



The Collective Voice of Scotland's Culture Sector

11th November 2021

Iain Stewart MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland

The Scotland Office

1 Melville Cres

Edinburgh

EH3 7HW

Dear Iain Stewart MP,

**Working in Spain**

I'm writing to you now following a discussion with Donald Cameron MSP (Shadow Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture), where we discussed the connection between Scotland and Spain and the impact of the culture sector being unable to work in Spain via a 90-days or less visa agreement, which the UK have with many other EU countries.

There is an urgent need to bridge the conceptual gap between trade and migration. The culture workforce provides service exports, in a similar way to lawyers and accountants. We trade in performances, readings, appearances at festivals and events, and we need to be there in person for a short amount of time. This live work forms part of the overall creative economy, which is a balance of the trade of services, digital works, and physical goods.

The culture sector notes efforts made so far to secure short-term visa free and work-permit free access to some European nations, such as France and Germany who now have reciprocal agreements in place. This access is essential for the creative economy, particularly for the self-employed culture workforce, including touring writers, musicians, actors, and performers. However, no UK citizen can currently enter Spain to work (even for one day) without a visa. Visa costs start at £189 and go up to £409 or higher.

Spain is a major market for Scotland's culture sector; events for example Sonar and Primavera Sound in Barcelona; San Sebastian Film Festival, and Feriarte in Madrid provide opportunities for the culture sector to build relationships with individuals in Spain and to export their live work, and subsequently to export digital, and physical works to new markets.

Building relationships and networking with individuals in other countries is a major part of working in the culture sector. Visa and work permit costs in Spain are making it difficult for Scotland's sector to compete with other European nations as our starting costs are higher. For example: it's now cheaper for a festival in Spain to book artists from EU nations as this way, they do not need to incur visa and work permit fees or the cost of the administrative time to manage these procedures.

The culture sector has experienced an extremely difficult time between the impact of both Brexit and Covid-19 and it would be appreciated if the UK Government could show support for the sector by prioritising and securing a reciprocal agreement with Spain where; **performers can work visa and work-permit free for up to 90 days to undertake live work and to promote their business.**

I would appreciate if you would respond to this letter to provide an update in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Jennifer Hunter

Director

Culture Counts

On behalf of members

cc **Shadow Cabinet Secretary Culture Donald Cameron MSP**

**The Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP**