

## Statement on Future European Research Collaboration

June 2020

1. The UK's international research collaborations are fundamentally intertwined with our collaborations with colleagues elsewhere in Europe. 60 percent of the UK's internationally co-authored research papers are with EU partners.<sup>1</sup> Maintaining such links is vital, especially given that seven out of the top 10, and 13 out of the top 20 nations with which the UK collaborates are EU Member States. In addition, much of the UK's international research collaboration and mobility beyond Europe is supported by being embedded in EU Framework Programmes. This is why association to Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programme starting in January 2021, is critical for the future trajectory of UK research.
2. Whether the UK will achieve association to Horizon Europe, however, remains an unknown. If it proves not possible, then our primary concern is to maintain, as far as feasible, the functional equivalence that EU Framework Programmes bring to UK research. Namely, the safeguarding of intangible benefits such as international research distinction, international collaboration, and international inward and outward mobility.
3. In making this statement we are proposing concrete and feasible steps that will help to build confidence and ameliorate uncertainty for UK-based researchers and partners based elsewhere in Europe. This is critical as researchers require significant advanced planning in order to construct proposals, projects and consortia. Greater certainty now will enable effective and successful planning in 2021 and beyond. In this regard, we welcome the commitment made by the Government at the House of Commons Science & Technology Select Committee on 18 March 2020 to fund the cost of Horizon Europe association whatever that may be. **We would welcome further confirmation, as is the practice of the Swiss Government, that this funding will be made available for research and innovation with the same functional equivalence if association does not prove possible.**
4. As the EU-UK negotiations continue we wish to see financial guarantees be put in place by the UK Government that encourage UK-based applicants to continue to engage in the hope that association with Horizon Europe will be achieved. Most importantly, this would encompass those parts of Horizon Europe known as monobeneficiary schemes, such as the European Research Council and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. It is essential that the UK retain involvement with these high quality and prestigious schemes. As the current outlook remains uncertain, **we recommend that the UK Government provides what confidence it can at the current time for UK-based researchers and partners elsewhere in Europe. It should announce therefore that, if it concludes a successful framework agreement with the EU by the end of the year, as is the Government's intention, it will provide a guarantee that all successful applications to the European Research Council and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions will be supported whilst the UK negotiates association.**
5. Given the delay with agreeing the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework and the consequent delay with the adoption of the Horizon Europe legal texts, it is likely that potential Associating Countries to Horizon Europe will have to negotiate association after the beginning of Horizon Europe. The guarantee we recommend will ensure that UK-based researchers and their partners have as much confidence as the UK Government can provide that their collaborations will be supported whatever the negotiations' outcome.
6. In addition, **we request that the UK Government confirms as soon as possible that it will support uncapped third country participation in Horizon Europe for the entirety of the programme.** This does not require the UK's association to Horizon

<sup>1</sup> The British Academy's Priorities for the Humanities and Social Sciences in the Current Negotiations, November 2017, <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/311/brexit-means.pdf>

Europe and will provide immediate clarification to UK-based researchers, and those based elsewhere in Europe and beyond, that they can aim to develop existing and new collaborations with their partners through Horizon Europe.

7. Although it remains unclear whether the UK will achieve association to Horizon Europe, some arrangements should be introduced to ensure that the UK is a more attractive and accessible place for researchers, their families and dependants whatever the outcome. In this light, we welcome the Government's new Global Talent Visa. We would, however, also welcome further clarity on the arrangements for short-term mobility for EU, EEA and Swiss nationals. The UK's immigration system has often impeded attendance at conferences, meetings or study visits here in the UK for researchers based elsewhere. It is unclear currently how such short-term visits will be managed for EU, EEA and Swiss nationals from January 2021, including as regards health insurance. **We recommend strongly that the ease of mobility of researchers between the UK and elsewhere in Europe continue in a simple, non-burdensome manner, which does not require a visa.** This would enable the UK also to remain aligned with the European Research Area.
8. It is vital for researchers who are employed in a state other than their own to be able to rely on regulations in place in order to facilitate the portability of pension and national insurance contributions back to their home state. For researchers from elsewhere working in the UK these regulations are needed to replace the current arrangements that exist within the EU, and vice versa. **At the very least, we would expect there should continue to be portability of state pension contributions and arrangements to facilitate portability of private pension contributions to those beginning employment after the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020.**
9. For longer-term stays in the UK, as things currently stand, researchers will be required to have health insurance and to pay the UK Immigration Health Surcharge. The latter is already expensive and internationally uncompetitive, and its cost may rise further. The rules on this are complex to navigate and have a significant potential confusion for any foreign visitor. The National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015 (as amended) apply only in England, and there are separate rules for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, since, though immigration is a UK competence, health is a devolved competence. **As we have previously stated, the Government must reduce very substantially the cost and content of the UK's immigration system if the UK is to remain an attractive and accessible place for researchers with their families and dependants to choose to work and live here.**
10. Research collaboration with our partners elsewhere in Europe will require the continuation of transfers of personal data made from the EU to the UK. **It is vital therefore that the UK secures an 'adequacy statement' within the meaning of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) by the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020 so this is possible.**
11. In conclusion: achieving association to Horizon Europe is vital for UK research and the UK's global collaborations. The UK Government can set out further steps to help to build confidence and ameliorate much uncertainty for UK-based researchers and our partners elsewhere in Europe by adopting our recommendations above. Regardless of association, we have set out significant areas where further enabling measures are required to meet the UK's ambitions to be an attractive destination and collaborator of choice internationally and with our colleagues elsewhere in Europe.