

Research Briefing

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EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement: Temporary business travel

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Summary

The UK-EU [Trade and Cooperation Agreement \(TCA\)](#) contains commitments affecting business-related travel, which offer UK and EU service providers access to each other's markets under certain conditions. This briefing explains changes affecting UK and EU businesses and individuals who travel to provide services in the other party's market.

The TCA includes commitments related to the following categories of business travellers:

- short-term business visitors
- business visitors for establishment purposes
- intra-corporate transferees
- contractual service suppliers and independent professionals.

The UK and EU have agreed not to impose market access restrictions on these categories of business traveller. Such restrictions include economic needs tests, which typically assess a host country's demand for foreign workers, and, in some cases, work permits.

Business visitors falling into the categories covered by the TCA must be treated similarly to domestic suppliers during their stay. However, a range of reservations and exemptions apply, meaning they do not have the same rights as EU nationals or businesses operating within the single market.

What has changed?

From 1 January 2021, UK service providers and investors no longer benefit from the freedoms that came with EU single market membership, including the freedom to provide services, the freedom of movement of persons, and the freedom of establishment. Instead, under the TCA, UK service providers must comply with the regulatory regimes of the EU Member State in whose territory they plan to provide services. This includes observing national immigration rules, work permit requirements, and employment regulations.

At the same time, the UK maintains control over its own immigration rules and access to work for EU nationals.

The TCA affects different groups of service providers to varying degrees. For example, touring artists no longer have guaranteed visa and work permit-free travel across Europe to give paid performances. Our briefing, [Touring artists and the UK-EU economic partnership](#), provides further detail.

The UK Government has committed to improving provisions for service providers trading with the EU. At the May 2025 summit, the UK and EU agreed to establish a dedicated dialogue on business-related travel.

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The TCA and trade in services

The [Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#) (TCA), announced on 24 December 2020 and fully in force since 1 May 2021, lays the foundation for the UK and EU economic partnership.¹

The TCA includes provisions giving UK and EU service providers access to each other's markets. It establishes that service providers of one party should be treated similarly to domestic providers in the market of the other (known as 'national treatment'), aiming to prevent discrimination. However, the UK's departure from the EU single market has led to a significant change for UK service providers seeking to sell their services in EU Member States, as well as for UK investors looking to establish or expand operations in the EU.

1.1

What has changed?

Outside the EU single market, UK service providers and investors no longer benefit from the principles of free movement of persons, free provision of services, and freedom of establishment. They are no longer covered by the common EU regulatory and supervisory framework and the harmonised EU standards, which exist in certain sectors.²

UK businesses have lost the "[automatic right to offer services across the EU](#)" and no longer benefit from the country-of-origin principle, mutual recognition or 'passporting', where an authorisation issued by one Member State under EU rules gives access to the entire EU single market. As a result, UK Service providers may need to establish a business (such as a subsidiary) in the EU to provide a service.³

UK service providers must comply with the domestic rules of each EU Member State (also referred to as host country rules) in which they operate a branch or provide a service.⁴

In this context, business travel, which often enables the supply of services abroad, has changed significantly. The end of free movement between the UK and EU means new barriers for service providers. UK citizens no longer have freedom to work, start a business or live in the EU. They are subject to EU Member State immigration rules and requirements concerning the right to

¹ Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, [UK/EU and EAEC: Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#), (TCA), 30 April 2021

² European Commission, [Questions & Answers: EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#), 24 December 2020

³ AS above

⁴ As above

work and may require visas for long-term stays in the EU. The same applies to EU citizens seeking to provide services in the UK.

1.2 Provisions on services and investment

The UK and EU have included certain commitments regarding investment and trade in services in the agreement.⁵

Core principles

The TCA provides market access for services and investment by removing access barriers such as an economic needs test⁶ or quantitative restrictions on the number of persons admitted per sector.

One of the basic principles of the TCA is that if one party's service suppliers seek to offer services in the territory of the other party, they will not be treated less favourably than domestic operators, provided they comply with that party's rules. This 'national treatment' of service providers aims to prevent discrimination.

