

## **Petitions Committee: Survey on arrangements for UK touring professionals and artists in the EU**

---

### **Activity**

The Petitions Committee used an online survey to ask what impact the post-Brexit arrangements would have on UK touring professionals and artists, including the wider industry.

The survey was sent to people who signed the petition calling on the Government to "[Seek Europe-wide Visa-free work permit for Touring professionals and Artists](#)", which received over 282,000 signatures.

We have summarised the key themes below and illustrated them with quotes from respondents.

---

### **Response**

**15,589** completed responses to survey as of 2pm on 3 February 2021

---

### **Respondents**

52% identified as a music and/ or performing arts fan

26% identified as an artist/ musician/ entertainer

1.8% identified as an agent/ artist manager

3.7% identified as a tour manager/ production manager/ assistants

7 % identified as a supplier/ other touring professional

8% identified as 'other'. These included:

- Amateur/ part-time musicians
  - Family/ friends of touring professionals;
  - Lawyer/ solicitor/ accountants for touring professionals
  - Members of the public
  - Music promoters
  - Music students/ teachers
  - Record label managers and staff
  - Retired touring professionals
  - Sport instructors e.g. yoga teachers/ mountain hiker instructions
  - Tour vehicle drivers
  - Video/ TV directors/ film crew/ photographers and music reporters
-

---

## Key statistics:

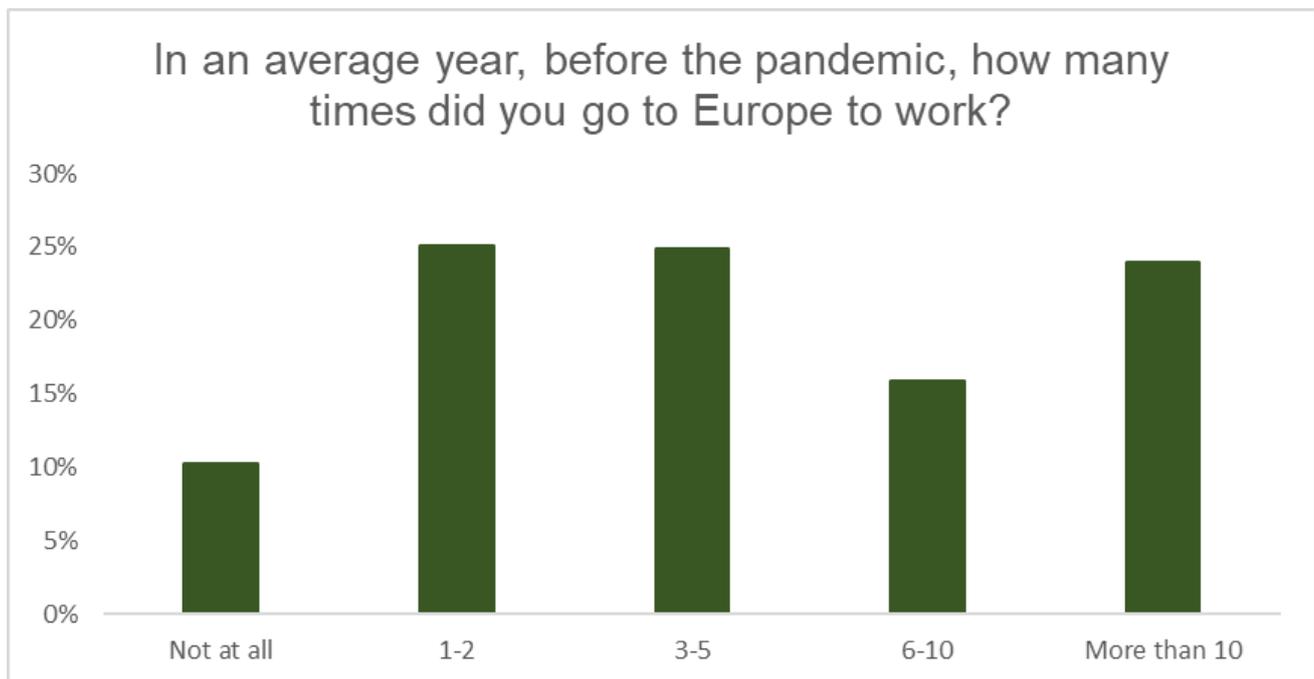
### Concerns from music and/ or performing arts fans:

