

A practical guide to touring across Europe for UK performing artists and companies

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Authors

This study was commissioned by Arts Council England through 1927, Artsadmin and LIFT. The report was prepared by independent producers and consultants Nadine Patel and Ania Obolewicz.

Introduction

Touring to Europe has become more complicated, because each country has its own independent rules and regulations for non-European visiting artists BUT do not fear, this document and the [Country Focus Guides](#) are here to help demystify the process. The aim of these documents is to support independent theatre, dance and live art makers as they tour in Europe post-Brexit. In general, we've focused on post-Brexit rules, not the shifting rules around travel permissions as they relate to the Coronavirus pandemic. The guidance will focus primarily on short-term engagements (under three months), as legislation differs extensively for longer term engagements and the majority of performing arts touring does not extend beyond three months. It will also focus primarily on paid performance engagements – other jobs such as teaching, running workshops or residencies might have slightly different rules depending on the country but also on the nature and the financial conditions of engagement. Similarly, different legislation applies for [Musicians touring](#) and Visual Artists (a guide is due to be published soon). There is also currently a campaign, [#carryontouring](#), which is backed by some MPs and looks to apply pressure on Government and the EU commission to resolve some of the issues which have arisen from the Brexit deal.

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Country guides

We have drafted 19 Country Guides:

1. [Austria](#)
2. [Belgium](#)
3. [Czechia](#)
4. [Denmark](#)
5. [Estonia](#)
6. [Finland](#)
7. [France](#)
8. [Germany](#)
9. [Greece](#)
10. [Ireland](#)
11. [Italy](#)
12. [Latvia](#)
13. [The Netherlands](#)
14. [Poland](#)
15. [Portugal](#)
16. [Slovenia](#)
17. [Spain](#)
18. [Sweden](#)
19. [Switzerland](#)

These countries were chosen because they have the clearest track record of presenting and collaborating with UK performance artists (some, such as Switzerland are not part of the European Union (EU), but present strong opportunities for the performing arts sector in the UK).

There are lots of experts and information points that can provide you with tailored advice and, in the background, the European Commission is trying to work on solutions for UK performing artists. In the meantime, you might need to consider giving yourself a good lead time (an average of two months) prior to your European engagement to make sure you have all the documents you need in place. Once you've gone through the experience it should take you less time the next time round, but bureaucracy does differ from country to country; what is expected in Spain will not be the same in Germany.

The information provided at present can be patchy and in over-complicated language so we have tried as best we can to summarise a very complex issue. We believe the information provided is as accurate as possible but the responsibility for ensuring that your visit to a European engagement is within the legal parameters remains with the touring individual and company.

It's important to collaborate closely with your partners in the countries you are going to visit (venues, festivals, companies) on what steps you need to take and what documents you need to prepare before coming. They have access to information in their local languages and local advice centres that can be very helpful.

Case studies

We have also drafted three case studies based on three different scenarios to help you. These are:

1. [Forced Entertainment](#), a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) touring to France, which has a combined group of freelancers and PAYE employees and will be performing different shows which have different freight considerations.
2. [Sonia Hughes](#), an independent artist touring to the Netherlands with two other freelancers.
3. [Tim Spooner](#), a small-scale, freelance artist touring to multiple countries including Slovenia, Poland and Germany.

We also recommend you look at the [Stopgap](#) touring to the EU case study if you are touring with disabled artists (additionally, Stopgap has non-British passport holders).

At the end of this document you will also find a helpful Resource list which will signpost you to organisations that focus on touring in Europe.

What you need to know:

Visas and work permits

A **visa** is an official document that allows the bearer to legally enter a foreign country.

A **work permit** is an official document giving a foreigner permission to take a job in a country.

Unfortunately some countries use the terminology of visa and work permits interchangeably so that can add to the confusion, but we have tried to address this in each Country Focus Guide.

If you are a British passport holder **you do not need a visa** to visit the Schengen area (EU + Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland and Romania are not part of the Schengen area) as long as you don't stay more than 90 days out of every 180 days, i.e. after 90 days in the Schengen area, you must return to the UK for at least 90 days before you can go back for another 90 days.

