

## Petitions Committee

### Oral evidence and E-petition session: Arrangements for UK touring professionals and artists in the EU, HC 1166

Thursday 4 February 2021

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Members present: Catherine McKinnell (Chair); Tonia Antoniazzi; and Nick Fletcher.

Scottish Affairs Committee Member present: Pete Wishart.

Questions 1 to 33

#### Witnesses

**I:** Tim Brennan, Petition Creator and Video Technician; Stuart Murdoch, Singer, Musician and Songwriter, Belle and Sebastian; Anna Patalong, Operatic Soprano; Emma Pollock, Performer and Co-founder, Chemikal Underground; Rakhvinder Singh, Violinist and Co-founder, Manchester Collective; Ian Smith, Founder, UKEartswork; and Yousef, DJ and Producer, Circus Recordings.



## Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Tim Brennan, Stuart Murdoch, Anna Patalong, Emma Pollock, Rakhvinder Singh, Ian Smith and Yousef.

**Q1 Chair:** Thank you for joining us for today's session on arrangements for touring professionals and artists in the EU. Pete Wishart, Chair of the Scottish Affairs Committee, is also taking part today. We had intended to be joined by members of the DCMS Committee, but unfortunately they are attending a meeting of their own Committee scheduled at this time.

Today's session has been prompted by a petition calling for the Government to seek a Europe-wide visa-free work permit for touring professionals and artists, which has now been signed by over a quarter of a million people. We are joined by the person who started the petition, Tim Brennan. To inform our work, we ran a survey of petitioners, music fans, artists and others working in the touring arts industry to hear their views. More than 15,000 people completed the survey, and we are really grateful to everyone who took the time to share their views. It has informed some of the issues that we will be discussing today.

Next week, we will be holding an e-petition session on this petition in which Members from across the House will be able to discuss the issues it raises and have the Minister respond. Ahead of that session, we thought it would be useful to hear directly from people from across the industry about how they will be affected by the changes to arrangements for touring professionals and artists whose work takes them to the European Union.

We had announced that opera singer Nicky Spence would be part of this session, but he has been called at short notice as a volunteer to assist with a vaccination clinic. I am sure everyone welcomes that work and understands very much why he cannot be with us today. Could each of our witnesses briefly introduce themselves, starting with you, Tim, as the lead petitioner?

**Tim Brennan:** Thanks, Chair. I am Tim Brennan. I have been a freelance video tech for around 30 years. Broadly speaking, I deal with all the large screens, video walls and stuff like that that you see at concerts and gigs.

**Stuart Murdoch:** Hi, folks. My name is Stuart Murdoch. I sing in the band Belle and Sebastian from Glasgow. We tour Europe and all round the world.

**Anna Patalong:** I'm Anna. I'm an operatic soprano, and I have been working professionally for about 10 years now. I tour all over the world, hopefully.

**Rakhvinder Singh:** Hi, I am Rakhi Singh. I am a violinist and the music director of a new organisation called Manchester Collective. We are about five years old, but I have been playing professionally for 20 years.

**Ian Smith:** Hi there. I am Ian Smith, and for the last 30 years I have been a musician, producer and engineer. I am the owner of two international agencies, working with everyone from Phil Rudd from AC/DC to Grammy award winners. I am a UK work sponsor, and a year ago I started



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ukeartswork.info, a free, non-commercial, apolitical website with exactly this in mind. So that's me.

**Yousef:** Hi, my name is Yousef. I am a touring DJ, and I have been on the road for over 20 years. I run a record label called Circus Recordings and a major events company called Circus, which is based in Liverpool. I am a producer, a mix engineer and a mentor for our scene in the last 12 months.

Q2 **Chair:** Tim, as the petition creator, could you briefly say why you started the petition? Have you been surprised by the level of support and interest it has received?

**Pete Wishart:** Just before he does, I think you have forgotten Emma Pollock.

**Chair:** I am so sorry, Emma. Excuse me.

**Emma Pollock:** Hello, it is lovely to see you all. My name is Emma Pollock. I have been a musician, performer and songwriter for a long time—over 20 years. We also run an independent record company, and have done for 25 years, called Chemikal Underground in Glasgow, and we run a recording studio, which I am sitting in at the moment, called Chem19. So I have quite an extensive experience of the music industry from both industry and performing.

**Chair:** Thanks, Emma—my apologies—and thank you, Pete. We will go back to you, Tim.

**Tim Brennan:** I started the petition because I wanted to make people aware that we face a real threat to our livelihoods as music touring professionals, and to highlight why artists, music and crew need to be able to continue touring freely throughout the EU, as we did prior to Brexit. Also I want to say that I am really encouraged by the amount of support that the petition has received. I checked just now and it was at about 282,000 signatures. It has been signed by people from all walks of life, and it really does show that live music is of major importance to people's lives.

Q3 **Chair:** Great. Thanks, Tim. I will come quickly to you, Rakhi and Anna, because I know you signed a letter in *The Times* in support of the campaign for a musician's passport. What prompted you to get involved in that? Is it the first time you have been involved in a public campaign like this?

**Anna Patalong:** I have been an ambassador for the Incorporated Society of Musicians for over two years now, so I have been stressing the importance of this issue for a fair while. There are lots of types of touring—there are bands with all their equipment, instruments and crew; orchestras, which have to plan for hundreds of people; and individuals like me who work contract to contract all over the place, jumping between countries and jumping in at very short notice. It's a huge part of our lives. Working in the EU has provided over 50% of my income throughout my career. On average it is about 45% of every musician's income, which obviously translates to tax revenue in this country, so it is not only an important issue for us; it is an important issue for the UK as a whole.



**Chair:** Rakhi?

**Rakhvinder Singh:** Having toured around Europe and further afield to China, Australia and the States, you notice the difference in the level of paperwork that you have to do. For every single organisation or individual, there is someone who has to do all of that paperwork. Often on tours you might visit a number of different countries. If the requirements for all of these countries become vastly different, it will probably mean 10 times the amount of paperwork that needs to be done now, which will probably inhibit touring.

**Chair:** Nick, do you want to ask some questions?

Q4 **Nick Fletcher:** Thank you, Chair. I should start by saying I am an avid music fan and I love going to see live performances. I have really missed it—obviously, not as much as you guys have—so 2020 was quite a sad year for not being able to see live music. I didn't realise until I started going through this how big the Europe problem is. Starting with the recording artists first, how much of your income comes from merchandising and ticket sales compared with what you would earn online? I know an awful lot of musicians earn a lot of money online these days. Let's start with Stuart.

**Stuart Murdoch:** We are probably at about 60% from touring these days. The picture has changed completely in the last 20 years. Musicians or people like us used to be able to make income from record sales, but we don't sell records any more; it went to streaming, so that completely dipped. Touring became a miracle, actually. The whole touring situation has been amazing. It has been like a bubble for the past 20 years, and that has been a godsend for us. We really don't make that much from merchandise, and we really don't make that much from streaming. We are all hoping that we will make money from streaming in the future, but touring is what we do so that we can get back in the studio and make more records. It's our bread and butter.