Commitments related to local presence ensure that businesses seeking to trade services across the border (cross-border services) can operate from their home territory and are not required to establish legal presence; that is, establish a business in the territory of the other party.

A most favoured nation clause in the TCA ensures that "if either the UK or the EU gives more favourable terms to another country in future, those terms will automatically extend to the UK/EU."⁷

Modes of service supply

The level and ease of market access depends on the way the service is supplied, that is:

- whether the service crosses the border, for example over the internet (mode 1);

⁵ Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, [UK/EU and EAEC: Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#), (TCA), 30 April 2021, Title II [Services and Investment], Articles 123-195.

⁶ An economic needs test typically means that access to a market is conditional on meeting economic criteria that reflect the host country's need for foreign workers.

⁷ Institute for Government, [UK-EU future relationship: the deal: services](#), 26 December 2020 (accessed 14 July 2025)

- whether the consumer purchases a service while abroad, like a tourist purchasing services in another country or an overseas student studying at a university (mode 2);
- whether a company such as a bank or a hotel chain supplies services from a branch established in another country (mode 3);
- whether a service supplier, who is a ‘natural person’, that is, an individual, stays temporarily in the territory of another country to provide a service (mode 4).⁸

The ability to supply a particular service or invest in a certain sector under the TCA depends on reservations set out in the agreement separately by the EU, its individual Member States and the UK.⁹ The Institute for Government states that UK nationals cannot, for example, sell actuarial services in Italy or construction services in Cyprus. They are not able to be surveyors in Bulgaria or tobacconists in France.¹⁰

In practice, individual EU Member States may have more liberal terms of market access for particular service activities than the TCA stipulates. For example, while the TCA does not explicitly provide for visa-free business travel, most EU Member States waive visas for short-term business trips.¹¹

National immigration and labour market regulations

Commitments related to services and investment do not affect individuals' access to national labour markets, or national regulations regarding nationality, citizenship, residence, or employment on a permanent basis.

The EU, its Member States and the UK retain their right to regulate the entry of individuals of the other party, and their stay in their territory. Immigration regulations and visa requirements of the UK and EU Member States apply.

Review clause

The TCA includes a commitment to review the services and investment provisions after five years, with a view to introducing future improvements (Article 126). It specifically refers to a potential review of the non-conforming measures and reservations (Annexes 19, 20, 21 and 22), and the permitted activities for short term business visitors (Annex 21).

⁸ The classification of services in four groups depending on the way they are supplied – the so-called modes – is applied in the WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services and free trade agreements. See Commons Library Briefing Trade in services and Brexit, 19 December 2019, section 2.1;

⁹ European Commission, [Questions & Answers: EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#), 24 December 2020

¹⁰ Institute for Government, [UK-EU future relationship: the deal: services](#) (accessed 4 February 2021)

¹¹ See for example, Emilija Leinarte, Catherine Barnard, [Mobility rights for service providers and the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#), 11 March 2021

2

Temporary business travel

The UK and EU have agreed arrangements that facilitate short-term business travel and temporary placements of highly skilled employees and independent professionals.

The relevant commitments are set out in Chapter 4 of Title II Services and Investment [Entry and temporary stay of natural persons for business purposes].¹² The WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and free trade agreements refer to these provisions as ‘Mode 4 services’.

These TCA provisions give service suppliers conditional access to the other party’s market, prohibit quotas on numbers of service suppliers in a particular sector, and eliminate economic needs tests.

The provisions also stipulate that one party’s service suppliers, which are allowed to provide services in the territory of the other party, have to be treated at least as favourably as domestic suppliers. However, this obligation does not require EU Member States to extend to natural or legal persons of the UK the same treatment that is granted to individuals or businesses established in other EU Member States.

