

OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER
FROM LEADING RESEARCH SCIENTISTS IN THE UK

Rt Hon Boris Johnson, MP
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AL

Monday, 8th June 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

Impact on Science Research of Brexit Transition Termination

The response to Covid-19 has shown how international collaboration has been essential for rapid progress in understanding the disease. No single nation has the expertise or innovative pipeline and power to characterize the virus, develop a vaccine for it and distribute that vaccine globally.

The huge scientific problems facing globally inter-connected economies, ranging from climate change to artificial intelligence, require shared expertise and research power. There is a wonderful vehicle for galvanizing and funding such collaborative research and innovation, the European Research Area.

The UK played a major role in the creation of the ERA and defining its ways of working and has led many of its most significant research efforts. But our involvement is now in jeopardy with the prospect of a No-Deal Brexit.

We believe that the Government should take whatever time is needed to negotiate a productive future relationship with the EU, including UK research and the ERA. This can only benefit both parties and is manifestly in the long-term interest of the UK and all its citizens.

Covid-19 has inflicted a severe setback to our economy and to future prospects of our youth. Recovery from such a setback will require a strong research and innovation base and a No-Deal Brexit would severely damage it. It would erode the attractiveness of our universities to talent from around the globe and the attractiveness of the UK as a location for leading science and technology businesses, at precisely a time when those goals are under threat due to the pandemic.

We believe a No-Deal Brexit will cause unnecessary and possibly long-term damage because of an arbitrary timeline set before the pandemic.

Yours faithfully,

Signatories overleaf

- Venki Ramakrishan, Nobel Prize for Chemistry 2000, President of the Royal Society
- Sir Paul Nurse, Nobel Laureate, Physiology or Medicine 2001
- Martin Rees FRS, Baron Rees of Ludlow
- Niall FitzGerald KBE, Chairman – Leverhulme Trust
- Professor Daniel Anthony, University of Oxford
- Professor Dorothy Bishop, University of Oxford
- Professor Edward Bullmore, University of Cambridge
- Professor Roger Crisp, University of Oxford
- Professor Annette Dolphin, University College London,
- Professor Dame Athene Donald DBE FRS, University of Cambridge
- Professor Barry Everitt FRS, University of Cambridge
- Professor Anne Ferguson-Smith FRS, University of Cambridge
- Professor Christine Holt FRS, University of Cambridge
- Professor Charles Hulme FBA, University of Oxford
- Professor Roger Lemon, University College London
- Professor Stafford Lightman, University of Bristol
- Dr Alice Prochaska, Former Principal and Honorary Fellow Somerville College, Oxford
- Professor Wolfram Schultz, University of Cambridge
- Professor Maggie Snowling CBE, University of Oxford
- Professor David Spiegelhalter OBE FRS, University of Cambridge
- Professor William Whyte, St John's College, Oxford