**Nick Fletcher:** Anna, would you like to answer that question?

**Anna Patalong:** Well, I don't have any merchandise.

**Nick Fletcher:** Will you get some?

**Anna Patalong:** Not yet, no, there's none of that. As Stuart says, there is no profit at all in streaming. All my work comes from live performance. As I said before, 50% of my entire career has been based in the EU. The visas that we are seeing at the moment are upwards of £400 or £600, so it will not be possible to continue that way, especially as we move from country very quickly. A thing in my profession is known as "jump-ins". If a singer gets sick, you get phoned up in the morning and a company will say, "Can you sing this role tonight?" Then you will be on a flight and will be out to Germany, France or wherever to sing the role that evening. Obviously, the pandemic has perhaps given some people a bit of breathing space, although not everybody, but it is also masking a lot of the problems. As soon as the performing arts world is back up and running again, I think we are really going to see the problems that are brewing underneath at the moment.



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**Nick Fletcher:** Thank you for that. Yousef, do you want to answer that?

**Chair:** I think Emma had her hand up as well. Yousef is unmuted, though, so he must be primed.

**Yousef:** There is a whole ecosystem around getting towards touring, whether it be in the UK, Europe or beyond, particularly in my scene. To be even a mildly successful DJ these days, you have to make music, have a record label, run your own events, maybe have a radio show, and do podcasts. You have to really build this momentum to build a fanbase and to be able to get these UK, European and international gigs. Like Stuart says, it is the lion's share of the income. After all this effort, you have created a cultural hub for yourself in your own country, but then you are unable to tour.

One of the positives of the internet is that you can put your music out and it can be heard all over the world very quickly. I disagree about Spotify, actually; I think sometimes Spotify can be an okay, steady income if you are prolific enough. But the important thing is touring. Like Anna, 50%, if not more, of my gigs around the year are in the EU. Some are in America, Australia and Asia, and some are in the UK, but the hub and the heartbeat of the whole electronic music scene is the UK. We export electronic music as our cultural phenomenon directly into the EU, and now that is becoming more and more difficult to venture into. It's going to be detrimental for an entire scene.

**Nick Fletcher:** Thank you for that. Emma?

**Emma Pollock:** I want to pick up on the mention of streaming. It is very difficult to have this conversation without touching on the changing landscape of the music industry, particularly over the last decade. As a company that basically sells records and recorded music as our business, we have seen an absolute and complete decimation of our income. It is probably down to about 10% to 20% of what it would have been with the same access 10, 15 or 20 years.

Basically, it used to be that you would go and play live as an act all over the world in order to sell records, because those records were the things that created the money. It has completely flipped. It is a really interesting situation now, where you put a record out as a calling card for people to come and see you play live. This is really the way that most musicians are managing to eke out some kind of existence. For many of us, that existence is a part-time career now, because there is not the same opportunity to call it a full-time career.

As a record company, we also see quite a lot of our artists who are really quite successful in certain parts of Europe. They need access to that territory—easy and flexible access—to be able to get over there in order not just to play, but to create visibility and awareness so that the streaming income can continue.



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Also, we are still selling physical records at gigs. At the end of the day, the profitability of the physical record versus the streaming equivalent is roughly 10:1. The profit is absolutely huge. It makes a massive difference to be in front of an audience in a room, then everybody goes to the merch table at the end and people tend to want to spend money on something they can take home and touch and play. So there is a huge benefit there to that access.

**Q5** **Nick Fletcher:** That comes on to one of my next questions. How important to your public profile and popularity is being able to perform your music to audiences, not just in the UK but in Europe and beyond? It is about public profile and how important that is. Can I go back to Stuart with that?

**Stuart Murdoch:** Yes—public profile. If Lady Gaga is Manchester United and Coldplay are maybe Norwich or QPR, we are sort of Crewe Alexandra or Doncaster Rovers; we are sort of middling. Emma talks about some people going part-time. I know a lot of people that have had to go part time. We hope that we don't have to.

We consider ourselves a working band and when we go on tour, the margins are so fine. With the charges for visas and paying for all your crew to come with you—we roll quite big, taking upwards of 20 people with us, even though we just play in theatres in Europe—the margins are very fine.

It is almost exponential. If you get above a certain level, you can start making real money, but at our level, nobody is getting rich. We are doing it because we love it. We have this phrase, "We're just trying to keep the party going." We just want to keep the party going into our 60s or something like that. We are happy to do it. We might be okay, but bands at our level and just below are really going to struggle with the extra money for crew and visas and all that kind of thing.

**Q6** **Nick Fletcher:** I love the phrase, "Keep the party going." I'll have to use that on Monday. I want the party to keep going for all of us. Anna, would you like to answer that, please?

**Anna Patalong:** Yes. Having access to those markets is an important part of raising the public profile, especially in my sector of the music industry. There are international competitions that people enter; I certainly entered, and that is where I got a lot of my work in the EU.

The whole music profession is about a complete cultural exchange. You have to have that exchange in order to build your profile, to get the work and to get the money, to get the tax revenue for the UK. Without access to these countries, or the access that we have currently, we as a nation look far less attractive to employers on the continent at the moment.

**Q7** **Nick Fletcher:** Thank you for that. I am going to move on, because I am conscious of time and we have a lot of questions to get through. Ian and Tim, could you describe your experience of planning or taking part in tours in Europe prior to Brexit and covid-19?

**Ian Smith:** I will drop into that; I am very happy to answer. Thanks for asking the question.



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One thing to say first is that although the focus is on musicians because of the petition and technicians associated with that, we are talking about the entire creative industries touring—that is dancers, actors, film makers, everybody. Given the amount of revenue that brings, and also the benefits in terms of good health and psychology for everybody and soft power throughout the world, we have been stymied a little by where we sit at the moment.

I started the site [ukeartswork.info](http://ukeartswork.info) a long time ago to try and give clear information, to try and eliminate some of the problems. Before we exited the EU, we could enter the Schengen area and perform anywhere we liked, with no need for carnets or any form of work permits at all. We now have a situation where in some countries, such as Germany and France, we have up to 90 days in any one year permit-free; the Netherlands is six weeks in 13 weeks; Spain is zero—we need work permits there; Portugal is the same. We have a mixed picture—a patchwork—everywhere else.

In terms of trying to plan logistically, one of the musicians may need to drop into a country for a couple of days' work. Many countries will allow you a certain amount of time without a work permit, some zero. Technicians, who are often on the road all the time, will go off one tour to another, maybe in a totally different genre or discipline, but they can no longer do that. That means, in effect, EU technicians will take those jobs. Musicians, and creatives generally, will find ourselves having to focus on those countries that, at the moment, give us free access to their markets.

It's a nightmare. The carnet situation, whereby a musician or a creative might drop into a country for a few days in a Schengen area, means that they will now officially need a carnet for any equipment, even a laptop or a microphone. Technicians with their toolboxes may go separately; officially they would need a carnet for that, which is a difficult situation.

One thing I would like to say, because everyone has alluded to it: the live and creative industries' engine room—the power plant that drives everything—is live, across the whole of the industry. It generates requirements for merchandise, records, albums, films and whatever. Those industries will also be affected, including the merchandising industries in the UK. I have been hearing a lot across Europe, because I work a lot in mainland Europe and the UK, that merchandise for bands or artists going into the EU will now be made in the EU to avoid import duties and VAT, because it is simpler. We will get quid pro quo, but that will be limited because of the size of the market in the EU and the UK.

