
Tuesday 12 July 2016

Society for Endocrinology response to EU referendum result

For immediate release

Following the referendum result on the UK's membership of the European Union (EU) the Society for Endocrinology urges the UK government to ensure that free movement of students, researchers and clinicians between the UK and other EU countries and full access to, and participation in, the EU research infrastructure is preserved. We strongly believe that the free movement of labour is essential to the delivery of care within the National Health Service (NHS) and to ensure that the UK continues to be a world leader in international scientific research.

The UK benefits from 30,000 scientists employed by British universities and 25,000 healthcare professionals within the NHS that come from EU countries, bringing their knowledge and expertise to the UK. What is more, over 3,500 UK researchers have been supported by the EU to gain invaluable experience in leading European institutions, increasing their global competitiveness and enhancing their work. These collaborations, facilitated by free movement within the EU, enable the UK to be part of the strongest knowledge-producing region in the world and exert global influence within the science and healthcare sectors.

As a consequence of our strong European collaborations, over half of the UK's research output is international and 60% of the UK's internationally co-authored publications are with partners inside the EU. These outputs not only raise the profile of UK science and healthcare practice, but advance the knowledge and practice of endocrinology and other disciplines globally. It has already been demonstrated that the impact of research done through international collaboration is 1.4 times higher than research done on a national levelⁱ. Not having free movement across Europe will have devastating consequences for science and healthcare in the UK, Europe and globally.

The UK is a global research superpower. Public investment in science delivers strong returns to the economy of at least 20% per annumⁱⁱ and drives enormous productivity benefitsⁱⁱⁱ. It also stimulates the private sector: for every pound spent by the government on R&D, private sector productivity increases by 20p every year^{iv} and between £1.13 and £1.60 of private investment is generated^v. However, the UK's public R&D spend as a percentage of GDP currently stands at 0.44% - one of the lowest figures among advanced nations and

the lowest of the G8 – and EU funds contribute greatly to the success of UK science and healthcare helping to address the shortfall in national funding. UK universities currently receive about 10% of their funding (around £1bn per year) from large EU programmes. In addition, participation in initiatives such as Horizon 2020 fosters international research cooperation that benefits the UK.

The Society for Endocrinology therefore joins colleagues from across science and medicine in urging the UK government to ensure the free movement of students, researchers and clinicians across Europe is preserved and that the UK continues to fully participate in EU research funding and infrastructure initiatives.

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1. For press enquiries, please contact the Society for Endocrinology press office:

Jo Stubbs

Communications Manager

Tel: +44 (0)1454 642 252

Email: joanne.stubbs@endocrinology.org

Omar Jamshed

Communications Executive

Tel: +44 (0)1454 642 206

Email: omar.jamshed@endocrinology.org

2. The Society for Endocrinology is a UK-based membership organisation representing a global community of scientists, clinicians and nurses who work with hormones. Together we aim to improve public health by advancing endocrine education and research, and engaging wider audiences with the science of hormones www.endocrinology.org

ⁱ Universities UK *The European Union's contribution to UK higher education*

<http://www.universitiesforeurope.com/register/Documents/The-European-Unions-contribution-to-UK-higher-education.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Economic Insight (2015) *What is the relationship between public and private investment in science, research and innovation?*

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/438763/bis-15-340-relationship-between-public-and-private-investment-in-R-D.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ BIS (2014) *Our Plan for Growth: Science and Innovation.*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/>

^{iv} Haskel, J *et al* (2014) *The Economic Significance of the UK Science Base.*

<http://www.rsc.org/globalassets/04-campaigning-outreach/realising-potential-of-scientists/research-policy/research-innovation/economic-significance-uk-science-base-2014.pdf>

^v Economic Insight (2015) *What is the relationship between public and private investment in science, research and innovation?*

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