



# AFTER THE “BREXIT” REFERENDUM:

## Possible outcomes for Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+

Brussels, 9 September 2016

### Introduction

On 23 June 2016, 51.9% of the British electorate voting in the referendum chose to leave the European Union (EU) after the United Kingdom (UK) had joined in 1973. EUA shares the disappointment over the result with its member Universities UK (UUK) and the British university community. EUA is very concerned about the insecurity this causes, notably with regard to the participation of British universities in the EU funding programmes as well as the long-term consequences for European cooperation in research and education. In order to help clarify the situation and shed some light on the current state of play, EUA has compiled the most up-to-date information which is relevant for universities.

### State of play and procedural aspects

The referendum has a consultative status, meaning the government is not bound by the result and is not automatically required to act accordingly. The result has no immediate consequences for British membership of the EU.

In order to formally start the process of leaving the EU, the UK government would need to officially invoke [Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty](#) which details the provisions for the exiting procedure. Article 50 foresees a maximum of two years between the formal notification of the member state's desire to leave the Union and the entry into force, unless the European Council (comprising the heads of states and governments of the EU member states, including the one that wishes to leave) decides to extend this period. At present the UK government has not yet invoked Article 50, meaning the UK remains a member of the EU with all rights and obligations for the time being.

## Cooperation in EU funding programmes

The result of the UK referendum has no immediate legal or financial consequences for the participation of British universities, their students and staff in EU funding programmes, nor for their project partners or host institutions in other countries. Projects continue to run and be funded, British universities can continue to apply and respond to new calls, student and staff mobility to and from the UK continues under the same conditions as prior to the referendum. Any formal change would only take effect once Article 50 has been invoked and either a withdrawal agreement has been concluded or the maximum duration for negotiations has elapsed. What the provisions of such a withdrawal agreement might be and what impact they might have on British participation in EU programmes and in formal structures of the European Research Area, is at present an entirely open question.

There are various ways in which non-EU member states participate in the EU funding programmes. For the two most important programmes for universities, Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+, the following can be distinguished:

### Horizon 2020

The budget for Horizon 2020, the current EU framework programme for research and innovation, is €74.8 billion until 2020. Horizon 2020 is "Open to the World". This means that participants from around the globe, regardless of their place of establishment or residence, can participate in most of the Horizon 2020 calls. However, they are not all automatically eligible for Horizon 2020 funding.

Generally countries can be grouped into the following categories:

1. **EU member states:** They contribute to the programme through the EU budget and are eligible to participate in all parts of the programme. They are part of the decision-making process that establishes the programme and are represented in the respective policy bodies.
2. **Associated countries:** These are non-EU member states that have stipulated a formal agreement on full or partial association to the programme giving them access to the entire programme or only to specific strands/actions. The association covers a maximum of one programme period from the entry into force of the specific agreement, meaning association has to be renegotiated for every programme generation. The current programme period lasts until 2020. Associated countries pay a financial contribution to the programme [based on their GDP](#). They are represented in key policy bodies. Currently 16 countries are associated to Horizon 2020 and the list can be found [here](#).
3. **Non-associated third countries:** These are non-EU member states that are not formally associated to the programme and are not represented in programme management committees. Entities from these countries can become consortium partners, but they do not count towards the minimum number of consortium partners needed to fulfil the eligibility criteria for an application. Non-associated third countries fall into **two groups**:
  - a) **Developing countries:** Research organisations in some 130 developing countries are automatically eligible for funding. The full list of these countries is provided in [Annex A of the Horizon 2020 work programmes](#).
  - b) **Industrialised countries and emerging economies:** Participants from these countries have to determine the sources of funding for themselves and find the resources for their part of the action. Several countries have created

mechanisms to co-fund their participants in Horizon 2020 actions selected for EU funding (more country-by-country information on available local support from non-EU countries for Horizon 2020 can be found [here](#)).

In exceptional circumstances, industrialised and emerging economies can receive EU funding if:

- there is a bilateral agreement between the country and the EU. For instance, researchers in the United States are eligible for EU funding when participating in the health programme on the basis of a reciprocal EU - US/NIH arrangement;
- the country is explicitly identified in the relevant work programme and call for proposals as being eligible for funding;
- their participation is deemed by the European Commission to be essential for carrying out the action.