Logistically it is a little bit of a nightmare. There are some solutions that I will allude to later, if people want me to, which I have been working on for some time, but that is where we sit at the moment—carnets, work permits and, of course, the bigger issues of cabotage, which I won't go into here, as everyone will fall asleep. It is a major issue. Maybe Tim would like to say something.

**Nick Fletcher:** Thank you for that. If time allows, your solutions would obviously be something that we could do with hearing.



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**Ian Smith:** Sure. They are very simple and straightforward. We can come back to that later.

**Chair:** I think Tonia was going to ask about some of those anyway, so we will definitely get to that.

Q8 **Nick Fletcher:** Can Tim answer that question please?

**Tim Brennan:** As Ian said, as freelancers we often move from tour to tour to tour. We can be out for months on end. Time limits are a big issue for us. The other big issue, which is now very real and about which I have been contacted by a lot of different freelancers, is that our work that has been booked ahead is being cancelled. The people who are cancelling that work are saying it is because they are looking for EU passport holders. People like me, with just a UK passport, have got no work.

Companies are sending out emails asking for EU status. I have been contacted by an American company that I used to work for quite a lot and they have said, "Well, we can't use you any more because the extra red tape is going to amount to too much." As UK freelancers, we look like we are going to be missing out massively.

It is not just about the EU tours. A lot of the time a US band will come into the UK and pick up someone like myself, and the kit and countless other technicians. They will take them on tour around Europe, and then at the end of it they will say, "Do you want to come to Australia? Do you want to go to South America? Do you want to move around?" That is where lots of our work comes from. If we lose out on the EU part—that crucial part where they first meet us—then we lose out on all of that worldwide work. You have 200,000 people who work in this industry, and we all risk losing our jobs, basically.

Q9 **Nick Fletcher:** Behind the scenes, what is required to put a tour together, and is there much difference with regard to festivals? I do not know who the best person to ask is.

**Ian Smith:** I come in as an agent. I run two music agencies and have done for 20 years, working with around 300 artists worldwide, including a lot of third country nationals. I will defer to Tim in a moment, but what is required when you are either putting together a tour or, as Stuart and Anna will say, dropping in for a couple of gigs, which is equally important and relevant, you have to look at the tour in terms of both cost and logistics—the logistics of being able to fly in or move between different countries. Obviously, within Schengen itself there are no physical borders—none that are actually maintained, except very rarely, when sometimes Hungary or someone else will do that.

In this situation, with Brexit and the requirements as third country nationals, you will have to potentially cover the carnet situation, the work permit situation and something that has not been mentioned yet. We often have to hire in or ask a promoter—an events person—to hire in backline: amplifiers or guitars and instruments of all descriptions. That will add to cost for the promoters.



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I have noticed that over the last 18 months, when I have been speaking to promoters in Europe at festivals and smaller venues, they are beginning to say, "What's happening after Brexit?" "Well, we're going to have to ask you to supply more equipment." That is an extra cost for the promoter, and that has been depressing the market and employability of UK-based artists, because we have to negotiate that in order to reduce their carnet costs. Carnet is a basic £360-plus—a percentage of the value of what you are taking. Obviously, if you can just take a guitar and a laptop, and you don't have to take amplifiers, etc, then that is a reduced cost.

You have to do backline hire. You have to do logistics with transport and travel, which is a cabotage problem. You have to now do individual work permits across the whole of Europe; the whole of the 27, being sovereign states, can have their own regulations and requirements. Then, on top of that, if you are bringing in merchandise, which I have to say for a lot of younger artists means the difference between profit and loss, then you have to arrange VAT payments and import duty payments into the EU and vice versa. Ironically—I will say this as the last thing—I am a UK-registered sponsor and have been for many years. It is actually easier for EU nationals, which I will come back to later, because of what has happened in terms of the UK Government giving 90 days with just the certificate of sponsorship—the same as for seasonal workers—to come into the UK, as one territory, than it is for EU nationals to go into the EU27.

Logistically, that is what we have to do when we are negotiating and working out how to actually work out a tour. That is true of everybody I have spoken about, in terms of the film industry, dancers, opera and classical music as well, sometimes, for longer periods of time. That is why Sir Simon Rattle, of course, has taken German nationality—so he can work around each of the 27 without having to deal with any of this, although I don't think he has a problem getting any work. Hopefully that is it, in a nutshell.

Sorry—the other thing is tech crew. You may have to source tech crew locally. We prefer to take them with us because it is easier in terms of language and the crew know the production very well—maybe they work on it all the time and for a long period of time—but now we may look at a situation where the bigger production companies will use the UK crew for the UK bit and then split it across different EU crews, which will begin to bring the quality of what we do down. It is much, much more difficult. It is not impossible—we will all still work—but in terms of bringing down availability and the possibility of working in Europe, we are in something of a mess. There are ways to ameliorate that and make it easier, but that is the situation when we are organising a tour.

Q10 **Nick Fletcher:** Yousef, are there any specific challenges for DJs?

**Yousef:** Yes, absolutely. In terms of touring and setting up a tour, we tend to do two or three countries over a weekend—sometimes in the same day. It is not unusual to do, say, Belgium on a Thursday, France on a Friday, Ibiza Saturday afternoon, Germany Saturday night and maybe Greece on a Sunday. For a lot of the guys, that is pretty standard in the height of the summer.



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But if you go through all these visa complications and difficulties—I have figured out, like Ian says, that there are about 15 countries with different restrictions—having to navigate each of them every week will be near impossible and unbelievably expensive. That takes us back to how, if you are a newer DJ trying to break through and your music has connected in, say, Germany, Greece or one of these places and you get offered a gig, it will be really hard for you to get to go and do it.

Now, one thing I want to make clear is that in the DJ community it is very important to get up the ladder by doing these key gigs. Say there is an important gig in Germany, Ibiza, Spain or something like that, and you are seen on the line-up or the bill and you can put it on your DJ CV that you have played these places, that will attract other promoters and give them confidence in you—for want of a better phrase—as a ticket seller or as a good DJ, and enhance your reputation. It is really important. You have to earn your stripes, essentially. Much like The Beatles did in the 1960s—they went over to Germany and earned their stripes, built a fanbase and came back—it is essential for DJs to get the foot in the door and build up the audience in these places. That is how it goes—particularly in Ibiza.

With Spain having like a zero-visa policy at the moment—I would say for almost all of my industry Ibiza, along with Madrid and Barcelona, is the absolute epicentre, with so many vitally important gigs—and of course with the amount of people who go to Ibiza, it is going to be really, really complex for Ibiza to even exist without a lot of the UK DJs being there. So it is going to be a very complicated scenario unless something is solved pretty quickly.

**Q11 Nick Fletcher:** Thank you for that; I understand where you are coming from. Anna and Rakhi, are there any specific challenges for being part of an ensemble that we have not already covered?