Chapter 4 of the TCA sets out the conditions for the mobility of five groups of business travellers:

- Business visitors for establishment purposes
- Intra-corporate transferees
- Short-term business visitors
- Contractual service providers, and
- Independent professionals.¹³

The permissible length of stay in the territory of the other party varies across these groups. The table below outlines the requirements for each group, as further explained in the sections below. Note that the TCA sets out the baseline requirements, which do not necessarily reflect the actual visa rules. In particular, in terms of length of stay, some countries, including the UK, permit longer stays for certain categories.

¹² Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, [UK/EU and EAEC: Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#), (TCA), 30 April 2021, Articles 140-145

¹³ Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, [UK/EU and EAEC: Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#), (TCA), 30 April 2021, Articles 141, 142, and 143

TCA provisions: entry and temporary stay for business purposes

Business travellers	Requirements	Education/qualifications	Length of stay	Sectoral coverage	Reservations
Business visitors for establishment purposes	senior position		90 of 180 days	all sectors	Annex 21
Intra-corporate transferees				all sectors	Annex 21
manager	senior employee/partner, >1 year	university degree or equivalent	3 years		
specialist	employee, >1 year	relevant qualification	3 years		
trainee	employee, >6 m	university degree	1 year		
Short-term business visitors			90 of 180 days	all sectors; only listed activities	Annex 21
Contractual service providers	employee, >1 year; contract requires stay abroad	3 years of professional experience; university degree or equivalent; legally required professional qualification	cumulative 12 months/ duration of contract	listed sectors	Annex 22
Independent professionals	established as self-employed in home country; contract requires stay abroad	6 years of professional experience; university degree or equivalent; legally required professional qualification	cumulative 12 months/ duration of contract	listed sectors	Annex 22

Source: House of Commons Library analysis of TCA articles 140 to 144

The parties have also agreed specific non-conforming measures –existing and future exemptions to the general principles– (Article 144 and Annexes 19 and 20) and sector-specific reservations (Annexes 21 and 22). See Box 1 below for the relevant UK visa rules.

The TCA includes commitments on transparency (Article 145) and good procedural practices, which apply to the requirements for entry and temporary stay of persons (Annex 23).

2.1 Business visitors for establishment purposes

Investors seeking to establish a business in the territory of the other party may enter and stay for a maximum period of 90 days over six-months without a work permit (Article 141). To qualify, a person must work in a senior position in a company established in the territory of the other party and be responsible for setting up an enterprise.

There are no numerical quotas or economic needs tests regarding the total number of business visitors, in a specific sector, that are allowed entry. UK business visitors are granted national treatment, but not the same treatment as available to residents of or businesses established in other EU Member States (paragraphs 3-4 of Annex 21).

2.2 Intra-corporate transferees

Under Article 141 in the TCA, companies located in one party may temporarily transfer certain categories of employees (intra-corporate transferees) to a related company in the other party.

These include senior managers, experienced specialists, or paid trainees who are temporarily seconded to a representative office or a subsidiary or other legal entity which has legal links to a business established in their home country.

The length of stay of managers and specialists is limited to three years. Traineeships are limited to a period of one year. Work permits may be required, depending on the laws of the individual countries.

Certain requirements must be fulfilled in order to qualify for the category of intra-corporate transferees (Article 140(d)). For example, managers are required to have worked in senior positions at their home company.

Specialists' qualifications are assessed by considering their knowledge, experience and professional qualifications required for the position. Prior to their transfer overseas, both managers and specialists must have worked for the respective company for at least a year. Trainees are required to possess a university degree and have worked for the company for no less than six months.

Country-specific reservations are listed in TCA Annex 21.

TCA Annex 23, article 2, contains commitments to facilitate and streamline administrative procedures related to visa and work permit applications for intra-corporate transferees. It also allows intra-corporate transferees to be accompanied by their partner, children and family members. The UK has committed to facilitating the entry and temporary stay of partners and dependent children of intra-corporate transferees, in line with the UK's immigration rules.¹⁴

¹⁴ TCA, Annex 23, article 2(4).

2.3

Short-term business visitors

Short-term business visitors (Article 142) can stay in the other party's territory for up to 90 days in any six-month period. This applies only if visitors are not selling goods to the general public or providing services directly to consumers during their stay.

