



Department for  
Digital, Culture,  
Media & Sport

Tracey Crouch MP  
Minister for Sport and Civil Society  
4th Floor  
100 Parliament Street  
London SW1A 2BQ

E: [enquiries@culture.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@culture.gov.uk)

[www.gov.uk/dcms](http://www.gov.uk/dcms)

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Lord Jay of Ewelme  
Chairman, House of Lords EU Home Affairs Sub-  
Committee  
House of Lords  
London  
W1A 0PW

Our Ref:  
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Dear Lord Jay of Ewelme,

Thank you for your letter of 27 July, following your inquiry into '*Brexit: freedom of movement in the fields of sport and culture*'.

I am pleased to see that the Committee has considered the mobility needs of the sport sector after we leave the EU. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that the government absolutely recognises the value of sport to the UK, and we are determined to ensure that our sport sector continues to flourish.

Please find responses to the specific questions you have posed below:

**Has the government made an analysis of the number of EU27 citizens working in the UK sports sector?**

DCMS's sector employment estimates show that employment in the sport sector was 581,000 in 2017 (1.8% of UK jobs).<sup>1</sup> EU nationals in the sport sector accounted for 3.6% of all employed and self-employed jobs (21,000) in 2017.<sup>2</sup> As the Committee found in its oral evidence session with Mr Allen, Mr Baston and Mr Bukalski, EU citizens make significant contributions to sport in the UK, from sports professionals and coaches at the elite end through to operational roles that support the running of matches, stadiums and the physical activity and leisure sector.

As the Committee will be aware, there are variations in the numbers of EU citizens involved in individual sports and areas of the sector. For example, football has more professional players from the EU proportionately than rugby or cricket, for historical and cultural reasons related to those games. The DCMS evidence to the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) highlighted these issues, and DCMS also encouraged sport sector stakeholders to respond to the MAC's call for evidence directly.<sup>3</sup>

**Has the government considered the effect of ending free movement on sports such as horseracing?**

<sup>1</sup> [DCMS Sector Economic Estimates 2017: Employment report](#)

<sup>2</sup> [DCMS Sector Economic Estimates 2017: Employment](#) Table 11.

<sup>3</sup> [Migration Advisory Committee call for evidence: DCMS response \(October 2017\)](#)



We understand the importance of movement of people across borders to maintain a thriving horseracing sector. In the *'The future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union'* White Paper, we set out our ambition to negotiate a framework for mobility that will end free movement, but enable citizens to continue to travel to each other's countries, and for UK and EU businesses to travel and provide services.<sup>4</sup> The detail of these commitments will be a matter for negotiations with the EU.

The government has commissioned the MAC to gather evidence on patterns of EU migration and the role of migration in the wider economy, ahead of our exit from the EU. We have welcomed their interim report and look forward to their full report in the autumn. Horseracing has particular asks of the future immigration system, and concerns around the shortage of work riders was flagged to the MAC by DCMS. Further details about the UK's future immigration system will be set out by the Home Office in due course.

As your letter recognises, British and Irish horseracing sectors are well-integrated, and British racing benefits from the experience of staff and the calibre of jockeys that come to work and compete in the UK. The UK government is firmly committed to maintaining the Common Travel Area (CTA) and to protecting the rights enjoyed by UK and Irish nationals when in each other's state.

We are also aware of how important the movement of horses is to the horseracing sector. We want equines to continue to be able to travel to and from the EU with minimum disruption, whilst maintaining high biosecurity and welfare standards. DCMS is working closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which leads on animal health and equine movements, on this issue.

**Has the government assessed whether extra Tier 5 or Tier 2 visas will need to be issued for EU27 sportspeople wishing to enter the UK post-Brexit, and if so, how many extra visas might be needed?**

High-skilled sports professionals come to the UK from both EEA and non-EEA countries to participate in our thriving sport sector, either on the basis of permanent or temporary contracts at clubs in sports leagues (for which Tier 2 and Tier 5 visas are required for non-EEA nationals), or for one-off sports competitions and events.

The White Paper on the UK's future relationship with the EU makes clear that our aspiration is for a reciprocal system to allow EU and UK citizens to travel freely in our respective jurisdictions, without a visa, for tourism and temporary business activity, which may include participation in one-off sports events, matches and competitions. This will be a matter for the negotiations with the EU.

In respect of Tier 2 and Tier 5 visas, the Home Office routinely works closely with the National Governing Bodies for UK sports to ensure immigration criteria reflect sports' needs and practices, and this will continue as we look to develop a new immigration system for the UK post EU exit. We will consider the MAC's advice on EU migration in the wider economy once it has been received and the Home Office will provide further details about the UK's future immigration system in due course.

**How will non-elite EU27 sportspeople enter the UK after the end of the transition period? Will the government introduce a preferential system for EU27 sportspeople, or will they fall under the rules that currently exist for non-EU sportspeople?**

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<sup>4</sup> [The future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union](#) page 33.

We recognise the value of talented individuals and groups of sportspeople coming to the UK. In the White Paper, the government confirmed the importance it attaches to the mobility of talented individuals to support cultural and sporting cooperation in the chapter on the Co-operative Accord on culture and education.<sup>5</sup> The precise way in which the government will control the movement of EU nationals to Britain after we leave the EU is yet to be determined. We are carefully considering a range of options for the future immigration system and we will make decisions based on evidence and our engagement with stakeholders.

**How, if at all, will the government protect what Angus Bujalski called the “business of sport” from any negative effects associated with ending free movement?**

We recognise the important role that fans and tourists have in supporting the UK’s sport sector. In the White Paper, the government set out its intention to develop a framework for mobility, which will allow people to travel freely, without a visa, for tourism and temporary business activity.

