally; as part of our rotational programme, we welcome in Paris a few trainees hired by our London office for 6-month secondments (see point above).

#### 3. THE CURRENT REGIME

4. Please describe your company's experience of moving workers between France and the UK in the current visa framework.

From France to the UK: the UK visa system has been changed recently and is reasonably quick and efficient with the qualifying criteria being clearly set out therefore mitigating the risk of visa refusals.

From the UK to France: in contrast to pre-Brexit Free Movement Rights it doesn't fare favourably either in terms of ease of mobility, timing or costs for a global law firm like ourselves

5. Please describe any impact you may have observed in terms of time, cost, or loss of opportunity.

Completing immigration processes is time consuming, although our staff is supported by immigration specialists and we have an expert in-house global mobility team.

In France, our profession is regulated; we are obviously not able anymore to use the EU Directive 98 for England & Wales qualified lawyers, which offered the possibility to operate as a fully-fledged lawyer immediately in France, subject to a rather light administrative procedure.

Currently, E&W qualified lawyers wishing to work in France need to obtain Foreign Legal Consultant status from the Paris Bar; under this status, they can operate only in E&W law. It can take several months to obtain such status and temporary status must be renewed annually. To be able to operate as a fully-fledged lawyer "Avocat à la Cour", the E&W qualified lawyers need to take article 100 exam, like any other third-country lawyer; this exam requires quite a lot of preparation.

France qualified lawyers willing to operate from the UK can do so immediately, under certain limitations - they cannot use the title "Solicitor", cannot complete any of the reserved legal activities and must be supervised when advising in E&W law; they can take the SQE exams to become fully-fledged E&W qualified lawyers.

4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. Would you like to offer any recommendations to improve the current visa regime / process?

It is not so much the visa regime that would need to be improved – but the specific point of our regulated profession.

## UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group

### Questionnaire

#### A. YOUR COMPANY

1. Please describe your company and the sector(s) in which you operate :

*Hogan Lovells advises global corporations from a range of sectors on issues relating to: corporate, finance, litigation, regulatory and IP law.*

2. Please provide an overview of your company structure and workforce :

*Hogan Lovells Paris is one of our 50 offices worldwide. Around 180 lawyers work in Paris, in all our practice groups. We also have 150 members of staff and interns for a headcount of 330 people overall.*

#### B. CROSS-CHANNEL MOBILITY NEEDS

3. Please describe your company's mobility needs for cross-channel workers:

(i) business meetings/visits : *occasional visits – staff and lawyers*

(ii) secondments : *4 each year*

(iii) interns and trainees : *occasionally*

#### C. THE CURRENT REGIME

4. Please describe your company's experience of moving workers between France and the UK in the current visa framework :

*Some of our interns in Paris used to spend part of their internship at the London office as part of the Paris-London Program. Initially, we were forced to stop because this practice because of COVID. However, owing to EU citizens now being required to have a visa to work in the UK, we decided not to re-start the program. Specifically, we found that the cost of the Visas were too expensive (i.e. in the EUR 1000s) and in any case they were difficult to guarantee.*

*We do still receive interns from the London office who are able to spend 6 months in Paris. We are unable to comment hugely on this process given that the administration is undertaken by the*

*London office; however, we can say that it seems easier to obtain a Visa to come to Paris from London than vice-versa.*

5. Please describe any impact you may have observed in terms of time, cost, or loss of opportunity:

*The Paris-London program was known by candidates who were keen to apply for an internship at Hogan Lovells Paris, but we have had to publicise that the program no longer exists.*

**D. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. Would you like to offer any recommendations to improve the current visa regime / process?

*There should be mechanisms in place such that short/medium-term intra-company cross-Channel transfers can take place without a Visa (or alternatively, the process to acquire a Visa for transfers of this nature should be cheaper and easier to obtain).*

## UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group

### Questionnaire

#### 1. YOUR COMPANY

Please describe your company and the sector(s) in which you operate.

Please provide an overview of your company structure and workforce.

#### 2. CROSS-CHANNEL MOBILITY NEEDS

1. Please describe your company's mobility needs for cross-channel workers:

(i) business meetings/visits;

(ii) secondments;

(iii) interns and trainees.

