



Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

Julia Lopez MP
Minister of State for Media, Data
and Digital Infrastructure
4th Floor
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

E: enquiries@dcms.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/dcms

1 March 2022

MC2022/02544/DC

Tim Brennan
Petition Creator and Campaign Director
Carry of Touring

info@devoconnect.co.uk

Dear Tim,

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport of 14 February 2022 regarding UK creatives and professionals touring in the EU. As the minister responsible for this area, I am responding on behalf of the Government.

As set out in our previous correspondence, the Government has worked hard to support the sector to adapt to new requirements. My letter of 2 November 2021 set out the Government's action in this area.

We have not stated that creative artists and professionals are able to tour freely. We have stated that 21 out of 27 EU Member States have confirmed they offer visa and work permit free routes for performers for some short-term touring. We have also stated that rules and definitions vary across Member States and so travellers should check with Member States' own guidance for more information before they travel.

Most of these Member States have confirmed that they offer visa and work permit free routes of at least 30 days, and many for up to 90 days, including many of the UK's biggest touring markets such as France, Germany and now, following close work between our governments and with industry, Spain. It is important that we recognise that these routes do exist, and are in many areas more workable than has at times been reported, to ensure our creative professionals are not discouraged from resuming touring activities.

The Government is working with those remaining Member States that do not allow visa or work permit free touring to encourage them to more closely align requirements with the UK's generous rules, which allow creative professionals to tour easily here. Following discussions, and having sought evidence from industry, Bulgaria and Croatia have also confirmed that they offer visa and work permit free routes for some touring activity.

As you know we are working closely with Member States, including Bulgaria and Croatia, to ensure their guidance is clear and accessible for UK nationals. We have published general [business traveller summaries](#) on GOV.UK and whilst not intended to be sector-specific, they do contain information that will help creative and cultural professionals to navigate Member State immigration systems. We have also developed sector specific '[landing pages](#)' for GOV.UK, aimed at the creative sectors, which will allow cultural and creative professionals to easily locate and access relevant guidance. We continue to welcome the input from stakeholders, including many of the organisations you reference, as part of this process.



You raise the issue of work permit exemptions. As set out in previous correspondence, during the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) negotiations the UK proposed expanding the list of activities for short term business visitors to cover musicians and their accompanying staff. This would have allowed musicians, artists and support staff to travel and perform in the UK and the EU more easily, without needing work permits, subject to Member State reservations. This proposal was rejected by the EU. The EU did not offer a visa waiver for paid activities during the 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. However nothing in this proposal would have compelled Member States to change their visa regimes for paid engagements. This proposal was incompatible with our manifesto commitment to take control of our borders nor would it meet the sector's needs. We do enable visa-free visits from EU citizens, but we wish to retain control of how we apply the policy.

Due to my current commitments, unfortunately I am not able to meet with you, but it is important to stress that my officials and I continue to work closely with the sector on this issue. I met with the sector in the Touring Working Group on 17 November, and since then I have had discussions with counterparts in target Member States, including meetings with the Greek Alternate Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Greek Ambassador on 2 December, and again with the Greek Ambassador on 14 December. I have also engaged with colleagues from across government on a variety of issues relating to touring, including as you note at the recent Westminster Hall debate, as well as responding to a number of parliamentary questions on the subject. In addition, my officials continue to work closely with the sector, including several meetings with stakeholders in recent months, including with members of the Carry on Touring campaign.

Thank you for writing, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued engagement on this important issue. I hope my response is helpful and that you are reassured that by continuing to work in collaboration with the music and wider creative industries, and directly with Member States, we can support the creative sectors to tour with confidence.

With Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julia Lopez MP
Minister of State
Minister for Media, Data and Digital Infrastructure