Under these rules, you can enter Schengen countries as a tourist but also for some unpaid work trips such as conferences, network meetings, R&D visits or visiting festivals. There are some instances, in the case of paid engagements, where a work visa is required, but this will be detailed in the individual Country Focus Guides. The hope is that, in future, there will be a universal EU work visa agreement across all Schengen countries and that for a short-term (less than three months) visit no country will require one.

The European Commission has an online [calculator](#) to help track short stays. Don't forget that going on holiday in the EU or any other unpaid activity will be added to the 90 days total – you don't have 90 days for paid work and 90 days for unpaid activity, it is 90 days **in total** you can spend in an EU country, regardless of what you are doing. Check with your team that they all have enough days available to be part of your paid engagement.

At the end of 2022 you **will** need to get an [ETIAS travel authorisation](#). Basically, you pay a small fee (€10 maximum) and register online. This will mean you have been security checked and can travel visa-free in Europe for five years. You will still only be able to travel visa-free for 90 days, though, as ETIAS does not change this rule.

European nationals coming to the UK for less than a month should not require a visa, but they may require sponsorship. This is dependent on the length of the engagement. The [UK Arts infopoint](#) will have updates regarding visas for EU nationals.

Non-European nationals may require a visa. You can find out who and how on the UK Government [website](#).

VAT

Value added tax (VAT) is a tax on all goods (i.e. selling a book) and services (i.e. teaching a workshop) bought and sold internationally.

Employees (people receiving a salary for their work) are excluded from VAT, but performing art companies or self-employed artists can potentially be subject to VAT. You can find a comprehensive guide to [VAT in Europe](#) for cultural workers.

The supply of services (e.g. performances, workshops) by a UK business to an EU business is now taxable in the EU Member State where the customer is established, so the venue/festival in the EU will be liable for that VAT. In practice, this means that VAT is zero rated when providing service to the EU countries. Even if you're VAT registered in the UK, you don't add VAT to your fee. You might be asked to add a 'reverse charge' on your invoice and the presenter in the EU is then responsible for processing VAT according to local VAT rules. The Reverse Charge mechanism moves the responsibility for the recording of a VAT transaction from the supplier (you) to the customer (the presenter). That way it eliminates or reduces the obligation for you to VAT register or account for VAT for this transaction in the UK. Make sure that it's clear in the contract with your partner that the fee is net of VAT and that local VAT will not be taken out. This might be the case if your partner is a VAT-exempt entity (non-profit association, etc.).

You can find contact details for the [HMRC office dealing with VAT issues online](#).

Tax

Each country sets its own tax rules. The main things to know about tax are: most countries will only be concerned with the tax that is applicable to the employment you have had in their country. They want to be sure that you don't come to their country and get paid without declaring it either back in the UK or in their country. Nearly all European countries have an agreement with the UK but keep an eye on these as post-Brexit they are changing (hopefully for the better) to avoid you being taxed twice.

When you are getting a contract drafted it's best to get the European festival or local organiser to separately specify the gross artist fee as well as the other expenses that they will cover (such as hotel, flights, catering) to make sure you are only having tax withheld on the fee.

A [comprehensive guide to tax in Europe for performing artists](#) has been written by Pearle, but please note this was published a few years ago and some of the percentages are out of date.

Tax will be withheld in the country you temporarily work in and then returned to you as a tax credit (not cash) once you have submitted your (or the company's) tax return. To avoid having tax withheld in a country you need to apply for a [Certificate of residence](#) in the UK. You then need to get the overseas country's tax authority to provide you with a form (or apply by letter if they do not have one). This would then be given to the person who is paying you so that they do not withhold a percentage of the payment for tax. The process is quite complicated but it could save you from having tax withheld and is worth trying to do. Please check with European hosts if they want certificates for the individuals in the company and/or the company as an entity.

If you weren't able to go through the above process and you [now been taxed](#) then:

- You can usually claim Foreign Tax Credit Relief when you [report your overseas income](#) in your tax return.
- How much relief you get depends on the UK's '[double-taxation agreement](#)' with the country your income is from.