**Anna Patalong:** Obviously, as part of an ensemble it is all of this quadrupled. If you are part of an orchestra, there are all the carnets—it is hugely expensive. It has been mentioned before by pretty much everyone that each of the EU countries now has to find its own way on what visa arrangements it wants to make with us. I think a lot of EU countries are not quite sure what they are going to do because they did not actually expect Barnier's offer of the visa waiver agreement to be rejected. The visa waiver agreement is used as a general term across the world, so all the artists in the UK are now in a worse position than musicians in the Congo and Colombia. So we are urging that the UK speaks to the EU about a bespoke visa waiver agreement, which will not cover work permits but will cover the visa arrangements. That would go a long way to help the situation.

**Rakhvinder Singh:** I would like to echo everything that everyone has said. But Ian, you said we will carry on working, but I think that for some people this actually will mean they stop being able to work. I'm thinking of smaller groups. If you are going to make a loss from going abroad, you simply won't be able to do it. So, much as everybody would like to keep working, I think that in some instances it just won't be possible.

**Q12 Chair:** Potentially, some bands and DJs will never get to that point of



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establishing themselves, because they can't, as you described, Yousef, very well.

**Yousef:** May I just put one more point in? I suppose it is a bit of a dig. At a time when I and, I guess, most people on this panel have spent the last 11 months literally getting no support, or next to nothing, from the Government, for all sorts of reasons, it is particularly tough to be told that in the likelihood of us going back to work at some point it's going to be supremely difficult. So not only will we have had a year or 18 months of almost no income, but when we go back it's going to be really complex to even generate what we need to.

**Anna Patalong:** That is really important. Really, this is one of the easiest trade deals to do, because all we need is the access. The creative industries created £111 billion for the UK economy in 2019. We will continue to do that if we are allowed. If we are not able to, we are going to need far more support from the Government than we are receiving now. You are going to have far more unemployed people. You are not going to get the tax revenue that we are bringing in currently. So it's in everyone's best interests to find a solution that works.

Q13 **Nick Fletcher:** I don't think the Government realise that. Obviously, they are doing what they can, and I'm pretty sure things will move on fairly swiftly. We saw the news last night, and the issues that you are all actually having to go through at this time are becoming quite apparent. This is an evidence session: it is to help us and the Government to understand what you are actually going through, so it's really important that you do let us know exactly what you are going through—it is super-important. I have one final question—or do you want to come in, Chair?

**Chair:** I am conscious of time, but obviously we want to make sure that everything is covered, and I know Emma wanted to come in as well. I am just conscious that Tonia has a lot of questions and Pete has as well. But if you think it will leave a hole in the evidence otherwise, do go ahead.

Q14 **Nick Fletcher:** No, no. Emma, do you want to come in? Then we'll move on to the other questions.

**Emma Pollock:** I wanted to make a very broad point. I know that we are likely to talk about a lot of practical issues that are barriers at the moment; that is what the focus will be on today. But we must not forget where this legacy that we have of 60 years of music has come from. It has come from an extraordinary growth and development of talent that we have basically seen since the '50s and '60s, and that has developed into one of the most prevalent popular music scenes—the same is true for classical, folk and all the genres—all across the world.

We have a 10% share of the global recorded music industry. That is absolutely extraordinary. And the fact that Chemikal Underground, as a Glasgow independent record company, has basically been able to sign pretty much most of our artists for the world is an extraordinary testament to the faith that artists all around the world put in the reach that a UK-based music company has today.



If we are not careful with what happens next, we are going to start to erode that standing and start to erode the potential of the new artists who are coming up at the moment, who are actually already finding it extraordinarily difficult as a result of what streaming has done to their income. We must protect the live industry and access to it, and do so for our crew, who are equally talented and extraordinarily good at what they do—again, because of the experience that being a UK crew member has given them.

**Nick Fletcher:** Thank you. And thank you, Chair.

Q15 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** The questions I have are about the impact of post-Brexit changes to work and travel rules.

Ian, you have touched on a few of these questions, so do not feel that you have to repeat yourself, but we need to pick some of them out. You created this website that provides artists with visa and permit information for 29 countries. What did your research tell you about the burden of new requirements that artists and touring professionals face?

**Ian Smith:** I am very happy to answer that. I started the site a year ago, to help. It is non-commercial; we just want to try to help the industry. The situation is that we are all now treated as third-country nationals. To return to what was said a moment ago about still being able to work, we will, but with added burdens. The main burden will be carnet.

The terms visa and work permits are used interchangeably, so to avoid confusion, let's just say work permits. We have 90 days in any 180 at the moment as tourists for non-work. The deal is this: before, we could work in any of the EU 27 and some of the countries that were part of the economic area, as well. Now we have to navigate not only differences across each of the countries, but changes that will happen in time. There has been a lot of talk about bilateral deals with individual countries, which will take years, if not decades, to try to sort out.

As I said before, on the website you will see 27 countries, maybe a few more, as well as links to the official Government websites for each of those countries regarding what is required. A musician, actor, dancer, or filmmaker may go, for example, to Germany and France more often now because it is easier in terms of work permits. You can go and have 90 days in any year. In Germany, they also allow that for support staff—technicians, etc.—but in the Czech Republic it is 14 days in any one year, in Poland it is 30 days in any one year, and in Spain and Portugal, as we said, it is nothing unless you get a work permit in advance.

It is far more complex. On Barnier's offer, I can return to the detail of the argument later, because I have a potential solution for that that I have been talking to people in the industry about, but maybe that is not for this moment. In terms of carnets, there is quite a simple solution to keep us going until we can get that cleared later. The restriction is that whenever we go over a Schengen border—UK-EU, in both directions—we will need a carnet. We will not require a visa, because we are non-visa nationals. Even if you go to Italy, Spain, or Portugal, you don't need a visa, unless you are working.



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The other thing I must say now—this is very important—is that we have a lot of UK nationals living in the EU. We have UK nationals who may have residence in an EU country. They only have the right to work in that host country and the UK. If you are an Irish passport holder, you can carry on working everywhere; you will still need a carnet, but you can carry on working. We have this differential rate everywhere, which is very difficult, because you may include in your band or theatre retinue EU nationals, Irish nationals and UK nationals. However, to tour that whole area from now on you must have in place a very clear idea of what the allowances are.

I have one last thing to say on this: it is not an issue of one person in that retinue. If you have mixed allowance within that retinue, you will have 90 days in a year for Germany for everybody, but if you are an EU citizen, you can work as long as you like. If you are a British citizen living in Austria or the Czech Republic, you can only work in that country, and that is out of your allowance of 190 days in any one year. This is why there has been a lot of confusion. Also, Members of Parliament have got a little confused over the 30 days in the UK and 90 in Europe. It is not: it is 90 days in Europe for general touring, but it is 90 days free if you have a certificate of sponsorship in the UK. I can go into more detail if you want, but that is the problem.

**Q16 Tonia Antoniazzi:** Everybody else is at a different stage, aren't they? How aware are you of those issues? I think "increasingly aware" is the answer. What impact will it really have on you and your careers? I'll go around everybody, but let's start with Tim.

**Tim Brennan:** As I said earlier, the impact on my career personally, and on the careers of other freelancers in the UK, will be that we will just be passed over. People are going to start using EU technicians in place of us, because it is cheaper, and they will not need to do the 27-odd visas and permits that we will require. That is the big thing for us: we will just end up losing out on our work, really.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:** Emma, what is the issue for you?

