

Europe on the Horizon: Examining the Value of European Research Collaboration

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Executive Summary

The result of the referendum on UK membership of the EU is a critical challenge to the collaborative nature of the humanities and social sciences. These disciplines thrive through exchange, discussion, debate, co-operation and partnerships. This briefing outlines how European research collaboration takes place in the humanities and social sciences and its consequences for these disciplines as well as for UK-based researchers, higher education institutions and society. It examines the role of the European Union both through its distinctive frameworks and culture of exchange in strengthening the UK's world-leading role in research. It evidences the value of participation in EU research programmes, a common regulatory framework, researcher mobility and makes the case for continuing close involvement.

European research collaboration is invaluable to UK research and researchers because:

- It has become a core feature of UK higher education competitiveness and research excellence;
- It addresses issues of access to expertise, resources and infrastructure, engagement and exchange; influence over the development of policy, research programmes and institutions; as well as, publications, exhibitions, and performances;
- These activities, including engagement and exchange, help build a critical mass of scholarship and foster key advancements in research. The importance of interdisciplinarity and cross-disciplinarity in these activities brings diversity to UK researchers and strengthens the position of the UK as a leading country for research;
- It supports the careers of researchers along the career-cycle by creating opportunities through distinctive mobility and research programmes. These schemes increase the visibility of researchers and enhance their careers;
- The resources received from EU research programmes enable the employment of researchers and help to attract and retain world-leading researchers. UK higher education institutions benefit from enhanced diversity on campuses, which contributes to strong performances in university rankings as well as attracting students from other countries;
- It has significant lasting outcomes on the networks of collaborating researchers and institutions, including a catalytic effect on attracting other researchers and staff from non-UK EU countries;
- It guards against insular research and increases resource-efficiency by allowing UK universities to pool research infrastructures;
- It provides a stable framework for UK researchers wishing to collaborate in and with other countries;
- Its role in establishing relations with trade, diplomatic and cultural partners of the UK are an asset for its economy and contribute to enhancing cultural and social well-being as well as UK soft power;
- It enriches the UK's intellectual life, by furthering awareness of historical and cultural specificity of approaches, methodologies, values, and intellectual traditions, as well as encouraging self-critical analysis and guarding against insularity.

Introduction

The decision of the UK to leave the EU has resulted in a series of analyses examining the future of mobility post-Brexit and offering scenarios for the future of UK research.¹ However, the value of European research collaboration has been insufficiently addressed in the context of the UK's negotiations with the EU. With this briefing, the Academy aims to address this omission as well as to explore the range of these collaborative activities.

The briefing has been helpfully informed by correspondence with Fellows and British Academy award holders as well as by other researchers in the humanities and the social sciences.² We are grateful to them for their time and reflection.³

How does the EU support European Research Collaboration?

UK research collaboration with partners elsewhere in Europe draws on geographical proximity as well as historical and cultural ties to these countries. It has largely benefited from membership of the EU, which has provided distinctive structures for collaborative activities in the EU, the European Economic Area (EEA) the European Neighbourhood Policy countries (Eastern Partnership⁴ and Southern Mediterranean⁵), and beyond.

The EU provides frameworks that contribute to a culture of exchange in which scholarship and research thrive. Through the creation of the European Research Area (ERA), the EU aims to create:

“A unified research area open to the world based on the Internal Market, in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely and through which the Union and its Member States strengthen their scientific and technological bases, their competitiveness and their capacity to collectively address grand challenges.”⁶

The ambition set out by the EU has resulted in a number of measures to support the *mobility of researchers*, both indirectly by removing visa restrictions, and directly through mechanisms designed to support mobility. The EU's free movement of persons principle provides researchers who are EU nationals with the opportunity to travel, live and work in any EU Member State. This right also extends to the European Economic Area (EEA).⁷

This mobility constitutes a comparative advantage for researchers and higher education institutions. It facilitates access to sites, laboratories, libraries and datasets across Europe as well as fostering exchange and engagement through participation in conferences, symposia and cultural performances in other countries.