#### 3. THE CURRENT REGIME

2. Please describe your company's experience of moving workers between France and the UK in the current visa framework.

Following Brexit, moving talent from France has become more costly, lengthy and procedural, consequently restricting businesses and applicants seeking to move talent. Further thereto, meeting English language added additional burden to applicants (in terms of costs in how degrees are verified and tests sat). Mostly, French and EEA nationals speak English to a high standard thus, the mandatory requirement to produce certain type of documentation confirming levels of spoken, written, reading and listening skills adds to an overall delay and cost to progressing visa applications.

3. Please describe any impact you may have observed in terms of time, cost, or loss of opportunity.

IHS surcharge and the Immigration Skills Charge (introduced in April 2017) further increased the costs burden on sponsoring companies. EU nationals became third-country nationals under UK immigration law. The UK imposed selection criteria on EU citizens in the same manner as it currently does for non-EU nationals. The selection criteria require migrants to demonstrate that they have a skilled job, a spouse or partner in the UK or a place to study with a registered university or college.

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#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Would you like to offer any recommendations to improve the current visa regime / process?

- Temporary Youth Mobility Route – expand to EEA nationals; allows young workers, those aged between 18 to 30, to experience life in the UK for up to two years. The scheme is a cultural exchange programme that permits nationals of participating countries and territories to live, work and study in the UK for this time period
- Removing sponsorship for shortage occupation job types
- Allowing Senior Specialist worker route to lead to Settlement (Permanent Residency in the UK)
- Graduate visa route – currently only available to students whom have completed their studies in the UK; this route allows employment and self-employment for a period of 2 or 3 years (subject to course completion); perhaps it would be beneficial if this is offered to EEA nationals whom have completed a qualifying degree abroad, allowing a transfer to the UK for period of 2 years to gain sector specific experience. This is a non-sponsored route, thus less costs than sponsorship (i.e. Skilled Worker, Senior Specialist Worker)
- High Potential visa route – this route is available to recent graduates of leading overseas universities who wish to work, or look for work, in the UK.. Currently only graduates from Paris Sciences et Lettres – PSL Research University qualify under this route. Recommendation – to expand the current Global Universities List - High Potential Individual visa: global universities list 2022 - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))
- Permit junior talent based in EU an opportunity to gain exposure at a linked UK based office for short durations with pay. (i.e. 3 months paid internship without sponsorship).

## UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group

### Questionnaire

#### 1. YOUR COMPANY

1. Please describe your company and the sector(s) in which you operate.

Business France is a national agency and is responsible for fostering export growth by French businesses, facilitating international investment in France. It promotes France's companies, business image and nationwide attractiveness as an investment location.

2. Please provide an overview of your company structure and workforce.

Business France fosters export growth by SMEs and mid sized companies, prepares and helps businesses to find commercial partners in target markets, paving the way for them to sign trading agreements and generate sustainable export growth.

Business France helps foreign investors make decisions and offer support throughout their project, calling not only upon Business France investment advisors but also its network of regional partners.

Business France promotes France's companies, business image and nationwide attractiveness as an investment location

Business France monitors France's international business image and attractiveness as an investment location. We suggest and implement strategies to promote France and its regions, businesses and talent and inform channels of influence in the international business world.

Business France runs the VIE International Internship Program enables businesses to give candidates a temporary assignment of between six and 24 months in a foreign country. The scheme is open to candidates of all qualification levels not only from France, but also from any other country in the European Economic Area.

Business France in Figures: 1500 employees – 80 offices in the world - 124 countries

#### 2. CROSS-CHANNEL MOBILITY NEEDS

3. Please describe your company's mobility needs for cross-channel workers:

Business France operates the V.I.E scheme worldwide, which allows young Europeans to undertake a secure professional assignment abroad of 6 to 24 months, outside of France, and for a French company. Young VIEs are protected by the French Embassy and supported by Business France throughout their V.I.E assignment.

VIE young professional posted in the UK need to apply for a visa to be allowed to work there, which is a costly solution to be able to work 12 months only for a French company.

**3. THE CURRENT REGIME**

4. Please describe your company's experience of moving workers between France and the UK in the current visa framework.

- VIE need to apply for a TW-GAE visa which has **only a one-year validity period** (whereas the VIE programme offers two-year assignments) ! this is too restrictive for French companies to decide to invest into the programme
- One of the eligibility requirements to obtain TW-GAE visas is that companies have at least 5 permanent employees in the UK, which restricts the scope of French companies that can participate in the VIE programme;
- VIE could participate through the "High-Potential Individual" program set up by the UK in May 2022 (it is under investigation at the moment), but the programme is only open to one French institution, L'Université PSL (Paris Sciences et Lettres).

