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Dear,

The members of our association are leading providers of educational school trips for German students within Europe. We estimate that in 2019 we sent at least 7,000 groups made up of 250,000 students to different locations within England, Scotland and Wales, generating around 1.5 Million overnight stays in hotels and host-families. As the UK has long been a primary destination for school-parties from all over the EU there are many more groups from different nations seeking to experience the British way of life.

Additionally, every year more than 500.000 students visit the UK with the primary objective of learning English through local English courses. The contribution of the language student market to the UKs economy alone is assumed to be as high as £ 1.4 bn p.a..

In many British towns student visitors are a vital part of the local economy. Apart from the language schools, creating well-paying jobs, students spend their money in local shops and thousands of host families are able to live on the additional income these foreign students provide.

However, we are very concerned that these numbers will fall sharply due to recent changes to UK immigration

Firstly, starting October '21 it will be mandatory to be in possession of a passport when entering the UK. However, most German students (as well as travellers from many other European countries) only have an ID card. Obtaining a passport will add considerable costs for students willing to visit the UK. This aspect is of particular concern to the many thousands of school groups that have to travel under a limited budget. They may be forced to choose other European destinations for their study trips.

Secondly, in many of our schools we have students from immigrant communities who do not have access to a German passport or ID card. Therefore, a large number of our groups have

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heavily relied upon the 'list of travellers' which will no longer be accepted at the border. This document allowed non-EU students to enter the UK without a visa, if they were part of a school group. As a result, around 5-10% of our students will now have to apply for a visa. Due to the associated travel costs to the issuing authorities and the costs of the visa itself these students are likely not able to participate in the trip. This has a knock-on effect as German student groups operate a policy of only travelling if every member of the group can afford to travel. Therefore, many groups will no longer be able to consider the UK as a viable option for their trip. This is a major concern for the teachers and school directors we have spoken to.

This will have a considerable effect on many local economies in the UK as these groups will:

- No longer generate income for British host families, local family organizers, as well as hotels and hostels especially in smaller towns with limited business opportunities.
- Will not to spend their money in local shops
- Not attend local language courses
- Not buy tickets for the visit to cultural sites (e.g. Stonehenge, Stratford upon Avon, London Eye, Brighton Pavilion, Canterbury Cathedral to name just a few)

Therefore, we would like to ask you to support us in seeking to reduce these new barriers to student travel, leading to a reinstatement of the 'list of travelers' as well as allowing German students to cross the border with an ID card. Especially as these trips are vital in order to

- Foster intercultural understanding and reduce prejudices
- Forge life-long connections with the UK
- Increase the tolerance for people, cultures and different ways of living and thinking
- Help the acquisition of language skills in the internationally most important language.

We hope you are able to see the importance of this matter and we can count upon your support for this issue.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for questions, concerns or further information. Personally, I can be reached under ingo.dobbert@schulfahrtenverband.de.

Sincerely,

Ingo Dobbert
Deputy Chairman