**Emma Pollock:** Twofold, I guess, because I am here with two hats on. Personally, I basically lose access to shows in Europe in particular. Spain is an interesting one; it is a country that I have seen a certain amount of success in over the years, and it will be very, very difficult to tour over there now.

From a record company perspective, all our artists will be impacted with regards to the potential to tour. Their own personal income will be impacted. Our sales of actual records will be impacted as a result of their not being able physically to get into the country to tour and sell records—awareness will drop. It feels as if everything about the UK music experience will shrink, which is really not a good thing.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:** Stuart?

**Stuart Murdoch:** I just want to back up what Emma is saying. It is such a pity; we are the rock and roll country, you know? It is like sending the English football team off to play the World cup, but they are only allowed to



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play nine players. It really will put the kibosh on us, and we are doing so great.

I have to speak for our crew as well. They are not just technicians. Our crew are part of the band, and it would be so sad. We have to take them everywhere—we love those guys—and they are so skilled. As Ian was saying earlier, we would probably have to hire crew in Europe to do their job. We would not do that, so we would probably not play the gig. I also have to speak for bands who are smaller than us and up-and-coming bands. The margins for us are fine, but folk below us are now looking at not playing the gig.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:** Rakhi?

**Rakhvinder Singh:** Most classical music organisations in the UK are made up of a management team and the artists. I just think it will be a huge drain on the resources of the management team. I know that to organise a tour to China, the office will work for a year to make that happen. You will not be able to take one-off gigs in Europe; it will be a nightmare to organise tours. It means that, given the resources that have to go into that, I just do not think that there is the space within classical music organisations for them to do that. Everybody works really hard as it is to survive and keep our classical music industry thriving and leading, and there just isn't the space. People work extra hours as it is. It means a lot more resources.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:** Anna?

**Anna Patalong:** Personally, as everyone has said, there is the fear of contracts being suspended or withdrawn, more money going into visas, and agents working every hour god sends to try to figure what is going on with these things. We have to remember that this is not just for us and the people who are working here now. I also work for the British Youth Opera, which brings the next generation through. There are tens of thousands of opera singers—let alone every other type of musician you can possibly think of—coming through the ranks. This will affect all those people for generations to come.

The classical music world in the UK is completely oversaturated as it is; that is why we spend 50% of our time going abroad to work, so that we have this cultural exchange. People have temporarily—we hope—left the industry already because of Covid and they have been propping up the economy. A perfect example is Nicky going off to volunteer for vaccinations today. People have turned to become ambulance drivers, to supermarkets—these are all performing artists who no longer have the work and need money. What is the reward going to be for them when we come out of this? We need these arrangements to be put in place as quickly as possible.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:** And Yousef?

**Yousef:** I will just echo what everyone has said, really. I mean, there are so many complications. I and most DJs spend so much time in Spain. Without any exaggeration, I could go to Spain maybe 15 or 20 times a year



and then in the summer I will go to Portugal, Malta—I am just looking at the list here. Italy—Italy is another huge market for electronic music and it will be made very, very complex for us to continue that.

Like I say, we all work extremely hard. One point that I want to make quickly is that most DJs do not just play records or music at the weekend; we are all full-time entrepreneurs. We spend all week working on, say, our record labels, our events—anything to contribute to this moment. So, we could do like a 40-hour week and then we travel at the weekend. So we want to get flights in and out, do what we've got to do and get home, usually to our families these days.

With all these additional complications, like getting a visa to just go to India or something, even though that has been set in stone for many years, it is still so complex, so time-consuming and expensive. You have to queue in London, and wait all day, and all these things. This is going to be the norm for all these places in Europe. It's going to be devastating.

**Q17 Tonia Antoniazzi:** Yes. Ian, I am going to come to you again, anyway. Do you want to add to that?

**Ian Smith:** I do, because there is something that has been said recently on another Sub-Committee—the Lords EU Services Sub-Committee—on 21 January. It has been said by the Government that they will help us all with payments for work permits and carnets. Money is not the problem; it's not the problem at all. It is about access—ease of access—to the markets. I think that is really important to note.

I know that everyone is saying it's expensive, it's more complicated, with more admin, and we don't have enough capacity, but it is not about money, really, although it would be great to have some in the situation we are all in at the moment. It's that essential—sorry, that's what I wanted to say. And by all means, come back.

**Q18 Tonia Antoniazzi:** It ties back in quite nicely actually, Ian. In our survey, 24% of the respondents said they typically visit six or more countries in one trip. You have spoken at length about how that isn't feasible. There are all separate requirements for each state. You also touched on the solution. Would you like to take this opportunity now to talk about that solution?

**Ian Smith:** Okay, bear with me everybody, because it is not too long but it is detailed. I have been working on this for the last couple of weeks. As I mentioned earlier, I am a UK sponsor, which means that I can give out certificates of sponsorship to third-country nationals coming to the UK. I am solely responsible for doing that and I am solely responsible for monitoring them while they are in the UK.

The reason I am telling you that is this: Mr Barnier, it was reported, had made an offer to the UK for work permit/visa-free access for 90 days in any one year. The UK Government said that wasn't the case. I am not here to talk about blame, or whatever else. It doesn't matter; it's irrelevant. We need a solution.



The EU insisted on 90 days without any documentation or requirement for a work permit. That is partly down to their *acquis* in law relating to the EU treaty, but I am not going to go into that; everyone will go crazy. The reality is that if the UK had not insisted on a certificate of sponsorship, which in everybody else's language is a work permit—because, rightly so, they said that they wanted to keep control of the border, take back control and stop freedom of movement.

So, the deal is this: in one year's time approximately, on 1 January 2022, ETIAS comes into place. For anybody who has done any touring, it is like an ESTA in the US; it is a little different. ETIAS will require anybody and everybody from a third country to request access to the Schengen area in advance. It is not a visa; it is just pre-authorisation.

If the UK Government could do something similar, and in the same breath take back more control of our borders and security and stop freedom of movement, that could sit on top of the visa system in the UK. By simply having a tick box on either system, you could allow for an exempted occupation. If Barnier had offered 90 days in any year for creatives, and the UK could offer the same thing without a certificate of sponsorship, or by instituting a similar system, we would instantly get rid of that requirement for a work permit in the UK and in any one of the EU27. There is my solution.

Q19 **Chair:** Why wouldn't the Government do this?

**Ian Smith:** I can't think of a good reason. The Government wants to exert greater control over our borders and to stop freedom of movement. We already have a visa system called tier 5 creative and sporting and permitted paid engagements, which are no longer necessary unless you are over in the UK for a long period of time.

By the way, the killer in all this is that a certificate of sponsorship—this has just been confirmed to me by a visa expert—will cost the actual sponsor nothing. Obviously, the certificate of sponsorship sponsor may charge something for admin—£20, £30, £40 or whatever. But the reality is that a sponsor, on putting in our information from EU creatives, is totally responsible for issuing that certificate of sponsorship. If it is flagged on the system, which I have never known in 15 years, obviously it would be stopped. At the moment, that is the only thing that is required for 90 days' work in the UK for an EU creative or possibly technician.

That is my potential solution, which I have been pitching to various people in industry over the last couple of weeks. It came to me on a long walk.