Those who identified as music and/ or performing arts fans were asked what their main concerns are about the impact of the changes to visa rules in Europe for touring professionals and artists.

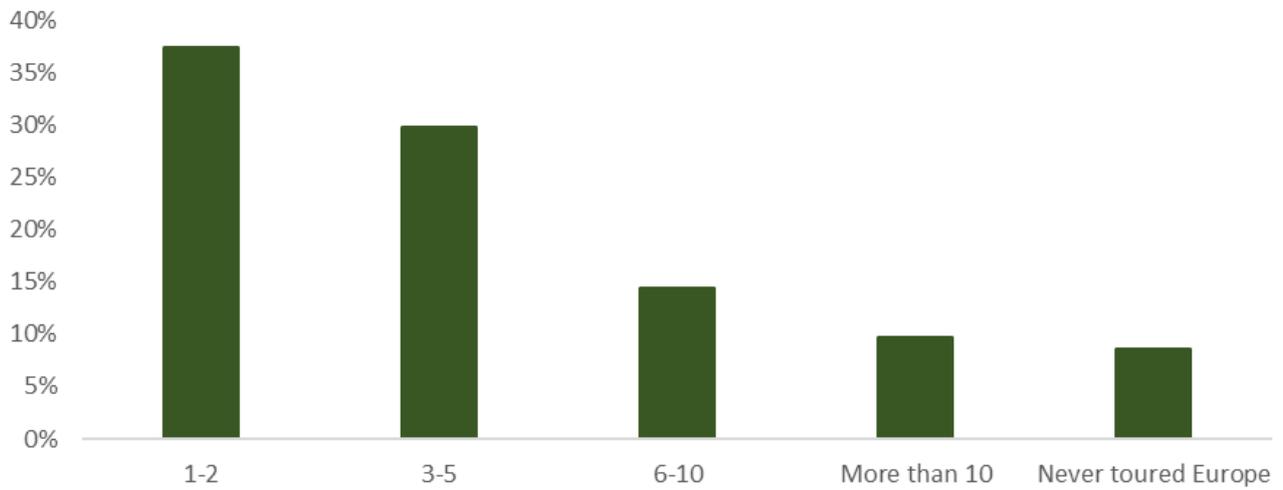
- Almost 100% of respondents said that they “strongly agree” or “agree” that they are concerned about the survival of the music and performing arts industries as a whole and people’s jobs.
- Over 95% said that they “strongly agree” or “agree” that they are concerned about the survival of their favourite artists.
- Over 80% said that they “strongly agree” or “agree” that they are concerned about the loss of opportunities to watch their favourite artists in Europe.

