



Department for
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Dear Julian,

Thank you for your letter of 13 September to the previous Secretary of State in respect of creatives touring the EU. I appreciate your patience in awaiting a reply to the questions posed by your Committee. I am responding as the new Minister of State within the department.

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.

The UK took an ambitious approach during negotiations with the EU on our future relationship 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. We recognise that there are now changes in the way creative workers can work in the EU, and the sector will need to adapt to new requirements now we are no longer a Member State. However, we want the UK's musicians and performers to be able to tour abroad easily, as demonstrated by our trade deal with three EFTA countries (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). This is based on the same offer that the EU rejected, and demonstrates that the offer is workable, including in a single market context.

We recognise that there remain challenges for touring and we consider that our close work with the creative sectors remains the most appropriate channel for communicating and updating them on the actions we are taking.

Our focus is now on bilateral engagement with EU Member States, who are principally responsible for deciding the rules governing what work UK visitors can undertake in their countries. This is why we, as government, have worked with urgency and pace and spoken to every EU Member State¹ about the importance of touring. From these extensive discussions, involving ministers, ambassadors and other officials, 19 out of 27 Member States have confirmed that UK musicians and performers do not need visas or work permits for some short-term touring activities. This includes most of the biggest touring markets, including France, Germany, and the Netherlands. These discussions are an important step to gaining clarity for the sector, and it is important to recognise that these visa and work permit free routes are available, and this was reflected in the DCMS announcement published on 4 August.

You ask about arrangements in each Member State and what constitutes “short-term tours”. Durations, precise definitions and requirements for touring can vary from Member State to Member State. Travellers should therefore check what requirements they need to fulfill with the EU Member State to which they are travelling, including to understand any local variations in the rules and what processes they need to follow. Of these 19 Member States, all have confirmed that they offer visa and work permit free routes of at least 30 days aside from Sweden (up to 14 days), Latvia (up to 14 days), Estonia (up to 5 days in a 30 day period) and the Czech Republic (up to 7 consecutive days, or 30 over a year). Austria offers visa and work permit free routes for up to four weeks, although artists may take up several chronologically linked employments, for a longer overall duration. For many Member States, including France and Germany, visa and work permit free touring is possible for up to three months. The UK offers several visa-free routes for touring professionals, including for up to one month without requiring a visa if they are paid by a UK source (under the permitted paid engagement visitor rules).

With this in mind, we, along with the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, continue to work closely and at pace with Member States to encourage them to ensure their online guidance is clear and accessible, and with stakeholders to help clarify areas of uncertainty in industry-led guidance. For example, following our discussions with EU Member States, the Austrian government has published new guidance in English specifically for the creative sectors, and stakeholders have raised queries with us that we have sought to clarify directly with Member States. As well as this, we have published guidance on GOV.UK, including updated [travel advice](#) for travelling to the EU, and we have now published individual [business traveller summaries](#) for all EU Member States and EEA countries to help UK nationals navigate visa and work permit requirements.

To illustrate with one example, the GOV.UK [business traveller summary](#) for Germany sets out that those performing in the arts and their assistants do not require a visa or permit if it is for less than 90 days in a 12-month period. It also provides information on processes and checklists of documents that may be needed. It may not cover all scenarios so travellers must always check the exact application process and document requirements with the German authorities or embassy or immigration authorities. The German embassy provides information on its [website](#),

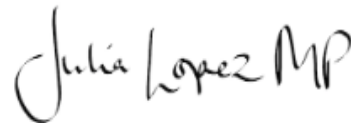
¹ Regarding Ireland, British Embassy officials in Ireland confirmed arrangements as per the Common Travel Area (CTA).

which now includes further clarification that these arrangements also apply for fashion models, while the German government also has a [web portal](#) aimed at people travelling to Germany for artistic/creative purposes, which helps explain visa, tax and work related questions.

We are now actively engaging with those eight Member States that do not offer any visa or work permit free routes for touring professionals: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Portugal, Romania, and Spain, encouraging them to closely align to the UK's more generous rules. Formal approaches were issued from late June and early July, which included the request for ministerial discussions. For Spain, which we know is of particular importance to our sectors, the former Minister for Trade Policy raised touring with the Spanish Trade Minister in Madrid on 29 June; Lord Frost and the previous Foreign Secretary raised touring with the Spanish Europe Minister on 5 July; and the previous Minister for Digital and Culture spoke with her Spanish counterpart, Minister Iceta, on 30 July. FCDO Minister Morton will discuss touring in a meeting with her Spanish counterpart on 30 September, and other discussions are ongoing at official and ministerial level across the target countries. As a new minister I am seeking discussions with counterparts in target countries to seek easements as a matter of urgency, and will provide further updates on progress in due course.

Thank you for your letter on this important subject. I know you share my view on the importance of ensuring that our world-leading creative and cultural artists can continue to travel widely. By continuing to work across government, in collaboration with the sector, and directly with Member States, we can support the creative and cultural industries to resume touring with confidence.

Yours sincerely,

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

Julia Lopez MP
Minister of State