



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Caroline Dinenage MP
Minister of State for Digital and Culture
Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
100 Parliament Street
Westminster
London
SW1A 2BQ

21st January 2021

Dear Caroline,

Visa Arrangements for UK musicians, artists and other cultural exchanges between the UK and the countries of the European Union

I am grateful for your response to my question in Parliament on Tuesday and to your commitment to bring energy and determination to enable smoother navigation of the rules we find ourselves with currently for musicians and others who wish to tour in the European Union. I am also grateful for your commitment to efforts to secure improved arrangements on a bilateral or EU basis.

I wanted to share with you some of the practical issues raised by my constituents as I was only able to provide one instance of where improvements might be found. **I share these, not in anticipation of a detailed response to each point, but as very practical input from my constituents to what would make most difference to them in terms of potential changes.**

- 1) *“Pre-pandemic, I travelled with any of four violins - I have a violin to cover the 16th century, another violin for baroque period, another for classical, and one for romantic/modern period. I also “double” (play more than instrument in a concert) so sometimes have travelled to Europe with two instruments at a time: if I am doubling the other instrument will be either a viola (usually my baroque/classical viola) or my viola d’amore (extinct instrument of the baroque era, used for duo solo in Bach’s St. John Passion). Therefore, I will have to apply for carnets for potentially six different instruments in order to work. The cost of obtaining these were estimated by the ISM at between £500 plus per instrument and a carnet is only valid for 12 months. I simply could not afford this yearly outlay”*
- 2) *“Could the minister be persuaded to urgently negotiate an expansion of the permit free arrangements similar to those that already exist with some countries (France for example), thus maintaining Britain’s leading place on the global stage?”*
- 3) *“In Europe, UK orchestras are already considered somewhat ‘expensive’ to hire compared to their European rivals (due to lack of state subsidies etc). If orchestras have to pay for carnets for every musician to go to the EU for one gig on top of existing costs that will put UK-based orchestras at a huge disadvantage”*
- 4) *“[Although] the Musicians Union says a minimum period of two years ... a shorter duration would be acceptable such as six months.”*



You will be aware of my passion for small businesses and entrepreneurs. The music, arts and cultural sector is replete with many of both and their passion brings not only economic advantages to themselves and those they may employ, but joy to millions and an enhanced reputation to our country. **I appreciate that you will have many priorities as we chart our new course as "Global Britain" but may I urge you to maintain these concerns at the highest level of your priorities.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Fuller".

Richard Fuller MP