1 British Academy, *Associated Countries and Third Countries linked to EU Framework Programmes*, February 2018, <https://www.britac.ac.uk/sites/default/>

2 'Award holders' quoted here and below are researchers who currently have or have received a British Academy and/or ERC award.

3 The author would like to thank those who provided comments and review on earlier versions of this briefing.

4 Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

5 Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia

6 European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth*, July 2012, <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/reinforced-european-research-area-partnership-excellence-and-growth>

7 The EEA includes the EU Member States and the three EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway).

The mobility of researchers is also supported through *EU funding mechanisms*. These programmes facilitate and financially support collaborative actions.

The following mechanisms are competitive programmes which facilitate European research collaboration by providing resources, visibility, recognition and a structure for collaboration to take place. They support transnational and virtual access, networking, and joint research activities and allow researchers from academia, industry, business and the public sector to collaborate across disciplines and countries and create future opportunities, including outside of these mechanisms:

- **Horizon 2020 (Framework Programme)** is the EU’s largest research and innovation programme (2014–2020) which funds collaborative projects, including Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions, which provide grants for all stages of researchers’ careers and help research-focused organisations create strategic partnerships and access to research infrastructures. These mechanisms are not currently offered by the UK and would be difficult to replicate. In the current programme, Horizon 2020 (2014–2020), the UK is second only to Germany in terms of signed contracts and in budget share of the programme,⁸ receiving 15.2% of the overall funding available.⁹ In the humanities and social sciences, the UK tops the list of research partners in these disciplines with 11% of the total number of partners, alongside Italy and Germany.¹⁰ The European Research Council (ERC), which is part of Horizon 2020 and accounts for 17% of its budget, supports excellence in frontier research, focusing on high-risk, high-gain research ideas. It enables international teams and collaborations at a scale and an emphasis on interdisciplinarity, that is not replicable domestically. The UK has been remarkably successful in securing funding from the ERC. From 2007–2015 UK-based researchers in the humanities and social sciences were awarded €626m in ERC funding, over a third of all the funding available in these disciplines.¹¹ UK membership of the EU has also allowed the UK to influence these programmes to the benefit of UK research.
- **Erasmus +** provides funding and opportunities for students and professors to study, volunteer, work and train abroad. The programme aims to support innovation, cooperation and reform, reduce unemployment, especially young people, promote adult learning and encourage young people to take part in European democracy.
- **The European Territorial Cooperation programmes (Interreg programmes)** provide a framework for the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges on a host of areas, including research and innovation, by bringing together universities, research institutes, public authorities and private entities through infrastructural projects, seminars and engagement with policymakers.

8 European Commission, Country Profile: United Kingdom, February 2018, http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/pdf/country-profiles/uk_country_profile_and_featured_projects.pdf#zoom=125&pagemode=none

9 European Commission, *Horizon 2020: Three years in, UK tops league of participants*, January 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/news/horizon-2020-three-years-uk-tops-league-participants_en

10 European Commission, *Integration of Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020: Participants, Budget and Disciplines*, May 2018, <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4365f75a-5efe-11e8-ab9c-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

11 British Academy, *Frontier Knowledge for Future Gain: Why the European Research Council Matters*, May 2018, https://www.britac.ac.uk/sites/default/files/BA_European%20Research%20Council.pdf

- **Creative Europe** supports the cultural and creative sectors with the objective of safeguarding, developing and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, and promoting Europe’s cultural heritage as well as strengthening the competitiveness of the European cultural and creative sectors.

The EU also supports coordination on decision-making on research infrastructure through the European Strategic Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) and the European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC), which facilitate the establishment and operation of large European research infrastructures between EU Member States and Associated Countries. The European Social Survey (ESS), which is widely considered to be the gold-standard for cross-national survey methodology and was one of the first European Research Infrastructure Consortia to be established, is based at the City University of London.

European research collaboration also flourishes through a *common regulatory framework*. EU regulations have the potential to simplify the regulatory environment for researchers conducting research across the EU. Where appropriate, they provide a single approach, as opposed to 28 different regulatory regimes, simplifying procedures, reducing bureaucracy and timescales, and helping research development.