### Usual tour habits for those who worked in the industry:

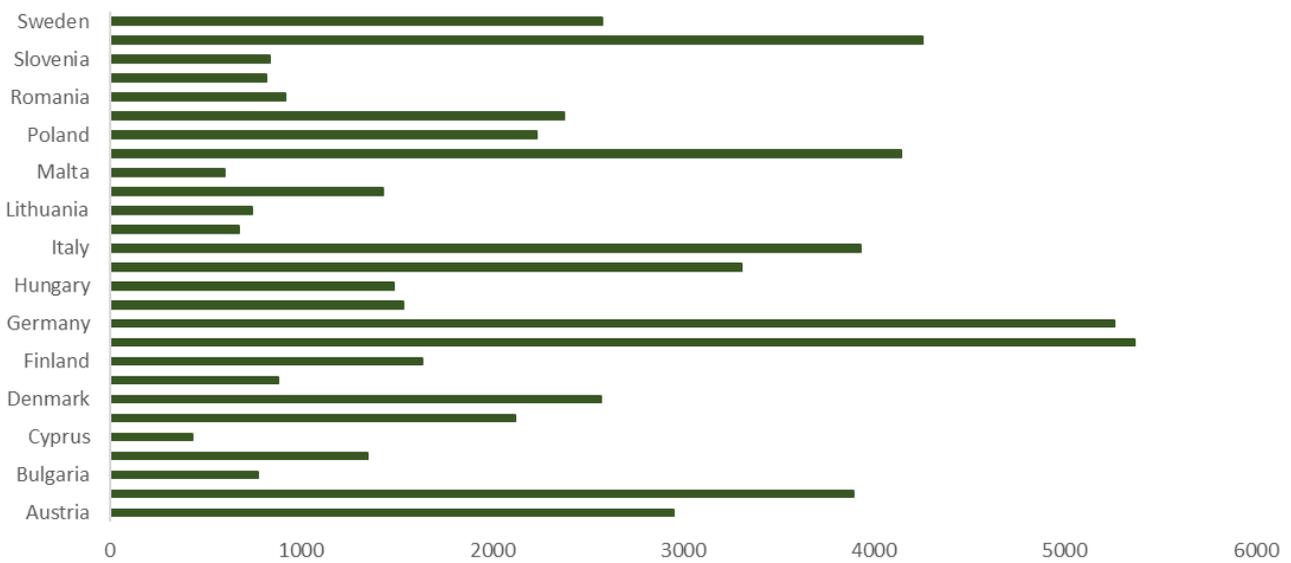
Participants who identified as artists/musicians/ entertainers/ artist managers/ agents/ tour managers/ production managers/ assistants, were asked about their usual tour habits.

