

Jo Swinson CBE
Liberal Democrat Headquarters
8-10 Great George Street
London
SW1P 3AE

From the President Venki Ramakrishnan

12 November 2019

Dear Ms Swinson,

Science and innovation drive the economy, create jobs and make our lives better. Our health, communications, energy needs, security and a host of other areas of our lives are underpinned by the contributions of countless scientists, technicians, doctors and engineers. The UK's status as a world leader in research is an advantage that we must build on. Any Government with a long-term vision for a progressive United Kingdom that is thriving economically and leading efforts to tackle global challenges must put science and innovation at the heart of its programme.

That means: securing a good Brexit outcome for science which involves full UK participation in Horizon Europe; overhauling our immigration system to support the international exchange of people and ideas; increasing investment in science to reach 3% of GDP by 2030; putting in place the policies and investment to deliver net-zero carbon emissions as quickly as possible; reforming the UK's education system to provide everyone with the breadth of skills they will need for the jobs of the future; and facilitating the development and application of new technologies such as data and AI and genomics so that they transform everyone's lives for the better.

The British Social Attitudes survey published earlier this year showed that more than three-quarters of the public (77%) agree that science and technology are making our lives healthier, easier and more comfortable and more than four in five people (85%) trust university scientists to do their work with the intention of benefitting the public.

Science is also at the heart of the issues that matter to the electorate. If supported effectively, breakthroughs in medical sciences will improve our health, extend length and quality of life, increase efficiency in the NHS, and save the public purse billions. The economy thrives on research and innovation with businesses that invest in R&D on average 13% more productive and the UK's pharmaceutical industry alone employing 63,000 people. As well as protecting the planet from the worst effects of climate change; investing in renewable energy, energy storage, electric vehicles, taking carbon out of the air and making more efficient use of resources will create new jobs and industries. Furthermore, the use of new data technologies can increase the efficacy and efficiency of public services from transport and health to social services and policing.



President Sir Venki Ramakrishnan
Executive Director Dr Julie Maxton

Founded in 1660, the Royal Society is the independent scientific academy of the UK, dedicated to promoting excellence in science.

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I have attached a copy of the Royal Society's manifesto for science which provides a roadmap for the next Government to capitalise on the UK's outstanding strengths in science and would be happy to discuss this with you. Science is one of the UK's most valuable national assets but for too long it has been taken for granted. Science is the engine that drives the UK forward, making us healthier, wealthier and wiser. Now is the time to invest in realising its full potential.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Venki Ramakrishnan".

Venki Ramakrishnan
President of the Royal Society

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