“My main research focuses on analysis of the brains of different primate species. We receive samples from animals that die of natural causes in zoos across Europe. This kind of project requires highly specialised skills and cannot be done by any one researcher or any one institute. Free movement of samples (EU wildlife trade regulations make it very difficult to transport outside the EU); ideas, technology, and funds are essential to this work.”

Dr Rogier Mars, recipient of a British Academy Small Research Grant and Research Fellow in Psychology, University of Oxford

A common regulatory framework is essential to adopting similar research protocols, avoiding duplication and increasing resource efficiency. It helps prevent delays in access to resources, materials and infrastructures and, by providing certainty and consistency to researchers, fosters researcher mobility and opportunities to collaborate.

What is European Research Collaboration?

Co-authorship figures are recurrently referenced to illustrate European research collaboration and its importance.¹² For instance, co-authored research papers with European partners account for 60% of the UK's internationally co-authored papers and increase the UK's overall performance in comparative citation analyses and impact.¹³ While these figures provide an interesting perspective and an account of the UK's cross-national collaborative activities, they are the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the array and reality of European research collaboration activities in the humanities and social sciences.

In these disciplines, European research collaboration is concerned with *access* to expertise, networks, institutions, libraries, research programmes, sites, museums and galleries as well as infrastructures and datasets. These are vital for the advancement of UK research and the liveliness of the humanities and social sciences.

European research collaboration also includes *engagement* and *exchange*. Researchers in the UK take part in symposia, conferences and seminars across Europe, providing a vital contribution to intellectual dialogues and encouraging self-critical analysis. These also support the embedding of public engagement with researchers and further the understanding of our societies and what it means to be human.

Access and engagement also confer *influence* over the development of policy and institutions. Researchers in the humanities and social sciences in the UK impart critical evidence to policymakers, and by doing so help inform and shape policies on a host of issues, including for example, cultural heritage, migration and healthcare.

European research collaboration leads to *publications*, *exhibitions*, and *performances*. Museums and galleries in the UK benefit from collaboration with guest curators established in other countries. This form of collaboration is crucial to the vitality of cultural life in the UK. Publications, exhibitions, and performances contribute to increasing the audience for the work of UK researchers, universities and cultural institutions.

Our discussions with researchers in the humanities and social sciences have highlighted the *interdisciplinary* component of these collaborative activities. The existing models of collaboration support activities across the boundaries of disciplines. Professor Simon Goldhill FBA, Professor of Greek Literature at the University of Cambridge, and Director of the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH) was awarded an ERC award for a project called 'The Bible and Antiquity in Nineteenth-Century Culture', which brought together scholars working on a range of fields including classics, history of education, cultural history, art history and literary history.¹⁴ Reflecting on the opportunities to collaborate, he adds in the British Academy Review that:

*“When I speak in America and elsewhere about the benefits of interdisciplinary collaborative work in the humanities and social sciences, it gives me a certain frisson when I declare that Europe is currently at least 20 years ahead in research in this area. The reason for this has been, simply enough, the funding models put in place over recent decades.”*¹⁵

12 UUK, International research collaboration after the UK leaves the European Union, April 2017, <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2017/international-collaboration-uk-post-exit.pdf>

13 UUK, *Evidence to Commons Science & Technology Committee inquiry on 'Leaving the EU'*, December 2016

14 See: <http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/programmes/bible-antiquity>

15 Simon Goldhill, 'Interdisciplinary collaborative research in British universities post-Brexit', *British Academy Review*, no. 31, Autumn 201

European research *collaboration* also takes place with disciplines *beyond the humanities and social sciences*. It includes exploratory collaboration between disciplines with areas of common interest, challenge- or question-focused research that requires the input of a range of disciplines working together, or emerging disciplines that bring together approaches from separate areas.¹⁶

“A key feature of collaborative projects is the ability to work across disciplinary boundaries to generate new conceptual insights. This was seen in the “Ambient Assisted Living for Wellness Engagement, and Long Life” (AAL WELL) projects,¹⁷ which involved psychologists, occupational therapists, and computer scientists from the UK, Sweden, and Canada. In working across disciplinary and national borders, we were able to examine the impact of new technologies for supporting older adults in their own homes from various angles. Removing national boundaries for academic cooperation is one way to foster such collaborations, as different specialist centres in different countries are able to work together.”

