



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department
Home Office
Direct Communications Unit
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Our reference: BS20745

9 March 2022

Dear Priti,

Re: Visa process and support for Ukrainian refugees

I write regarding the need for urgent support for Ukrainian refugees. I know that you and your colleagues across Government have been working tirelessly to introduce improved processes to help Ukrainian refugees while ensuring border security, and I am grateful for your efforts.

However, I am concerned that our aims of helping hundreds of thousands of refugees are not being delivered on the ground and that there appears to be significant confusion and delay in getting operations up and running. Last week assurances were given that additional resource had been provided and visa applications were being processed quickly, in some cases in a matter of hours, yet this week constituents read in the news that only 300 had been granted. The press and public were informed that there were Home Office teams in Calais ready to help there, yet today there are reports that there is no team on site and refugees are being turned away and told to go to Paris or Brussels.

Our constituents wish to support Ukrainian refugees and are frustrated that this does not appear to be happening in a swift or efficient manner. I have had many people write to me willing to offer to house and support refugees, yet there is no system yet in place to register an interest or enable this to happen.

Hundreds of thousands of women and children continue to pour into Poland and other countries neighbouring Ukraine, placing even greater pressure on their resources and ability to provide support. Across Europe we must all work to support both the refugees and the countries on the front line in dealing with the current humanitarian crisis. We should be, and I hope we are, working with European nations to ensure swift processing and movement of refugees across all countries in a way which is proportionate and provides as much stability and security to those who have had to flee their homes.

The UK has a proud history of supporting refugees and it is right we continue to do so in the current crisis. We must provide clear and immediate support to those wishing to travel to the UK, and have internal processes established to provide continuing support once they arrive. I would be happy to support any efforts to help establish this.

Constituents are understandably anxious at the perceived delays. I would therefore be very grateful if you could provide me with an update on the visa support being provided, including the number of applications being processed daily, our work with European countries to establish a clear process for the relocation of refugees, and the ongoing work to establish a system of support for refugees once in the UK.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Spencer". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the word "Spencer".

Dr Ben Spencer MP
Runnymede and Weybridge