Whenever any tax has been withheld, ask for a tax certificate, including for contracts where a net performance fee has been agreed and the tax is paid on top of the net fee. A tax certificate is needed in the UK as evidence you have had it withheld in the country you have worked in. It will be up to your European partner to obtain the tax certificate from their ministry of finance for you. HMRC has guidance on how to report your foreign income or gains in your tax return in '[Foreign notes](#)'.

We would advise you to [contact HMRC](#) or get [professional tax help](#) if you're not sure, or need help with double-taxation relief.

The key thing here is to consider your cash flow issue as you will not get repaid until the end of the financial year, and it will be a tax credit (i.e. Foreign Tax Credit Relief) **not a cash reimbursement.**

Social Security

Social security contributions relate to your National Insurance etc. Whether you are employed or self-employed, everyone needs to make these contributions and you need to show that you are paying these contributions in the UK to avoid paying them again in the European country you are visiting. This is done through [getting an A1 form](#). If

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you are working for a UK arts company then your employer would normally apply the A1 form for the employees that go on tour. If you are self-employed then you need to apply for the A1 form. Some countries, such as Italy and France, are really strict about you providing an A1 form. Pearle has a comprehensive social security guide [you can refer to](#).

If you are **self-employed** and are going to be working temporarily in the EU, you can apply for an [A1 certificate](#) from HMRC to continue paying your social security contributions in the UK. This means you will not have to pay social security contributions abroad as well.

If you are a **producer applying on behalf of others** you will need to fill in an [authorising your agent \(64-8\) form](#). Write on the top 'For A1 purposes only' and send it with the CA3822 (A1) application form.

It's really important to apply for A1 forms far in advance, as HMRC can take a very long time to process them. If your A1 form is delayed, you can try asking a venue to hold back part of your fee until the certificates and tax forms arrive so as to avoid deductions being applied. If your forms and the payment of your fee are delayed, ensure your cash flow takes the delay into account.

Remember the [new IR35 rules](#) (about off-payroll working) which [came into place in April 2021](#), and check [whether they apply to you](#) as an arts organisation employing freelancers for a particular international engagement.

You can also [contact the HMRC office dealing with National Insurance](#).

Copyright

UK copyright works will still be protected in the EU and vice versa. Look up what you need to know in the [guide to copyright clearance in Europe](#).

Passport control and customs

Before travelling, remember to make sure that your passport has at least six months left and is less than 10 years old (even if it has six months or more left) on the day you're leaving the UK. At border control, you may need to show a return or onward ticket, show you have enough money for your stay and use separate lanes from EU, EEA and Swiss citizens when queuing. Your passport might be stamped.

Healthcare

Your [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#) will still be valid if you're travelling to an EU country (they are not valid in Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland). If

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your EHIC card expires, you will need to apply for a [Global Health Insurance Card \(GHIC\)](#). You do this via the [NHS website](#).

Carnet

The acronym ATA is a combination of French and English terms "Admission Temporaire/Temporary Admission." The ATA carnet is now the document most widely used involving temporary admission of goods from one country to another. You don't necessarily need an ATA carnet. They are expensive and aren't always required, especially if you are only visiting one country. Contact the local customs authorities and send them a list of the professional equipment/goods you are travelling with and they can advise you what to do. The purpose of the ATA carnet is to ensure you do not have to pay customs duty or tax. You can still do this without a carnet using a '[duplicate list](#)'. On headed paper you will need to list:

- a description of the goods (props, sound equipment etc.)
- quantities
- serial numbers, if the goods have them
- value of the goods

Once you are at customs, you'll need to provide two copies of the list above and a completed [form C&E 1246](#).

If you do need an EU ATA carnet then this will normally be valid for 12 months and cost about £325 plus a security deposit of 30-40% of the goods' value. A particular advantage of an EU carnet is the ability to visit 27 adjacent countries, through open borders and with no further cost or hassle. It also reduces hassle when you return to the UK. It may be worth paying an expert to do the work for you, such as [ATA Carnet UK](#) but there are also [good examples from UK companies](#) who have been through the process.

In any case, whether you are travelling with an ATA carnet or not, there are no custom duties to be paid for the temporary import/export of goods used for a live performance, unless they are intended for sale (merchandising).