Dr Timothy Gomersall, former recipient of a British Academy Small Research Grant and Senior Lecturer in Health Psychology, University of Huddersfield

European research collaboration is intrinsic to *UK research and research excellence* and helps strengthen higher education institutions. Researchers established in other European countries provide a distinctive contribution to the humanities and social sciences.

“In my field, UK/EU collaborations are vibrant and ongoing. EU research (especially from Finland, the Netherlands and Germany) leads the world, and our collaborations with EU research has benefitted my field in a very positive way. As an example, much education research in the UK lacks a strong quantitative foundation; EU research is very strong in advancing quantitative methods, and we regularly send PhD and postgraduate students for training to other EU countries.”

Professor Rob Klassen, Professor and Chair of the Psychology in Education Research Centre, University of York

UK research draws extensively on the research excellence of these countries. 29 of the top 100 universities in the arts and humanities and 25 of the top 100 universities in the social sciences are found in other European countries.^{18, 19} These collaboration activities are inherent and essential components of UK research and research community. They foster inter-cultural exchange and dialogue and, by confronting different intellectual traditions, strengthen UK research.

16 British Academy, *Crossing Paths: Interdisciplinary Institutions, Careers, Education and Applications*, July 2016, https://www.britac.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Crossing%20Paths%20-%20Full%20Report_2.pdf

17 AAL WELL is part of the European Research Area in Ageing 2 (ERA-AGE 2), a three year project funded by the European Commission, under Framework Programme 7.

18 Times Higher Education, *Best universities for social sciences degrees 2019*, October 2018, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-social-science-degrees>

19 Times Higher Education, *Best universities for arts and humanities degrees 2018*, September 2017, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-arts-and-humanities-degrees>

What does European Research Collaboration mean for UK Research and Researchers?

European research collaboration promotes the *liveliness of the humanities and social sciences* and plays a key part in sustaining certain disciplines and research areas. Access to libraries, laboratories and museums as well as engagement through networking, conferences and symposia help build a critical mass of scholarship, drawing on the expertise and research methods of researchers in other European countries, especially important for ‘orchid’ subjects.²⁰

“It would be absolutely impossible to undertake my research without European partners. Relatively speaking, there is very little expertise in medieval intellectual history in the UK, with only a couple of people working in very different areas of my particular field of Franciscan studies. By contrast, there are virtually countless experts on the continent in my general as well as specific field. As a matter of course, these European experts are also trained in manuscript research and critical editing of texts. This training is essential for all ground-breaking work in medieval studies, since a large percentage of medieval texts are not yet edited. In the UK, however, these are not generally required skills, but almost no one has them at the level required for serious work. Additionally, many of the actual manuscripts needed for medieval research can only be found in Rome, Paris, and other major European cities. As the holder of a large European Research Council Grant, I would not be able to run my project without the ability to move freely around Europe and to hire EU citizens as staff.”

Dr Lydia Schumacher, former British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow and Reader in Historical and Philosophical Theology, King’s College London

In comparative studies, which seek to compare and contrast nations, cultures, societies and institutions, European research collaboration advances knowledge. These studies involve recurring challenges, including differing indicators, definitions and dataset categories. By exchanging best practices and confronting intellectual traditions, European research collaboration can resolve some of these issues and inform research in other countries. Understanding differences between legal, political, cultural, historical and social contexts is crucial to the development of research in this field.

By supporting UK research and research excellence, European research collaboration provides *visibility, public profile* and *international prestige* to UK-based researchers. This has major impact on access to international networks and opportunities to network.

“EU collaborations have helped me establish an international reputation and to make my research highly regarded across Europe, which in turn was important for both my discipline and my own institution.”

