

Science and Technology Committee of the House of Commons Implications and opportunities of leaving the EU for science and research.

Response from Icon, the Institute of Conservation

We are delighted to be able to submit written evidence on behalf of the Icon Board of Trustees. Evidence submitted by Siobhan Stevenson ACR, Chair of the Board of Trustees, Matija Strlic, Chair Icon Heritage Science Group, and Alison Richmond ACR FIIC, Chief Executive.

The Institute of Conservation is a registered charity and the UK professional body for the conservation of cultural heritage. Icon raises awareness of the cultural, social and economic value of caring for heritage and champions high standards of conservation. We represent nearly 3,000 individuals and organisations. Icon's membership incorporates not only professional conservators and heritage scientists, but many others who share a commitment to improving understanding of and access to our cultural heritage. Most of our members are UK-based but many also work internationally. Icon accredits conservators (Accredited Conservator-Restorers) who have reached a proficient level of practice, judgment and ethics across the professional standards.

We are submitting evidence to this inquiry to draw the Committee's attention to the key role that European funding has in supporting research that underpins the conservation of cultural heritage through the work of our members.

1. What the effect of the various models available for the UK's future relationship with the EU will be on UK science and research, in terms of:

- Collaboration;
- Free movement of researchers and students;
- Access to funding;
- Access to EU-funded research facilities, both in the UK and abroad
- Intellectual property and commercialisation of research

1.1. The effect of complete withdrawal of the UK from EU research programmes would be devastating particularly for emerging and cross-disciplinary fields of research such as heritage science.

1.1.1. At the recent 2nd International conference on Science and Engineering in Arts, Heritage and Archaeology (<http://www.seaha-cdt.ac.uk/seaha-conference-2016/>), Dr Adam Cooper, Lecturer in Social Science and Public Policy at UCL, presented evidence that ~50% of heritage science funding in the UK comes from the EU. This makes heritage science very different from the average, where data show that probably more than 7% of total public research funding in the UK is from EU sources (<https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/uk-research-and-european-union/role-of-EU-in-funding-UK-research/how-does-eu-funding-compare-with-uk/>).

1.1.2. Most of this funding (90% in total) goes to research universities and SMEs. In relation to the latter, EU Framework funding is the other major source of funding for research-intensive enterprises in addition to Innovate UK, and loss will be felt by research-active conservation SMEs, which have traditionally benefitted from EU Framework funding.

1.2.1 Of the possible future scenarios, associated status

(<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/brexit-could-uk-join-european-union-eu-research-system-as-associated-country>) in EU research programmes has been mentioned most frequently, especially the Norway model (<http://www.eu-norway.org/eu/Cooperation-in-programmes-and-agencies/#.V4IKvbgrJhE>), which enables researchers to have access to funding as well as frequently mentioned mobility programmes such as Erasmus+ (<http://esn.org/Erasmus?gclid=CKWjwpTB6MOCFeYK0wodMsQPRQ>). We believe that this is the only acceptable scenario as an alternative to full membership.

1.2.2 Even though the Norway scenario ensures continued access to EU funding, heritage science and UK science in general still stand to lose their ability to influence how funding is prioritised and distributed (because research strategies are developed by the European Commission and confirmed by the European Parliament), and we believe that this would be a considerable loss.

1.2.3 The Norway scenario would retain access of UK researchers to EU-funded research facilities and vice-versa. In relation to this point, we bring to your attention the European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science – E-RIHS (<http://www.e-rihs.eu/>), which is in the process of establishment, with the UK representing one of the key contributing EU research communities. We strongly support that this infrastructure is supported by the UK Research Councils. Through European infrastructural funds (projects such as Iperion and Charisma), UK museums, galleries, libraries and archives gained unprecedented access to European research facilities and we believe that it is essential for this to continue through E-RIHS.

1.3 During the recent debate in the House of Lords, Baroness Sharp of Guildford raised the question about the potential impact of Brexit on UK heritage science (<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2016-07-07/debates/16070739000383/BrexitHorizon2020AndErasmus#contribution-16070739000053>) with specific reference to free movement of people and Marie Curie programmes (<http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/>).