Short-term business visitors are allowed entry to carry out certain "permitted" activities, which are listed in paragraph 8 of Annex 21. For example, they may attend meetings and consultations, conduct independent research, marketing research, participate in trainings, trade fairs and exhibitions, engage in sales or purchase negotiations, or other commercial transactions.

Some types of service provision are also allowed under this category (Paragraph 8 of Annex 21). Professional installers, repair and maintenance personnel can provide after-sales or after-lease services as agreed in a prior contract with a consumer from the other party. Also travel agents, tour guides and tour operators, interpreters and translators may work while on a short-term business visit in the territory of the other party.

Generally, short-term business visitors would not require a work permit, would not be subject to an economic needs test or other similar approvals. But certain limitations may apply. These vary by EU Member State, as listed in Annex 21.

Trade expert Sam Lowe told The Guardian that short-term business visits generally cover activities such as attending meetings, trade fairs, conferences or conducting research. However, he explained that if the activity involves directly providing goods or services to the public, a work visa would be required. For example, from 2021, a British fashion model could travel to Italy for meetings or networking without a visa, but would need to apply for an Italian work visa to carry out paid modelling work, such as taking part in a fashion show or photoshoot.¹⁵

Similarly, touring musicians may need to get a work visa (or multiple work visas) if they are to gig in venues across the EU.¹⁶ Unlike after-sales repair or interpreters' services, their activities are not included in the list of permitted activities. For more information, see the Commons Library research briefing [Touring artists and the UK-EU economic partnership](#).

¹⁵ Lisa O'Carroll, The Guardian, [Committees, visas and climate change: Brexit experts' verdicts on the deal details](#), 28 December 2020

¹⁶ As above

2.4 Contractual service suppliers

This category covers professionals employed by a business of the home country, who have a contract (other than through a placement agency) to supply a service to a final consumer established in the host country.

The contract must require temporary presence to deliver the service abroad. The permitted length of stay in the other territory is a cumulative period of 12 months, or for the duration of the contract, whichever is shorter (articles 140.5(b) and 143.4).

A contractual service provider is required to have been employed by the sending company for at least a year immediately before their application for entry. They must possess at least three years of relevant professional experience, a university degree, or a relevant professional qualification.

2.5 Independent professionals

Independent professionals, in the context of the TCA, are individuals who are officially established as self-employed in their home country before their travel and have a contract with a final consumer in the host country (Article 140.5(c)).

An independent professional may stay in the host territory for a cumulative period of 12 months, or for the duration of their contract, whichever is less (Article 143).

Further conditions apply. An independent professional must:

- have not set up a business in the other party's territory
- have a genuine, legally valid contract (other than through a placement agency) for less than 12 months to supply a service to a final consumer in the other party. This contract must require the presence of the independent professional to deliver the service.
- on the date of their application for entry and stay in the other party's territory, have:
 - at least six years of professional experience in the relevant activity
 - a university degree or
 - a qualification demonstrating knowledge of and equivalent level; and
 - the professional qualifications legally required to exercise that activity in the other party.

The provisions for independent professionals do not give rights to people who seek work, or would like to establish themselves as self-employed, in the territory of the other party.

2.6 Limitations and practical implications

In practice, the ease of business travel depends on specific exceptions and reservations (areas where countries have reserved the right not to follow the core commitments of the TCA) listed in the annexes to the agreement. UK business travellers have to meet those requirements for each of the EU countries they plan to visit and/or deliver services in.

Business travel for establishment purposes, intra-corporate transfers and short-term business visits

TCA provisions regarding business travel for establishment purposes, intra-corporate transfers and short-term business visits apply to all sectors. The EU, and individual EU Member States, have made reservations, however, which vary from country to country. For example, whereas the TCA grants a 90-day work permit-free access for short-term business visitors in any six months (Article 142.4), some Member States have reserved the right to require work permits and apply economic needs tests. The UK has made a small number of reservations. See [Annex 21](#) of the TCA.

