

Thursday October 19, 2017

10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing to urge you to issue a clear and definitive statement on the Government's position regarding access to global creative talent. We call for clarity on how the UK's future EU and non-EU immigration system will support our world-leading creative industries, which are the fastest growing part of Britain's economy.

As outlined in a 'Global Talent Report' published today by the Creative Industries Federation, international workers are crucial to the success of the UK's creative industries. The sector now returns more in GVA than the automotive, oil and gas, aerospace and life sciences industries combined and makes up 10% of the UK's services exports. Britain is also world-renowned for its creativity and cultural innovation. We could not have become such an economic and cultural leader without access to the brightest and best talent from around the world.

Despite this success, the creative industries have faced significant challenges when seeking to attract and retain global talent, which has hampered their growth. This was a problem even before the EU referendum.

Our non-EU immigration system is simply not fit for purpose for this fast-growing and highly innovative sector. It fails to meet the needs of creative freelancers, who make up almost half of the sector's workforce in the UK. This system will inevitably come under greater pressure after we leave the European Union and its failing will only become more apparent. A lack of direction and tangible proposals from Government on how this will be improved post-Brexit risks exacerbating these challenges and undermining our reputation as an international centre of culture and creativity.

We welcome the consultation issued by the Migration Advisory Committee and call on Government to ensure that its findings and recommendations inform any decisions on future immigration policy. We also urge Government to engage more closely with sectors like the creative industries that will suffer if we don't get this right. Government needs to provide certainty to creative businesses immediately that their ability to attract and retain global talent will not only be sustained but also improved post-Brexit.

Our creative industries are an economic success story worth £87bn to the UK economy and employing more than three million people. This letter is signed by and has the support of representatives from all the main political parties, all of whom believe that the Government must do more to support and not harm this success.

Yours faithfully,

**Tom Watson MP**, Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

**Kevin Brennan MP**, Deputy Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

**Brendan O'Hara MP**, Scottish National Party spokesperson on Culture and Media

**Stephen Gethins MP**, Scottish National Party spokesperson on International Affairs and Europe

**Baroness Bonham-Carter**, Liberal Democrat spokesperson for Culture, Media and Sport

**Tom Brake MP**, Liberal Democrat spokesperson on Exiting the EU

**Lord Clement-Jones**, Liberal Democrat spokesperson for the Digital Economy