

A submission from the British Academy to the Migration Advisory Committee inquiry on EEA workers in the UK labour market

The British Academy, the UK's national academy for the humanities and social sciences, welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the Migration Advisory Committee on EEA workers in the UK labour market. Non-UK EU nationals in the UK higher education system provide a critical contribution to extending human knowledge and understanding as well as providing vital skills to UK workers.

EEA Migration Trends

- Please provide evidence on the characteristics (e.g. types of jobs migrants perform, skill levels, etc.) migrants in your particular sector/local area/region. How do these differ from UK workers? And from non-EEA workers?

Non-UK EU nationals accounted for 11.67% of the UK-based FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) HEI (Higher Education Institution) workforce in 2015-2016. They contribute to ensuring the excellence and value of research and institutions in the UK. Their geographical distribution reveals a broad spread across UK regions. For example, in Northern Ireland 24.6% of FTE HEI staff are non-UK EU nationals, the highest anywhere in the UK. In London, the proportion of non-UK EU FTE HEI staff is 18.16%, followed by the East of England with 14.10%. The contribution of non-UK EU nationals is particularly high in some disciplines. For example, in West Midlands, respectively 49.03% and 35.08% of FTE HEI staff in modern languages and economics & econometrics are non-UK EU nationals. In the South West, respectively 41.26% and 45.04% of HEI FTE staff in modern languages and economics & econometrics are non-UK EU nationals.

The humanities and social sciences draw extensively on a non-UK EU workforce. Six of the top ten disciplines with the highest proportion of non-UK EU FTE HEI staff are in the humanities and social sciences. These are: economics & econometrics (36.39%), modern languages (34.93%), classics (26.3%), politics & international studies (25.42%), area studies (24.7%), and anthropology & development studies (23.19%). All disciplines where deep understanding of European languages, cultures, and societies are crucial.

- Have the patterns of EEA migration changed over time? What evidence do you have showing your employment of EEA migrants since 2000? And after the Brexit referendum? Are these trends different for UK workers and non-EEA workers?

In the last 10 years, the UK higher education system has seen its staff body, including both academic and non-academic, increase by 18%. It has increased from 289,995 FTE staff in 2006-2007 to 342,085 in 2015-2016. UK FTE HEI staff increased by 11% in that period, from 247,120 to 274,310. Non-UK EU FTE HEI staff increased by 92%, from 20,805 in 2006-2007 to 39,915 in 2015-2016. This is compared to an increase in non-EU FTE HEI staff by 26%, from 22,070 in 2006-2007 to 27,860 in 2015-2016. As a result, the proportion of non-UK EU FTE HEI staff (11.67%) is now higher than of non-EU FTE HEI staff (8.14%).

With the exception of Northern Ireland, all UK NUTS1 regions saw their proportion of non-UK EU FTE HEI staff rise. Wales had the most modest gain with an increase by 69.75%

of its non-UK EU FTE HEI workforce while London, the South East and Scotland saw their proportion increase respectively by 152.47%, 114.16% and 109.73%.

- Have you made any assessment of the impact of a possible reduction in the availability of EEA migrants (whether occurring naturally or through policy) as part of your workforce? What impact would a reduction in EEA migration have on your sector/local area/region? How will your business/sector/area/region cope? Would the impact be different if reductions in migration took place amongst non-EEA migrants? Have you made any contingency plans?

The contribution to teaching and research of non-UK EU nationals in the humanities and social sciences is important throughout the UK. However, and as aforementioned, their geographical distribution as well as their prominence in each discipline differ. Any disruption to the freedom of movement would have a significant impact in the humanities and social sciences and in particular for economics & econometrics, modern languages, classics and politics and international studies and may lead to staff shortages for UK institutions. For example, the West Midlands, South West, London and Scotland would be particularly affected in these disciplines.

A number of UK institutions, including some of the UK's leading and largest universities, would be particularly impacted across all disciplines as a result of any reduction in the availability of non-UK EU nationals. Ten universities have at least one in five of their full-time staff coming from other EU countries. They include St Mary's University College (56.98%), University of Ulster (29.36%), London School of Economics and Political Science (25.20%), King's College London (21.66%) and University College London (21.19%).

Non-UK EU nationals contribute to the UK's remarkable performance in securing funding from the European Research Council (ERC) and Horizon 2020. This success is particularly the case for the humanities and social sciences for ERC. H el ene Rey, named by the Economist in 2016 as 'the one to watch', a Professor of Economics at the London Business School and a Fellow of the British Academy, received one of the first ERC Starting Grants in 2008. Professor Rey came to the UK from the USA as a result of her ERC award and despite other offers in the United States. She is only one among many examples. From 2007-2015 UK-based researchers in the humanities and social sciences secured just over  626 million from Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grants from the ERC. This accounts for just over a third of all total funding that was available in the humanities and social sciences. These grants are always premised on EU collaboration and mobility. At present, 34.2% of all Principal Investigators in the humanities and social sciences who were awarded a ERC grant and who work in UK Host Institutions are non-UK EU nationals. Non-UK EU nationals are essential in receiving funding from the ERC, a prestigious mechanism, on which careers can be built and which contribute to the livelihood and excellence of UK research.

Recruitment practices, training and skills

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of employing EEA workers? Have these changed following the Brexit referendum result?

From the preceding paragraphs it is clear that the ability to attract non-UK EU nationals is fundamental to UK research and institutions and to the future growth of the country. Non-

UK EU nationals provide distinctive perspectives, vital skills, opportunities to collaborate and widen the networks of UK institutions. They also support the attractiveness of UK universities and their ability to draw and retain the best students. Concerns about the lack of clarity over current and future residency rights, the retention and recruitment of non-UK EU nationals as well as the participation in EU funding schemes such as the European Research Council need to be allayed swiftly and positively. The uncertainty is already reducing the attractiveness of the UK to EEA workers (inward flows and exits) to the concern of many UK universities.

- To what extent has EEA and non-EEA migration affected these skills and training of the UK workers.

The humanities and social sciences are concerned with essential issues such as our relationships with other people and nations, the implications of new technologies, education and the management of our economy. Non-UK EU nationals in the academic workforce in these disciplines equip students with valuable skills and core transferable competences to enhance their employability, within a high-quality learning environment which recognises and supports excellent teaching. Furthermore, through their distinctive perspectives, language skills, or networks in other countries, non-UK EU nationals in the UK higher education system have furthered opportunities for UK researchers to collaborate and enhanced the impact of their research. Overall, therefore, the contribution of non-UK EU nationals represents a critical resource for sustaining, developing and diversifying the skills and training of UK workers.