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for Education

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Department for  
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Dear Dame Anne,

Thank you for your letter of 30 July to the Prime Minister, congratulating him on his appointment. As I am sure you will appreciate, the Prime Minister receives a large amount of correspondence and is unable to respond to it all personally. As science and research falls within my portfolio, as Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, he has asked me to reply on his behalf. I'm delighted to hear you underline the Royal Society of Edinburgh's commitment, as Scotland's National Academy, to working with the Government.

The Government is dedicated to ensuring that the UK remains a world leader in science, research and innovation and that all places in the UK, including Scotland, benefit from our ambitions. This is why, through the Industrial Strategy, we have committed to increasing investment in research and development across the economy to 2.4% of GDP by 2027, and 3% in the longer term. As a first step towards that, we have invested an extra £7bn in research and development up to 2021/2022. Reaching the 2.4% target will require an excellent science and research base – one to which the UK is proudly home, as highlighted in the SIAs,<sup>1</sup> – and I see Scotland's strengths as a research-intensive nation supporting our ambition. We will continue to engage with our colleagues in the Scottish Government to achieve our ambition of raising R&D investment.

In your letter you rightly observe that the EU Framework Programmes for research and innovation have benefited the UK's research collaborations. The UK is an attractive partner for world-class collaboration with our European partners, and, under the current Horizon 2020 programme, we are a top five partner of choice for our 26 of the 27 Member States.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/science-and-innovation-audits-wave-3-summary-reports>

Until the UK exits the EU, the UK will continue to participate in Horizon 2020 as a Member State. In the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal at the end of the Article 50 extension period, the Government has confirmed that the funding commitments made under the guarantee and its extension still stand. Through these commitments, the Government will guarantee funding for all successful eligible UK bids to Horizon 2020 that are submitted before the end of 2020. This funding guarantee will apply for the lifetime of projects.

I am pleased to bring to your attention that the Government has additionally committed to ensuring that UK bids for relevant Horizon 2020 European Research Council (ERC), Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and SMEi grants submitted before Exit can be assessed via UKRI if they are not assessed by the European Commission.

Beyond the current programme, I assure you that the Government remains committed to creating mutually beneficial opportunities for all parts of the UK to collaborate with our European and international partners.

In your letter you also emphasise the importance of an immigration system that supports research and innovation. The Government is committed to ensuring that the UK's research and innovation sectors can continue to be able to recruit international talent at all levels after the UK has exited the EU. In support of this, the Prime Minister announced, on 8 August, the development of a fast-track immigration route designed to attract elite researchers and specialists in science, engineering and technology to the UK.

I would like to thank you for your continued positive engagement with BEIS, and I encourage you to continue your excellent work in Scotland to support the UK's research and innovation endeavour. I look forward to working with the RSE closely in my new ministerial role.

Thank you again for raising a number of important points in your letter. I hope my response is of help to you.

Yours sincerely,



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**RT HON JO JOHNSON MP**