

PRESS RELEASE

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UK association to Horizon Europe: A great success for the European science community

German U15 expressly welcomes the decision announced today by the President of the European Commission EU, Ursula von der Leyen, and British Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, to associate the United Kingdom to the EU framework programme for research and innovation, Horizon Europe. This brings to an end years of wrangling over the future of scientific cooperation between the UK and the European Union with a much-needed boost for the research landscape on both sides of the Channel. German U15 and its British partner Russell Group will meet in Hamburg next Monday to raise the glass in a toast to the agreement.

Jan Wöpking, Managing Director, German U15:

"Today is a good day for the European science community. The UK's association is excellent news. It makes as much sense scientifically as it does geopolitically. The UK is one of our closest, longest-standing and most trusted research partners and one of the world's strongest science nations."

"The association is crucial for the innovativeness and competitiveness of the pan-European research landscape. Climate change, digitalisation and strategic de-risking can only be successfully managed in cooperation with strong scientific value partners. This includes British universities in particular, with whom our universities have a close and productive collaboration. That is why, together with many friends from the UK and Europe, we have continued to make the case for the UK's association for years."

When a delegation of the British Russell Group meets with university leaders from German U15 in Hamburg next week, both sides will discuss how to deepen their partnership. "The association completely changes the way we can cooperate," says Wöpking. "At the meeting we will talk about how our universities can make the most of these changes and regain the levels of interaction they had with their British partners under Horizon 2020 as quickly as possible."

German U15, together with its British partner association, the Russell Group, has first publicly advocated for full association of the UK to Horizon Europe in January 2019. Together with many other science organisations from the European Union and the UK, German U15 has continuously lobbied for the association over the last four years.

Tim Bradshaw, Russell Group Chief Executive:

"Association to Horizon Europe is tremendous news for UK and EU science, research and innovation. We are delighted the negotiating teams have worked so hard to agree a good deal. We are also enormously grateful to friends across Europe, notably U15, for their support and advocacy for UK association."

"This deal is a true win-win, and the research community on both sides of the Channel will spare no effort in making UK association a success. We will be ready to work with the UK Government, the European Commission and our European partners to make the most of Horizon's opportunities from day one."

The UK's non-association with Horizon Europe has meant that UK researchers have been unable to participate in key parts of the programme and experienced major disadvantages when they applied for funding through the programme. The participation of British institutions in European research projects has therefore declined significantly in recent years.

About Horizon Europe

With a budget of 95.5 billion euros for the period 2021-2027, Horizon Europe forms the core of European research funding and is one of the largest public research funding programmes worldwide. The focus of the EU framework programme for research and innovation is on jointly tackling global challenges such as climate change and digitalisation.

About German U15

German U15 is the strategic representation of research-intensive and internationally visible German universities. The U15 universities educate almost one third of all German and international students in Germany. They supervise half of all doctoral theses completed in Germany. The U15 universities attract two-fifths of all public third-party funding, with the ratio rising to 60 percent in the medical sector.

About the Russell Group

The Russell Group is a university alliance of 24 excellent research universities in the UK. Russell Group member universities educate more than a quarter of all students and 80% of all trainee doctors and dentists in the UK. Russell Group universities also produce more than two-thirds of the UK's cutting-edge research.

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