Q20 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** That is quite interesting. We have spoken about the impact that this will have on British workers, and how a British crew might not be able to travel with you, so you might have to use an EU crew. Would your solution solve that problem?

**Ian Smith:** Yes, because those would be exempted categories under what Barnier said they were offering for businesspeople and so on. From my perspective, I cannot see a downside to this from the Government side, because they are exercising control over freedom of movement—you have



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to apply for access to the UK before you even come here, like with the ESTA in the United States. There would be a cost, of course. It is a computer system, so maybe it will take 20 years to come in—I am kidding, but maybe if they put in a lot of resources, we could do that.

EU ETIAS comes in on 1 January 2022 and has to be in force totally by the end of next year. That means that we have no choice—we have to do this anyway, as third-country nationals; if you are resident in an EU state, you do not have to. If you have a system on top of the UK visa system, whatever it might be called, that is compatible with ETIAS, you can have a tick box on both for exempted occupations, and the immigration officer at the border says, “You’re a creative. Are you coming in for work?” “Yes, I am, but I am on this.”

Let us face it: if a creative is coming in for work without any equipment, they shouldn’t, but they could go into Schengen and work without letting the authorities know, which is a very bad idea. However, there is no reason in my head—I have thought about it and thought about it—unless there is a treaty problem and Barnier did not have the authority to make that offer, and we are exploring that with other people, through the MU, the ISM and so on at the moment. It could be a game changer. There is another one for carnets, but I will give you that a little later on.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:** I was going to touch on carnets, but I will hand back to the Chair, because I am very aware of time.

Q21 **Chair:** To be honest, Tonia, I thought you were going there, so I was going to ask what the solution is for carnets and those goods.

**Ian Smith:** Are you ready for this? It is really easy, this one. It is easier than ETIAS and whatever the UK Government might do. Okay, this is the solution for carnets. Our community are creatives, and we are used to finding solutions very quickly to big problems—getting on stage when the power has gone off or whatever.

The reality is that for many, many years, there has been an informal exemption for musicians carrying instruments or other items across borders. The same is true for toolboxes for crew—I checked that this morning. Strictly speaking, there should be a carnet for a toolbox and so on, but what we need from the UK Government urgently is clarification on whether or not we still have that clearance for what are known as portables. If UK customs will allow us to carry through, say, a guitar, a violin, a ‘cello or a set of bagpipes—I am a piper, so I had to say that—you obviate the need for smaller outfits and solo musicians to even have a carnet. That means that if you are carrying through your instrument, that’s fine.

A carnet is normally all the equipment that you would normally import and export on a temporary basis. You may have 10 guitars, but you can have a slip that says, “I’m just taking one or two.” They are expensive. They are necessary because of international trade agreements and law, but there is a way around this. If we could get clarity on portables from the UK Government via Customs and Excise and HMRC, and equally clarification



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from the EU for Schengen, the law for anybody carrying a DJ deck or a laptop—I won't go into too much detail on this—is that there is a legal treaty or legislation that allows you to self-declare a small, portable instrument by just walking through the green channel. You do not have to physically say anything.

We will publish all this on the website later. I am more than happy, at the end of this session, to send to the Committee the findings that we have and any references. I would be very, very happy to send them to you. If we can reduce carnets and get to a point where we can have this exemption—obviously not for musicians and artists who are staying for more than three months in the EU—that will make a massive difference.

**Chair:** Okay. I have many questions, but I will bring in Pete, and hopefully we can have some time at the end.

**Q22 Pete Wishart:** Thank you, and hello everybody. It is nice to see you all. I would first of all say to Stuart Murdoch that I always thought that Belle and Sebastian were more the Leicester City of British music—I think that is much more appropriate than Crewe Alexandra.

In my 15 years as a touring musician and 20 years as a Member of Parliament, I have never known a set of conditions like this, where the Government has come into conflict with musicians. I can't think of one example or one issue—it just hasn't happened—that has led Sir Elton John to phone up the Culture Secretary and to a whole slew of our top performing artists writing a passionate letter about the condition of the industry and their concerns about what is happening, and demanding that something gets done about it.

I am a vice-chair of the all-party parliamentary group on music, I have spoken on DCMS issues regularly for about 15 years, and I chair the all-party parliamentary intellectual property group. Usually what we talk about when it comes to music-related issues are things like the copyright directive and framework—issues to do with IP—and how things come together in various EU directives. That is now part of history. Obviously, we talk about issues to do with the monetisation of streaming services and the digitisation of music, which happened about 15 years ago. There were huge issues around that, but I have never known a period like this.

It is not a comfortable place for Governments to be. You wouldn't want to be the Secretary of State for DCMS or the Prime Minister having to take calls from senior musicians and being in conflict with the music industry. It strikes me that they would be doing practically everything to get themselves off this particular hook. That is the thing that surprises me: they are not making any great efforts to do that. I think they will have to. I think something will have to come up.

I like Ian's semi-solution. I think there is a lot in that, and I would like to talk to you further about it in advance on Monday, because that has to be proposed. I suspect and suggest it might run up against the obsession with ending freedom of movement, which seems to be the driver of all the difficulties that we have. I think there would be particular problems with



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some of the points at tier 5 and the rest of the points-based system, and there might be issues around all that. It is a valuable thing to present and promote, particularly when we are looking at ETIAS coming in next year. That provides another opportunity to have a look at this.

I have not been a touring artist for 20-odd years now, so I am interested in the impact of all this. But it is not just the touring visas issue that concerns me; it is the whole package of Brexit—the ending of freedom of movement and leaving the single market. There are other things, like national insurances to be negotiated with up to 27 countries, and there are issues to do with income tax and the cost that will have on accountants. When I was touring, it was the merchandise that could sometimes make or break a tour. How will that be affected?

I am interested to hear your views. We have heard quite a lot about the number of days that you can spend in various countries. This is something that still confuses me. I am not entirely sure just what the arrangements are for how many days a band can tour Europe. I see that Ian has his hand up, so he will help me out with that one. I understand that the figure of 90 days is kicking around, but I know there are different arrangements in other countries. If I was a member of Belle and Sebastian and I was preparing my next tour—you have assembled your crew, transport and all your logistics, and you are looking to tour Germany, France, Denmark, Sweden, Italy and Spain—how do you negotiate spending time in these countries? How is that organised? Who do you have to speak to about doing that? I'm looking particularly to Ian to help me with this question, because I have not quite got my head around that at all.

**Ian Smith:** It's actually quite straightforward, but it is making everyone confused. The situation is that we all have 90 days in any 180. Within that allowance, you can work in a particular EU country according to their regulations. The problem is that each of the countries usually specifies how many days in a year. Germany is 90 days in any one year, permit free. So is France. The Netherlands is six weeks in any 13. But that all comes out of your allowance of 90 days in any 180. If you spend 10 days in the Netherlands, three days in Germany and seven days in France, that's 20 days—that is out of your 90 out of 180. There are two levels to it. There is your top level, in terms of how long you can be there without a visa—we don't need visas at all in Schengen. But each one of those days that you spend working in any of the other 27 is taken off that 90 out of 180.

