

Description

Brexit effect has been felt within the academic world for quite some time now. The decision of the UK to continue with Brexit is affecting various universities across the European Union. These universities are unsure of the funding for their research projects, most of which was provided by European Union. As a measure to that, UK universities have decided to collaborate with German universities. According to University of Oxford, alliance of UK Universities with Berlin Universities can help the academics in an influential way. It would help them to win joint grants from German institutions and British funders.

Uncertain Future for British Universities

There are various talks in progress that are aimed to deliver exact details on how the UK will relate with the EU. For the European Universities, the talks are moving too slowly to avoid uncertainty. Researchers' preparations are in progress for forming collaborations for projects that are planned in 2019. Prof. Janet Beer who is the president of Universities UK has voiced her concerns. According to her, the Universities need urgent clarity on whether they will be able to continue being part of Horizon 2020 after Brexit. European research programs could stall unless the universities know soon what will happen after Brexit.

Prof. Janet also said that the uncertainty over Brexit will affect university students. Approximately 30,000 UK students participate in the program every year, and the Erasmus program allows European students to undertake studies abroad. If the program is halted for UK students, then they will miss out on many opportunities.

Brexit talks are still in the first phase. The talks involve discussing the Irish border, Citizen Rights, and financial settlement. Higher education and research will be discussed in Brexit second phase talks. The second phase will focus primarily on how the UK will relate to the EU after Brexit.

Britain Reassures Scientists

Jo Johnson, the Minister of Universities said that the British government will try and secure a favorable agreement with European Union. He added that the aim will be to make sure that British innovation and science continue to flourish.

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According to him, it is important to collaborate for the growth of Britain's economy. He also pointed out that the government has been consistent with plans to ensure that there is a strong future relationship with EU. This will enable British scientists to continue collaborating and working with their European counterparts. He gave out this statement after a warning from the European Commission. If Britain withdraws from the European Union without an agreement with Brussels, then British researchers will lose their Horizon 2020 grants.

The Minister also added that UK would be able to recruit top European Union researchers through encouraging talented students from EU to pursue degrees in UK. Minister Johnson told reporters that European Union students are welcome in Britain. He also said that the students will access the higher education funding system.

Britain's Future Plans

The EU supports Horizon 2020 which is a research funding scheme. There is some anticipation that Oxford University will establish a research center in Berlin. The university sought help from German institutions in collaboration with Berlin Universities. Germany has showered money on this sector, and this has also increased the budget of the German Research Foundation. This collaboration may be the beginning of many other positive arrangements.

Minister Johnson unveiled a new assessment tool for universities to measure their effectiveness at commercializing research. British universities are currently assessed based on their research excellence and teaching. This component was added to encourage universities to increase the impact of their work.

The framework for knowledge exchange is a tool that will assess the capabilities of universities to create spin off companies. It will also look into intellectual property licensing and create partnerships with several business partners. Sheffield University was an example for advanced research and manufacturing as pointed out by the Minister. The super car manufacturer McLaren opened a factory in the city because of the center.

British researchers would not suffer because of Brexit if the government is able to deliver on their promises. They could still keep links with European researchers. The collaborative academic research will not be affected by the UK's decision to leave the EU. There will be still students across the European Union who will consider studying in Britain.

What do you think will be the other effects of Brexit? Please share your thoughts with us in the comments section below.

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