Dr Claudia Bolgia, recipient of a British Academy Small Research Grant and Senior Lecturer in the History of European Art at the University of Edinburgh

European research collaboration has significant lasting outcomes on the networks of collaborating researchers and institutions, including a catalytic effect on attracting other researchers, including early-career researchers, to build their research careers in the UK. In 2015–2016, 11.67% of academic staff in the UK were from other EU countries, with

20 An orchid subject is a critical single field of study.

Northern Ireland having the highest proportion anywhere in the UK with 24.6%.²¹ The majority of the disciplines with the largest proportion of staff from non-UK EU countries are in the humanities and social sciences.²² They provide an invaluable contribution to the development of research collaboration opportunities with researchers and higher educations in other EU Member States.²³

European research collaboration provides UK-based researchers across the career cycle with distinctive opportunities, in particular with regards to the length and scale of funding. In the case of the ERC, the length of the award, up to five years, is far longer than the length of standard awards in the UK, in particular for the humanities and social sciences. ERC awards provide the opportunity for *longer-term employment* than is often available in the UK, in particular for *early career researchers* and postgraduate students, in a precarious and highly-competitive employment market.²⁴

The scale of funding is also unprecedented and contributes to developing ambitious research projects, which allow for significant advances in research, and greater visibility and impact. These features undeniably benefit the careers of these researchers.

“Receiving an ERC grant was closely linked to my promotion to Reader.”

Dr Nathan Hill, former British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow and Reader
in Tibetan and Historical Linguistics, School of Oriental and African Studies

Professor Philip Bullock, Professor of Russian Literature and Music at the University of Oxford and former British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow, is part of the Writing 1900 scholarly network.²⁵ The collaboration between the University of Oxford and the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin brings together scholars from the UK, Germany, Belgium, Denmark and France to study the literary culture of the period in ways that overcome traditional national, linguistics and generic borders by meeting regularly to share expertise and search for new approaches to literature and criticism:

“It has allowed me to work in languages I had previously studied (French and German) but which I do not always use professionally. In terms of my career, I recently held a EURIAS fellowship at the institut d’études avancées in Paris, and I know that a successful track-record of international collaborations is an important criterion in this competition.”

These benefits to the careers of UK-based researchers have been essential to *retaining* and *attracting world-leading researchers* in the humanities and social sciences, and are significantly aided by the UK’s participation in EU research programmes. Professor Ricardo Reis, recipient of the 2016 Germán Bernácer Prize for promoting economic research in Europe, is a Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics and received an ERC Grant in 2015. Professor Reis came to the UK from the USA as a result of his ERC Grant and despite other opportunities available to him in the United States.

European research collaboration also leads to greater *diversity* in UK research, including in research cultures and practices. Researchers in the UK benefit from the critical

21 HESA aggregated data

22 British Academy, *International Staff and Students in UK Higher Education*, November 2017, <https://www.britac.ac.uk/sites/default/files/BA%20International%20staff%20and%20students%20in%20UK%20HE.pdf>

23 British Academy, *A submission from the British Academy to the Migration Advisory Committee inquiry on EEA workers in the UK labour market*, November 2017, <https://www.britac.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2017-11-27%20Migration%20Advisory%20Committee%20submission%20on%20EEA%20workers.pdf>

24 British Academy, *Frontier Knowledge for Future Gain: Why the European Research Council Matters*, May 2018, https://www.britac.ac.uk/sites/default/files/BA_European%20Research%20Council.pdf

25 See: <http://writing1900.org/>

encounters with researchers in other European countries. In particular, encounters with researchers from different educational backgrounds are fundamental. They benefit teaching practices as well as research by pooling ideas, exchanging best practices and encouraging self-reflection.

“There are different intellectual traditions in the EU, and scholarship benefits from this encounter, including that between academics in person. Our doctoral students are expected to be able to use German, as well as Anglophone scholarship, and those who can do generally exhibit a greater breadth. Collaboration develops awareness of the international nature of our cultural and intellectual heritage, but also fosters awareness of the historical and cultural specificity of approaches and values that are taken for granted, and thus, encourages self-critical analysis.”

