

## UK and France Near Deal to Return 50 Illegal Migrants Weekly Under New Pilot Scheme

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The United Kingdom and France are reportedly close to finalising a pilot agreement that would allow up to 50 illegal migrants per week to be returned from Britain to France. The initiative, currently in the negotiation stage, is expected to be a significant step forward in tackling the persistent challenge of illegal cross-Channel migration.

The plan, backed by both governments, would mark the first formal bilateral returns agreement between the two countries since the UK left the European Union (EU). It would allow British immigration officials to send back a limited number of small boat arrivals to France each week, with the aim of discouraging people-smuggling networks and reducing dangerous Channel crossings. The pilot programme is part of wider bilateral talks aimed at tightening border security and curbing illegal migration through increased cooperation.

According to reports from senior UK government sources, the Home Office, responsible for immigration, security, and law and order, is in advanced discussions with its French counterpart, the Ministry of the Interior. While the pilot would initially cover a small number of migrants, officials believe it could pave the way for a larger-scale agreement if deemed successful. Talks have been described as “constructive”, and while there are still details to be ironed out, both sides appear eager to move forward.

The UK government has faced growing pressure from the public and Conservative backbenchers to stem the tide of illegal Channel crossings, which have reached over 20,000 so far in 2025. The Labour government, meanwhile, has come under criticism for lacking clear deterrent policies and for sending mixed signals that some argue may be encouraging further illegal migration.

France has historically refused to accept returns from Britain without an overarching EU deal, but the current talks suggest a more flexible approach. The proposed arrangement is expected to focus on individuals who have already sought asylum in France or another safe country before making the journey to the UK.

Migration experts say the pilot scheme could serve as a much-needed deterrent, though its success will depend on enforcement and swift legal processes. Speaking to *The Telegraph*, one Home Office source said, “This is about restoring order to the system and showing that illegal migration will not lead to a permanent stay.”

If the agreement is formalised, the first removals could begin within weeks. The move signals a more robust stance by the UK in controlling its borders and preventing abuse of its asylum system.