



PM “MISSES THE BIG PICTURE” ON IMMIGRATION

Commenting on the Prime Minister’s speech on immigration, the co-Chairmen of the Cross Party Group for Balanced Migration, Frank Field MP and Nicholas Soames MP, said:

“While the Government is right to split economic migration from permanent settlement, it is clear that the Prime Minister misses the big picture. The Points Based System has no limit, affects just 20 per cent of immigration, and will not stop the UK’s population hitting 70 million in 2029. What is needed is a clear political commitment to make a very substantial reduction in immigration. In his four thousand word speech, the Prime Minister has entirely avoided this central issue.”

1. The Points Based System (PBS) only applies to work-related migration and students. According to Government figures, these categories accounted for just 20% of all entry visas issued in 2008-9^[1].
2. The Government’s own calculation is that, if the PBS had been in operation last year, it would have reduced work related immigration by 20,000^[2]. If the population is not to rise from 61 million today to 70 million in 2029, immigration needs to be reduced to the levels it was in the 1990s – about 50,000 a year. In 2008 net immigration is expected to be about 150,000 so a reduction of 100,000 is required. The PBS falls far short of this.
3. Government claims that immigration has fallen 44% are simply wrong; they have confused the International Passenger Survey (IPS) with the annual immigration statistics. The IPS showed a drop in net arrivals of about 90,000 but most of this fall had nothing to do with the implementation of the PBS. Three quarters of the drop was due to more East European members of the EU going home. They are not, of course, covered by the PBS. A further part may have been due to the development of the

^[1] <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/resources/en/docs/2958881/visastats2008-09> page 19.

^[2] UKBA Press Release, 5 Jan 2009 text and Notes to Editors. Note 4

recession. In the three most recent recessions immigration has fallen sharply for a few years before resuming its strong upward trend^[3].

Notes to editors:

1. For media enquiries, please contact Patrick White in the office of Rt Hon Frank Field MP, Tel. 020 7219 6636.
2. The Rt Hon Frank Field MP and The Hon Nicholas Soames MP are Co-Chairmen of the Cross Party Group on Balanced Migration. The Group's Vice-Chairmen are Lord (Bill) Jordan CBE (former President of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union) and Daniel Kawczynski MP (Conservative, Shrewsbury & Atcham). Other members include Roger Godsiff MP, Peter Kilfoyle MP, David Taylor MP, Robert Key MP, Colin Burgon MP, Lord Ahmed, Lord Anderson, Lord Carey (former Archbishop of Canterbury) Baroness Cox, Field Marshal Lord Inge KG, GCB, PC, DL, Lord Skidelsky, Lord Wakeham and Lord Ramsbotham.
3. For more information, please visit www.balancedmigration.com.

^[3] Migrationwatch Briefing Paper No 1.21