



Department for
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Dear Deborah,

Thank you for your letter of 27 April to the Prime Minister, following the evidence session he had with the Liaison Committee on 24 March. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

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.

Touring is a vital part of musicians and performers' careers, providing not only a vital income stream, but also enriching opportunities for cultural exchange across the world. Ending freedom of movement was an important commitment in the Government's 2019 General Election manifesto, and accordingly this ended with the conclusion of the Transition Period. Hence, while the negotiations could never have replicated in full the mobility arrangements that existed during our membership of the EU, the proposals we tabled would have addressed many of the challenges that performers and artists currently face, and we are disappointed that the EU did not agree to them, despite the mutual benefits to the creative industries on both sides.

We want musicians and other creative professionals to be able to tour easily abroad. Now that the negotiations have concluded and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement has been ratified, our focus is on helping the creative industries adjust to our new relationship with the EU.

As part of this, the DCMS-led Working Group - involving you and other signatories to your letter, as well as other sector representative bodies and a range of government departments - has been a vital forum to discuss these issues. The Working Group has sought to provide clarity regarding the practical steps that need to be taken by touring professionals when touring the EU. As you know, we have published sector-specific "landing pages" on gov.uk to help professionals navigate the guidance available online, as well as general business traveller guides for EU Member States. We welcome your contributions to the development of these products, and for your continued engagement with the Working Group as we explore further options for support.



I would now like to address the four measures you have proposed in your letter.

Negotiating a bespoke Visa Waiver Agreement with the EU

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement is the basis of our trading relations with the EU. We have always acknowledged that the end of freedom of movement would have consequences for touring musicians and performers.

Regrettably we do not believe the sector's visa waiver proposal is viable. The Commission would be likely to argue that any EU-wide visa waiver agreement can only be part of a wider package with a binding non-discrimination clause and a permanent reciprocal visa waiver agreement covering all current and future Member States. This was what the Commission proposed in the negotiations, and this remains incompatible with our manifesto commitment to take control of our borders.

While the EU has visa-waiver deals with some other third countries, these are non-binding in practice. This means that Member States can apply visas on paid activity, or even offer the same waiver regime to those with whom they don't have deals. We do enable visa-free visits from EU citizens, but we wish to retain control of how we apply the policy. No major G7 economy has agreed to lock in their visa systems with the EU.

However, our door is open if the EU is willing to reconsider our proposals made during negotiations. Where there are issues around the clarity of Member States' immigration rules we will also raise these with the European Commission. Lord Frost raised the issues facing touring performers at the Partnership Council with the European Commission on 9 June. The importance of touring was recognised, and the UK will continue to take forward positive discussions with Member States to support our creative and cultural sectors.

Negotiating bilateral agreements with key EU Member States

In April I met with the UK's Heads of Mission around Europe to emphasise the priority of this engagement with their European counterparts, and Embassies have now had discussions with every Member State to encourage them to make their rules and guidance around visas and work-permits clear and accessible. I have also been speaking to our ministerial counterparts in a number of key Member States, which have been going well. We have already spoken to Portugal, The Netherlands and Austria, and we will shortly speak to other Member States including Spain and Italy.

Through this work we have established that some touring activities are possible in at least 17 out of 27 Member States without needing visas or work permits. This includes France, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and many more.

Some Member States have already taken steps to improve their guidance, and we will continue to work with counterparts to promote the need for clarity. There are several organisations in the music and creative industries who have been producing their own guidance in this area, including the ISM, and we are keen to work with you to discuss our findings and ensure a clear and shared understanding.



However, we recognise the difficulties still being faced by the sector. We are now working closely with individual member states to encourage them to adopt a more flexible approach, in line with the UK's own rules which allow creative professionals to tour easily here.

Emergency funding package

I understand the sector's desire for transitional funding support to help with touring, and to have the confidence to book tours not only this year but in 2022 as well. We are looking closely at options here. We are also working with the Department for International Trade and the sector to look carefully at proposals for an ambitious Cultural Export Office.

Reducing the impact of road haulage and cross-trade rules

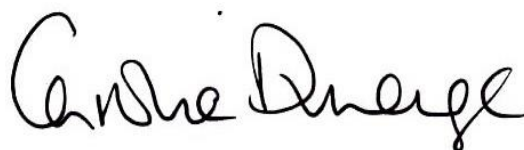
The Government recognises the leading position of the UK concert haulage sector and its importance for our sectors. The UK pressed for a special derogation from the cabotage restrictions for hauliers carrying equipment for the purpose of concert tours and similar activities. The EU rejected this.

The Department for Transport is looking at options, and we are working closely with them and the sector on this. It is worth noting that the EU has also tightened restrictions for EU hauliers on cabotage. This is a complex issue for which there are no simple solutions, but we are working closely to support the DfT in looking at what might be done.

Thank you for sharing the proposals you have raised above. I am grateful for the contributions you and many other creative and cultural stakeholders have made to these discussions to date, and would welcome your continued support in encouraging EU Member States to match the generous arrangements we provide for incoming creative professionals ourselves. It is vital for us to work together on these issues as we explore further how our sectors can be supported to work and tour in the EU with confidence.

I hope this information is helpful.

With best wishes,



Caroline Dinenage MP
Minister of State for Digital and Culture