5. Please describe any impact you may have observed in terms of time, cost, or loss of opportunity.

After Brexit and the visa restrictions put in place, so starting from end of 2021, **the number of young VIE dropped from 900 to 200 in the UK**, directly because of the restrictions put in place (need for a specific visa restricting the length of work on site and exclusion of a large number of companies allowed to use the scheme).

French companies need to pay for visa procedures for the VIE (about 2000 pounds) and the application process may take up to 3 months to be completed. This is also a setback that prevent companies and VIE to fully consider the UK as a destination for work and commercial exchanges.

**4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. Would you like to offer any recommendations to improve the current visa regime / process?

Business France would definitely encourage the following initiatives:

- Use the visa TW-GAE and renew it, so that VIS could complete a 24-month mission (maximum length for a VIE mission);
- Use a different visa, allowing the VIE to complete a 24-month mission, without renewal and offering enough flexibility (to work in the UK);
- Consider the use of flexible visas (for the VIE) that can be used by French companies not having a settled office in the UK

**UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group**

**Annex 2 - Responses to questionnaire from individuals**

**ANSWER 1**

1. **START TIME:** 12/6/22 11:23:08
2. **COMPLETION TIME:** 12/6/22 11:28:33
3. **AGE:** 31
4. **NATIONALITY:** FRENCH
5. **OCCUPATION:** AVOCAT A LA COUR / SOLICITOR
6. **PLACE OF RESIDENCE:** LONDON
7. **PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY YOU WISH / WISHED TO GO TO WORK IN FRANCE:**

I am a French qualified Avocat, I trained in France and it was likely the place where I was more likely to find work

8. **PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY YOU WISH / WISHED TO GO TO WORK IN THE UK**

I have recently qualified as a Solicitor in England and Wales and my law firm has an office in London

I have studied in the UK in the past (University of Kent in Canterbury)

I love the UK

9. **PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR EXPERIENCE IN APPLYING FOR A VISA, WHAT TYPE OF VISA DID YOU APPLY FOR, HOW LONG IT TOOK, AND WHAT WAS THE RESULT**

I applied for a skilled worker visa for a duration of 5 years (pre-settled status)

It took almost a month to gather all relevant documentation

It then took 8 weeks (instead of 12) to get the visa

Overall, I think that you need to be prepared to wait for (at least) 3 months from the date on which you obtain the list of documents to be submitted and the date on which you receive your visa

Although it may not seem too long, the main issue is that from the day you submit your visa application you are not allowed to come to the UK (hence to organise your move to the UK, find a rental, look for nurseries, etc..). So it may take you even longer before being allowed to come to the UK.

**10. IF YOU DECIDED NOT TO PURSUE THE VISA APPLICATION OR DID NOT OBTAIN A VISA FOR ANY REASON, PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY AND DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DID / PLAN TO DO INSTEAD**

Stay in France

**ANSWER 2**

1. **START TIME:** 1/9/23 10:54:36

2. **COMPLETION TIME:** 1/9/23 11:02:40

3. **AGE:** 21

4. **NATIONALITY:** BRITISH

5. **OCCUPATION:** STUDENT

6. **PLACE OF RESIDENCE:** ENGLAND

7. **PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY YOU WISH / WISHED TO GO TO WORK IN FRANCE:**

I wished to work in France in order to complete my Year Abroad, which is part of my university degree.

8. **PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY YOU WISH / WISHED TO GO TO WORK IN THE UK**

9. **PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR EXPERIENCE IN APPLYING FOR A VISA, WHAT TYPE OF VISA DID YOU APPLY FOR, HOW LONG IT TOOK, AND WHAT WAS THE RESULT**

I applied for a Long Stay working visa. The main issue I had was obtaining my "Avis Favorable", which I needed in order to apply for my visa. It took up to 2 and a half months to obtain this document. I also had to provide proof of accommodation, which is extremely difficult to get, when most landlords won't let you rent for an extended period of time without a visa. Overall the visa process took me around 4 months.

