

2 June 2016**UK and German university leaders before Brexit-Referendum:
Devastating consequences for Study and Research**

University leaders in the UK and Germany have underlined how the EU helps academics to carry out cutting-edge research and enables students to study in other parts of the EU.

Speaking ahead of a meeting of UK and German university leaders in Berlin this week (1 – 2 June), Professor Dr. Horst Hippler, the head of the German university membership body, the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), said that it would be 'devastating for science and research cooperation in Germany and across the continent', were the UK to leave the EU.

A delegation of six university vice-chancellors from the UK – including the Universities UK President Dame Julia Goodfellow – are holding meetings in Berlin with German university leaders through the German Rectors' Conference (HRK).

The leaders will be discussing current issues facing both university sectors and common priorities for EU policy affecting higher education and research. The upcoming EU referendum in the UK – and its possible impact on higher education and research – will also be discussed.

Dame Julia Goodfellow, President of Universities UK and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kent, said: "In the UK and Germany, there are academics, leading in their fields, working on cutting edge research and new advances. The EU makes it easier for these researchers to work together so they can pool their resources and data and achieve more together than they could alone. These days, most of the very best research in the world is done by the leading minds collaborating in teams working across borders. EU schemes such as Erasmus also enable thousands of our students and academics to spend time studying in other EU countries, improving their skills and promoting understanding between people and cultures. University leaders in both the UK and Germany feel that this kind of collaboration is important and worth maintaining."

Professor Horst Hippler, President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), said: "The United Kingdom and Germany are among the leading nations in higher education and university research in Europe. Both of our nations benefit tremendously from the exchange of students and researchers as well as from the exceptionally close collaboration in research. The European Union provides the framework that allows British-German university collaboration to thrive. New barriers would throw us back for years and years."

Additional information

After the US, the UK and Germany are each other's most important collaborator. They are the two most successful Member States in terms of the European Union's Research and Innovation funding programme FP7. FP7 funding won: Germany: €7.1bn / UK: €6.8bn, including ERC.

In the EU's FP7 Research and Innovation funding programme, there were 4,208 collaborative projects including UK and Germany, worth €18.2bn. In the current EU Research and Innovation programme Horizon2020 (2014 to 2020), there are 971 collaborative projects including UK and Germany, worth €5.3bn

A number of students from the UK also study in Germany, and vice versa.

German students in the UK: 13,765 (full degree) / 4,428 (Erasmus).

UK students in Germany: 1,411 (full degree) / 2,112 (Erasmus).

The delegation of UK university leaders includes:

Professor Dame Julia Goodfellow, President, Universities UK & Vice-Chancellor, University of Kent;

Professor Colin Riordan, President and Vice-Chancellor, Cardiff University & Chair of the UK Higher Education International Unit;

Professor Sir Steve Smith, Vice-Chancellor, University of Exeter & Chair of the International Policy Network, Universities UK;

Professor Paul Boyle, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Leicester;

Professor Dame Glynis M. Breakwell, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Bath & Chair of the Funding Policy Network, Universities UK; and

Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive, Universities UK

The German Rectors' Conference HRK and its UK equivalent Universities UK have been working closely for a number of years, in particular on EU affairs. Collaboration stepped up when members of the HRK Board visited a UUK Members' meeting in London in February 2015 and discussed common priorities and challenges for the UK and German sectors as well as increasing cooperation between the two organisations.