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8 March 2022

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

Dear Home Secretary,

**PBSC letter to the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the situation in Ukraine**

The PBSC welcomes the Secretary of State's announcement of 1 March on continued immigration support for those impacted by the situation in Ukraine, and the introduction of the Ukraine Family Scheme on 4 March.

These measures will be welcomed by the sector, as it continues to support sector employees and communities through unfolding events.

We reiterate our asks, as follows:

1. Remove Ukraine from Immigration Rules Appendix Visitor: Visa National List, to allow Ukrainian nationals, particularly those with family in the UK, to enter the UK visa-free.
2. Allow those arriving as visitors to switch into family and / or PBS routes (in line with the current policy for Ukrainian nationals already in the UK).
3. Extend the policy of allowing Ukrainian nationals already in the UK to extend or switch their stay to all other nationals unable to return to Ukraine or Russia due to the conflict.
4. Advise on the acceptability of alternative documents to passports to allow entry in the circumstances.
5. Advise on the acceptability of alternative documents to passports for those who reach a safe third country but wish to travel onwards to the UK under an immigration route, but do not have the required documentation.
6. Advise on the position for those whose documents (including passports) are held in UK Consulates / application processing centres.
7. Reassure regular Russian national visa holders in the UK that, other than as required through international sanctions, there will be no adverse impact on their or their families' immigration status in the UK.

In addition, and noting both the escalation in the situation and the continued evacuation of impacted nationals not only in Ukraine, but also in Russia, we are concerned that the immigration position of those who flee to their first safe location as a result of the crisis cross-border is precarious.

Many are entering their safe receiving country with visitor status. As such, whilst they may have valid UK immigration applications that could legitimately be made in those countries and decided under the UK's Immigration Rules, the Rules (Section 28, Part 1 Immigration Rules) create a barrier to their lodging an application in those locations, as they hold visitor rather than residence status.

The Rules allow for discretion to be applied, and there is precedent for the exercise of discretion in the application of this Rule. Indeed, this discretion is now rightly being applied for Ukrainian nationals to allow them to make applications under the Family Scheme in Poland, Hungary, Moldova, Romania and France.

Noting the broader impact of this rule to those seeking to make applications under UK immigration rules, the PBSC ask that the SSHD urgently extend and formalise the application of this discretion **to allow all nationals, impacted by the situation, to apply for leave to enter the UK under the Immigration Rules from any location where they are lawfully present as a visitor, for an initial period of 3 months, to be kept under close review.**

This measure will greatly help in the sector's efforts to support the safety and well-being of all impacted employees.

We remain grateful for your department's rapid measures, and stand ready to assist you and the work of the department in any way.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan Belfield". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dr Alan Belfield FEng,

On behalf of the Professional & Business Services Council

Co-Chair of the Professional & Business Services Council & Chair Arup