Emerita Professor Judith Lieu FBA, Lady Margaret’s Emerita Professor of Divinity, University of Cambridge

These benefits to research in the UK and UK-based researchers also support research *collaboration with countries outside Europe*. The Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) network, supported in part with the European Commission, funds transnational, humanities-led research projects from all disciplines bringing together scholars, postdoctoral research, PhD students as well as associated partners from civil society and cultural institutions. It has provided funding opportunities for projects concerning changing perceptions of, and attitudes towards, historical time in East Asia, intercommunity social relationships and transformations of island cultures and societies in the Lesser Antilles and new cultural geographies of gendered urban space in Delhi and Shanghai.²⁶ EU research programmes, both in terms of the (geographical) scope of the activities and the partnership, provide EU Member States and Associated Countries with strategic opportunities to collaborate with countries outside of Europe.²⁷

“The benefits to knowledge have been immense and research in the UK is considerably stronger than it would have been if none of this collaboration and funding were present. Universities in the UK have gained enormously in terms of the incoming of some wonderful academic colleagues and students from other European countries, often people whose first experience of the UK was working with British Academics on joint research projects or exchange programmes by the EU. I and many other UK academics have gained formative experience and developed our careers and research profiles doing collaborative research in the EU or on third countries but funded by the EU.”

Professor Christopher Hunt, recipient of a British Academy Small Research Grant and Reader in Natural Sciences and Psychology, Liverpool John Moores University

UK higher education institutions, by ensuring the exchange of ideas, mobility of students and researchers and sharing of facilities, play an essential role in organising and establishing European research collaboration, which in turn support research excellence, increase citation performance and enhance the attractiveness of these institutions.²⁸ European research collaboration activities have *raised the profile of UK higher education institutions* and have allowed UK universities to perform strongly in *university rankings*,²⁹ creating a catalytic effect by supporting future collaboration.

26 See: <http://heranet.info/>

27 SwissCore, *Horizon 2020 as a gateway for international cooperation?*, July 2016, https://www.swisscore.org/Documents/20160728_Report%20on%20INCO%20Horizon%202020.pdf

28 Russell Group, *Russell Group universities and the European Union*, <https://russellgroup.ac.uk/media/5417/russell-group-universities-and-the-european-union.pdf>

29 Times Higher Education, *World University Rankings 2019*, https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2019/world-ranking#!/page/0/length/25/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/stats

“EU research collaboration has broken down any sense of insularity or borders for the UK research community. From the beginning of my research career, I have thought of myself as a researcher working in an international field rather than a purely British one. The ability of UK universities to attract international students and staff also contributes to the social diversity and quality of life both of campus and city and enables the UK to become better known and appreciated abroad through such experiences – as well as developing partnerships for future mutual benefit.”

Dr Hugh Houghton, recipient of a British Academy Small Research Grant and Professor of New Testament Textual Scholarship, University of Birmingham

Collaboration with partners in other European countries allows UK universities to pool infrastructures and increase their *resource efficiency*.³⁰ By pooling resources at a continental level, research funds can be directed to the institutions that are best suited to addressing particular research questions. These collaborations also provide an important income to these institutions. In 2014/2015, the UK’s total research grants and contracts income from EU government bodies amounted to £5.5 billion, which represented a 66% increase since 2006/2007, meaning that the UK’s income from EU government bodies has grown at a faster pace than its total research grants and contracts income. Reliance of the UK’s higher education system on EU government bodies has grown steadily, from 7.65% of the total research income in 2006/2007 to 13.05% in 2014/2015.³¹

“My current European Research Council project on Indo-Iranian philology, Zoroastrian literature and religion, combines models and methodologies from digital humanities, philology and linguistics [...] The project involves an international team of researchers in the UK, Germany, India and Iran. It provides positions for three full-time and one part-time postdoctoral researchers and three fully funded PhD scholarships.”