Short-term business visitors are only permitted to perform specifically named activities during their visit. These activities, discussed in section 2.3 above, are listed in [paragraph 8 of Annex 21](#).

Temporary business travel of contractual service providers and independent professionals

The TCA limits the benefits of temporary business travel of contractual service providers and independent professionals to certain named sectors and sub-sectors. This contrasts with other categories of business travellers, which are, as a rule, open to all service sectors but have a number of country-specific exclusions and limitations.¹⁷

The UK and EU have agreed a joint list of sectors that are open to contractual service providers and independent professionals, set out in annex 22 of the

¹⁷ In trade in services agreements, a ‘negative list’ means that trade is liberalised across all services sectors, with the excepted sectors listed separately. In contrast, a ‘positive list’ approach liberalises only those sectors that are specifically named in the agreement, with all others excluded from commitments. The WTO [General Agreement on Trade in Services](#) uses a positive list approach.

TCA – paragraph 10 for contractual service suppliers, and paragraph 11 for independent professionals.

The lists include, for example, legal services, accounting, engineering, various other professional and business services, research, medical services and many more. However, they do not include creative or artistic services such as photography or musical performance.

In addition, paragraph 12 of annex 22 contains reservations (exemptions) by sector made by the EU and its Member States. These include economic needs tests or professional knowledge requirements.

The UK has made no reservations in these areas; however, its commitments related to some sectors are “unbound”, which means that the UK reserves the right to introduce or maintain restricting measures in the specified sector (paragraph 13 of annex 22).

Government guidance on the [UK-EU trade and cooperation agreement: reservations](#) provides further details and an interactive tool for finding reservations by sector.¹⁸

Additional requirements

In addition to the sector-specific reservations, each party may adopt or maintain measures relating to qualification requirements, technical standards, or licensing (paragraph 3 of annex 22).

Researchers from Sussex University UK Trade Policy Observatory, Ingo Borchert and Minako Morita-Jaeger, observed that 14 of the 27 EU Member States apply economic needs tests before accepting foreign independent professionals who offer legal advisory services in public international law and home jurisdiction law.¹⁹

Trade expert Sam Lowe noted that in practice, providing service may be more burdensome than what “permitted by the TCA” suggests:

Different EU member states have their own immigration regimes, which might allow additional activities or apply further conditions. Austria, for example, requires a work permit for market research. There also might be additional necessary criteria, such as a recognised qualification.²⁰

¹⁸ Department for Business and Trade, Department for International Trade and Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, UK-EU trade and cooperation agreement: reservations, 13 July 2021.

¹⁹ Ingo Borchert and Minako Morita-Jaeger, [Taking Stock of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement: Trade in Services and Digital Trade](#), UKTPO, Briefing Paper 53, January 2021

²⁰ The Guardian, [“Committees, visas and climate change: Brexit experts' verdicts on the deal details”](#), 28 December 2020

1 Relevant UK visa categories

The UK implements the mobility commitments in the TCA through its existing immigration rules. The TCA has not resulted in any new immigration commitments for the UK.

The [Global Business Mobility visa](#) and [permitted business activities as a visitor](#) cover broadly the same five categories of business travellers as in the TCA, although the UK's provisions are currently more generous than the TCA requires. For example, a Senior or Specialist Worker visa for intra-corporate transferees can be issued for five years, whereas the TCA minimum is three years.[Insert box text here]

3

Commentary

Initial trade expert commentary following the conclusion of the TCA highlighted the significant difference between the complex and fragmented business mobility provisions in the TCA and the freedom of movement that applied in the EU single market. It was noted, however, that the TCA improves on the WTO GATS baseline.²¹ Several experts were concerned about the ability of small and medium-sized businesses to adapt to the new rules.