Individual researchers from any country in the world seeking the opportunity to work in Europe for a certain period of their career can apply for funding through the European Research Council and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions.

## Erasmus+

With a budget of €14.7 billion until 2020, Erasmus+ offers opportunities for mobility and cooperation across the education, training, youth and sport sectors. For both individual participants and participating organisations, the conditions for participation in Erasmus+ depends on the country in which they are based.

The programme differentiates between two main groups of countries:

1. **Programme countries:** These can take part in all actions of the Erasmus+ programme. They include all EU member states and five non-EU countries: Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey.
2. **Partner countries (or third countries):** These can only take part in certain actions of the programme, and are subject to specific criteria or conditions. They cover the rest of the world and are divided roughly into 12 geographically coherent "regions".

Most of these countries do not contribute financially to the programme, but are funded through instruments related to other policies such as development cooperation or policies for the European Neighbourhood. These funding instruments have a much broader remit than education and are only very partially used for Erasmus+.

Please note that in addition special limits, rules and conditions may apply for individual countries.

### The case of Norway:

Norway has been associated to EU research and innovation programmes since 1987. As the country is member of the European Economic Area (EEA), thus adhering to the EU's internal market, the association to Horizon 2020 takes place through an amendment to Protocol 31 of the [EEA agreement](#). This allows Norwegian universities, researchers and companies to participate on the same basis as their counterparts in the EU. In return, Norway contributes to the programme financially, more details can be found [here](#).

Norway also participates in all activities of Erasmus+. However, it is limited to working with programme countries only. It has a National Erasmus+ Agency and contributes financially to the programme.

**The case of Switzerland:**

Following its demotion to partner country status after the Swiss referendum on immigration in February 2014, Switzerland forms part of region five of Erasmus+ partner countries (along with Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and Vatican City). This means that Swiss institutions can only participate in a reduced number of activities and only under the conditions applying to organisations from partner countries:

- Swiss higher education institutions (HEIs) can engage in outgoing and incoming mobility activities (key action 1) with any Erasmus+ programme country. However, no European funding is provided; HEIs have to apply for national funding for these activities. All types of mobility (study or traineeships, teachers or staff) are covered.
- Swiss HEIs can participate in cooperation projects, which include strategic partnerships and knowledge alliances (key action 2), in two ways: 1) by applying for national funding in support of participation; 2) by demonstrating that they bring added value to the project, in which case they can also benefit from Erasmus+ funding. Switzerland is unable to participate in capacity building projects in the field of higher education.

Furthermore Switzerland is only partially associated to Horizon 2020 under the agreement from 15 September 2014. The association covers the following actions:

- the "Excellent Science" pillar containing the European Research Council, Future and Emerging Technologies, Research Infrastructures and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions;
- actions under the specific objective "Spreading excellence and widening participation";
- the Euratom programme and;
- the activities carried out by the European Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion for Energy for 2014-2020.

With regard to all other parts of the programme, Switzerland remains a non-associated third country.

If Switzerland does not provide free movement to nationals of all EU member states by 2017, the agreement associating Switzerland to parts of Horizon 2020 will be terminated with a retroactive effect as of 31 December 2016. This also means that for grant agreements signed in 2017, including those following 2016 calls, Swiss entities will be treated as entities from a non-associated third country.

## Visa rules

Entry into the European Union for students and researchers from non-EU member states is regulated by the [directive](#) on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, pupil exchange, remunerated and unremunerated training, voluntary service and au pairing. This directive gives easy access to the EU for students and researchers from third countries accepted by an EU host organisation in addition to rights concerning mobility, work and residence in the EU. The directive was adopted in May 2016 and EU member states have now two years to translate it into national law. The existing [scientific visa](#), however, does already give easy access to the EU for researchers (though not for students).

## Outlook

Whether and how the UK will participate in EU programmes in research and education after a withdrawal from the EU, is entirely open at the moment. The above-mentioned options are those that currently exist, but this does not preclude that another model might be found, depending on the general terms of withdrawal from the Union.

EUA stresses that UK universities will remain part of the family of European universities which goes beyond EU borders and it will continue to advocate for cooperation in research and education in the interest of all its members. EUA will actively continue to monitor the ongoing discussions and inform its members about relevant developments.