

Vice-President of the European Commission Inter-institutional Relations and Foresight

30 May 2022

Dear Vice-President

I am writing to you on behalf of Universities UK, the representative body of 140 UK

Horizon Europe and the other EU science programmes, as agreed in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

Researchers across the continent have now been waiting for 17 months for this arrangement to be confirmed, and the impact of this delay is being keenly felt by UK institutions and their EU counterparts. Many of our members have reported that their researchers have been forced to leave research consortia that are working on projects that would have a tangible positive impact on European and global prosperity, like improving climate data and addressing food security in sub-Saharan Africa. The situation is deteriorating every day that the uncertainty drags on.

Failure to secure UK association to Horizon Europe would be a lose-lose for health, wealth and wellbeing and would do a disservice to future generations in Europe and beyond. We appreciate that there are fundamental differences between the EU and

together to ensure that our ability to collaborate in science is not compromised by unrelated political disputes. Our colleagues across the EU university community, including the European University Association, strongly support this view through the Stick to Science campaign.

We believe we are close to the precipice, based on the information we have recently received from the UK Government. Their view is that the value-for-money case for UK association is weakened every day that the UK is left waiting for the arrangement to be confirmed. As evidence they would point to emerging data from the early calls in Horizon Europe which show that the UK has dropped from the second most frequent participant in Horizon 2020 to the seventh in the current programme.

In response to the ongoing uncertainty, the UK Government is now at an advanced stage of planning large-scale, comprehensive domestic alternatives to Horizon

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