10. **IF YOU DECIDED NOT TO PURSUE THE VISA APPLICATION OR DID NOT OBTAIN A VISA FOR ANY REASON, PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY AND DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DID / PLAN TO DO INSTEAD**

### ANSWER 3

1. **START TIME:** 1/9/23 21:23:08
2. **COMPLETION TIME:** 1/9/23 22:04:47
3. **AGE:** 23
4. **NATIONALITY:** BRITISH
5. **OCCUPATION:** CURRENTLY A STUDENT
6. **PLACE OF RESIDENCE:** UK
7. **PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY YOU WISH / WISHED TO GO TO WORK IN FRANCE**

I was born and grew up in France until I was 13 years old when I moved to the UK with my family for my parents' work. I always planned to go back to France and make my life there, and I studied French at university, during which time I spent a year working in France with Erasmus. I then finished my studies in the UK and returned to France, by which time British nationals now needed visas to live and work long-term in France.

8. **PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY YOU WISH / WISHED TO GO TO WORK IN THE UK**
9. **PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR EXPERIENCE IN APPLYING FOR A VISA, WHAT TYPE OF VISA DID YOU APPLY FOR, HOW LONG IT TOOK, AND WHAT WAS THE RESULT**

Although I was born in France and have lived there most of my life, because I had left in 2012 and have no French family, the only available option for me to obtain permission to live and work in France was to ask a Préfecture to make an exception for me, on the grounds of my time spent in France, level of integration and potential contributions to France. This was confirmed to me by an immigration lawyer whom I consulted.

The only other option would have been for an employer to sponsor my application; this was unrealistic at the time as I had only just graduated and I could not find an employer who would do so.

In September 2021 therefore, I applied for a "carte de séjour vie privée et familiale, motif humanitaire ou exceptionnel".

In November 2021, I was notified that my application had been received and that I should attend a meeting at the Préfecture in March.

In March 2022, I attended my meeting at the Préfecture.

I was asked to submit further evidence and to approach companies that could show they would employ me.

In July 2022, I was notified that my carte de séjour was ready for collection at the Préfecture.

I now have a temporary carte de séjour until May 2023, enabling me to live and work in France, which I will shortly have to renew.

- 10. IF YOU DECIDED NOT TO PURSUE THE VISA APPLICATION OR DID NOT OBTAIN A VISA FOR ANY REASON, PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY AND DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DID / PLAN TO DO INSTEAD**

**UK-France Business Forum - Mobility Sub-Group**

**Annex 3 - Reference documents**

Ref.	Date	Document	Link
REF-1	January 2017	<i>Partial Review of the Shortage Occupation List</i> , Migration Advisory Committee	<a href="#">Link</a>
REF-2	30 August 2018	Fernandez Reino, M., and Sumption M., <i>Exploiting the Opportunity? Low-Skilled Work Migration After Brexit</i> , Migration Observatory, Oxford University	<a href="#">Link</a>
REF-3	19 December 2018	Home Office and UK visas and Immigration, <i>The UK's future skills-based immigration System</i> , HM Government	<a href="#">Link</a>
REF-4	23 January 2019	Conseil d'orientation des Politiques de Jeunesse, Commission Insertion des Jeunes, <i>Mobilités des Jeunes</i>	<a href="#">Link</a>
REF-5	March 2020	Steer/HS1, <i>Delivering for Britain and Beyond, The Economic Impact of HS1</i>	<a href="#">Link</a>
REF-6	23 October 2020	Emirates, <i>Emirates launches integrated biometric path at the airport for added convenience</i>	<a href="#">Link</a>
REF-7	11 August 2021	Ministère de l'Intérieur et des Outre-Mer, <i>Les accords bilatéraux relatifs à la mobilité professionnelle</i>	<a href="#">Link</a>
REF-8	October 2021	Davies, G., <i>Addressing skills and labour shortages post-Brexit</i> , London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development	<a href="#">Link</a>
REF-9	October 2021	<i>Intra-Company Transfers</i> , Migration Advisory Committee	<a href="#">Link</a>
REF-10	December 2021	<i>MAC Annual Report</i> , Migration Advisory Committee	<a href="#">Link</a>
REF-11	15 August 2022	Alberti, G., Forder, C., Sumption, M., and Walsh, P. W., <i>How is the End of Free Movement Affecting the Low-wage Labour Force in the UK?</i> , The Migration Observatory, Oxford University	<a href="#">Link</a>
REF-12	6 November 2022	Trade in Services Council, <i>10 steps to boost trade in services through business mobility</i> , The Confederation of British Industry	<a href="#">Link</a>
REF-13	18 November 2022	<i>Closed shop, Why business immigration isn't working</i> , The Law Society Gazette	<a href="#">Link</a>
REF-14	December 2022	<i>MAC Annual Report</i> , Migration Advisory Committee, December 2022	<a href="#">Link</a>