1.3.1 Migration and exchange of talent has always worked well for countries with a high Global Talent Index (<http://www.slideshare.net/Management-Thinking/global-talent-index-2011-2015>), and the following quote is worth repeating: “international collaboration and researcher mobility were acknowledged as being core to the maintenance and further development of the UK’s world-leading position as a research nation, especially in light of the relatively limited inputs to the UK research base in terms of R&D expenditure and the number of researchers”, according to BIS (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263729/bis-13-1297-international-comparative-performance-of-the-UK-research-base-2013.pdf).

2 What the science and research priorities for the UK Government should be in negotiating a new relationship with the EU.

2.2 We would like to turn your attention to the fact that Norway has negotiated that part of the EU funding settlement is distributed through the so-called Norway grants scheme (<http://eeagrants.org/>), which enables it to invest into research priorities of Norway’s own choosing, of which cultural heritage research is one of its key funding domains (<http://eeagrants.org/content/download/5976/65820/version/2/file/Programme+Areas>

[+2009-2014.pdf](#)). We would urge that UK settlement follows this example and funds cultural heritage research as a priority and as part of the UK soft diplomacy.

- 3 What science and technology-related legislation, regulations and projects will need to be reviewed in the run up to the UK leaving the EU.
 - 3.2 The UK government has recently developed funding mechanisms to enable international collaboration beyond the EU, in so-called ODA countries (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Official_development_assistance).
 - 3.2.1 Of these, the Newton Fund (<https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/science/newton>) is interesting, and it has prioritised research into cultural heritage, which we support. For the Newton Fund to have an impact similar to participation in EU programmes, it would need to significantly boost funding of research consortia, it would need to fund research overheads in full and its budget would need to be significantly increased to mirror the funding received by UK researchers from EU programmes.
 - 3.2.2 If the UK is to inhibit free movement of labour in the EU, to support the heritage science sector we recommend that the Government consider extending access to Tier 2 visas to workers in heritage science and move to the exclusion of students from the net migration statistics. <https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/overview>
- 4 The status of researchers, scientists and students working and studying in the UK when the UK leaves the EU, and what protections should be put in place for them.
 - 4.2 The current status of researchers, scientists and students working and studying in the UK should be retained.
 - 4.2.1 Professor Michael Arthur, UCL Provost, has recently explored the potential impact of limited student mobility (following a possible fee status change) in a recent article in The Times (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/uk-fears-significant-drop-eu-student-recruitment>) and this could have grave impact on student bodies particularly at research-intensive universities.
 - 4.2.2 To enable UK universities to attract the best talent regardless of geography, the UK Research Councils have already relaxed their eligibility requirements (<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/skills/students/help/eligibility/>): mechanisms thus exist to support mobility and it needs to be ensured that they are reinforced in the future and that significantly more than 10% of EU and international students are funded on equal footing with UK students.
- 5 The opportunities that the UK's exit presents for research collaboration and market access with non-EU countries, and how these might compare with existing EU arrangements.
 - 5.2 We provide a response to this in part under point 1 (establishment of a scheme similar to the Norway grant scheme), and under point 6 (development of fields of research that could link EU funding programmes and UK funding programmes, such as heritage science).
- 6 What other measures the Government should undertake to keep UK science and research on a sound footing, with sufficient funding, after an EU exit.
 - 6.2 A response to this point was partly provided under point 1 (adoption of the Norway

model), point 3 (changes to the Newton Fund), point 4 (changes to EU student eligibility requirements), however, we also bring to your attention that through the British Council, £30m is currently being invested in the Cultural Protection Fund (<https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/about/cultural-protection-fund-2016-2020>) to support heritage at risk.

6.3 With more UK investment into research in countries beyond EU, UK heritage science could become the link between EU research programmes and the broader, globally oriented research. We believe that this is a significant opportunity and we would wholeheartedly support it.

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