As previously acknowledged, we appreciate the valuable work that lower-skilled EU workers do to support what Mr Bujalski termed the “business of sport”. These roles are being considered by the MAC, and we look forward to receiving their advice on this matter.

Major sports events and competitions in the UK are also of course supported by the fantastic work of volunteers. Since the London Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012 the profile and momentum around volunteering for major events has grown considerably. This has been evidenced through volunteer teams at events including the “Tour Makers” for the Tour de France Grand Départ in 2014; “The Pack” for the 2015 Rugby World Cup; and “Runners” for the London 2017 World ParaAthletics and IAAF World Athletics Championships. For the latter, over 10,000 people applied for 4,000 volunteering roles.

Following the publication of the government’s *Sporting Future* strategy in 2015, we have established a Sports Business Council to support and fulfil the huge economic potential of sport in the UK. The Sports Business Council is the key forum for the sport and physical activity sector to work with government to identify and take actions to ensure the sector continues to grow and prosper.

**Has the government given any consideration to introducing a seasonal workers scheme for EU27 workers in the sports sector?**

Like many other sectors, sport relies on seasonal workers to fulfil important supporting roles, such as those which are vital to the running of stadiums and events. This has been highlighted to the MAC as a concern by DCMS.

DCMS and BEIS have been in discussion with a number of sports, including particularly seasonal sports like snowsports and yachting, to understand their concerns about the ability of their members to continue to work and provide services in the EU post exit, including on a seasonal basis. As the White Paper sets out, we wish to ensure a labour mobility framework is agreed with the EU as part of the negotiations to help address these concerns.

**Has the government assessed how UK sports, from the elite to the grassroots level, would be affected should the UK no longer be able to make use of the Kolpak ruling?**

The government has engaged with professional sport about how changes to freedom of movement after EU exit may affect the sector, as we have with other industry sectors. The UK’s

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<sup>5</sup> [The future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union](#), p.79.

immigration system already makes specific provision for UK sport to access top-level sports people from outside the EU, which after we exit the EU will include “Kolpak” players.

We recognise the need for sports, including football, rugby and cricket, to continue to be able to access talent from the EU and globally. As the Committee has found, there are a range of views among stakeholders about how the removal of freedom of movement and the Kolpak ruling will impact sports in the UK. We will continue to engage with stakeholders to understand the potential implications of the removal of the Kolpak ruling. In designing our future immigration system, the government will maintain its dialogue with the National Governing Bodies to ensure that any new arrangements for their individual sports balance the need to attract talent with the need to ensure that opportunities for home-grown players are maintained.

**The government’s current proposal is for an “association agreement” with the EU. Under the terms of an association agreement, would UK sportspeople be able to play in EU sports teams as “homegrown” players, post-Brexit? And could EU sportspeople continue to play in the UK as such?**

The Association Agreement has been proposed to provide structure and governance to the relationship between the UK and the EU going forward in light of the fact that the UK will no longer be subject to EU institutions, such as the Court of Justice of the European Union. This is a governance proposal, which is not directly related to the specific detail of future mobility arrangements between the UK and the EU.

Leaving the EU will mean an end to freedom of movement. As I have previously explained, we fully recognise the need for UK sports to access top global talent and conversely for British sportspeople to compete at the highest levels of international sport. In the White Paper, we set out our ambition to negotiate a Co-operative Accord on culture and education to support ongoing collaboration between the EU and the UK. The proposed Accord will be underpinned by our desire to agree a reciprocal framework for mobility.

**How, if at all, does the government plan to ensure that sportspeople, other sports sector workers, and fans, will be able to travel and work in the EU after the transition period?**

The government has stated its desire to work with the EU to explore opportunities for continued sporting co-operation. It is in both the UK’s and the EU’s interest to encourage the mobility of our most talented sportspeople, to support the competitiveness of European sport and to maintain a thriving European sporting community going forward.

We recognise the significant contribution that UK workers make to the European sport and tourism sectors, for example as skiing, snowboarding and sailing instructors. We are working closely with representative organisations for these types of workers to fully understand their mobility needs.

The UK has proposed reciprocal visa-free travel arrangements to enable UK and EU citizens to continue to travel freely for tourism in the future, which will enable EU sports fans to continue to come to the UK to support our world-leading sports teams and major events, and vice versa. The UK has also been clear that we want these reciprocal mobility arrangements to be as streamlined as possible to ensure smooth passage for legitimate travel while strengthening the security of the UK’s borders.

**What will the government offer to the EU in return?**

The UK’s sport and physical activity sector is recognised globally as world-class. We work closely with the EU to tackle international sporting issues such as corruption, as well as to



share best practice in sports governance, grassroots participation and athlete welfare. The UK is a world-leading host of major sporting events, building on the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games legacy, and we are also home to the Premier League - the most watched and supported football league in the world. We are very keen to continue and deepen our excellent working relationships with the EU collectively and with individual EU countries bilaterally on sports co-operation going forward.

The UK wishes to continue to play an active part in the sporting life of Europe after we leave the EU, which is why we have proposed a Co-operative Accord on culture and education. As you highlighted in your letter, we attach great importance to the continued mobility of talented groups and individuals from both the UK and the EU to support cultural, creative and sporting co-operation. As we continue our negotiations with the EU, and design our future immigration system, we will be looking to ensure that our sports sector continues to thrive.

I am copying this letter to Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP, Minister of State for Immigration, and Damian Collins MP, Chair of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tracey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'T'.

Tracey Crouch MP  
**Minister for Sport and Civil Society**