



Department
for Transport

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Dear Mark and Bob

Thank you for your letter of 20 July 2020, about EU-UK negotiations as they affect the maritime sector and those who work in the sector.

The recognition of seafarers as key workers that you referred to reflected the critical role they are playing in keeping supply routes open during the Covid 19 pandemic. I have also been concerned to support the crew changes that are vital to the welfare of seafarers and to shipping operations. As you know, the UK has remained open for seafarers to transit through and either stay on vessels, go ashore, take shore leave or be repatriated. We have encouraged other maritime nations to do the same.

Social security issues are ultimately a matter for the Department of Work and Pensions. It may help to explain that the existing EU social security coordination rules will continue to apply after 31 December 2020 to individuals in full scope of the Withdrawal Agreement, including UK nationals living and/or working in the EU and EU citizens living and/or working in the UK by the end of December 2020, for as long as they remain in full scope of the Withdrawal Agreement. For those in full personal scope, the Withdrawal Agreement:

- Ensures that workers (and their employers), as well as the self-employed, only pay into one social security system at a time.
- Provides for the aggregation of social security contributions, meaning those who have paid into a system will have their contributions, and the rights that flow from those contributions, protected.

The social security position of those not covered by the Withdrawal Agreement will depend on the outcome of negotiations with the EU. The government is seeking to maintain arrangements with the EU in some areas, however the rules may change depending on the ongoing negotiations. This includes:

- counting future social security contributions in the EEA and Switzerland towards meeting UK State Pension qualifying conditions.
- getting the UK State Pension uprated every year in the EEA and Switzerland.

Please also note that if seafarers are UK Nationals sailing under the flag of an EU Member State then they are in scope of the WA (same as being resident there). Those that have made contributions in the relevant state (UK for EU Citizens and EU for UK Nationals) pre 2021 will continue to be able to use these and any future contributions towards their State Pension (aggregation).

We are working to ensure the continued acceptance of UK certificates of competence by EU member states after the end of the transition period. As you say, the EU Directive 2008/106 provides a route for acceptance of certificates from non-EU countries. There is further work to be done to ensure that this process is completed as soon as possible. I can confirm that the UK remains committed to accepting certificates of competence from EU countries after the end of the transition period.

Yours sincerely,



KELLY TOLHURST MP

MINISTER FOR AVIATION, MARITIME AND SECURITY