

PRESS RELEASE

U15 e. V. | 29 March 2017

Ensuring solidarity: priority for higher education and research in the ‘Brexit negotiations’

In light of the negotiations between the EU and the United Kingdom, the German U15 universities are requesting rapid clarification on future conditions for cooperation in the academic sector. Uncertainty threatens the innovative strength of Europe in global competition.

Today's official request from the United Kingdom to leave the EU in accordance with Article 50 of the EU Treaty marks the start of the so-called ‘Brexit negotiations’, which will govern the future relationship between the EU and the UK. One issue that must be discussed in this context is cooperation in research and teaching between Great Britain and the EU member states. ‘The negotiating partners must listen to scientists and scholars on both sides of the Channel, and trust the academic sector's powers of self-organisation. A lopsided emphasis on questions of market access or trade in the “Brexit negotiations” must not endanger the good cooperation between German and British universities,’ noted Hans-Jochen Schiewer, Rector of the University of Freiburg and Chairman of German U15. Schiewer is of the opinion that cooperation in the academic sector and the mobility of academic personnel – and students, in particular – will be of central importance to the future economic development of the United Kingdom and the EU, as well as the future climate between both sides.

Obstacles to the exchange of people, expertise, and ideas, complicated access to funding, and a loss of mutual understanding and trust compromise the performance of the German, European and British systems of higher education and research. They mean poorer conditions in the face of global competition.



‘German U15 is in close contact with British partner organisations. We will be following the negotiations closely from both sides of the Channel,’ Schiewer stated. ‘It is possible that they result in lower barriers to cooperation in the academic sector. This is clearly in the interests of German U15, given the many ties between the German U15 universities and universities in Great Britain.’

About U15:

U15 is the strategic interest group for strong research universities with international acclaim. The U15 universities include almost one-third of all German and international students in Germany, and support half of all completed doctoral projects in the country. U15 universities attract two-fifths of public external funding, and in the medical field as much as 60 percent of these funds.

Press contact U15:

Denise Feldner
German U15 e.V.
Chausseestraße 111-113
10115 Berlin
Germany
presse@german-u15.de