

Mr. Maros Sefcovic
Vice-President of the European Commission for Interinstitutional Relations
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The Russell Group of Universities
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Dear Vice-President,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Russell Group concerning the deadlock in formalising the UK's participation in Horizon Europe. The Russell Group represents 24 of the UK's most research-intensive universities, delivering world-class R&D and collaborating with universities and businesses around the world.

We now believe the UK's full association to Horizon is at risk. While we recognise that the UK's association is linked to wider discussions about Britain's relationship with the EU and the Northern Ireland Protocol, we hope that the UK's access to Horizon Europe is seen as more than a bargaining chip between the UK or EU. I have also written to the UK Prime Minister setting out these concerns.

The UK has much to offer the European knowledge community as a full associate member, as a supporter of excellence in frontier discovery research and training opportunities with our world-leading universities. With the fair and equitable terms of the UK's association and financial contribution agreed at the TCA back in December 2020, and UK researchers having already been successful in key early Horizon Europe awards, to lose this opportunity for long-term scientific collaboration at this late stage would be snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.

Horizon Europe's success is predicated on a commitment to collaborate with the best minds of the world, no matter which country they live. UK and EU universities have a long history of tackling common problems and building close partnerships for many years, and the strength of those partnerships has helped to tackle some of the world's most pressing challenges. Without a swift formalisation of the UK's association, we are concerned that much of the hard work that has gone before will be lost as the UK Government prepares its plans for alternative schemes – an outcome which will leave both the UK and the EU worse off.

Confirming the UK as a full associate member of Horizon Europe will lead to more knowledge, more discoveries, and more innovation, which can only benefit all European citizens. Tackling the next Covid-19 needs a worldwide response, utilising the world's research community to provide solutions and drive forward innovation. Ultimately, a Horizon Europe without the EU's closest partner in research and innovation risks weakening Europe's position in the global research and innovation landscape.

It is now crunch time for association. I would therefore urge you to make a personal intervention to break the deadlock, get the deal over the line on behalf of the research community, and unlock the enormous benefits to both the UK and EU that Horizon Europe will bring.

We stand ready to support you in this endeavour in any way we can.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Tim Bradshaw
Chief Executive, Russell Group

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