

Ahead of leaving the European Union, there remains several unresolved issues facing the higher education sector, but the two main issues are: Horizon Europe and Erasmus+, which will form the basis of this briefing. Our stated wish since the European Union referendum is that the UK should be a full and active member of both Horizon Europe and Erasmus+.

## Horizon Europe

- The uncertainty about future participation is worrying for scientists on an individual level and for universities. We want to be at the heart of Europe's most successful research programme and there's a risk that might not happen and is contingent on the UK striking an overall deal with the EU. We need the flow of talent to come to Scotland and without Horizon we will be a much poorer proposition for the world's best scientists. Horizon is unparalleled in supporting deep research collaborations. There is a risk that these partnerships with our closest neighbours will be more difficult if we are not a part of Horizon Europe.
- Scotland's universities have performed very well in Horizon 2020. Horizon 2020 made almost €80 billion of funding available from 2014 to 2020. By 2018, Scotland had received €533m in total across 881 different projects. This represents 1.61% of the total allocated Horizon 2020 budget to date. The €533million secured by Scotland is 11.24% of the total funding awarded to UK organisations (over €4.7billion).
- Research is one of Scotland's key assets. As a sector, we do it well: Scotland produces 12% of the UK's research with 8% of the UK's population and 10% of its researchers. More of Scotland's research publications are up there in the world's top 1% of most cited publications than anywhere else in the UK or EU. Highly cited work is a mark of the impact of the research. Not being able to access a vital network of colleagues and funding is threatening our position and reputation.
- We welcome the UK Government's continued expression of intent to remain in Horizon 2020 (or Horizon Europe, as the next Framework which begins on 1 January 2021) as an "associate member" but that is contingent on the achievement of a negotiated outcome. The Political Declaration included a section supportive of this outcome, "the Parties will establish general principles, terms and conditions for the United Kingdom's participation in Union programmes, subject to the conditions set out in the corresponding Union instruments, in areas such as science and innovation"<sup>1</sup>. Negotiations on this issue have stalled over the UK's financial contribution and a potential rebate to the EU on the basis that the UK has historically won more in H2020 grants than it contributed.

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/840656/Political\\_Declaration\\_setting\\_out\\_the\\_framework\\_for\\_the\\_future\\_relationship\\_between\\_the\\_European\\_Union\\_and\\_the\\_United\\_Kingdom.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/840656/Political_Declaration_setting_out_the_framework_for_the_future_relationship_between_the_European_Union_and_the_United_Kingdom.pdf) See section II A 11

## Erasmus+

- Over 2,700 people at Scotland's universities had the experience of outward mobility for study or work through Erasmus in 2017/18. Between 2014-18, Erasmus+ funded 164 projects and 17 strategic partnerships in higher education in Scotland at the value of €50.2m and €5.4m respectively. Erasmus+ projects have given opportunities to students to study abroad who might not have otherwise been able to.
- We could be potentially leaving Erasmus+ at a key point. The next funding programme for Erasmus+ will double in size to €30bn for the 2021-27 programme.
- Whilst there is a financial underwrite in place until 2020, there is no clarity on whether the UK Government will negotiate an association to Erasmus+ to ensure the continuation of two-way student mobility. Nor is there sufficient clarity on the detail of domestic alternative successor scheme in the event of no negotiated outcome by 31 December. A UK-successor scheme may not be in place at the time of our Erasmus+ membership ending, thus denying many students the opportunity to study abroad at all.
- Our concerns are that a successor scheme would be inferior to Erasmus+ if it did not also include staff mobility or international collaborative projects as the current scheme does. Additionally, there has been speculation that a UK domestic alternative scheme would only fund UK students on exchange, not operate on the reciprocal basis that the Erasmus+ model does. This would leave the UK or UK universities to reach bilateral deal with other governments and/or institutions which is far more time and resource intensive for institutions and is likely to reduce the range of options available to students relative to the opportunities available in Erasmus+.

## ENDS

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