BREXIT: Global researchers’ views on opportunities and challenges

Summary Report – November 2017
Research methodology  
- survey conducted in October 2017

Online survey (29th September – 17th October 2017)

Aim: to collect information with regards to the challenges and opportunities faced by the research community in light of the UK’s decision to leave the EU.

Comparison: Highlight change when compared to findings from previous research carried out in May 2017 (n=2,469).

Questionnaire length: 16 minutes on average

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Margin of error at 90% confidence level*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global=2,170</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK=1,242</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU=452</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-EU=476</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Sample: Obtained through a random selection of researchers from the Scopus database of published researchers. This database covers 20,000 different journals, including >3 million researchers around the world. The sample was profiled so country and subject area speciality could be tracked during fieldwork to ensure sufficient responses by area. To ensure results were representative they are weighted to reflect the OECD distribution of researchers. The UK population was oversampled to ensure that the UK results are very robust, the weighting ensures the UK’s contribution to the global scores reflects its size.
Implications for government
When it comes to actions the UK government could take, funding is a priority - 90% of UK researchers want any European research funding no longer accessible to UK institutes replaced by government.

Q16. The following statements describe possible actions which can be undertaken by different organisations in order to overcome some of the potential challenges to the research community posed by the UK’s decision to leave the EU. How strongly do you support or oppose each of these to be done by the UK government?

“% strongly support/tend to support”

To **involve** members of the UK academic/research sector in the negotiation process with the EU

To **replace any European research funding** no longer accessible to UK based institutions

To **enable access** of UK universities and research institutes to the ERC

To **enable access** of UK universities and research institutes to Horizon 2020

To ensure that UK universities have access to European non-EU programmes (e.g. CERN)*

To ensure UK bodies **remain members** of EU science and innovation agencies*

*Item asked only in Oct 2017

**ACCES TO RESEARCH FUNDING**

**SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN:**

- d acd ad
- d acd ad
- c acd
- c acd
- d acd a
- acd

**UK** (1,242)  **EU** (452)  **NON-EU** (476)  **TOTAL** (2,170)
Mobility is also a high priority. 90% of UK researchers support free movement for EU researchers who wish to work in the UK. 89% of UK researchers support simplifying procedures for visa/citizenship applications for EU research staff.

Q16. The following statements describe possible actions which can be undertaken by different organisations in order to overcome some of the potential challenges to the research community posed by the UK’s decision to leave the EU. How strongly do you support or oppose each of these to be done *by the UK government*?

"% strongly support/tend to support"

To **simplify procedures for visa** and British citizenship applications for EU research staff

To **make visa** and citizenship **applications free of charge** for EU research staff *

To **maintain current free movement for EU researchers** who wish to work in the UK *

Significantly higher than:

- a
- b
- c
- d

*Items asked only in Oct 2017*
To support ongoing research collaboration, 66% of all researchers support the UK government maintaining or creating bilateral research collaborations with specific EU countries, and 69% for non-EU countries. However, support for bi-lateral collaboration with specific EU countries has slipped since May amongst UK researchers.

Q16. The following statements describe possible actions which can be undertaken by different organisations in order to overcome some of the potential challenges to the research community posed by the UK’s decision to leave the EU. How strongly do you support or oppose each of these to be done by the UK government?

"% strongly support/tend to support"

To create and maintain bilateral research collaborations with specific EU countries

To create and maintain bilateral research collaborations with specific countries outside the EU

Significantly higher than:

a/b/c/d: letter stat higher at 90%

UK (1,242)  EU (452)  NON-EU (476)  TOTAL (2,170)
Implications for different organisations
**When it comes to what UK institutes can do, UK researchers prioritise partnering with EU universities to ensure cross-border collaboration. They also favoured asking their institute to offer legal assistance to EU staff, and to cover any fees for EU staff members’ relocation to the UK.**

**Q13. And which, if any, of these actions do you think that the institute you mainly work for should undertake regarding the UK’s decision to leave the EU. Please select up to three measures which you consider most important.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner with EU universities or research institutes to ensure cross-border collaboration on research projects irrespective of the outcome of Brexit negotiations</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering legal assistance to EU staff members</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up a designated office, department or unit which can provide information and assistance to EU staff members on issues related to the UK’s decision to leave the EU</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering to cover fees for EU staff members for visa applications and residence requests</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with EU staff members, to address issues related to the UK’s decision to leave the EU</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with EU staff members, to address issues related to the UK’s decision to leave the EU (via email or leaflets)</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other actions, please specify</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Items asked only in Oct 2017*
Much like their British colleagues, EU researchers find that partnering with UK universities is most important. More importance is placed on communication with British staff members compared to May 2017.