There is something else that I have to tell you. I have become an ultra EU nerd through all of this, which has driven me mad. It's not normal—trust me, I would rather be working with the gear behind me. If a state—for example, America or Canada—has done a deal that pre-dated the arrangements for Schengen, its citizens can spend 90 days in any of each of the 27 states. They can do 90 days in Germany, 90 days in France and 90 days wherever. That is the difference between the two. You have 90 days in 180 as a UK citizen, and you can spend an amount of that time working. But each time you work in a different state, you have a different allowance in that state.



**Q23** **Pete Wishart:** I think I understand that. Thanks, Ian, for a valiant effort and attempt to try to describe what is a really complex issue. I think I am closer to understanding it. For a tour manager assembling a tour, it must be a nightmare.

Maybe Emma or Stuart can answer my next question. When you are assembling your crew, what size are we talking about? I think Runrig operated at roughly the level that Stuart is at, and I know that when Mogwai are touring, it's maybe just that little bit bigger when they are assembling their crews and their touring apparatus and infrastructure.

What is it that you take when you are going on tour? Can you just give us a sense of what the crew involves? I know there are some things—there is the need for accountants now. When we toured, we had caterers. There would even be two or three truck drivers if you were touring with a couple of trucks. Can you just give us a sense of what you need to assemble and what impact all this is going to have on the size of your crew, and possible cutbacks that you are going to have to make in order to try and make this profitable? Emma, maybe you could help us with that.

**Emma Pollock:** Sure. I am going to answer this in two tiers, actually, because I have lived the life of being in a band, which was together from '95 to 2005. We toured extensively around the world and we toured repeatedly in Europe and North America, and we went to Australia and Japan at times as well. That experience was: you've got crew, a tour manager, a tour bus that you basically arrange, and you take your gear over to Europe on the ferry. You've got guitar techs and stage managers. Basically, you've got a crew, and you've got a tour manager to answer all of those tricky questions that Ian has just gone through, which would basically be required now, in the new world that we are in.

But my situation for the past 10 years has been as a solo artist, and my situation has completely changed. I now go to Europe completely alone, with maybe one or two other musicians, so every single administrative and practical challenge has to be met by me as an individual musician. That's okay because I am up for the challenge and, because I have been in the music industry for 25 years, I am more than well versed in how to go find the solution to a problem. The trouble is that, for a younger artist who maybe doesn't have the confidence, the wherewithal or the money for the support to pay a tour manager, this could basically be enough to be the disincentive and for them not to do it at all. That really is the worry.

**Q24** **Pete Wishart:** Stuart, you made the very good point that your crew become your best pals. You are spending months together and sharing a fantastic experience. Touring Europe is just amazing. It is great fun. It is not just something that we all like to do as musicians; there is a huge cultural impact and environment to the whole thing. Could you give us a sense about what the crew would be composed of, and would this necessitate any cutbacks in the people that you would take out with you?

**Stuart Murdoch:** Well, we are not as fancy: we don't take caterers; we just eat on the road. We put everything into the show. All the money goes into the show. It is not just that they are our pals. We are constantly working on



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the show as we go—we are creating the show; with the video stuff that we do, we are editing. Our guys are doing that and making the show better all the time.

We have a tour manager, a production manager and three backline crew. We used to take session musicians as well, but that becomes more difficult; we will probably have to get our session musicians in Europe now, rather than them touring with us. There are seven in the band, plus the crews. We are on two buses—two sleeper buses. That is the most economic way to do it, really. It is also the safest way. It means that nobody gets lost—everybody is on the bus.

Q25 **Pete Wishart:** I think I remember one famous episode with the Belle and Sebastian tour bus involving one of your members of the band.

**Stuart Murdoch:** That is the thing. You would think it was safe, and then we left the drummer in North Dakota that one time, in a Walmart. It is probably the thing we will be best remembered for. But yes, everybody is on the bus. Also, we are trying to make this thing green as well. We are trying to make it as green as possible, so the bus is probably the best way to do it. That is for tours. In the summertime, we are in and out of Europe maybe six or seven times during the summer. A lot of that is flying in and flying out for festivals, and we strip things back for that.

Q26 **Pete Wishart:** What about the solo artists? Is this going to have an impact? I am thinking of DJs, ensembles and so on. You travel light anyway. Is all of this going to have an impact on how your touring arrangements are going to be assembled?

**Emma Pollock:** Quite often, you will go and play shows at a loss in order to invest in the possibility of being invited back to Europe for bigger festivals, because they are the things that really can pay an awful lot more money. As a solo artist, it is far more work to take on now, without that support of being in a band and having all of those tasks shared across a number of personnel. It just becomes so difficult. A lot of artists are solo these days not because they chose to be, but because the economics of the current situation forces it to be the case. This is just another barrier.

**Yousef:** My concern is about people who are at mid-level and below—for them to be able to break through. As has been mentioned, they have less experience and less resilience to be able to deal with all of these on-the-road eventualities. People at my level have managers and agents and stuff like that, and we can circumnavigate some of this, possibly. But when you are trying to break through, the economics of it simply won't stack up. It is going to be really difficult, especially, like I say, if you are doing a couple of entry-level gigs over the weekend and you have to get through all these hurdles just to get your foot on the ladder. It is going to almost evaporate the next generation, potentially.

Q27 **Pete Wishart:** You are all established artists—what are your agents, tour promoters and all your European agents saying about this? You will have different agents you work with for different territories in Europe. Are they now more nervous about promoting UK artists when they see this?



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**Chair:** I think Rakhi and Emma were going to come in on the previous question, and then I think Ian wants to come in on the agent side. Rakhi, go on.

**Rakhvinder Singh:** It kind of ties in. We become far less attractive for people to book. If it is a toss-up between booking someone up and coming from a region that is easy to navigate and booking from the UK where there is extra paperwork, I think the choice will always go to less paperwork, so we become far less attractive for promoters. It is more work for them, not just more work for us.

**Pete Wishart:** And Emma? It is quite hard to keep an eye on all these things.

**Chair:** Sorry, it was Anna who wanted to come in. Sorry, Emma.

**Anna Patalong:** For us, there are promoters, contractors and agents that I know have been working around the clock since the beginning of the year, and not just to sort out what is happening going forward. We have contacts in the diary for the next three years and it is about trying to sort those out and get visas for them. These contracts are worth hundreds of thousands of pounds, and there is no certainty at the minute that they can actually go ahead. Once we are all hopefully through the pandemic, there is no certainty that any of these contracts will actually happen.

As Rakhi said, in terms of being booked abroad, there are so many avenues that are now possibly closing to us. We don't have the ability to actually go and promote ourselves over there. We become far less inviting with all of this paperwork and the money attached to all of that paperwork. It is far easier, in an oversaturated industry, to book somebody that is there on the doorstep.

Also, in my line of work, we have to travel all the time for auditions, and that, again, would eat into our 90 days' free time, which would leave any paid work, if we can actually use that paid work in what remains of the 90 days, a lot less time. You can spend weeks out of a year auditioning abroad in various countries.

Q28 **Pete Wishart:** I'm grateful. Thank you for that. Did Ian want to come back?

**Chair:** Yes, Ian was going to come in on the agent question.

**Ian Smith:** To put this into context, for the last 12 years, although I have been working for 20 years as an agent and tour manager, and musician occasionally, I have been dual-based in the UK and Vienna in Austria. I have a big network of friends. I am an agent mainly, a manager occasionally, and a producer.

