



Rt Hon Priti Patel MP  
Secretary of State for the Home Department  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

3 September 2019

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to you in connection with the Government's forthcoming preparations to leave the European Union on 31 October 2019. There are growing concerns from our live music industry, which is worth around £1 billion to the economy, about the impact of a "no deal" Brexit.

Last year, Ed Sheeran was the biggest selling touring artist in the world, building on 2017 when five of the top 10 biggest world tours were by UK acts. Ed's "Divide Tour" is now officially the highest grossing tour of all time. Three of the top four most popular live arenas anywhere on the planet are here in the UK. In seven of the last 11 years the biggest selling album in the world has been from a UK artist.

We welcomed your article in the Mail on Sunday on 28 July 2019 where you outlined that the UK must "*attract the most talented and skilled from other parts of the world*". We have an opportunity to take a globalised approach to migration where arbitrary barriers are removed to allow global talent to come to the United Kingdom. The reform of our immigration system, which follows from Brexit, must take into account the needs of our music industry which is worth £4.5 billion to the UK economy.

UK Music is however deeply concerned about conflicting reports from the Home Office in recent weeks regarding the possibility of the immediate ending freedom of movement in the event of a "no deal" Brexit this Autumn. Such a policy would cause considerable disruption to the international live music touring industry, in terms of UK artists travelling to the EU for concerts and vice versa. It would also run contrary to existing Government guidance which currently indicates EU citizens will continue to be able to enter the UK to work for up to three months even in the event of a "no deal" Brexit. If an alternative "cliff edge" policy is pursued in relation to freedom of movement it could result in retaliation from EU member states, requiring UK musicians to apply for expensive and bureaucratic visas and work permits in order to continue to tour the EU, severely harming our ability to enhance our export potential following recent year to year growth of seven per cent.

It has subsequently been reported in the media over the weekend that the Government is now no longer considering the immediate ending of freedom of movement yet without a clear and

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unambiguous commitment from ministers then this only adds to the uncertainty that the music industry is currently experiencing.

Ending freedom of movement immediately would place considerable strain on the UK's booking agents and promoters which support our live music industry which contributes around a £1 billion to the UK. They will have to spend more time issuing Certificates of Sponsorship (CoS) under the Tier 5 visa system than ever before. Sponsors have a finite allocation of CoS per year which was set when EU nationals were said not to need a CoS. Ending freedom of movement immediately means lots of sponsors would find their annual CoS allocations too small to deal with the inclusion of EU acts. Agents who have more EU acts on their books will see most impact. Some agents, promoters and festivals who deal exclusively with EU artists will be dragged into the immigration system for the first time. We predict this increased demand will overload the UK Visa and Immigration system as it struggles to cope.

Despite the Government's attempt at reassurance via its response to the House of Commons DCMS Select Committee live music inquiry, the Immigration White Paper's crude "skills and salary" approach will not work for music. Requiring musicians, songwriters and producers from the EU to earn salaries of at least £30,000 to work in the UK poses a major threat to the music industry where music creators earn on average £20,504 - way below the average for other jobs. Many in the music industry are highly skilled yet the nature of this creativity means they are not necessarily recognised by qualifications and do not map onto the Regulated Qualifications Framework and are transferred through peer to peer learning instead.

We welcomed recent commitments from your predecessor who indicated that the Migration Advisory Committee would be tasked with looking at the "skills and salary" requirements again and ask you to give serious consideration to alternative arrangements for music. A solution may exist within the Immigration White Paper itself which sets out a proposal for umbrella organisations to act as visa sponsors for the sector. We would welcome to opportunity for our members and associates to engage in developing this proposition further to ensure a light touch approach, free of regulatory burdens, can be developed. We also ask the Government to analyse Canadian policy towards performing artists (both musical and theatrical) and their crews who may enter the country without a work permit in order to facilitate cultural exchange.

We are extremely disappointed to learn recently from Home Office officials that the Government no longer plans to discuss immigration reform at a scheduled roundtable with representatives from the music industry on 19 September.

More broadly, the current information provided by the Government to companies for "no deal" is worryingly inadequate when preparing the industry for the possible changes ahead.

For example, we are also concerned about the impact that a "no deal" Brexit could have on the ability of the UK music industry to sell merchandising and move equipment when they are touring in mainland Europe.

According to Government guidance in the event of a "no deal" Brexit, anyone bringing goods into or taking goods out of the UK in baggage or a small motor vehicle which they intend to use for business will be forced to "declare your goods and pay import duty and VAT before you move them across the border".

This could have a drastic impact on our members to sell merchandise and transport equipment on European tours and result in a loss of income of up to 40 per cent, threatening the viability of future tours and damaging Britain's export earnings.

The UK music industry must be able to connect to a global talent pool of expertise to contribute to growing our success.

We ask you for urgent clarity over the Government's advice to industry concerning a "no deal" Brexit in relation live music and establish a policy framework in relation to immigration that will enable our sectors growth to continue to thrive.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Angler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping 'M' and a long, horizontal tail on the 'l'.

CEO, UK Music

### **Annex**

UK Music's membership comprises of: -

- AIM – The Association of Independent Music – the trade body for the independent music community, representing over 850 small and medium sized independent record labels and associated music businesses.
- BPI - the trade body of the recorded music industry representing 3 major record labels and over 300 independent record labels.
- FAC – The Featured Artists Coalition represents and promotes the interests of featured recording artists in the music industry.
- The Ivors Academy - The Ivors Academy exists to support, protect and celebrate music creators in the UK. We are the independent professional association representing songwriters and composers in all genres, whether they create song, symphony or sync. Previously known as BASCA, we can trace our history back over 70 years. As champions of music creators, we have three main activities: campaigning, cultivating and celebrating.
- MMF – Music Managers Forum - representing over 650 UK managers of artists, songwriters and producers across the music industry with global businesses.
- MPG - Music Producers Guild - representing and promoting the interests of all those involved in the production of recorded music – including producers, engineers, mixers, re-mixers, programmers and mastering engineers.
- MPA - Music Publishers Association - with 260 major and independent music publishers in membership, representing close to 4,000 catalogues across all genres of music.
- Musicians' Union representing 30,000 musicians.
- PPL is the music licensing company which works on behalf of over 100,000 record companies and performers to license recorded music played in public (at pubs, nightclubs, restaurants, shops, offices and many other business types) and broadcast (TV and radio) in the UK.

- *PRS for Music* is responsible for the collective licensing of rights in the musical works of 114,000 composers, songwriters and publishers and an international repertoire of 10 million songs.
- UK Live Music Group, representing the main trade associations and representative bodies of the live music sector