Q15. And which of the following actions, if any, do you think the institute you work for should undertake regarding the UK’s decision to leave the EU? Please select up to three measures which you consider most important.

**Partner with UK universities or research institutes to ensure cross-border collaboration on research projects irrespective of the outcome of Brexit negotiations**
- 45%

**Communication with all British staff members, to address issues related to the UK’s decision to leave the EU (by email or leaflets)**
- 40% +10

**Meetings with British staff members, to address issues related to the UK’s decision to leave the EU**
- 25%

**Offering legal assistance to British staff**
- 25%

**Set up a designated office, department or unit which can provide information and assistance to British staff members on issues related to the UK’s decision to leave the EU**
- 18% +5

**Offering to cover fees for British staff members for visa applications and residence requests**
- 11%

Any other actions, please specify
- 5%

Don’t know
- 15%

None of these
- 10% -6

*Item asked only in Oct 2017*

Base: EU; n=452
The vast majority of UK researchers support UK institutes offering free legal assistance to EU staff. Three quarters of UK researchers believe the EU should continue to allow UK academic institutes access to EU scientific funding.

Q16. The following statements describe possible actions which can be undertaken by different organisations in order to overcome some of the potential challenges to the research community posed by the UK’s decision to leave the EU. How strongly do you support or oppose each of these to be done?

“% strongly support/tend to support”

UK universities and research institutes to offer free legal assistance to EU staff members and their families for British visa and citizenship applications

UK universities and research institutes to cover costs related to British visa and citizenship applications for EU staff and their family

UK universities and research institutes to open branches in EU countries so that those institutes can attract EU researchers and have access to EU funding

Researchers take on the responsibility for ensuring cross-border collaboration (UK and EU) on research projects

The EU to enable access of UK unis and research institutes to Horizon 2020/FP9 on the same basis as other EU countries

*Items asked only in Oct 2017

Significantly higher than:

- a
- b
- c
- d

UK (1,242) EU (452) NON-EU (476) TOTAL (2,170)
The majority of researchers support the creation of a global research body.

Q24. As you may know, European Member States contribute financially through the EU framework programme (Horizon 2020/FP9) to fund research projects overseen by the European Research Council. Do you think that a similar global research body should be formed over the next 5-10 years or not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All; n=2,170

IMPLICATIONS FOR UNIVERSITIES AND OTHERS

Significant change since May 2017

a/b/c/d: letter stat higher at 90%
Why are such actions needed?
UK researchers report they are seeing changes in the number of EU researchers applying to and leaving their institutes. 46% think there are fewer EU applications, which explains high levels of support for action in the UK.

Q5a. Now, please think about researchers at your own institution. How, if at all, do you think each of the following is being impacted by the decision of the UK to leave the EU compared to if it had decided to stay in the EU?

### The number of...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The number of...</th>
<th>Is decreasing</th>
<th>Is the same</th>
<th>Is increasing</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPLYING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU researchers applying for positions at my institute</td>
<td>46% (▼-11)</td>
<td>15% (▲+3)</td>
<td>4% (▲+6)</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-EU researchers applying for positions at my institute</td>
<td>17% (▲+8)</td>
<td>38% (▼-15)</td>
<td>2% (▲+7)</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEAVING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU researchers from my institute leaving the UK</td>
<td>10% (▼-14)</td>
<td>19% (▲+7)</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-EU researchers based in the UK leaving the UK</td>
<td>3% (▼-17)</td>
<td>37% (▲+7)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British researchers from my institute leaving the UK</td>
<td>2% (▼-8)</td>
<td>39% (▲+8)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base: UK; n=1,242*
Q5c. Still thinking about the institute you mainly work for, how, if at all, do you think each of the following is being/will be impacted by the decision of the UK to leave the EU compared to if it had decided to stay in the EU?

**The number of...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requests for collaborations from EU universities/research institutes with the university/institute I work for</th>
<th>Is decreasing</th>
<th>Is the same</th>
<th>Is increasing</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU funded grants the university/institute I work for is applying for</th>
<th>Is decreasing</th>
<th>Is the same</th>
<th>Is increasing</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research projects carried out by the university/institute I work for</th>
<th>Is decreasing</th>
<th>Is the same</th>
<th>Is increasing</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requests for collaborations from non-EU universities/research institutes with the university/institute I work for</th>
<th>Is decreasing</th>
<th>Is the same</th>
<th>Is increasing</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Item asked only in Oct 2017

Base: UK; n=1,242

UK based researchers also report effects on the number of collaborative projects their institute is being invited to take part in by EU institutes. 43% say requests for collaborations have decreased.