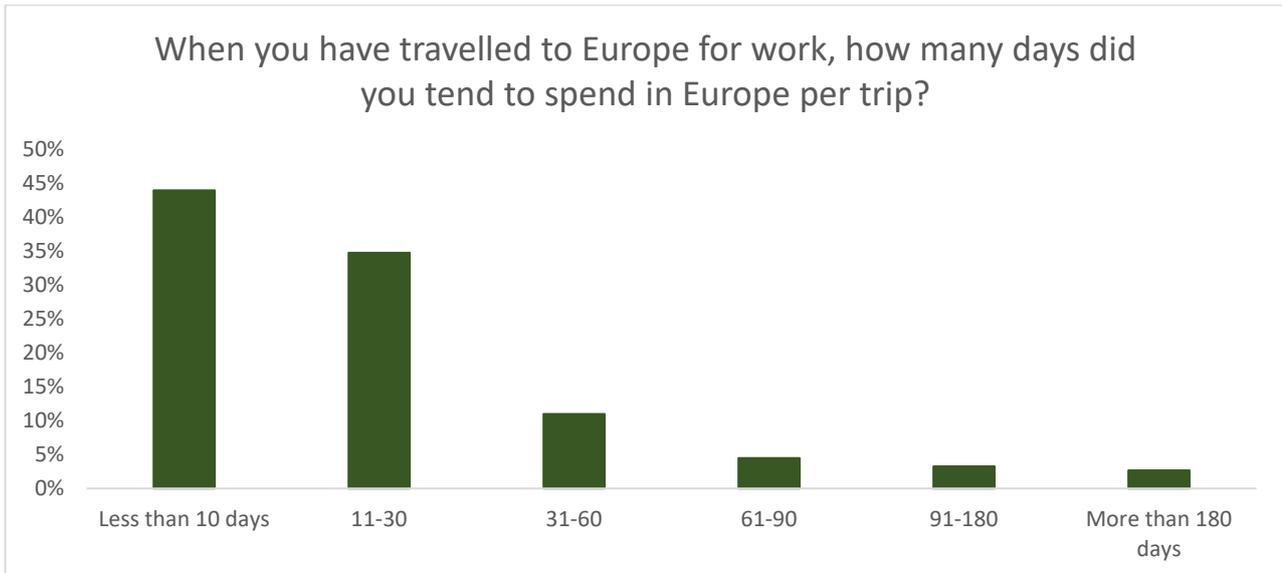


### When you have travelled to Europe for work, how many countries did you tend to visit per trip or tour?



### Which of these EU countries have you visited for work in the last 5 years?





**Participants were asked about the usual composition of their touring parties:**

- 32% said that they would usually have fewer than 5 UK citizens in their touring party
- 36% said that they would usually have 5-10 UK citizens in their touring party
- 13% said that they would usually have 10-20 UK citizens in their touring party
- 9% said that they would usually have 20-50 UK citizens in their touring party
- 7% said that they would usually have more than 50 UK citizens in their touring party.

Participants were asked how they expected the new rules to change the number of UK citizens they would have in their touring parties.

- 50% of respondents said that the number of UK citizens within their touring parties would reduce. Out of these, 27% said that they would recruit locally within Europe and 23% said that they would manage with fewer people.
- 24% said that they didn't know what impact it would have on the size of their touring party.
- 21% said that they expected the number of UK citizens within their touring party to stay the same.
- 3% said that they expected the number of UK citizens within their touring party to increase.

**Participants were asked how concerned they are about the implications of different changes:**

- 94% of respondents said that they were "very concerned" about the implications of cost (e.g. visas, Carnets, travel, insurance etc). This increased to just under 100% including those who said they were "somewhat concerned".
- 86% said that they were "very concerned" and 12% said that they were "somewhat concerned" by the time that would be required (e.g. to complete additional paperwork, customs processes, border checks etc).
- 87% said that they were "very concerned" and 10% said that they were somewhat concerned by the logistics and planning (e.g. completing visa applications) that would be required.

- 98% said that they were “very concerned” or “somewhat concerned” about the potential for stress as a result of increased paperwork, costs and border checks etc.

### **Participants were asked how likely it was that the new rules would stop them from touring in Europe:**

- 80% said that they were “very likely” or “likely” to stop touring Europe.

### **Participants who identified as working in the touring industry were asked how worried they are about the future of their job or career in light of the new rules:**

- 79% said that they were “extremely worried” or “very worried”. An additional 15% said that they were “somewhat worried”.

### **Participants were asked whether they were considering a career change as result of the new rules:**

- 18% said that they were considering a career change as a result of the new rules and 41% said “maybe”.

### **Participants were asked how concerned they were about the impact of the following on touring musicians, artists and other touring professionals:**

- 90% said that they were “extremely concerned” about the impact of changes to visa and permit requirements following the end of the post-Brexit transition period.
- 67% said that they were “extremely concerned” about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 91% said that they were concerned by the combined impact of changes to visa and permit requirements following the end of the post-Brexit transition period.

## **Comments**

### **Key themes:**

- **Many talked about the impact on touring professionals’ jobs and careers**

"Our son is a young musician, with a first-class degree from the Royal Northern College of Music, and what was a burgeoning career as a jazz musician. He had already been on four or five European tours with bands, and these were not just a way of earning money in Europe: they also raised the bands' profiles in the UK hugely, and brought them lots of work in the UK. Through the pandemic he has done everything possible to create income online, but we have still needed to bail him out several times. We are deeply concerned that his talent (evident since the age of 3 or 4), all his hard work, and the pleasure his music has already brought to others, will all go to waste. He lives and breathes music, and is in danger of losing it. Raising additional barriers to musicians for petty political reasons, just when the music world is under critical threat, is criminal."

