



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

24th January 2021

Dear Constance,

RE: VISA-FREE WORK PERMITS FOR CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of visa-free work permits for artists, musicians and other creative professionals.

I have read your comments with interest and wholeheartedly welcome your support for the performing arts. The UK is home to a huge number of world-class performers across a range of different disciplines and I am committed to ensuring their continued international success under the agreement reached between the UK and the EU. I am also delighted that the Government recognises the value of the industry and supports ambitious arrangements for performers and artists to be able to work and tour across Europe.

I have been assured that the Government did not turn down a bespoke arrangement from the EU to allow musicians to work and perform in member states. I understand that the UK proposed to capture the work done by musicians, artists and entertainers, and their accompanying staff, through a list of permitted activities for short-term business visitors. These proposals reflected the asks of the music industry itself, and were developed in consultation with bodies like the Musicians Union. This would have allowed musicians and support staff to travel and perform in the UK and the EU more easily, without needing work-permits. Unfortunately, the EU repeatedly refused these proposals and made less ambitious ones which would not have enabled touring, or covered support staff.

I am pleased, however, that the Government has confirmed that the door remains open for the EU to change its mind, and it will continue its work to make it as straightforward as possible for UK artists to travel and work in the EU. Rest assured that I will continue to monitor this issue closely moving forward and urge Ministers to do all they can to encourage the EU to work with them constructively to identify solutions to make arrangements as seamless as possible.

More broadly, I am thrilled with the support provided by the Government for the performing arts in recent months. The £1.57 billion Cultural Recovery Fund is a world leading rescue package for Britain's arts, culture and heritage industries to help weather the impact of Coronavirus. I understand that a package worth £165 million, which has been offered to organisations including the National Theatre, Southbank Centre and the Royal Shakespeare Company, has taken total allocations to over £1 billion. Many venues in our area have also very welcomingly benefitted from funding.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,
Tom

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE