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Rt. Hon Theresa May MP  
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7 October 2012

Dear Right Honourable Theresa May,

The World Council of Anthropological Associations, which is a network of forty four national and international professional associations in anthropology from around the world, is extremely concerned about how current UK immigration legislation is affecting professional anthropologists from non-EU countries employed in British universities.

We refer in particular to British Home Office rules that restrict the ability of non-EU employees on Tier 1, Tier 2 or Work Permit Visas to return to their country of origin (or in some cases, travel abroad) for more than 180 days in a five year period or for longer than a 90 day period in any one visit.

Anthropology researchers must often conduct fieldwork, including ethnographic, archeological, archive and museum-based research for a sustained period of time outside of the EU, and for periods which sometimes extend to a year or more. This ability to conduct such research overseas is essential for permanent faculty, research fellows and post-doctoral researchers alike. Unfortunately, reports reaching us are that such employment-related research travel is often being confused with 'visits home' by Home Office officials.

As a professional association and learned society representing anthropologists worldwide, we have learnt that non-EU anthropologists hired to take up employment in British universities have been threatened with deportation when they have applied for indefinite leave to remain in the UK if they had remained out of the country for more than 90 days at a stretch and/or 180 days in total over a period of five years. Many of them have thus been forced to pay the expensive fee for their visas and meet Home Office officials on a face-to face-basis, instead of applying by post, the latter being a less expensive option but one that does not give the applicants

an opportunity to argue their case. The rules, as they are presently being applied, are a major hindrance for non-EU scholars working in Britain. Often non-EU anthropologists have exceptional expertise in the country of their birth and residence as well as in other countries. Non-EU scholars and researchers also have added value to research outputs as a marker of the international reputations of British universities.

The World Council of Anthropological Associations and our colleagues in cognate fieldwork-centric disciplines such as International Development, Geography and Archaeology would like assurances that Home Office staff including new trainees are attuned to the specific needs of fieldwork researchers and that this is made clear to all parties concerned so that non-EU employees applying for indefinite leave in Britain are not jeopardised should they decide to apply by post.

Our association is also concerned that assessments for stay in Britain are based on a 'minimum salary' for Tier 2/Work Visa. Whilst the minimum salary for a manager is stated at £40,000 on your website, this exemplary figure is well above the starting salary for academics with a doctorate (Lecturer, Research Fellow) which is currently at the national rate of £30,122. We would be grateful if you would inform Home Office staff as to this discrepancy and apply the minimal salary requirements for professional academics accordingly.

We look forward to your attention and response to these matters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marcin Buch'.