"Ultimately we shall lose thousands of young talented musicians, who won't risk a perilous career, and the impact on the UK's cultural industry and life will be immeasurable. The idea

---

that there will be sufficient work within the UK is ludicrous, and in any case, cultural exchange is the life-blood of civil society."

"Sovereignty should never be a reason to destroy an industry which contributes so much to our economic and cultural development. As a young artist I now look towards my career as a UK citizen with fear and despair. Because of these rules and the UK Government's clear desire to put sovereignty and populist politics over a lucrative industry many of the young generation of music professionals will be seeking to emigrate and make their careers elsewhere."

"This will be extremely detrimental to an entire generation of young musicians who have had their careers interrupted and paused (due to Brexit and COVID) just at the critical moment when they are trying to bridge the gap between full time education and full time employment. We need all the opportunities we can get and this legislation is likely stifling many possible employment opportunities and earnings which we will inevitably be paying tax on and contributing to the UK economy."

"For the past 25 years, my whole career as a solo performer has been based on my ability to simply turn up and sing wherever I was required in Europe or to go on spontaneous busking trips to scout out new opportunities and make new contacts, travelling regularly to and fro between the UK and at least 5 other countries in the course of any given year without any paperwork, visas or bureaucratic expenditure...Now I have to negotiate Frontier Worker status before the end of this year for all the countries I regularly visit in order to retain any of the freedom I've previously enjoyed or face the prospect of having to apply for work permits in a new system that is still not completely clear, which, for a single person, suffering from autism and in the middle of a global pandemic, where I can't work or function normally anyway, is virtually impossible..."

"Without reform my entire business will be completely unviable due to the overwhelming increase in costs. It is my personal responsibility to fly 60-70 musicians out every year to a perform at a festival in Cyprus, which uses exclusively UK bands. This is my business and therefore their travel and accommodation is already fully at my expense. The added financial burden of visas for this many performers will be fatal".

- **Many said that smaller and upcoming artists would be the most impacted:**

"These new rules will make touring in Europe financially unviable for smaller acts which means less work. The implications for future lost revenue and artist's career longevity in Europe by not having access to these territories and markets at an early stage is incalculable."

"The new rules will be devastating for new musicians who don't have the backing of major labels, this will destroy British DIY music, arguably one of Britain's greatest exports."

"All of the rules seem to be geared around professional musicians. There appears to be absolutely no provision for entrepreneurial, grassroots, DIY musicians who have spent years building connections so they could tour on a shoestring budget and hard work."

---

"As a small band with a minor record deal tours WILL NOT be financially viable without a free movement deal. We spend thousands up front to travel, buy merch, organise hotels and allocate potential expenses BEFORE we're able to sell a single T-shirt or receive one of the minuscule fee's for playing. The pandemic has already severed revenue streams. We DO NOT make money from record sales due to the devaluation of music over the last few decades. Touring is the only way we can reinvest in future music and take a small cut out of something we enjoy. If free movement doesn't see the light of day we may as well end this well loved band that started in 1982."

- **Many talked about the implications of the changes and some said that it would make touring in Europe unviable:**

"I have been touring Europe as a U.K. citizen for the past 10 years. It has been my biggest source of income. Coming from a mid-level touring band we rely heavily on the longer 25 - 30 day EU tours to bring in the money. Not only for the members but the crew as well. Without this in the touring calendar or with crushingly big costs for visas / carnets / paperwork it will almost be next to impossible to tour the way we have been and make any profit whatsoever. Deeming something I have dedicating my entire life to well and truly dead. With this and COVID on top I can't begin to express the deep concern and impact this has had and will have on my entire world."

"Now that we are no longer in the EU, I can't even go there to make a recording at the moment which otherwise I would do. Often I play in 3 or 4 different EU countries in a week. That is going to be a logistical nightmare. Also, often I am asked to replace an artist who is ill and has had to cancel at the last minute. Now if I need a visa, this won't be possible."

