

Introduction

The Musicians' Union (MU) is the trade union for musicians in the UK, with over 33,000 members working across the UK in all sectors of the music business.

Evidence

This document is an extension of the UK Music submission to this consultation, which the MU fully supports as a UK Music member, and includes further information based on our experience of helping members to navigate the new trading arrangements between the UK and the EU.

Firstly, it is very clear that the new post-Brexit system is much more complex for everyone involved in the music industry to navigate. Members almost never sought guidance from us on performing in the EU before Brexit except in relation to specific contracts, terms, and fees, but we now have many pages of advice for members on our website,¹ as well as resources like webinars² and interactive flow charts.³ We also regularly receive queries from members seeking advice on performing in the EU in addition to this guidance, and have now appointed a Head of International to fully support members in this area.

Part of the reason for this complexity is the need to navigate the caveats and complex details in the arrangements and guidance for working in the EU. Examples of this include the specific requirements for working in the EU (e.g. in relation to work permits and documentation), which are different in certain countries; the carnet system, which is complex and expensive; the guidance around travelling with "portable music instruments";⁴ the procedures for using "splitter vans" to transport instruments;⁵ and the advice on transporting merchandise.⁶ We also know that members have experienced unexpected issues when travelling, including at Holyhead port, that seem to be the result of the interpretation or understanding of relevant guidance varying between officials.

These issues add significant uncertainty and costs to the process of working in the EU, particularly for grassroots, independent, and publicly funded artists and organisations that make up the majority of the Welsh music industry. It is much

¹ <https://musiciansunion.org.uk/working-performing/working-overseas/working-in-the-eu>

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TaBJudK-aLQ>

³ <https://musiciansunion.org.uk/working-performing/working-overseas/working-in-the-eu/flowchart-guide-to-working-in-europe>

⁴ <https://musiciansunion.org.uk/working-performing/working-overseas/working-in-the-eu/travelling-with-portable-musical-instruments>

⁵ <https://musiciansunion.org.uk/working-performing/working-overseas/working-in-the-eu/splitter-vans-to-transport-instruments>

⁶ <https://musiciansunion.org.uk/working-performing/working-overseas/working-in-the-eu/transporting-merchandise>

harder for independent musicians living and working in Wales, as well as Wales-based labels, managers, and venues, to work in the EU and with EU-based artists and companies than it was. However, major labels and large companies that tend to be based in London will usually find these problems easier to navigate and afford. These issues relating to the UK's new relationship with the EU therefore make it harder to sustain a thriving music industry in Wales, and there must be improvements to the UK's trading arrangements with the UK over time, to enable music and the broader creative industries to thrive in Wales. It's also important to note, in relation to these challenges and the Committee's recent report on the creative industries workforce, that musicians, especially in the grassroots or "commercial" areas of the industry, are often even more independent and isolated than workers in other areas of the creative industries, such as those working on film and TV productions. This can make the stress, costs, and work of problems such as complying with the requirements to work in the EU even more difficult to manage.

We endorse the recommendations in the UK Music submission and look forward to supporting the Committee's ongoing work in this area.