Professor Almut Hintze FBA, Zartoshty Brothers Professor of Zoroastrianism, School of Oriental and African Studies

The shared knowledge flows *help us to understand and address the common challenges* that European societies face, such as health, poverty, the future of mobility, demographic changes and air quality. Cross-national activities enhance evidence-based and scientific analyses for reacting to these issues and provide *policy solutions*. These collaborations contribute to strengthening our *relations with key trade and diplomatic partners* and establishing new relations with emerging areas of interest. By doing so, they benefit the *UK economy and promote soft power*.³²

“In economic geography, European and international collaboration is hugely important and particularly strong across the EU and also with the US, Australia and New Zealand. There are certainly strong international networks of scholars. Such collaborations yield learning around policy lessons which are particularly valuable. In economic geography, it is critical to learn from places like Silicon Valley or the German Mittelstand to understand effective ways of supporting firms and regional economies.”

Professor Gillian Bristow, Dean of Research for the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Cardiff

30 UUK, *International research collaboration after the UK leaves the European Union*, April 2017, <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2017/international-collaboration-uk-post-exit.pdf>

31 HESA aggregated data

32 British Academy, *A submission from the British Academy to the Migration Advisory Committee inquiry on the economic and social impacts of international students*, November 2017, <https://www.britac.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-01-26%20Migration%20Advisory%20Committee%20submission%20on%20the%20impact%20of%20international%20students.pdf>

These collaboration activities significantly enrich the *UK's intellectual and cultural life*, contribute to cultural, social, and economic well-being and incite creativity and social innovation. They also encourage or demand the effective management of language skills, which increase knowledge in other fields and stimulate further collaborations.³³

“The value of EU collaboration is of course difficult to quantify, like many inherently valuable things that we may generally take for granted (the value of the natural world, art, literature, and music for instance), but it has undoubtedly fostered a spirit of enquiry, mutual respect and interest, and enabled people from very different cultures [...] to better understand one another, to share specialisms, talents, and cultures.”

Professor Pauline Fairclough, former British Academy Mid-Career Fellow and Reader in Music, University of Bristol

33 British Academy, *Born Global: Implications for Higher Education*, March 2016, <https://www.britac.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Born%20Global%20-%20Implications%20for%20Higher%20Education.pdf>

The Future of European Research Collaboration

Leaving the EU creates uncertainty as regards involvement in European research collaboration as it is strongly dependent on mobility, access to research programmes and common regulation. Researchers in the humanities and social sciences are worried about the ongoing decline of opportunities for collaboration while the UK remains a Member State and during the transition period. In particular, concerns both in the UK and in other European countries regarding the UK's current and future involvement in EU research programmes have already resulted in a decline in the UK's participation in collaborative activities.

As the UK negotiates and defines its future relationship with the EU, revisions to the research environment could seriously hamper intellectual dialogues, access to research infrastructures, including the European Social Survey, and influence over policies affecting the UK, as well as place existing and future UK involvement in European research collaboration at risk. The closest possible association to EU research programmes will help mitigate this risk and continue to enable UK-based researchers to maintain their current European collaborative networks.

Preserving European research collaboration would entail *supporting the inward and the outward mobility of researchers*. The UK should consider investing in infrastructures with the objective of encouraging collaboration and attracting talented researchers to the UK and enabling UK researchers to spend time in other countries.

The UK should also seek to preserve common regulatory frameworks or maintain regulatory alignment, where appropriate and applicable, and in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including UK academia and universities. In particular, ongoing review and introduction of new EU legislation could lead to different regulatory arrangements between the UK and the EU in areas including data transfer, patient safety and copyright. This could disrupt current and prospective research projects in the humanities and social sciences and with other disciplines.

At present, UK higher education and research engenders an environment that has strongly supported European research collaboration in the humanities and social sciences. The expertise and experience of UK-based researchers and institutions, including museums, libraries and galleries, in forging and nurturing European research collaboration is a real strength of the UK that would be a significant loss to the humanities and the social sciences if not supported fully in the future.

About the Academy

The British Academy is the UK's independent national academy representing the humanities and social sciences. For over a century it has supported and celebrated the best in UK and international research and helped connect the expertise of those working in these disciplines with the wider public. The Academy supports innovative research and outstanding people, influences policy and seeks to raise the level of public understanding of some of the biggest issues of our time, through policy reports, publications and public events. The Academy represents the UK's research excellence worldwide in a fast-changing global environment. It promotes UK research in international arenas, fosters a global approach across UK research, and provides leadership in developing global links and expertise.

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