

## **Campaign welcomes further partnership on science and innovation collaboration**

7 September 2017

The Campaign for Social Science has long argued that the best outcome for UK science and research – for research funding, opportunities for international collaboration, and international talent recruitment – would be if the UK negotiated the closest possible association and participation for the duration of Horizon 2020 after the UK leaves the EU in 2019, and for the next Framework Programme, FP 9.

The Campaign therefore welcomes the government's 6 September further partnership paper on [Collaboration on Science and Innovation](#), which clarifies that 'the UK will seek an ambitious science and innovation agreement with the EU that will support and promote science and innovation across Europe both now and in the future.'

This DexEU paper discusses the potential for association with the EU's Research and Innovation (Framework) Programmes, offering the clearest indication to date that the UK might be willing to seek associated status, and, significantly, to also 'explore forging a more ambitious and close partnership with the EU than any yet agreed between the EU and a non-EU country'.

While the government's position is reassuring, additional details and clarity will be needed to ensure UK science and research maintain their global excellence. We would also be further encouraged to see the government's commitment to 'strengthening the UK's world leading science base' extend across all sciences.

Achieving associated status for a country like the UK under the current H2020 rules would normally require agreement to freedom of movement. The recent [Swiss compromise](#), which does not place quotas on immigration but requires that jobs in areas of high unemployment are advertised to Swiss residents before they are advertised abroad, suggests that there may be room to negotiate how freedom of movement is implemented in practice.

[Pascal Lamy's July 2017 LAB-FAB-APP report](#), which provides the basis for European thinking on the next Framework Program, FP 9, opens up the possibility for the UK to seek association with FP9, without changing its current position on free movement. Its key recommendation is that the EU "open up the [Research and Innovation] programme to association by the best and participation by all, based on reciprocal co-funding or access to co-funding in the partner country." Association based on excellence and financial contribution would allow the UK to remain an important player in the European Research Area, and to continue international research collaboration to the benefit of both the UK and EU going forward, irrespective of the eventual post-Brexit model of EU-engagement. So all this bodes well for prospects that UK aspirations for research partnerships may be achievable.

Of course, the Campaign for Social Science supports broad participation across all disciplines in EU science programmes, and we know how important ‘hard’ sciences are to the UK’s long-term well-being. We note too though that just as the biomedical sciences benefit from access to larger datasets made possible by participation in EU-funded research, so many of the social and behavioural sciences benefit from data, and comparative frameworks made possible by cross-European research. Participation in H2020 and future Framework programmes enables the social sciences to address many of the [future grand challenges](#) identified as priorities by Sir Mark Walport, CEO designate of UKRI, including population growth, poverty, housing, ageing, economic productivity, educational outcomes, and health-related behavior. And we know that [UK social sciences have outperformed other UK disciplines](#), and the social sciences in other countries, in winning Framework grant-funding to address issues such as these.

Additionally, the UK’s collaboration with EU science and research facilitates the transfer and development of key skills, including [data and number skills](#). Therefore, we continue to encourage the UK government to develop a flexible immigration system for the higher education and research sector, ensuring that the UK retains the necessary expertise for a healthy and vibrant science and social science community at the forefront of research and innovation, and meets the government’s aim of remaining a ‘hub for international talent’.

Moreover, we echo the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee’s call for a science advisor to be hired as soon as possible within the Department for Exiting the European Union, as this would strengthen the voice of the science community throughout the Brexit negotiations.

**James Wilsdon, Chair of the Campaign for Social Science, said:**

“We welcome this statement of intent and aspiration and hope that it may be achievable, and that the UK government is willing to fund continued participation in Horizon 2020, and as fully associated participation as possible in the upcoming 9th Framework programme. This would strengthen the many examples of important international collaboration in the natural and physical sciences, but across all other disciplines too.”