



# Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

Julia Lopez MP  
Minister of State for Media, Data and  
Digital Infrastructure  
1st Floor  
100 Parliament Street  
London SW1A 2BQ

E: [enquiries@dcms.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@dcms.gov.uk)

[www.gov.uk/dcms](http://www.gov.uk/dcms)

23 December 2022

Lord Tim Clement-Jones

Our Ref:  
MC2022/15720/EOA

Dear Lord Clement-Jones,

Thank you for your correspondence of 29 November to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP, regarding creative artists and professionals touring in the EU. I am responding as the Minister responsible for the Creative Industries.

This Government recognises the importance of the UK's creative and cultural industries, not only to the economy and international reputation of the United Kingdom, but also to the wellbeing and enrichment of its people. We also recognise that the way creative workers work in the EU has changed, and the sector will need to adapt to new requirements now we are no longer a Member State. We have been committed to supporting the sector to adapt to these new arrangements, and have worked with the sector and directly with Member States to clarify what creative workers need to do.

The UK took an ambitious approach during negotiations with the EU that would have ensured that touring artists and their support staff did not need work-permits to perform in the EU; regrettably, these proposals were rejected by the EU. Our trade deal with the three European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries was based on the same offer, and shows that offer is workable.

The vast majority of Member States have now confirmed that UK musicians and performers do not need visas or work permits for some short-term touring. This includes the UK's most important touring markets, such as France, Germany and the Netherlands. This also includes Spain, which introduced 90-day visa- and work permit- free touring in November 2021; and Greece, which announced a visa and work permit free route for UK creatives in June 2022, both following engagement by the UK Government and the sector. There are therefore three remaining Member States - Portugal, Malta and Cyprus - that have not confirmed visa and work permit free routes. Ultimately it is up to these countries to make these decisions. Formal approaches have been made including discussions at ministerial and official level, and we have worked with the sector to amplify each other's lobbying efforts. We encourage them to ensure arrangements support UK touring professionals, and the economic and cultural benefits this brings.

You raised returning to negotiations to seek an exemption for the touring sector. We believe the proposal of an EU-wide visa waiver is unviable. The EU did not offer a visa waiver for paid activities during the Trade and Cooperation Agreement negotiations. What they did offer was a



reciprocal visa waiver agreement covering all current and any future Member States for short stays, for example, as a tourist. This remains incompatible with the Government's manifesto commitment to take control of our borders, and nor would it meet the sector's needs.

You raised the '90/180 day' rule for UK citizens in the Schengen area. Ultimately, only Member States can change their visa rules beyond what is required of their membership of the Schengen Area. We are aware that musicians and their support staff are concerned about the 90 in 180 day Schengen limit. We have already confirmed that almost all Member States offer visa and work permit free routes, many for up to 90 days. Beyond this limit, creatives will be required to obtain the relevant visa or work permit for the relevant Member State, as artists from other third countries are required to do. And we have developed guidance on GOV.UK to support artists to understand the visa and permit requirements for medium and long term stays in Member States.

Regarding EU citizens coming to the UK, the UK's rules for touring creative professionals are comparatively more generous than in many EU Member States. The UK's domestic rules allow musicians, entertainers and artists (and their technical staff) from non-visa national countries, such as EU Member States and the US, to perform in the UK without requiring a visa, and the UK does not have work-permits. If Member States are willing to change their rules to more closely reflect the UK's arrangements, we will encourage them to do so.

Thank you for writing on this matter. DCMS Ministers and officials engage with the music sector regularly through bilateral meetings and visits, discussing a range of issues, including touring. My officials have met with the Carry On Touring group previously, and I would be happy for them to do so again. This Government remains committed to enabling our creative sectors to thrive and supporting them in adapting to new touring arrangements post-EU Exit.

With best wishes,



Julia Lopez MP

**Minister of State**

**Minister for Media, Data and Digital Infrastructure**