"At present the rules would making touring in Europe completely unviable, and it is unlikely at this stage it would even be attempted leading to a significant decline in earnings and loss of jobs over the course of the year."

"New rules will mean we, as a band, will never be able to afford to play in Europe again."

"Different arrangements for every EU country, cabotage rules, issues around merchandise and the cost of visas and carnets are likely to make a lot touring unviable, especially for new artists. UK crew may well find that artists will have to employ local citizens instead, which I have found to be the norm when touring the USA, Canada and Australia."

"We work in the subsidised arts, and money is already incredibly tight in normal circumstances - for us, Europe was always still attainable as a touring destination, but this will change dramatically if we suddenly have to pay for visas and carnets etc - we would either not tour anymore, or have to pay more local crew with less knowledge relevant to our production, and it would have a detrimental economic impact on UK workers/ touring personnel."

"My touring party would include vulnerable people and people from low incomes. Being able to tour would be a treat and a privilege, which we have to fundraise extensively for in order to be able to go on tour. It's already hard enough to raise enough money for travel,

accommodation, etc. It would be exponentially harder if there were fees and red tape associated with the costs of visas."

"I work for an U.K. international pop star, who employs at least 250 on each tour. The European leg of a normal tour (which might be 35 stadiums - we do around 8 in the U.K.) helps pay for the other legs of the tour. Firstly, at the moment it is impossible to plan as the rules are SO unclear. Secondly if visas and carnets have to be provided for every member of the touring party the tour just does not make financial sense. My carnet alone would require 8 separate instruments to be registered, which as it stands would cost £3000-we don't know whether that stands for each separate country yet, as we are essentially dealing with a NO DEAL situation, in terms of the music touring industry."

"The new rules will kill orchestral touring in Europe, and this will have an extremely negative impact on the UK music industry. Without being able to tour in Europe, our UK concerts will also collapse because the European touring revenue supports and subsidises the UK concerts. For example, our regular concert series at the South Bank depends financially on each concert being part of a wider tour, which almost always includes European concerts".

"As a touring Electronic Artist/DJ the majority of my shows are on the weekend. Sometimes I will play 3 or 4 different European countries in a weekend which means very tight travel schedules as it is. A visa check at each airport will put hours on to my travel time and may mean i can't play as many shows resulting in a loss of income. Also the cost of a separate visa for each country will also drastically reduce my income."

"The new rules will force me to perhaps abandon touring altogether. I simply cannot risk booking 20 shows in advance only to reach a border and be told that my paperwork is somehow incorrect. Up until now there is a terrible lack of information as to exactly what paperwork I will need and what pitfalls I may face. If I hit one border and have to go through hours of delays due to my paperwork, my tour would fall through. Tours are ran on a tight budget both financially and in regards to timekeeping. I cannot afford the damage that would be caused to my finances and my respect from not turning up to an arranged show. It is safer just to not tour. I am also now considering, as a work around, the possibility of getting my session musicians from within the EU, and renting my transport from within the EU. This removes business and tax payments from the UK and gives it to the EU."

- **Many expressed concerns that UK citizens will not be employed as a result of the changes, and that this will impact the quality of the productions on offer:**

"In order to comply with the present regulations, and in order to maintain a financially viable number of performances, I will have to employ EU-nationals as support staff and backing musicians. Prior to Brexit the entire team would've consisted of UK-nationals."

"It is likely that EU organisers of concerts and other events will decide it is simply too much trouble to hire British musicians and will instead hire EU musicians. Long term this will be devastating to the British music industry."

"I'm a dancer and many European jobs are now not accepting UK passports. This limits the amount of work available for me as I perform on cruise ships and very few are UK based."

---

"... a proportion of my work used to be made up of 'jump-in' concerts, i.e. those where the originally booked artist is indisposed and a replacement is sought at very short notice. It used to be possible to jump on a plane at 24 hour's notice, sometimes less, to do work like this. The fees are high and often 3 or 4 times more than can be earned in the UK. This will be totally impossible if lengthily VISAs and paperwork is needed. Instead of turning to UK artists, promoters will fill this work with artists from already in the EU for whom travel remains easy."

