



*Hellenic Actors Union*  
*Kaniggos 33, Athens*  
*106 82, Greece*

Mr. TAMURA Norhisa  
Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare

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

Athens, November 19th, 2020

Distinguished Minister,

The Hellenic Actors' Union has been informed about the critical situation that performers and other freelance art workers in the media and entertainment sector are facing today as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and about the severe measures taken in Japan in order to contain the spread of the virus.

The necessity of these measures is unquestionable since public health is everyone's top priority at the moment. But still we are concerned, nevertheless, about the results of such measures on the livelihood of thousands of independent contractors in the cultural sector of Your country.

The pandemic and subsequent measures have resulted in thousands of productions being postponed or canceled, and in an unmeasurable financial damage for all parties involved - still we have been informed, and are saddened by the fact, that none of these professionals have been compensated for these losses in any way whatsoever. The majority of them have no access to wage support or other forms of financial assistance, including sick pay, which are granted to regular employees in Japan, as a means of upholding their income and assisting them in these difficult times.

Art Workers are paying a disproportionately high cost during the pandemic: many have seen their sources of income vanish and now, as a result, they are living under the poverty threshold. Moreover, most of them has seen their income dropping more than 50% since February this year, and an alarming percentage is reported living on zero income. The situation for performers, freelance art workers and their families is critical. They need the support of the state, just like all art workers have needed similar support throughout the world during this time of crisis.

Positive examples on a global scale include Germany, Canada, the UK, the USA, and most EU countries, that have taken bold, unprecedented steps to provide comprehensive welfare to and revenue protection for all workers during the pandemic, granting therefore independent contractors a similar level of support as that provided to employees. This support has made a significant difference for all those who received it and were able to sustain themselves on a basic level.

The Hellenic Actors' Union, together with FIA, FIM and UNI MEI, stands in solidarity with their affiliated unions in Japan, respectively JAU, MUJ and MINPO ROREN.

We urge the Japanese government to hear their desperate cry and promptly extend meaningful support to all freelance art workers in the media and entertainment sector during this crisis.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ioannis Panagopoulos', written in a cursive style.

**Ioannis Panagopoulos**

*Chairman of International Relations of the Hellenic Actors' Union*

*Member of the Organising Committee of the Support Art Workers Initiative*