Twitter Thread by Howard Goodall



Howard Goodall
@Howard_Goodall

Some thoughts on this laudable petition (a ■about managing

It is good to give a voice to the huge frustrations being felt with regard to the situation musicians, other performers & the many other skilled professionals who work alongside them are waking up to now the UK-EU FTA deal is public /2

Virtually nothing in this article I wrote two months ago is changed by the deal, as in fact predicted in the article itself /3
https://t.co/XTwktiIaZK

The current petition is a kind of offshoot of the @WeAreTheMU petition that has been running for 2 years which has so far 90k signatures/4
https://t.co/8tYKAAm4DY

Who will act on the pleas in these petitions, especially as the deal, with its 2,000 pages, will become law in about 40 hours time in our Noddy-democracy Parliament? Trade bodies representing the UK's music industry have been lobbying hard on these exact issues for 4 years /5

DCMS Sec of State Oliver Dowden was ultimately responsible for pressing these urgent & vital requests on our sector's behalf to the Downing St negotiating team. If he did, he failed. There is nothing in the deal for the creative sector. Performing artists are nowhere in it /6

It's worth noting the Brexit Govt's priorities here. The creative industries & financial services are our biggest foreign earners, by a gigantic margin. Between them their earnings for the UK would pay for all state education & the NHS annually. They are not in the deal. /7

What is being asked of the EU - an ■■-wide visa waiver for performing artists & their teams - has never existed before. Member states decide work visa & entry policy themselves. Performers from no other country in the world have ever been offered EU-wide work visa exemption /8

If the UK had led by example & proposed such a thing at any time in its period of membership & influence, or even offered it now for performers coming to the UK, we might not as a sector be where we are. But the UK esp under May/Patel has made visas for inbound artists tougher /9

So our govt's leverage, now the deal is done, is both weak, and, frankly, hypocritical, in asking for an EU-wide work visa. We worked freely across the EU as members because of Freedom of Movement, from which we have emphatically withdrawn. Plus it's only half the problem /10

The other big headache for touring artists & others, beyond work permits, is customs carnets, outlined in detail in my article linked above. We have to use carnets because the UK (ex NI) also emphatically withdrew from the EEA Customs Union /11

Assuming (a big if) we COULD get the EU to agree a performers' work permit across the 27 countries, the carnet/customs problem doesn't go away, and can't, until or unless we were to rejoin the Customs Union. This isn't politics, it's trade/VAT basics: rules, not opinions /12

But again we come down to who will make the case for us in any new talks? The Frost-Barnier teams are stood down. The cabinet clique running Britain didn't prioritise the entire Services sector (80% of our economy) in the deal, why on earth would they prioritise musicians? /13

364 Tory MPs will vote tomorrow for a deal they've barely read, never mind scrutinised. They will do so whatever the consequences for their constituents, never mind the plight of the music industry. /14

Some MPs, across the house, have a special interest in, and concern for, music, without doubt. But the whipping system means they will be forced to endorse a law that wilfully, knowingly dismantles rights & privileges that have allowed our musicians to thrive in the EU /15

MPs may also harbour private qualms about fighting for a special status for performers when so many other professional fields are equally blighted by the abandonment of FoM and withdrawal from the SM /16

Over the next 6 months all industries will be compiling long lists of requests, concerns & hoped-for concessions to amend the current terms of the FTA. We will be in a long queue. /17

So, let us move forward with realistic expectations. The Brexit government is not our ally. It wants us to suck up the new inconveniences, barriers & costs, and get on with it. It seems inescapable that our industry will therefore shrink /18

It may be that as a sector we could make our case to our ■■ friends directly, since cultural exchange is good for everyone. Recent years of dishonest, anti-European rhetoric from our govt & its client press won't help but we're supposedly creative & resourceful. Let's try ■ /19