I am also in touch with most of the EU27 music export officers, because I have done presentations on this for the last nine months or so. It has been insane. The problem is this. It is about not only the ease of making sure the artists can come in and being sure that they can, because of the work permit



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situation. We had uncertainty 18 months or two years ago, so the promoters and the agents I was speaking to were saying, "What's going to happen after Brexit? How can I book this show?" It is more for the classical world and other aspects of the world that are longer term in terms of bookings—so a year, 18 months. We have a situation now where they are aware of the problems with work permits and so on. Okay, we can maybe get round that. There is also the problem of carnets, which you have mentioned, but that increases costs for the local promoter because we are being asked to book in backline, or even instruments.

So a UK-based band with UK-based citizens in it might want to avoid having to bring extra equipment. I know musicians do not always want to use other instruments, but sometimes they will. Then we talk to the promoter and we say, "That's €1,000 or £2K", or whatever, "and we need backline." "Okay." "Drums, bass guitar, lead guitar, amp." "Yeah, fine." "By the way, we also need two guitars and a keyboard." "Well, they normally bring them." "Yeah, but it's cheaper now for us not to have to bring them." Ironically, if we can get the promoters to even book the show, which is more difficult, there are extra costs there, and the revenue that is being made is going to the local backline companies in Europe. So that is the difficulty, and it is happening all around.

I am an agent working both in the UK and the European Union at the moment, but I have friends throughout the UK who are agents. Agents work their asses off. What people tend to forget is that agents only get paid commission usually. For every 20 phone calls, you might get one that works. So, in terms of that, across Europe now, it is more difficult—not so much the uncertainty, but it is about cost as well, so it is depressing the market for UK musicians.

**Q29 Chair:** We have about seven minutes left. I want to prepare you all for your final comments. If we have not already covered something that you think is absolutely crucial that MPs need to know before the debate on Monday and that you want put on the record, get that into your final comments.

Also, we have heard an awful lot about how this impacts you as artists and the industry more generally, but something that perhaps the public are not alive to yet is how our vibrant artistic and musical scene might be diminished—whether we will have less access to seeing artists and whether we will end up paying more to see artists. It would be helpful to get any insights that you might have about where this could go if it is not put right. We will go to each of you for a one-minute final comment and any thoughts you might have.

**Rakhvinder Singh:** We haven't spoken about collaboration. So much amazing work is done through collaboration when different cultures meet and create something new together, so I think new creations and potential new connections will be hugely limited.

**Q30 Chair:** Ian agrees with you. Who would like to go next?



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**Ian Smith:** I am going to say all of this in one minute. Totally what I was going to say, Rhaki. It is going to diminish not only our ability to enjoy music from our own country and creative arts from the UK but also collaborations. You have got to remember, we are a huge creative community around the world.

Creatives are like no other group, in terms of being able to work together through music or visual arts. It is very easy, in some ways, and this is causing a problem that is making that far more difficult. The general public will not have as big an access to breaking artists and young artists from the EU, because they can't afford to come in, and vice versa in the EU.

Audiences will become more disenchanted because they can't see the people they want to see. The ticket pricing won't affect very much because, frankly, in the industry we all work in, particularly the music industry, the business side of it and the back end of the music industry will find ways around that, in terms of what they make financially.

A big issue, which has not been touched on very much and which will affect everything, is cabotage. It is a big issue generally for touring. In fact, I was talking to the MU a few days ago. Apparently, the tonnage, which is currently 3.5 tonnes, is dropping to 2.5 tonnes soon. That will mean that all vehicles under 2.5 tonnes will come under the cabotage rules, which means that we won't be able to get around. That is really important, but not for now. Thank you very much everybody. I appreciated being part of this.

Q31 **Chair:** Thank you. Emma, I know you wanted to come in before. Do you have some final thoughts for us?

**Emma Pollock:** Sure. The whole of the arts industry in the UK is in the balance here. We need to look at the future of record sales, the music industry, awareness of UK acts, new and existing legacies. All of this depends on access to the right experience. That starts here and extends to Europe, and further afield. We need to preserve this.

Q32 **Chair:** And Anna?

**Anna Patalong:** This isn't about pro-EU or anti-EU feeling any more. This is about the Government's commitment to champion UK industries. The creative industries bring in £111 billion a year. As I said, it is the easiest trade deal that you could possibly do. You just need the right channels, and we will do the rest of the work for you, as we have been doing for generations previously.

In terms of how the wider public can understand this, we bring in so much tax revenue from our EU gigs. If we are not able to continue doing that, the whole UK economy is going to suffer massively. The creative industries are far bigger—not that there is a competition—and we bring in far more than fishing. I think we deserve to be spoken about to a similar extent.

**Yousef:** I really echo that, Anna; absolutely. Some factors of Government are not taking it seriously, unbelievably. It is as if we are children playing in the toy room who occasionally come out. That is not the case at all. It is a



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very serious business, run by hard-working music enthusiasts and entrepreneurial people, and people who do not ask for any support under normal circumstances. We just get on with it, make it happen and fend for ourselves.

Like I said earlier on in the discussion, this is no time to be putting any more restrictions in place. If anything, we should just wipe them out for the interim, while we are trying to get back on our feet, and discuss it later on.

**Anna Patalong:** To add to that, as you said, the performing arts industries have been the worst affected by the pandemic. We are really going to need some support—and we do not need any more problems in getting going. We need the support and the concern of Government to allow this thriving UK industry to thrive again.

**Stuart Murdoch:** This is such a good thing to be good at as a country. It is such a joyful thing, and nobody voted for this—it would be like a turkey voting for Christmas. I just wish we could sort it out. So please, let's get it done.

Q33 **Chair:** Final words to our petitioner, who brought us all here today.

**Tim Brennan:** I would just like to say that before Brexit we were the hub of the European music scene. We were a key entry point, really, for musicians from the US and other major music markets. If we are not allowed to continue working freely in the EU, that hub and entry point will be lost for ever and inevitably the UK's economy will suffer. I think we will suffer culturally and I think our influence in the other music markets will be lost as well.

**Chair:** Thank you. That is all we have time for. I know there is cross-party support on the need to find a solution to this issue and your contributions today have been really valuable in adding strength, weight and focus to those discussions.

From a personal perspective, I want to say thank you for taking the time to do this. I know it is of huge interest to you to get this right, but as a member of the public—I am not a touring artist, Pete—and an avid follower of music, art and culture, I have missed all of it this year as much as anybody and I can't wait for all that pent-up opportunity to go and see the bands we love and hear the music live. The vast majority of the British public are probably in the same place. I think if there was a level of awareness about what this could mean—you expressed it so powerfully today—we have to find a solution. There is no doubt about it.

The next stage is that we will discuss this in an e-session on Monday. Many Members of Parliament have a really keen interest in seeing a solution to this, so we will put the case to the Government on Monday, and hopefully we will hear a response from the Government that gives hope. If not, we will keep working on it until we find a solution to the challenges to ensure that we do have that thriving culture, music and arts scene that we all appreciate and love. Thank you so much for taking the time. I wish you all the best for the future as well.



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