

Is Brexit going to damage UK science?

Interview of Professor Richard Catlow, Vice-President of the Royal Society



Obviously the funding of large facilities such as CERN, and the ESRF (European Synchrotron Radiation Facility), is already multinational. Maybe it will be more difficult to get funding for smaller bilateral and multilateral projects. If we succeed in remaining part of Horizon Europe, then the key issue will be largely solved for both bilateral or multilateral projects. For the industry, my experience is that they want to collaborate where the expertise is but they will all want to be involved in Horizon Europe.

Still optimistic for next years?

First, to be part of the next Horizon Europe, we need to continue to work with UK and European Governments and European Science Institutions to illustrate to both sides the benefits.

We have received strong support from the French Academy of Science, the Dutch KNAW and German Leopoldina; they help us to make it clear that Brexit has to preserve scientific collaboration. We have strong support from all our colleagues in Europe which we greatly appreciate.

To be part of Horizon Europe is our major challenge and objective.

Professor **Richard CATLOW** is Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS), Foreign Secretary and Vice-President of the Royal Society.

<https://royalsociety.org/people/richard-catlow-11198>



[1] www.horizon2020.gouv.fr/cid145004/presentation-du-programme-horizon-europe-09-2019.html

[2] www.horizon2020.gouv.fr

As the Royal Society is the UK's National Academy of Sciences, do you think that Brexit will damage UK research?

Yes, there is a potential danger that Brexit could damage research in the UK and other European countries. We have been working hard with the other European Academies and Research Institutions to prevent this case. If UK stays closely associated with Horizon Europe [1], Brexit should not damage research in the UK and Europe. I am quite optimistic and our main challenge will be to be part of Horizon Europe.

Actually you have many collaborations with European Research Centers, National Academies and industries; this will probably protect UK Science?

Today we have many bilateral or multilateral collaborations with Europe and on both sides we are eager to continue. We are currently participating in Horizon 2020 [2] and we hope to participate in Horizon Europe. I am optimistic for two reasons: UK Government is positively disposed, and our colleagues in European Academies wish UK Science to be part of European scientific collaboration.

But no complacency, nothing is given yet and we are working hard to convince both UK and EU to keep UK participation for the advancement of Sciences.

Are all disciplines involved? What about the collaborations with industry?

Science is international across the full range of disciplines and all disciplines are involved in collaborative projects.

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