

Mr. TAMURA Norhisa  
Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare

1-2-2 Kasumigaseki  
Chiyoda-ku  
Tokyo 100-8916  
Japan

Paris, November 23, 2020

Re: Critical situation of performers and technicians in the Japanese arts and entertainment sectors

Distinguished Minister,

As the principal performers' trade union in France, we are writing you today to alert you to the dramatic situation in which our freelance colleagues working in the Japanese media and arts sectors find themselves, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the strict measures your government has taken to contain the spread of the virus.

We obviously recognize that these measures are essential to save lives, but are nonetheless concerned about their far-reaching implications for thousands of artists and others in our field who are considered independent contractors, and as such have no access to wage support schemes or other forms of financial assistance, nor even to sick pay.

Freelance actors, dancers, musicians and technical crew are paying a heavy price. According to our colleagues in your country, thousands of productions have been cancelled, or suspended at best, and the revenues on which our colleagues counted to provide for their families have disappeared, with very little visibility on what the future holds. Unlike in our country, for example, no system of compensation seems to exist to cover these cancellations. Our colleagues report that the majority have seen their income fall by 50% since February, with many now living in true poverty, with no income at all.

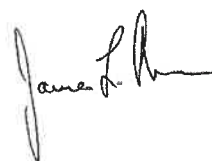
Those among them who are still fortunate enough to find work, cannot receive any benefits should they become Covid contacts and have to quarantine, or even if they fall ill themselves.

Many countries around the world, including France, have taken unprecedented steps to provide comprehensive protection to all workers during the pandemic. In many European Union independent contractors receive support, as do, of course, employees, whether engaged on long term or short term contracts.

We had the opportunity in 2018 to participate in a meeting of the executive board of the International Federation of Actors (FIA) in Tokyo, hosted by the Japan Actors' Union. This included a meeting with some of the best-known performers in your country. We also attended a number of performances. We came away impressed, not only, of course, with the high quality of the cultural life in the country, but also with the energetic efforts of performers and their union to improve the lives of all artists.

We express our full solidarity with our colleagues of JAU, and urge your government to hear their appeal and promptly extend meaningful support measures to all freelance workers in the media and entertainment sector during this crisis.

Sincerely,



Jimmy SHUMAN,  
Délégation générale,  
for the National Board