

EXCLUSIVE Brexit disruption may return with summer tourists, Dover chief says



Trucks queue on the road leading to the Waterbrook Inland Border Facility, a temporary customs clearance centre set up in a truck stop in Ashford, Kent, Britain January 15, 2021. REUTERS/John Sibley



Vehicles enter the Port of Dover, following the end of the Brexit transition period, in Dover, Britain, January 4, 2021. REUTERS/Toby Melville/Files

LONDON, July 9 (Reuters) – Britain’s biggest port said that post-Brexit disruption could return to Dover and slow trade when holidaymakers head for Europe this summer so the government must urgently reconsider funding redevelopment to prevent long-term damage.

Britain’s passage out of the European Union was eased by a lack of tourists driving to France during the pandemic, enabling port staff to process the additional paperwork for trucks that is now required to access Europe and keep goods moving.

But the government dropped a travel quarantine requirement for fully vaccinated Britons on Thursday, potentially opening up holiday routes and increasing the number of vehicles that could descend on the southwest port in the summer. [read more](#)

Doug Bannister, CEO of the Port of Dover, told Reuters the site had managed the switch to full customs checks well so far after Britain left the trade bloc at the end

of 2020.

“That’s because we haven’t seen the demand for tourists coming from our facilities, as we would normally expect to see,” he told Reuters on a bright sunny day as a ferry departed for Calais.

“It’s at those points in time when the pressure on the total system increases.”

In 2019, some 2.4 million trucks used the Dover port, along with 2 million tourist cars and 74,000 coaches.

Dover has modelled the impact of a return of passenger cars to the port, and Bannister said there would be challenges if it happened quickly. “There will be longer transaction times and more processing,” he said.

British industry had warned in the run-up to Brexit that the UK’s supply chains could be strained to breaking point, with even the government saying some 7,000 trucks could back up from Dover if they failed to fill out paperwork correctly.

Instead, a December rush to stockpile goods in the country, which led to 20-mile queues outside Dover at the time, meant trade dropped off in January and enabled manufacturers and logistics groups to adapt to the new demands.

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