When you leave the UK, the cover of the carnet and paperwork for temporary export will need to be completed by the customs official at the UK port or airport of departure. This is important to keep in mind if you are driving or flying with your set (otherwise shipping companies will arrange it for you). You can phone the [imports and exports general enquiries helpline](#) before departure to get a contact number for the port or airport of departure to check when an official will be available. They'll tell you about alternative arrangements if necessary.

Please note that from 1st January 2021, the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel are unable to process ATA carnets. [See](#) where you need to visit on your way. All the UK airports process ATA carnets – in most cases you can do it at baggage points or by going to the Enquiries Desk and calling the Customs Officer. However, at some airports you need to arrange it in advance:

Luton: Call **01582 817900** in advance (Mon-Friday 9am-5pm only). Give the officer details of your arrival time and they will arrange to meet you by security check-in.

Edinburgh: Appointment needs to be made in advance, call **0131 322 5283**, option 12

Birmingham: Appointment needs to be made in advance, call passenger terminal duty officers on **07823 532768** or **07802 290092**.

Carnet holders leaving the UK by **Eurostar** should notify Border Force in advance by calling 0207 841 6410.

Road Haulage

If you are an artist or arts company travelling with equipment/goods in a **UK-based** haulier to transport your professional equipment to the EU you will need an [ECMT permit](#). At the moment you can only make three stops within the EU, across all the countries, before you must go back to the UK. (The term cabotage which you may have heard recently means the movement of goods within a single country, and is a sub-set of the road haulage limits). Haulage companies that specialise in theatre haulage include [Stagefreight](#), [Sound Moves](#) or [Chequers](#). UK Theatre has put together an explanation of what it means for [touring companies](#). This is one of the more complicated aspects of EU touring post-Brexit, therefore if you are traveling through several countries overland with lots of goods, we recommend you seek advice. The Government recently published this [overview](#).

Instruments

If you travel with an instrument containing protected species such as ivory, a CITES certificate is needed when crossing the EU-UK border. As a musician, you can use a [CITES Musical Instrument Certificate \(MIC\)](#), valid for three years. Musical instruments carried by an individual can be taken without a customs declaration. Pass through the 'nothing to declare' exit.

Similarly if your set or costumes include protected materials (for example feathers on a costume) you will need a [CITES certificate](#).

Insurance

Make sure you have taken out all the necessary insurances for your travel to the EU. You should always have public liability insurance and employer's liability insurance, and you should check with your insurance provider if your current policy includes overseas working.

You should also think of transportation insurance if you are moving the set. This might be included in your general insurance policy – a lot of combined theatre policies have it. Again, it's best to check with your provider as you might need marine and/or transit insurance cover. If you are moving your set and props by a haulage company, they'll be able to advise on what you need. You should also think about taking out travel insurance for your trip.

Insurance brokers which specialise in the arts and entertainment industry are [Hencilla Canworth](#) and [Gordon & Co.](#)

Travelling with animals

You can no longer use a pet passport issued in Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) for travel to an EU country or Northern Ireland; it has to have been issued in the EU to be accepted by an EU country. When travelling to an EU country or Northern Ireland, your pet needs:

- a [microchip](#)
- a valid [rabies vaccination](#)
- an [animal health certificate](#) unless you have a pet passport issued in an EU country or Northern Ireland
- [tapeworm treatment](#) for dogs if you're travelling directly to Finland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Norway or Malta.

These requirements also apply to assistance dogs. Check the rules of the country you're travelling to for any additional restrictions or [requirements before you travel](#).

Touring green

Remember there are lots of ways to reduce your carbon footprint when travelling, beyond just considering which mode of transport you use (though [The Man in Seat Sixty One](#) does explain how to travel by train to any country in the world and how long it takes), such as:

- Try to use environmentally-friendly materials for your sets, props and costumes

- Liaise with your local partner to see if there are more sustainable ways of arranging your set and props than freighting them from the UK – you might be able to source, hire or remake them locally which might be cheaper and greener
- Consider how your performers will be travelling to your rehearsal space and how green that rehearsal space is
- Try to consider energy use in your lighting plan and explore technologies that will reduce the power demand
- When abroad, look to stay close to the venue so you can rely on walking or public transport
- Request that you stay in a hotel that is environmentally certified
- Try to only eat local food
- Swap your phone for a [Fairphone](#)
- Avoid printed publicity material. Take a look at [Artsadmin's sustainable marketing guide](#) on their website.

