

Scientists renew post-Brexit collaboration and commitment across Europe

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Science is key to tackling today's societal challenges. Making discoveries and advancing research frontiers are not just matters for our human fascination; they are central to improvements in health, wellbeing and economic prosperity. Science also is an international endeavour and the UK and Germany in particular are two of Europe's major research partners. We are concerned to maintain and build upon the dynamism of our current scientific collaborations at a time of major change in Europe. To this end, representatives from the Royal Society, the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the Leopoldina recently convened a roundtable in Berlin to discuss the present and future joint working. These three academies are making this statement to underline their continued commitment to the pursuit of international scientific research.

In order to flourish, science needs the free flow and exchange of ideas, as well as the movement of the creative idea makers. Researchers should be able to travel so that they can discuss, learn and collaborate across projects and national boundaries, combining their multinational strengths. Indeed, the ability of a country to welcome and thereby attract global talent is fundamental to the strength of its science base. In this way, European collaboration has greatly strengthened European science. The European Union, with its commitment to pursuing a free marketplace for scientists and researchers, and its funding of scientific endeavours through programmes such as Horizon 2020, has contributed substantially to this progress. We are concerned that the negotiations over the UK's future relationship with the European Union do not disturb this free exchange of ideas and talent.

Within the European Union, the UK and Germany are leaders in science and innovation. The two countries have a strong history of research collaboration. Indeed, a recent Royal Society report shows that Germany is the top European collaborative partner for UK research authors¹. Both countries are recognised for the quality of their scientific research, which is achieved through the open exchange of talent and the provision of funding. We are strong research allies and, at this time of change, we welcome opportunities and mechanisms that will allow us to continue collaborating in excellent science. Indeed, we trust that our governments will keep science in Europe open to the world.

Whilst new technologies and scientific discoveries can offer great opportunities for economic growth, some countries have experienced an improvement in prosperity and living standards alongside increased inequality. The Royal Society, the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the Leopoldina are working together in this time of change to ensure that science remains open to the world, to support and promote excellent science and the continued important and successful scientific collaboration between our nations. We are also committed to seeing science as a public good that benefits all.

¹ Royal Society (2016) *UK research and the European Union: The Role of the EU in international research collaboration and researcher mobility*, available here: <https://royalsociety.org/~media/policy/projects/eu-uk-funding/phase-2/EU-role-in-international-research-collaboration-and-researcher-mobility.pdf> (accessed 22/02/17)