"International artists will no longer view UK session musicians and support crew as viable options for their touring parties due to the associated costs and - possibly even more crucially - the additional time taken to cross borders which may well jeopardise getting to destinations on time, leading to concert cancellations and therefore huge financial losses for all involved."

"I will use suppliers in EU when in EU in order to reduce uncertainty and costs."

"The costs of the visas and extra paperwork needs extra admin personal we just can't afford to hire. We broke even on all European touring making a profit only on Merch. These new rules will ruin peoples careers and dissolve musical acts, industry links that have being active for years, it will mean only major backed artists could afford to perform overseas and means the monopoly on the music industry again falls into the hands of the majors (the few) and leaves out the independent artists and labels (the many)."

"If we are forced to compromise on the personnel used to play music abroad - and this happens because you would be forced to use local European musicians, with whom you haven't practised long and hard with - or just fewer musicians - which changes the very nature of the music you've created - you will invariably affect the overall quality of live music coming from the UK to Europe."

- **Many spoke about how the arts were an important export for the UK and a source of pride:**

"The arts as a whole is one of our best and biggest exports. The complete neglect for this industry in the brexit deal is shameful and seriously needs addressing. The decline in music sales and move to streaming has greatly impacted artist's revenue and there is a heavy reliance upon touring and live performances to make a living, particularly for smaller acts just starting out. Hampering the ability to easily tour and perform across the EU will have a tremendous impact on the viability of many artists. They also support a network of technical and support staff while on the road who depend upon touring for their living as well. Covid-19 has completely decimated an already struggling industry with the closure of many venues already announced. To pile on this extra burden at massively stressed time of the industry is careless and shameful. The government need to reconsider their position before we no longer have a thriving music and arts scene that Britain is so known for throughout the world."

"The arts are one of the UK's biggest exports, as well as one of its greatest prides. To destroy the arts is to destroy the souls of the country and one of our very few remaining sources of pride. Churchill was told to cuts the arts during WW2 and replied 'then what would we be fighting for?' [...]"

"This will impact on the quality of touring UK theatre and our reputation in the world"

---

"Where is the leadership, where is the foresight? What the hell has happened to the country that gave us The Beatles, and the Rolling Stones and Brit Pop, Elton John, Queen and every other cultural export revered around the world. Our creative arts are already on life support. This will kill it dead and people who do nothing at this moment will have that very real harm to our nation on their conscience."

- **Many spoke about the impact of the changes on top of the impact that Covid has already had on their industry:**

"It's our whole lively hood and what we have trained our whole lives to do. Coronavirus was hard enough to have our jobs stripped then and this is making it harder."

"Very concerned after a year of covid and very little work, these new rules have almost entirely dried up touring dates."

"Brexit and Covid are a difficult combination to manage - musicians have to go to Europe in advance to quarantine before a date, but this eats into the number of days they can be in the Schengen zone. It is going to mean busy artists may lose dates later in the year."

- **Many spoke about how these changes will limit or remove artists' ability to accept short-notice work which is common to the sector:**

"The days of last minute flights and concerts to help colleagues from either the UK or the EU out are quite simply, a thing of the past... I have regularly caught a flight/taken a Eurostar to help out when fellow singers were indisposed through illness... I fear that the amount of extra cost, logistics and paperwork now deemed necessary is the final nail in the coffin of an industry already devastated by the pandemic... it's heart-breaking..."

"In our industry we can be dispatched to work in any EU country in a day due to emergencies. We also typically spend a day or two in each country and move between then at a rate not seen in any other industry. Obtaining visas quickly enough will be impossible. Also being tax compliant, or even just aware of the rules within each individual country is impossible for individuals working as freelance crew."

---