

Keeping Britain on screen

Supporting the future of UK creators

We represent more than 100,000 authors, scriptwriters, directors and other creators working in the creative industries, a sector that contributes £92 billion to the UK economy. As the Government prepares for withdrawal from the European Union, these are the key areas of concern for our members.

The implementation of the EU Copyright Directive in the UK

The Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market was recently approved by the European Parliament, and has now entered formal Trilogue discussions. The Directive aims to modernise copyright law for the digital age and contains various provisions to support authors, scriptwriters, publishers and other creators.

These include an obligation for publishers to be more transparent when providing information to authors and performers on the exploitation of their works. It also establishes a principle of fair and proportionate remuneration for creators — a vital provision at a time when many writers and directors are struggling to make a living from their work.

▶ **The Copyright Directive is set to be agreed before the UK leaves the EU, and we urge the Government to support the Directive and these important provisions in its passage through the Trilogue process and on to approval.**

Reciprocal agreements on UK creators' economic rights with the EU

Reciprocal agreements between organisations in the UK and Europe provide an important contribution to creators' incomes. Collective Management Organisations such as Directors UK and ALCS collect royalties from sources across the EU and distribute to creators in the UK, something which is underpinned by reciprocal agreements.

The UK and its authors are generally a net beneficiary of these reciprocal agreements due to the significant international success of intellectual property from the UK in all forms. We have been made aware that the domestic laws in a few European countries state that they can only pay these royalties to foreign nationals as long as the other country remains in the EU or the EEA. Without further agreements, our access to these royalties is at risk.

▶ **The Government must support the continued operation of these arrangements to ensure that UK content and its creators are not devalued after Brexit.**

International mobility for creators and workers in the creative industries

The success of the UK's creative industries depends on access to talent from abroad, ease of movement across the EU for UK talent and to export our creative content. Co-productions, tours, performances and one-off films invariably use workers from the UK, EU and the rest of the world.

Any future migration system with the EU must support the movement of creators and technicians. Extending the current visa system — which is costly and time-consuming — to EU nationals would place considerable burdens upon the creative industries and undoubtedly undermine their success.

▶ **We are calling on the Government to ensure that creative freelancers will be able to travel freely for work between the UK and the EU after Brexit, in recognition of the unique needs of the sector.**

Funding for cultural projects

Many creative practitioners have benefitted from European Union funding.

The Creative Europe funding scheme provides vital funding for the arts across Europe, bringing in an average of £18.4 million a year in funding to the UK, and helping to distribute British films across the EU. The cultural sector has also benefitted from other European funding streams including the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund.

▶ The Government should have a strategy to continue these funding streams or replace them with alternative domestic funding for the arts via the Arts Council or another equivalent body. It should also ensure that funding for cultural projects forms a key component of the proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which is due to replace EU structural funds.

Health and safety issues for workers in the creative industries

Current EU working time and health and safety laws have been incorporated into UK law, although it is worth noting that the UK Government has chosen to allow UK employers and workers to opt out of some provisions, such as the 48-hour maximum working week. It is important that going forward we uphold these protections that have been a factor in making the UK creative industries both successful and a safe and healthy workplace for creators.

▶ The Government must ensure that the current framework of employment rights and health and safety legislation is retained and not weakened after Brexit.

What can you do?

- Table written or oral parliamentary questions
- Sponsor a parliamentary debate
- Write to the Secretary of State

We are always available to provide further briefings — please get in touch using the details below.

About us



ALCS is the UK's collective management organisation (CMO) representing 95,000 authors.

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Directors UK is the professional association and CMO for British screen directors, with over 7,000 members.

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The Society of Authors is the UK trade union for more than 10,000 writers, illustrators and literary translators, which has been advising and speaking out for the profession since 1884.

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The Writers' Guild of Great Britain (WGGB) is a trade union representing professional writers in TV, film, theatre, radio, books, comedy, poetry, animation and videogames.

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