



# Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann Royal Irish Academy

15 June, 2016

Dear Editor,

We support the United Kingdom's (UK's) continued membership of the European Union (EU). We believe that within the global academic community, greater impact will continue to be achieved by the Northern Ireland and other UK universities, institutes, researchers, academics, and students through full and active participation in the policy formulation, networking and collaborative higher education and research frameworks established within the EU.

EU students and staff at our universities help to foster an international, outward looking culture on the campuses which in turn provides local students with a university experience that prepares them for an ever more globalised world. Over 200,000 UK students have studied and worked abroad through the Erasmus exchange programme in the past 10 years, boosting their future job prospects. Northern Ireland has received more than double the overall funding per capita under Erasmus than the UK as a whole. Students who did an Erasmus placement have been shown to be 50% less likely to experience long-term unemployment. Over 125,000 EU students are currently studying at UK universities. Investment in research and in enhancing opportunities for students is vitally important for the long-term prosperity of Northern Ireland and the UK as a whole.

Working together, UK and European researchers pool their resources, expertise, data and infrastructure to achieve more together than they could do alone. Most of today's major challenges are global and not solely national. In the EU, researchers can collaborate more easily to develop solutions on an international scale, making the most of Europe's diversity to achieve greater results. Research involving international collaborators has been shown to have nearly 50% more measurable impact than research done at a national level. The EU produces over a third of the world's scientific output - 34% more than the US and that gap has grown by 4% over the last 6 years according to the latest UNESCO data.

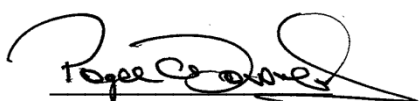
The EU has allocated 8% of its budget into a multinational research programme, 'Horizon 2020' (€80bn from 2014-2020). Northern Ireland researchers work within Horizon 2020 with partners from across Europe, as part of world-leading multinational teams. Freedom of movement and a common legislative framework help make cross-border collaboration much easier. These European-led projects also attract leading research teams from anywhere around the world as secondary partners, increasing UK global networking. From 2007-2013, the EU science programme involved 170 countries worldwide. EU funds now make up 17%

of the total science research grants in UK Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). Most importantly, a 73% of the increase in HEI science funding from 2007-14 can be assigned to EU sources.

We believe that it is in the interests of higher education and research in Northern Ireland, and in enhancing the current and future opportunities for our students and graduates, for the UK to remain an enthusiastic and influential member of the EU.

Although we are all Members of the Royal Irish Academy - which is Ireland's leading body of experts in the sciences, engineering, the humanities and social sciences - this letter, from its Northern Ireland members, is being written in our individual capacity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger Downer', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Professor Roger Downer  
Senior Vice President, RIA

Signed:

Sir Kenneth Bloomfield

Professor Vani Borooah

Professor Peter Bowler

Professor John D Brewer

Professor Bruce M.S Campbell

Professor S.J. Connolly

Professor John Gerard Doyle

Professor Roger Downer

Professor Robert Elwood

Professor Marie T. Flanagan

Professor Jonathan Gorman

Professor Peter Gray

Professor Ed Larrissy

Professor CLS Lewis

Professor David N. Livingstone

Professor Hugh Magennis

Dr Martin Mathieu

Professor John V McCanny  
Professor Gerry McKenna  
Professor Elizabeth Meehan  
Professor T.J Millar  
Professor Ian Montgomery  
Professor John Morison  
Professor Mary O'Dowd  
Professor Rosalind Pritchard  
Professor Paula J. Reimer  
Professor Bert Rima  
Professor Stephen Smartt  
Professor Sean Strain  
Professor Richard Boyden Warner