

15 October 2020

Dr Ursula von der Leyen
President, European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Dear President von der Leyen

For the last four years, the European and UK research community has been calling for continued scientific cooperation post-Brexit. In this late state of the negotiations, we urge you to find a compromise. This is the final opportunity to use these negotiations to ensure that future generations everywhere can continue to benefit from the results of UK-EU scientific collaboration.

Our shared experiences tell us that we should now be building on the successful EU-UK collaborations we have known for decades, not scaling back. We must continue to work together to tackle shared global challenges, including the current pandemic, where research is the only exit strategy. We've found it encouraging that both of your teams have continued to discuss research in the negotiations and have committed to the principle of full UK participation in Horizon Europe. This mutual mandate must now translate into action.

A practical agreement can, and must, be found. This summer, over 100 organisations and researchers signed a compromise [statement](#) that proposed solutions to some of the sticking points in negotiations. These included ensuring fair financial contributions, accepting EU oversight of programme funds, and agreeing to introduce reciprocal mobility arrangements. In the current political context, it will be most important to build trust on both sides, including the UK demonstrating its commitment to the programme.

A decision against UK participation in Horizon Europe would have fundamental and long-term consequences. It would fracture European research collaboration, undermine the ambition of the programme and threaten its future success. It would also hold back our collective efforts to compete on the global stage, not least with countries including China and the US. Domestic efforts to replicate the scheme cannot replace the value of being part of the world's largest multi-lateral programme.

The UK's participation in previous programmes has benefited us all and it must continue. We urge you to use the final stages of talks to find common ground and to deliver for research.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Tobias Bonhoeffer, Director, Max Planck Institute of Neurobiology and Governor,
Wellcome Trust

Sir Jeremy Farrar, Director, Wellcome

Pascal Lamy, Jacques Delors Institute

Professor Maria Leptin, Director, EMBO

Sir Paul Nurse, Director, The Francis Crick Institute