

## The Contribution of the EU to UK Higher Education: Policy Briefing

- **The UK does disproportionately well in securing EU research funding, which stimulates growth and constitutes an increasingly important source of income for UK universities.**
- Under the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7), the UK has received almost €7 billion, or 15.5%, of the funding allocated. In 2013, the UK had a higher value of grants agreed than any other participating country.
- Within the UK, the higher education sector does exceptionally well, securing over 70% of the funding allocated to the UK under FP7.
- FP funding has had an enormous impact on stimulating employment and growth: the long-term impact of FP7 across the EU is estimated at 900,000 additional jobs and a growth in GDP of nearly 1%.
- **The nature of EU research funding means that it complements and adds value to national structures, enabling projects the UK could not undertake alone.**
- International collaboration encourages excellence by bringing together the most outstanding researchers in the field; providing opportunities to share best practice across partner institutions; and granting access to international facilities and large international datasets.
- **EU research and development activity enhances the UK higher education sector's quality; competitiveness and international reputation.**
- International collaboration has been found to be highly correlated with research quality: internationally co-authored work is more likely to achieve a high citation impact than work done at national or institutional level. Over 80% of the UK's internationally co-authored papers are written with partners from other EU countries.
- Research output is also highly correlated with researcher mobility. Researchers who have spent an extended time abroad tend to be significantly more productive in terms of articles published than those who have remained in the UK.

- The UK is a partner of choice internationally in part due to its membership of the EU which affords the UK greater visibility.
- **UK universities benefit from a range of EU activities beyond the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development.**
- The Erasmus programme represents the single biggest source of funding for UK students and staff hoping to pursue a study or work placement abroad. In academic year 2012/13, it funded study or work placements for 14,600 UK students and 2123 UK higher education staff. UK student participation has been rising steadily since 2006/07 and reached record levels in 2012/13.
- UK universities can access EU Structural and Cohesion Funds which aim to support overall social and economic development by reducing disparities between the regions and Member States. To date, HEIs in England alone have been awarded £331 million over the life of the current programme.
- **Inside the EU, the UK has access to research and higher education funding; direct influence over the regulatory environment; and global significance.**
- Membership of the EU affords the UK access to collaborative and transnational research projects. The nature of these projects means that they could not be pursued nor could the same impact be achieved were the UK contribution to the EU research or higher education budgets invested at national level.
- As an EU Member State the UK enjoys the broadest rights and access to EU funding for both higher education and research. Given the uncertain outcome of negotiations by the UK and the interim instability, an exit from the European Union has the potential to adversely affect the UK higher education sector and wider research community.
- As an EU Member State, the UK has the ability to influence future higher education and research policy at EU level, as well as the broader regulatory environment. Outside the EU, it would lose this influence and the ability to shape regulation which, in all likelihood, it would remain bound by.
- As an EU Member State, the UK benefits from the increased global influence and negotiating power that membership of a wider bloc of countries entails. At a time of increasing global competition in research and higher education, isolation from this would risk damaging the competitiveness of the UK higher education sector and the country.