

**Sarah Cremin**

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**From:** Covid19  
**To:** Napton, John  
**Subject:** RE: Request for submission

Good morning Aileen,

Further to the request of a written submission; please find attached as succinct as a response as possible on the key questions raised and also a copy of our planned social distancing when non-essential travel can restart. Hopefully whilst succinct it does clarify the key points in how we as a company and an industry can assist the re-opening of travel and transport as safely as possible, to allow the economic recovery to begin after what has been the most difficult of times for everyone.

Should you need me to expand or revert on anything further please do not hesitate to contact myself.

Kind regards



**John Napton**  
Director UK and Ireland

T. +44 (0)1752 635305 M. +44 (0)7831 171512  
[john.napton@brittanyferries.com](mailto:john.napton@brittanyferries.com)  
BAI (UK) Ltd, Millbay, Plymouth, PL1 3EW

BAI (UK) Limited Co.1080495  
BAI (Ireland) Limited Co.61246  
Portsmouth Handling Services Limited Co.2460854

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Brittany Ferries – submission on Covid-19 travel Restrictions

### **1- Introduction**

Brittany Ferries (BF) is a Ro-Pax operator so a shipping company that predominantly operates ferries with Roll-on Roll-off passenger and freight capabilities, with a bias towards the passengers within that mix. BF currently operates, with the support of an Irish government PSO, a twice weekly link between Rosslare and Bilbao (Spain). This is a Ro-Pax service being run as a freight only service due to Covid-19 to ensure supply of critical goods. Ordinarily this schedule would be passenger and freight and also provide a once weekly link between Rosslare and Roscoff (France) being very passenger based demand. Also we would have been, for 40 years, running a high season (32 weeks) weekly link between Cork and Roscoff, with our flag ship. The later route has brought as many French tourists to Ireland as it has taken Irish tourist to France, predominantly families. Therefore with the above background, I would restrict our comments to the Ireland - Continental links and any areas that may directly or indirectly impact them.

I would further add that transport links like ours have been open throughout this pandemic, with frontline workers ensure supply of critical freight, and therefore potential exposure to the virus. We have been carrying people throughout in the for of freight drivers and repatriations, therefore we have already continually and pro-actively changed our procedures at the port and aboard to ensure the continued safety of our team and clients we remain confident that maritime can be among the safest forms of travel for this reason and others detailed in this submission.

### **2- Self-isolation of travellers entering Ireland**

It is clear that whilst this requirement is in place, we cannot envisage either the return of the tourist routes of Rosslare-Roscoff or Cork-Roscoff , nor can we guarantee the continuation of the only direct Ro-Ro link between Ireland and Spain beyond the end of the PSO as this route also needs passengers to be self-sufficient. Passengers, for BF means tourists broadly and we cannot envisage tourists entering Ireland with these restrictions in place.

### **3- Travel Restrictions for Irish passengers exiting**

As with point 2, we see little appetite for Irish passengers travelling to the continent, regardless of the French / Spanish rules if they remain a requirement to self-isolate on their return. That said should there be isolation requirements (even if not showing symptoms) on the continent this would prove to be an additional barrier.

### **4- Provisions and measures at entry/exit points, specifically testing**

The measures that are required to keep people safe are of course for the health departments. My concern on bringing in measures such as, testing or thermal imaging etc. is that it is likely to create disturbance in passenger traffic markets. It is highly likely that key airports and ports like those in Dublin would have the finances to quickly incorporate the required infrastructure where regional connections would, for the much lower levels of footfall, not be in a position at times like these to

justify the investment. Therefore a seasonal, but highly successful passenger service to and from port of Cork would be inhibited from operating on the level field, impacting that region's tourism disproportionately.

#### **5- Common Travel Area**

Whilst we do not have a link confined to the CTA, consistency in approach of health and border measures within the CTA would avoid "back door" tourism links that would be detrimental to the Irish economy at a given point in time.

#### **6- Co-ordination with other EU member states in removing restrictions**

This would be eminently helpful for public perception, especially if both Schengen area and CTA were similarly co-ordinated. If this were to be a phased plan with plenty of warning so that operators and travellers alike could align their plans. Should any parts of either Schengen or CTA open up independently from the other areas, again it would create "back doors" for travellers therefore defeating much of what is trying to be achieved.

#### **7- Social distancing for passenger travel – advantages of maritime options**

It seems clear also that wherever possible continuation of social distancing seems both sensible and a requirement above testing or other measures. Maritime are clearly ideally placed for this in comparison to other modes. We have the ability and plan to on re-opening non-essential travel, to operate on a reduced capacity basis with a "one vehicle to one cabin" principle for all travellers (freight drivers as well as passengers). Our full plan is attached as a flowchart for all contact points for information. This is particularly pertinent when considering point 4 above, where we hope not to see what we believe to be, a safe form of, travel being denied due to infrastructure or controls requirements that cannot be implemented regionally.

