# France accuses UK’s weak asylum laws of fueling Channel migrant surge



Eleonore Caroit, a prominent member of France's governing Renaissance Party, has described the United Kingdom as an 'El Dorado' for migrants, largely due to its perceived leniency in asylum policies. Speaking to French media, Caroit, who is a close ally of President Emmanuel Macron and serves as vice president of the National Assembly’s foreign affairs committee, highlighted the complexities of the migrant situation and called for both countries to take shared responsibility. She remarked, “It is… a complex situation, people want simple solutions, but… you have to go to Calais and see what it looks like, and how many small boats you have and how many people are waiting to go to the UK.”

Caroit’s commentary follows mounting frustrations within the UK regarding France’s failure to stem the rising tide of migrants crossing the English Channel in small boats. Recent statistics reveal a staggering increase of approximately 40% in crossings compared to the previous year, with 14,811 migrants having made the treacherous journey in just the first five months of 2025. Alarmingly, ten lives have been lost this year alone in the perilous attempts to reach British shores. The numbers underscore an urgent humanitarian crisis, as the French authorities have reportedly intercepted only 38% of attempted crossings this year, down from 45% in 2024 and 47% in 2023.

Caroit argued against the criticism directed towards French police for not intercepting boats, clarifying that current law restricts their ability to act once vessels are in the water. In her view, this limitation should be addressed through legislative reforms, enabling officers to intervene in low waters. She stated, "It’s a matter of legislation, but it’s also a matter, again, of what happened after Brexit," referring to the diminishing mechanisms for returning migrants. The end of the UK’s participation in the Dublin Agreement—as a result of Brexit—has complicated the situation, leaving the UK without the ability to return asylum seekers who arrive via France. Caroit suggested that urgent cooperation between French and British authorities is essential to create a framework that effectively manages the situation, emphasizing, “Most importantly, it is important to deter these boats from actually wanting to go to the UK.”

The ongoing discourse surrounding migrant crossings has its roots in historical and political tensions between the UK and France. Previous statements from prominent French officials, such as Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin, have echoed Caroit's call for greater British responsibility in addressing the crisis. Darmanin has contended that the UK must implement stricter return policies and offer legitimate pathways for migration to alleviate the overwhelming numbers crossing the Channel. Meanwhile, French Prime Minister Jean Castex has rejected proposals for joint border patrols, maintaining that the UK's policies are central to reducing the crisis.

With the situation increasingly dire, there seems to be a consensus among French officials that Britain’s perceived leniency in asylum processing has made it an attractive destination for many. Initiatives to open safe legal routes for legitimate asylum seekers have been highlighted as critical in curbing illegal crossings and dismantling the smuggling networks that exploit vulnerable migrants.

The rising death toll and the growing number of successful crossings bring into sharp focus the urgent need for collaborative solutions that transcend political posturing. Continued discussions between both nations could pave the way for a more effective management of migration, though the underlying issues tied to Brexit remain a significant barrier.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14772413/France-blames-Brexit-migrant-crisis-Macron-MP-attacks-UKs-weak-asylum-policy-makes-Britain-El-Dorado-illegal-migration.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14772413/France-blames-Brexit-migrant-crisis-Macron-MP-attacks-UKs-weak-asylum-policy-makes-Britain-El-Dorado-illegal-migration.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/12/02/can-solve-french-prime-minister-blames-uk-migrant-channel-crisis/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/11/28/britain-must-take-responsibility-channel-migrant-crisis-say/), [[3]](https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2022/0105/UK-and-France-are-butting-heads-over-migration.-Is-Brexit-to-blame)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20211203-france-rejects-british-joint-border-patrols-to-fight-channel-migrant-crisis-illegal-migration), [[6]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/french-politician-blames-british-security-flaws-for-calais-migrants-crisis-10393452.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/why-france-blames-britain-for-the-channel-migrant-crisis/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14772413/France-blames-Brexit-migrant-crisis-Macron-MP-attacks-UKs-weak-asylum-policy-makes-Britain-El-Dorado-illegal-migration.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/11/28/britain-must-take-responsibility-channel-migrant-crisis-say/> - In November 2021, French Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin stated that Britain must take responsibility for the Channel migrant crisis and make itself less attractive to migrants. He emphasized the need for the UK to implement more effective return policies and to weaken criminal people-smuggling networks by opening legal immigration channels for those with legitimate reasons to enter the UK. This statement highlights the ongoing tensions between France and the UK regarding the management of migrant crossings in the English Channel.
3. <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2022/0105/UK-and-France-are-butting-heads-over-migration.-Is-Brexit-to-blame> - The article examines the strained relations between the UK and France over migration issues, attributing the tensions to Brexit. With the end of the transition period on December 31, 2020, the UK ceased its commitment to the Dublin Regulation, which previously facilitated the return of asylum-seekers to EU countries. This change has left asylum-seekers who reach the UK from France without a clear legal framework for return, complicating the management of migrant crossings in the English Channel.
4. <https://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20211203-france-rejects-british-joint-border-patrols-to-fight-channel-migrant-crisis-illegal-migration> - In December 2021, France rejected a British proposal for joint border patrols in the English Channel to combat clandestine migration. French Prime Minister Jean Castex emphasized that the solution lies more with the UK, urging Britain to implement more effective return policies and to open legal immigration channels for those with legitimate reasons to enter the UK. This stance underscores the ongoing disagreements between the two nations over managing migrant crossings.
5. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/12/02/can-solve-french-prime-minister-blames-uk-migrant-channel-crisis/> - French Prime Minister Jean Castex blamed the UK for the migrant Channel crisis, stating that Britain needed to deport more failed asylum seekers, open up safer legal routes, and crack down on its black market to reduce the record numbers of migrants crossing the Channel. He rejected the UK's proposal for joint patrols, emphasizing that the solution lies more with the UK in dissuading migrants from coming to Britain.
6. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/french-politician-blames-british-security-flaws-for-calais-migrants-crisis-10393452.html> - In July 2015, French politician Xavier Bertrand criticized British 'security flaws' for encouraging waves of migrants to head for Calais in hope of crossing the Channel. He called for the UK to take responsibility for detaining thousands of illegal immigrants stranded in Calais and suggested that the Royal Navy should participate in a blockade of Libya to prevent migrants from reaching mainland Europe.
7. <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/why-france-blames-britain-for-the-channel-migrant-crisis/> - The article explores why France blames Britain for the Channel migrant crisis, highlighting that migrants perceive England as a land of opportunity where they can work without residence permits. It discusses the role of smuggling gangs in facilitating these crossings and the need for both countries to address the issue collaboratively to prevent further tragedies in the English Channel.