

Group of the Progressive Alliance of **Socialists** & **Democrats** in the European Parliament

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Dear President von der Leyen, dear Vice-President Šefčovič

I am writing to you on behalf of the S&D Group, to express our dismay and shock at the reported cases of EU citizens being detained for several days when travelling to the UK.

While the UK as a third country determines its policy for visas, it seems entirely disproportionate and even vindictive to detain EU citizens in such a way, who may simply have ticked the wrong box or not have realised that the end of the transition period and the UK's new visa requirements for EU citizens meant they should first apply for a visa for study or work.

Unfortunately, this issue has only added to the existing problem encountered with the UK's visa fee discrimination between EU nationals of different Member States, and has created the impression that the UK is using these issues to make political points.

While I acknowledge that Vice-President Šefčovič and the Commission services have been very receptive and swift to react, and welcome the revised guidance which the Home Office has now issued to the UK Border Force, I would like to ask you and the Commission to monitor what is happening very closely, and take further contact with the UK to express just how unacceptable and disproportionate these actions are.

Please be assured that Vice-President Šefčovič continues to enjoy our full support for his strong work with the UK as co-Chair of the Joint Committee and Partnership Council, and we look forward to ongoing close cooperation on the full and proper implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement and Trade and Cooperation Agreement in the coming months.

Best wishes,

Iratxe García Pérez