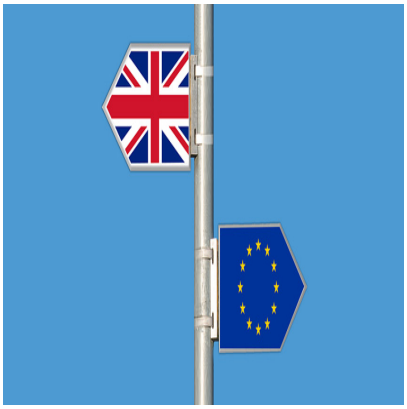


Description

The United Kingdom's decision to go ahead with Brexit is affecting universities across the European Union (EU) according to a recent report. Under the EU agreements, researchers can freely conduct research across Europe. The EU also provides funding for large research projects through the Horizon 2020 program.

Talks that will detail exactly how the United Kingdom will relate to the European Union are in progress. The talks are moving too slowly for European universities to avoid uncertainty. Researchers are already preparing for grant applications and forming collaborations for projects planned in 2019.

British Universities Face Uncertain Future

The President of Universities UK, Prof. Janet Beer, voiced her concerns recently. She said that universities needed urgent clarity on whether or not they will be able to continue to be part of Horizon 2020 after Brexit. UK researchers can be denied access to a vital research network if they are no longer a part of this program. Unless universities know soon what will happen after Brexit, European research programs could stall.

Prof. Beer also pointed out that the uncertainty over Brexit will affect university students. The Erasmus+ program allows European students to study abroad. Approximately 30,000 British students participate in this program every year. If it is discontinued for UK students, they will miss many opportunities.

Currently, Brexit talks are still in the first phase. This involves discussing citizens' rights, the Irish border, and financial settlement. Research and higher education will be discussed in the second phase of the Brexit talks. This phase will focus on how the United Kingdom will relate to the EU after Brexit.

Britain Reassures Scientists

The Minister of Universities, Jo Johnson has said that the British government will try to secure a favourable agreement with the EU. Minister Johnson said the aim will be to ensure that British science and innovation continue to flourish.

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The minister recognized the importance of collaboration to Britain's economic growth. He pointed out that his government has been consistent in its plans to ensure a strong future relationship with the EU. This will make it possible for British scientists to continue working with their European counterparts. This statement follows a warning from the European Commission. If the UK withdraws from the EU without an agreement with Brussels, British researchers will lose their Horizon 2020 grants.

Minister Johnson said that the UK would be able to recruit top EU researchers by encouraging talented EU students to pursue degrees in Britain. He told reporters that EU students would continue to be welcome in Britain. They will also have access to the higher education funding system.

Britain's Plans for the Future

Minister Johnson revealed a new assessment tool for universities. It will measure how effective universities are at commercializing their research. Currently, British universities are assessed based on their teaching and research excellence. This additional component should encourage them to increases the impact of their work.

The knowledge exchange framework tool will assess how universities create spin-off companies. It will also look at intellectual property licensing and creating partnerships with businesses. The minister used Sheffield University's advanced manufacturing and research center as an example. The center is the reason that supercar manufacturer McLaren opened a factory in that city.

If the government is able to deliver on these promises, British researchers would not suffer as a result of Brexit. They would be able to maintain their links with European researchers. Collaborative academic research would be unaffected by the UK's decision to leave the European Union. Students across the EU would still be able to consider studying in the UK.

Are you affected by the Brexit talks as a student or a researcher? What impact do you think these negotiations will have on research in Europe? Please share your thoughts by commenting in the section below.

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