Basically, normalise asking the local host about their green policy and have a green rider yourself.

Lots of guides exist to help you measure the aspect and impact of your tour, including those found on [Julie's Bicycle](#), Eleanor Margolies' [resource list](#) and the [Green theatre guide](#).

Also, the recently published [Green Guide for the UK](#) collects commissioned creative responses, articles and a series of conversations with artists, collectives and organisations whose core practice is grounded in sustainable, ecological, environmental and/or climate based understandings and is a great source for inspiration.

Resource list

Funding bodies

Arts Council England

- [Brexit information](#)
- [This guide](#) provides information on what the end of the transition period will mean for the arts sector now that the UK has left the European Union

Arts Wales International

- No specific resources available but [it can be contacted](#) and is regularly organising events as part of its partnership with [Arts Info point](#).

Creative Scotland

- This [page](#) provides links to useful information and guidance regarding the UK's exit from the EU and will be updated on an ongoing basis as more information becomes available.

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

- No specific resources available but [it can be contacted](#).

Europe

- IETM published a [Fund Finder](#) in 2019, which lists all the key funding opportunities for arts and culture in Europe

Information regarding artists' mobility

- [On the Move](#) aims to facilitate cross-border mobility in the arts and culture sector across Europe and worldwide. On this website you will find all the latest information regarding funding opportunities, mobility news, funding guides and updates regarding training webinars. You can sign up to its [newsletter](#) to make sure you stay up to date.
- [Mobility Information Points](#) (MIPs) are information centres and/or websites in several European countries which aim to tackle administrative challenges that artists and cultural professionals can face when working across borders. Relevant issues can be around visas, social security, taxation, customs etc.
- [PEARLE](#) Live Performance Europe is the Performing Arts Employers Association League Europe, the European Federation of Music and Live Performance Organisations. Pearle* represents more than 10,000 managers of theaters, concert venues, theatre production companies, orchestras, operas, ballet and dance companies, festivals, promoters and other professional organisations in the performing arts in Europe. It is the leading organisation on EU and international regulatory affairs issues affecting daily operations or live performance organisations. It has published [What you didn't know about Europe - The Ultimate Cookbook for Cultural Managers](#) which has an update on visa legislation if you are traveling to Europe with non-EU or British passport holders. Also its [FAQ post-Brexit](#) is useful.
- [Arts Infopoint UK](#) is an initiative to support the arts sector with information on practical issues relating to artist mobility. The project provides support for artists visiting Wales and the UK who need information in areas such as visas,

taxation and social security. It is particularly useful for EU artists coming to the UK.

- [Farnham Maltings](#) supports independent theatre makers and producers by offering international opportunities and training.
- [Dance 4](#) leads on international showcasing opportunities in global market places for independent (non-NPO) artists and producers based in England.
- [Horizon Showcase](#) is a new showcase, delivered by a consortium made up of [Battersea Arts Centre](#), [Dance4](#), [Fierce Festival](#), [GIFT](#), [MAYK](#) and [Transform](#). The aim is to showcase English performance to international partners during the Edinburgh festivals.

Government information regarding travel to the EU

[A checklist](#) for performing artists, creatives, management and production staff in the performing arts touring in an EU country, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein.

[Visiting](#) the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein.

Art form specific guides

- [A Practical Guide to Brexit for Outdoor Touring Companies](#) includes information and practical case studies for outdoor arts touring companies about the ways to work internationally after Brexit.
- [UK Theatre](#) list of resources related to Brexit.
- [Musicians' Union guide](#) to working in the EU after Brexit.
- [One Dance UK](#) list of resources related to Brexit.
- [Freelancers Make Theatre Work](#) list of resources and latest Government lobbying results.

