



Department
for Education



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Chris Lowry
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By e-mail to c.lowry@immunology.org

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Dear Chris,

Thank you for your e-mail to Ben Gummer of 31 January on immunological research and the UK's relationship with the European Union. I am responding as the Minister responsible for science and research.

I note the British Society for Immunology's four priorities, as set out in the document *How the UK can seize the opportunity to define a new relationship with the EU*: maintaining access to Horizon 2020 and its successor; increasing public investment in scientific research; maintaining barrier-free entry for workers with exceptional skills including scientists; and guaranteeing the rights of EU nationals currently resident within the UK.

On access to research programmes, UK participants can continue to bid for competitive EU research funding, such as Horizon 2020, while we remain a member of the EU. The Government will work with the European Commission to ensure payment when funds are awarded and the Treasury will underwrite the payment of such awards, even when specific projects continue beyond the UK's departure from the EU. This decision will give British participants and their EU partners the assurance and certainty needed to plan ahead for projects that can run over many years. As the Prime Minister said in her speech on 17 January, we will welcome agreement to continue to collaborate with our European partners on major science, research and technology initiatives. Access to apply to Horizon 2020 and subsequent funding programmes after we leave the EU will be a matter for the negotiations that will follow the triggering of Article 50.

On increasing public investment in scientific research, at the Autumn Statement 2016, the Government committed an extra £2 billion per year to research and development funding by 2020-21, including for the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund. This funding is additional to the spending review announcement in autumn 2015, where science resource funding was protected in real terms, at £4.7 billion per year, for the rest of the Parliament. In the current financial year, total research and innovation funding is over £6 billion. The Chancellor has also confirmed a further £100 million support for collaboration between universities across the range of knowledge exchange activity, and a further £100 million for Innovate UK for the Biomedical Catalyst, from 2017/18 to 2020/21.

On maintaining barrier-free entry for skilled workers, we value the contribution of EU and international staff and remain fully open to scientists and researchers from across the EU. The Secretary of State for Exiting the EU has made clear that "We will always welcome those with the skills, the drive and the expertise to make our nation better still. If we are to win in the global marketplace, we must win the global battle for talent." We are considering very carefully the options that are open to us. As part of that it is important that we understand the impacts on the different sectors of the economy and the labour market from any changes that we make.

Finally, on the question of guaranteeing the rights of EU nationals currently resident in the UK, the Government has been clear that during negotiations we want to protect the status of EU nationals already living here, and the only circumstances in which that would not be possible is if British citizens' rights in European member states were not protected in return.

I hope that this response reassures you of the Government's commitment to maintaining the UK's research base and securing the best possible outcome for UK science and research as we leave the EU.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jo Johnson', written in a cursive style.

JO JOHNSON MP