

Political Studies Association Evidence to the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee Inquiry into the Influence of EU Membership on UK Science

Introduction

1. The Political Studies Association (PSA) is the leading organisation in the UK linking academics in political science and current affairs, theorists and practitioners, policy-makers, journalists, researchers and students in higher education.
2. Membership of the PSA is open to anyone interested in the study of politics. It spans academics in political science and current affairs, theorists and practitioners, policy-makers, journalists, researchers, politics teachers and students in Higher Education. Membership has grown steadily and now stands at over 1,900, making it the second largest such national association in the world.
3. As a charitable organisation that exists to promote the development of political studies and to encourage education and the advancement of learning in the art and science of government and in other branches of the political sciences we fully support any initiative that serves to improve standards of teaching.
4. This submission addresses questions 1, 3, and 4 of the inquiry.

What is the scale of the financial contribution from the EU to UK science and research, and vice versa?

5. UK universities receive significant and critically important funding streams from a number of EU sources. The main source of funding is Horizon 2020, which will disburse almost 80 billion euros over seven years (2014-2020). The UK did disproportionately well out of Horizon 2020's predecessor, Framework Programme 7, receiving 15.2% of all funding, amounting to 5.2 billion euros.
6. This represents a sizeable proportion of research funding in the UK. In 2013/14 the UK received £687m of research income from the UK. In the same year RCUK invested just under £3bn in research. Cambridge University alone received £68m in a year from Horizon 2020 – some 17% of its entire research income. This is particularly important at a time when national investment in science and research is static and our leading competitors are overtaking the UK by a significant margin in the proportion of GDP they spend on science and research.
7. EU funding for research continues to grow, despite an overall cut to the Commission's budget. Horizon 2020 is almost 30% bigger than previous programmes of a similar nature.
8. It is also important to note that Horizon 2020 pays for 25% of the cost of administration, which is significantly higher than from some other research funders.

What are the benefits to UK science and research in terms of collaboration and funding programmes such as Horizon 2020 and the European Research Council?

9. The EU plays a vital role in supporting universities to collaborate across borders. By bringing together 28 states under a single framework for collaboration it substantially reduces the

bureaucracy generally associated with collaborating with institutions across borders, thus saving British institutions time and money.

11. The EU also encourages the establishment of networks of excellence and by pooling resources, expertise, data and infrastructure across borders it is able to generate a higher return on investment in research. It also enables British institutions to achieve a level of scale in their research, particularly with regard to research infrastructure, that allows them to compete with institutions in the United States.
12. Over half the UK's academic outputs are now in collaboration with other countries. This compares to just 33% for the US and this can in no small part be attributed to the spur to international collaboration coming from the EU.
13. Furthermore Horizon 2020 encourages research that takes up the "great challenges" of Europe's future, such as ageing populations and climate change, ensuring that the research is of strategic value.
14. Some universities are particularly successful at securing EU funding. This now accounts for a very high proportion of their research funding and plays a major role in keeping these institutions at top of international league tables and thus competing effectively against top US institutions – creating virtuous circle of funding and people.

What contribution does EU membership make to the quality of UK science and research through the free movement of people?

14. Membership of the EU makes it easier for universities in the UK to attract the best academics and avoid the cost in time and money of applying for work permits to bring over talented individuals. It also makes it easier to attract students, who make a significant financial contribution to both their institutions, in terms of fees, but also to the local communities in which they reside. The highly international nature of the UK's universities helps attract further talent from overseas creating a virtuous circle that further increases the UK's soft power.
15. Not only does EU membership help attract talent but through the Erasmus exchange programme it allows students and staff to spend time overseas, broadening their horizons and enhancing their language skills, thus improving their employability.

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