Other useful resources

- [Stonewall's global briefing packs](#) gives an overview of LGBTQI inclusion in the workplace in several European countries, i.e. the legal landscape regarding LGBTQI rights in the country and a list of key organisations.
- [Disability Arts International](#)'s website is part of [Europe Beyond Access](#), a seven-partner European collaboration supported by the Creative Europe programme of the EU. It is a UK-based charity which supports disabled artists

and the sector through critique, talent development, consultancy and partnerships, plus a news and listings service.

- You should check before your travel if costs can be recuperated via the [Access to Work scheme](#).
- [Slate World](#) was a two year transnational partnership promoting the visibility and mobility of Black artists, and fellow artists also marginalised for their race, across Europe, led by Eclipse with partners Theater De Meervaart, ICK Amsterdam and Teatro Griot. The programme featured intra-European training and opportunities for Black artists, public events, and the commissioning of new Black work that explored Black European identity. Contact [Eclipse Theatre](#) to engage with the findings of this programme.
- [Anti-Racism touring rider](#) to share with venues and companies.
- Disability Arts online offers an [access rider](#) open template with guiding comments.

International networks

- [IETM](#) is a network of more than 500 performing arts organisations and individual members working in the contemporary performing arts worldwide: theatre, dance, circus, interdisciplinary live art forms, new media.
- [Circostrada](#) has been working since 2003 to develop and structure the fields of circus and street arts in Europe and beyond.
- [Caravan](#) is the International Youth and Social Circus Network of 35 circus schools from across Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia, which advocates for the positive impact of youth and social circus. The network was established in 2008 by six European circus schools, with a common goal to use social circus as an educational tool and to dedicate this work to groups from disadvantaged backgrounds with specific needs.
- [European Festivals Association](#) (EFA) connects about 100 festivals and festival associations in 40 countries. EFA members are the core element that make the Association an open, influential, international place for any festival that wants to be part of a bigger community.
- [Aerowaves](#) is a hub for dance discovery in Europe. It identifies the most promising new work by emerging dance artists and then promotes it through cross-border performances. Aerowaves' network of partners in 33 countries enables these younger choreographers to bring new dance to new audiences.
- [ASSITEJ](#) is the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People. It unites theatres, organisations and individuals throughout the world who make theatre for children and young people.
- [RES ARTIS](#) is a worldwide network of artist residencies. It is an association of more than 650 centres, organisations and individuals in more than 70 countries.

- [Fresh Arts Coalition Europe \(FACE\)](#) is an international network of arts organisations that supports contemporary cross-disciplinary art forms and facilitates international collaboration. It covers fresh and ground-breaking practices such as live art, immersive or participatory projects, site-specific arts, contemporary circus, and physical and visual theatre.
 - [IN SITU](#) is a European platform for artistic creation in public space. Since 2003, it has supported more than 200 artists working outside conventional venues. IN SITU is an ecosystem connecting a new generation of artists with audiences, programmers and key players in economic, political and social realities around Europe.
 - [Culture Action Europe \(CAE\)](#) is the major European network of cultural organisations, artists, activists, academics and policy-makers. CAE is the first port of call for informed opinion and debate about arts and cultural policy in Europe.
 - [RESHAPE](#) is a collaborative, bottom-up research process that proposes instruments for transition towards an alternative, fairer and unified arts ecosystem across Europe and the Southern Mediterranean.
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- [PERFORM EUROPE](#) is a Creative Europe programme which supports experiments to make touring of performing arts works in Creative Europe and the UK more sustainable and inclusive.
 - [The European Network of Cultural Centres](#) has a membership of 5,000 cultural venues in 25 countries.
 - [Theatre without borders](#) is a global, all-volunteer, grass-roots, virtual community that shares information and builds connections between individuals and institutions interested in international theatre and performance exchange.
 - [EU National Institutes for Culture](#) has some opportunities to work with member countries through its programmes.
 - [European Dancehouse Network](#) is a network for trust and cooperation between European dance houses sharing a common vision regarding the development of dance art across borders.
 - [International Theatre Institute](#) is the world's largest performing arts organisation, founded in 1948 by theatre and dance experts and UNESCO. It strives for a society in which the performing arts and artists thrive and flourish.

Job opportunities

To find out about potential job opportunities in the EU there are good job listings on the [On the Move](#), [IETM](#) and [Pearle websites](#).