Ingo Borchert and Minako Morita-Jaeger of the UK Trade Policy Observatory argued in a 2021 briefing that the provisions for business travel in the TCA offered more than the general WTO GATS framework, which would apply if there were no free trade agreement with the EU:

For example, the categories of independent professionals, short-term business visitors and graduate trainees do not exist under the WTO/GATS. Also, the TCA facilitates short-term business trips and includes liberal provisions for intra-corporate transferees (and their dependents) as well as other classes of temporary movers.²²

The researchers noted that the TCA falls considerably short of free movement within the single market. On this point, Mickaël Laurans, Head of International, Law Society of England and Wales stated that “on the mobility point and fly-in, fly-out [services], it is a massive change compared to free movement of people”.²³

Borchert and Jaeger suggested that the provisions on short-term business travel would mostly benefit large, multinational businesses and highly skilled professionals. They thought small and medium-sized businesses might struggle with the “bureaucratic fixed costs of compliance” and would be less able to use the intra-company transfer route, as many of them do not have affiliate enterprises abroad.²⁴

Giving evidence to the House of Lords EU Services sub-committee, George Riddell, Director of Trade Strategy at Ernst & Young, echoed the concern for small and medium-sized businesses’ ability to adapt to the new rules. He highlighted the need for better information and support:

²¹ Emilija Leinarte, Catherine Barnard, [Mobility rights for service providers and the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#), 11 March 2021; Ingo Borchert and Minako Morita-Jaeger, [Taking Stock of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement: Trade in Services and Digital Trade](#), UKTPO, Briefing Paper 53, January 2021

²² Ingo Borchert and Minako Morita-Jaeger, [Taking Stock of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement: Trade in Services and Digital Trade](#), UKTPO, Briefing Paper 53, January 2021

²³ HL EU Sub-committee on EU Services, [Uncorrected oral evidence: Future UK-EU relations: trade in services](#), 28 January 2021, Q26

²⁴ Ingo Borchert and Minako Morita-Jaeger, [Taking Stock of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement: Trade in Services and Digital Trade](#), UKTPO, Briefing Paper 53, January 2021

... although in the popular imagination it is the EYs, the Deloittes and the KPMGs of the world that dominate the sector, in the latest statistics somewhere between 85% to 90% of the employment in the sector is in small and medium-sized firms. They, too, will have to adapt to these new rules, and in many cases they do not have the capacity to do so in the way some of the medium to larger-sized players in the market have.²⁵

The House of Lords European Union Committee concluded in the report [Beyond Brexit: trade in services](#), published on 24 March 2021, that the TCA's business mobility clauses were "a major change in the UK-EU trading relationship for services". It welcomed the signature of the TCA, alleviating some uncertainty for the professional and business services sector, and providing a platform for constructive dialogue with the EU.

However, the committee had concerns about the complexity created by the extensive national reservations and noted that the "fragmented" new framework would likely hit small operators the hardest.²⁶ In line with the committee's recommendations,²⁷ the government has published guidance to businesses explaining the relevant TCA provisions and exemptions (see section 5.1 below).

²⁵ House of Lords Select Committee on the European Union, Sub-committee on EU Services, [Corrected oral evidence: Future UK-EU relations: trade in services](#), 28 January 2021, Q26

²⁶ House of Lords European Union Committee, [Beyond Brexit: trade in services](#), 23rd Report of Session 2019-21, 24 March 2021, HL Paper 248, paras 95, 111-112.

²⁷ As above, paras 96, 112.

4 Implementation of business-related travel provisions

4.1 Ongoing issues

Since the entry into force of the TCA, its joint UK and EU governance bodies²⁸ have continued discussing some themes related to business mobility, with the main focus on transparency obligations, the UK visa sponsorship scheme, and mobility of touring artists.