**Annex 4 - Bilateral Agreements signed by the UK and EU Member States**

ROYAUME-UNI	FRANCE	ALLEMAGNE	ITALIE	ESPAGNE	GRECE	POLOGNE	Autriche	Belgique	BULGARIE	CROATIE	CHYPRE	DANEMARK	ESTONIE	FINLANDE
	Argentine	Argentine					Argentine					Argentine		
Australie	Australie	Australie	Australie	Australie	Australie	Australie	Australie	Australie			Australie	Australie	Australie	Australie
	Bénin													
	Bosnie Herzégovine													
	Brésil	Brésil												
Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada		Canada		Canada	Canada	
	Cap Vert													
	Chili	Chili				Chili	Chili					Chili		
	Colombie													
Corée du Sud	Corée du Sud	Corée du Sud	Corée du Sud	Corée du Sud		Corée du Sud	Corée du Sud	Corée du Sud				Corée du Sud	Corée du Sud	
	Gabon													
	Géorgie													
Hong-Kong	Hong-Kong	Hong-Kong					Hong-Kong							
	Inde													
Islande														
		Israël					Israël							
Japon	Japon	Japon		Japon		Japon	Japon					Japon	Japon	
	Maroc													
	Maurice													
	Mexique													
Monaco														
	Monténégro													
Nouvelle-Zélande	Nouvelle-Zélande	Nouvelle-Zélande	Nouvelle-Zélande	Nouvelle-Zélande		Nouvelle-Zélande	Nouvelle-Zélande	Nouvelle-Zélande		Nouvelle-Zélande		Nouvelle-Zélande	Nouvelle-Zélande	Nouvelle-Zélande
	Pérou													
	République du Congo (Brazzaville)													
	Russie													
Saint-Marin														
	Sénégal													
	Serbie													
							Taipei							
Taiwan	Taiwan	Taiwan				Taiwan								
	Tunisie													
	Uruguay	Uruguay												
	USA													
10	29	12	4	5	2	7	10	4	0	2	1	7	5	2

HONGRIE	IRLANDE	LETTONIE	LITUANIE	LUXEMBOURG	MALTE	PAYS-BAS	Portugal	REPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE	ROUMANIE	SLOVAQUIE	SLOVENIE	SUEDE
						Argentine	Argentine					Argentine
Australie	Australie	Australie		Australie	Australie	Australie	Australie	Australie		Australie	Australie	Australie
	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada		Canada	Canada	Canada		Canada	Canada	Canada
Chili				Chili			Chili					Chili
Corée du Sud		Corée du Sud	Corée du Sud			Corée du Sud	Corée du Sud		Corée du Sud			Corée du Sud
												Hong-Kong
Japon			Japon				Japon					
Nouvelle-Zélande		Nouvelle-Zélande	Nouvelle-Zélande	Nouvelle-Zélande								
							Pérou					
Thaïlande												
							USA					
6	3	4	4	4	2	5	9	3	1	3	3	7

**Source links:**

[Working Holiday Visa's \(working-holidays.io\)](https://www.working-holidays.io)

[Youth Mobility Scheme visa: Eligibility - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/youth-mobility-scheme)

[Programme Vacances-Travail \(PVT\) - Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères \(diplomatie.gouv.fr\)](https://diplomatie.gouv.fr/Programme-Vacances-Travail-PVT)

[Les accords bilatéraux relatifs à la mobilité professionnelle / Les accords bilatéraux / Europe et International - Direction générale des étrangers en France - Ministère de l'Intérieur \(interieur.gouv.fr\)](https://interieur.gouv.fr/les-accords-bilateraux-relatifs-a-la-mobilite-professionnelle)

[D-Visa: Working Holiday - Federal Foreign Office \(diplo.de\)](https://www.diplo.de/visa/working-holiday)

[Work and travel abroad with International Experience Canada - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/work-and-travel-abroad-with-international-experience)

[Ministry of Labour and Social Policy / Programmes / Working Holiday Agreements \(mrips.gov.pl\)](https://mrips.gov.pl/programmes/working-holiday-agreements)

[Working Holiday Application – BMEIA, Außenministerium Österreich](https://www.bmeia.gv.at/working-holiday)

[Working holiday | Maahanmuuttovirasto \(migri.fi\)](https://migri.fi/working-holiday)