

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ
United Kingdom

2 March 2021

Dear Chancellor,

We write as the Presidents of the four UK National Academies, ahead of this week's Budget, to urge you to ensure that the recent uplift to UK research and innovation at the 2020 Spending Review is preserved by confirming that our association to Horizon Europe will be provided through additional funding. A real term decrease at this time would send the wrong signal to a sector that will be key to a successful recovery.

The Government's success in ensuring UK association to Horizon Europe, the EU's flagship research and innovation funding programme, is strongly welcomed by our communities. Research and innovation is global and the value of international cooperation is evidenced by the rapid global response to COVID19 leading to the successful and ongoing roll out of vaccines. This first, vital step towards continued cooperation is positive news for patients, the public and businesses in the UK, Europe and beyond.

However, the agreement to associate to Horizon Europe came after the 2020 Spending Review and we are now concerned that association may be funded from the existing BEIS R&D allocation, which you set out in November last year. Up until now, UK participation in EU Framework Programmes has not been funded in this way and the likely additional cost of association in 2021/22 would more than account for the projected increase to BEIS R&D. This would decrease the money available to fund R&D projects and risk halting investments in research and innovation activity that, once lost, will take time to rebuild.

Research and innovation will be a key part of the UK's ambition to 'unite and level up' and 'build back better' in response to COVID-19 and the Treasury has recognised this with welcome commitments to increase investment in R&D to £22bn by 2024-25. Association to Horizon Europe is highly valuable and strongly welcomed by the research and innovation community. But the costs of association should not be an alternative to, nor adversely impact, UK R&D if the Government is to avoid undermining its own commitments to boost UK R&D and help the UK become a global science superpower.

We urge you to ensure this is accomplished and would be pleased to speak further if useful.

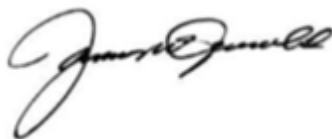
Yours sincerely,



Professor Dame Anne Johnson PMedSci
President, Academy of Medical Sciences



Professor Sir David Cannadine FBA
President, British Academy



Professor Sir Jim McDonald FEng FRSE
President, Royal Academy of Engineering



Sir Adrian Smith PRS
President, Royal Society

Cc: Amanda Solloway MP, Minister for Science, Research and Innovation; Charles Roxburgh, Second Permanent Secretary to the Treasury