The implementation of Article 145 of the TCA on transparency requires each side to publish information regarding the conditions for entry and stay of business visitors and service suppliers. The UK has emphasised the importance of accurate, clear, and easy-to-find guidance from individual Member States. The EU has since updated its [immigration portal](#)²⁹, which consolidates information on how third-country nationals can enter the EU to work, study, provide services and reunite with family members under trade agreements.³⁰

The EU has reiterated its concerns about the UK visa sponsorship scheme, describing it as discriminatory against EU service providers.³¹ It has said that the scheme may be “de facto nullifying or impairing the benefits” that EU professionals covered by the TCA might reasonably expect. The UK, for its part, considers the scheme a core element of its immigration system and has described it as a reasonable and proportionate mechanism, noting that it is subject to ongoing improvements.³²

Touring artists

The UK has repeatedly raised the problems experienced by touring artists, who can no longer travel and work freely across the EU. In absence of specific provisions in the TCA, artists and their accompanying staff must comply with

²⁸ This includes the joint UK-EU Partnership Council, which supervises the operation of the TCA at a political level and provides strategic direction. Supporting its implementation are the Trade Partnership Committee and the Trade Specialised Committee on Services, Investment and Digital Trade.

²⁹ [EU Immigration Portal](#) (accessed 29 July 2025)

³⁰ FCDO, [Trade Specialised Committee on Services, Investment and Digital Trade - Minutes](#), 24 October 2024

³¹ the situation faced by British touring artists was the result of the United Kingdom leaving the EU.; [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation and application of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#), 4 April 2025, COM(2025) 149 final, para 4.2

³² FCDO, [Trade Specialised Committee on Services, Investment and Digital Trade - Minutes](#), 24 October 2024

immigration regulations of each of the 27 EU Member States, where they intend to perform. Transportation of music instruments, merchandise and other goods is subject to EU customs regulations, while cabotage rules for foreign hauliers can limit the number of bus or lorry trips made as part of a tour.³³ The EU has maintained that the situation is the result of the UK leaving the EU and is not in favour of changing the TCA to address it.³⁴

The Commons Library research briefing, [Touring artists and the UK-EU economic partnership](#), provides further information on UK touring artists in the EU.

4.2 UK Government position

In line with the Labour Party's 2024 general election manifesto, the UK Government has said it would seek to improve arrangements for services trade with the EU, including the provisions for UK touring artists in the EU.³⁵

In its trade strategy, published in June 2025, the government again recognised the barriers to trading with the EU, including challenges associated with business mobility.³⁶

4.3 Commitment to dedicated dialogue

On 19 May 2025, the UK Government and the EU held their [first joint summit since the UK's departure from the EU](#). In the [Common Understanding](#) adopted at the summit, the parties agreed to establish a dedicated dialogue on the entry and temporary stay of individuals for business purposes, with a view to resolving outstanding implementation issues. This would include discussing the UK visa sponsorship scheme.³⁷

While the UK and EU did not make specific commitments regarding touring artists, they acknowledged “the value of travel and cultural and artistic

³³ UK Music, [Touring and Working in the EU](#), accessed 28 July 2025

³⁴ Specialised Committee on Road Transport, [Minutes: EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement \(TCA\) Fourth Meeting of the Specialised Committee on Road Transport](#), 14 November 2024; FCDO, [Minutes of the third meeting of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement Partnership Council, 16 May 2024](#), 24 October 2024

³⁵ Another government priority is the mutual recognition of diplomas issued by one party in the territory of the other (recognition of professional qualifications), enabling professionals in regulated fields, such as medicine and architecture, to provide services more easily in the other party's market.

See section 1 of House of Commons Library briefing paper, [Resetting the UK's relationship with the European Union](#).

³⁶ UK Government, [The UK Trade Strategy](#), 26 June 2025, pp18-19

³⁷ Another dialogue will address the recognition of professional qualifications.

exchanges, including the activities of touring artists” and said they would “continue their efforts to support travel and cultural exchange”.³⁸

5 Further information

5.1 UK government guidance on gov.uk

- [Selling services to the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein;](#)
- [UK-EU trade and cooperation agreement: reservations;](#)
- [Travelling to the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein for work.](#)

5.2 EU immigration information

[EU Immigration Portal](#)

³⁸ European Commission, [A renewed agenda for European Union – United Kingdom cooperation Common Understanding](#), 19 May 2025

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