



Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

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Catherine McKinnell MP
Chair, Petitions Committee
House of Commons

4th March 2021

Dear Catherine,

Thank you for your letter dated 20 January 2021 to the Secretary of State regarding e-petition 563294, which calls for the Government to seek a Europe-wide Visa-free work permit for Touring professionals and Artists. I am replying as the Minister for Digital and Culture, and as the Minister who spoke at the debate.

I greatly appreciated the opportunity to outline the Government's position during the debate and would like to thank you for calling this debate on what is such an important matter.

With regard to the negotiations between the EU and the UK, I would like to restate that the EU's proposals, in which they tabled text regarding activities that could be conducted without a visa, would not have addressed the concerns of the creative and cultural sectors. This is because these proposals were non-binding, did not include technical or touring support staff, and did not address the need for work permits. The EU's proposals were also part of a package on visa-free travel that was not consistent with our manifesto commitment to take back control of our borders.

The UK's offer, by contrast, was informed by the extensive engagement the Government has conducted with a broad range of experts from across our creative and cultural sectors. Our proposal involved capturing the work not only of musicians, artists, and performers, but also of their support staff, without whom they would not be able to tour. By including those professionals and their undertakings on the list of permitted activities for Short Term Business Visitors, performers, artists, and those supporting them would have been able to travel and work in the UK and the EU more easily, without the need of work permits.

That the EU chose to reject this mutually beneficial proposal is regrettable, however there is scope to return to this issue in the future and we have made it clear that our door remains open should the EU change its mind.

We recognise the concerns of the creative and cultural sectors regarding the new arrangements and are committed to supporting them as they get to grips with the changes to systems and processes. We have published guidance on GOV.UK, including updated [travel](#)

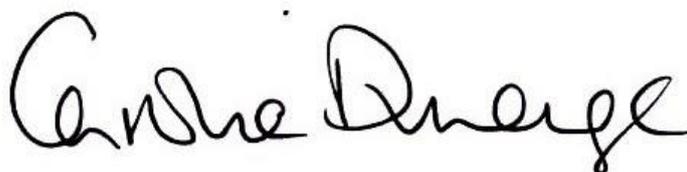


[advice](#) for travelling to the EU, and we are engaging regularly with our embassies to support UK nationals abroad. Our agreement with the EU contains Transparency and Procedural Facilitation measures that will help ensure visa processes are as prompt and smooth as possible.

The Government is determined to work closely with stakeholders to explore how we can support the sector to make touring easier. The Secretary of State for DCMS and I held a roundtable discussion with key representatives from across the creative and cultural sectors on 20 January to discuss these issues, and we have set up a new DCMS-led working group. This group, consisting of representatives from other key government departments, and sector representatives covering the breadth of our cultural and creative sectors, is tackling the range of specific issues with a view to assisting the sector as far as possible to work confidently in the EU.

I hope you find this information useful.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Caroline Dinenage'.

Caroline Dinenage MP
Minister of State for Digital and Culture