



*The Royal Society  
of Edinburgh*

KNOWLEDGE MADE USEFUL

FROM THE PRESIDENT: PROFESSOR DAME ANNE GLOVER, FRS, PRSE

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Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
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30 July 2019

Dear Prime Minister

On behalf of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE), Scotland's National Academy, I write to congratulate you on your appointment as Prime Minister and to underline our commitment to working with your Government for the benefit of Scotland and the UK more broadly.

Harnessing the expertise of over 1600 Fellows, the RSE contributes to the social, cultural and economic well-being of Scotland and the wider world through the advancement of learning and useful knowledge. The multidisciplinary breadth of the RSE Fellowship comprising science and technology, arts, humanities, social science, business and public service enables us to provide independent and impartial advice on a wide range of contemporary issues bringing together a breadth of perspectives and insights.

As a molecular and cell biologist, I was pleased to hear you refer to the strength of the UK life sciences sector in your inaugural speech as Prime Minister. The UK's science and technology base has benefited greatly from international scientific collaboration, including a sustained and deep partnership with the EU. Indeed, 57% of Scotland's scientific publications involve international collaboration, with 56% of Scotland's international publications having an EU partner. Scotland is a research intensive nation, with independent evidence (Elsevier for the Scottish Science Advisory Council, 2019) demonstrating that in terms of research impact, Scotland is the top performing UK nation.

The EU framework programmes for research and innovation, with their focus on excellence, have strengthened these collaborations and the UK research endeavour, and have been hugely valuable to Scotland. Since it began in 2014, Scottish organisations, primarily our universities, have secured more than €558m from the Horizon 2020 programme – more money per head than England, Wales or Northern Ireland. The RSE remains clear that securing direct and full participation in Horizon 2020 and its successor programme, Horizon Europe, should be a priority for the UK Government in its negotiations with its EU counterparts. We are equally clear of the risks that a no deal poses to the UK's research base and I welcome the stress you have placed on securing a deal with the EU ahead of the UK's withdrawal.



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The competitiveness and international standing of the UK's research base is predicated on its ability to attract and retain high quality staff from across the world. Scotland benefits enormously from a highly multinational research community with more than a quarter of research staff and around one in six postgraduate research students being from the EU.

It is vital that the UK's research and innovation sectors are underpinned by a proportionate and flexible immigration system to ensure that international talent, wherever it is located, and at all levels of the system, can continue to come to the UK. It will also be important to ensure that the UK's future immigration policy takes account of the distinctive needs and circumstances of the devolved nations.

The RSE stands by to support and input into discussions and the UK Government's negotiations with the EU as appropriate to the benefit of Scotland and the wider UK.

With all best wishes



Professor Dame Anne Glover FRS PRSE  
*President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*

Copy: First Minister of Scotland  
Secretary of State for Scotland  
Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation

