

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Materion Allanol a Deddfwriaeth Ychwanegol |
External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee
Y goblygiadau i Gymru wrth i Brydain adael yr Undeb Ewropeaidd |
Implications for Wales of Britain exiting the European Union
IOB 28
Ymateb gan Prifysgol Caerdydd
Evidence from Cardiff University

Introduction

1. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the committee's consultation on the implications for Wales exiting the EU. As a higher education institution in Wales, Cardiff University plays a unique role in the intellectual, cultural and economic life of Wales, the UK and the world. We welcome any opportunities for Cardiff University to contribute to this mission.
2. Cardiff University is committed to working with partners to navigate the best course for Wales and the rest of country as Britain exits the European Union (EU). Though the UK's exit from the EU will bring challenges, we are committed to seeking opportunities in the new world context. We want to continue to form productive collaborations across Europe and across the world.
3. Our research tackles challenges of global significance while our students receive a student experience that is ranked among the best in the country. A recent analysis produced for the University by London Economics shows that we play an important role in our communities in Wales and the wider UK, contributing £2.92bn annually to the economy and generating over £6 for every £1 that we spend. The same independent report suggested that while we directly provide over 5,500 full-time equivalent jobs, the University's activities support a further 5,750 jobs across the UK. We wish to harness these strengths to support the emerging Brexit policy in the most effective way possible.
4. We welcome the recent Government confirmation that EU students who register for academic year 2017/18 will be able to access UK student support for the duration of their study. We would encourage both the Welsh and UK Governments to make a similar commitment in relation to students applying for study in 2018/19. We also welcome the Chancellor of the Exchequer's recent reassurance on Structural Funds and Horizon 2020 projects and the work the Wales European Funding Office (WEFO) is doing to secure funding. Any further assurances the UK and Welsh Governments can give would help further strengthen confidence in continued investment.
5. There are also devolved implications for Cardiff University and Brexit. The University will continue to be responsive to Welsh Government priorities. We would urge the UK Government to consider carefully how changes arising from Brexit may best be managed so

that the University – along with other higher education providers in Wales – can play a fully supportive role.

What should be the top priority for Wales in advance of the UK Government triggering of Article 50 (which starts the formal process of exiting the EU)?

6. As we noted in the introduction, Cardiff University is committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure Brexit works for Wales and the UK. We want to continue to form productive collaborations across Europe and the wider world.
7. We would advocate that any future agreement between the UK and EU should:
 - Allow Universities to access European research funding streams and networks (including Horizon 2020), or failing that, create an international research fund to allow global research collaboration;
 - Provide assurances that all existing EU staff will be able to remain in the UK following the UK's exit from the EU, as well as allow Universities to recruit the best staff to work here;
 - Give assurance that any changes to EU students' immigration status, tuition fee requirements and access to student loans will only apply to incoming EU students beginning courses after the UK's exit from the EU. We would also expect, post Brexit, universities to be able to recruit the best and brightest students from across the EU and the world to come and study here.

Access to European research funding

8. Overall research and development spend needs to be maintained at least at current levels to preserve the capacity of UK science and research and to maintain the UK's position as a world leader in the field. As a priority, the UK Government should secure full access to Framework Programme funding. Alternatively, provision would need to be made through uplift to the national science and research budget equivalent to the amount secured from Horizon 2020, recognising the UK as a net beneficiary from EU research programmes.
9. If sufficient access to funding cannot be negotiated, or alternative long-term funding cannot be found, then a major and irreplaceable funding stream will be lost and those that benefit from that research will be disadvantaged. The total value of future research income to Cardiff University from live FP7 and Horizon 2020 projects awarded up to 31st July 2016 amounts to £23.5m, with further applications to H2020 in the pipeline to the value of £15.7m. European Structural Fund projects are worth an additional £23.6M with a further £35.2M of projects in development. One significant recipient of this funding is the Cardiff University Brain Research Imaging Centre (CUBRIC) which is set to become one of Europe's top facilities for brain imaging. The centre plays a pivotal role in the global endeavour to better understand the causes of neurological and psychiatric conditions such as dementia, schizophrenia and multiple sclerosis, so as to develop better treatments.

10. In 2014/15, 16% of our Home undergraduate students were internationally mobile. Many of these participated in the Erasmus+ programme, supporting the enhancement of students' personal development, inter-cultural understanding, linguistic abilities as well as the development of many of the transferable skills employers seek from graduates. We believe that Brexit offers an opportunity to create a new international outward mobility programme that could look to replicate the most successful elements of the Erasmus+ programme. This would allow universities to continue valuable collaboration with European partners and support compulsory periods abroad for modern language students, in addition to supporting the wider internationalisation of education in Wales and the UK. It may be worth considering the creation of a specific mobility programme for Wales as part of the Brexit negotiations with the UK government.

11. Cardiff University believes the UK Government should work to secure agreements with the EU to:

- Access future EU funding and collaborative activities under Horizon 2020, in particular ERC grants, the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions;
- Ensure continued access to research infrastructures;
- Explore opportunities for a new International Outward Mobility Programme Framework, building on the best elements of Erasmus+.

Status of EU students and staff

12. Cardiff University is an international community that values students and staff that come to work and study with us from around the world. 17% of our academic staff and 5% of our students are EU nationals (10% of our research students are EU nationals). This diversity fosters creativity and innovation and is an important part of our culture.

13. We would like to work with both the UK and Welsh Governments to secure greater certainty for our staff and students from the EU. The main areas of uncertainty remain clarity on access to financial support and fees for EU students and clarity around immigration rules for both students and staff.

14. Whilst we welcome the confirmation that EU students currently studying here (including the 2016/17 and 2017/18 cohorts) will receive student support for the duration of their studies, it may be that this is outweighed by the perception of the UK as unwelcoming. This could impact on students who were planning to come this year, and on future recruitment. We would advocate that EU students are also provided a similar guarantee regarding tuition fee status and access to student financial support for EU students starting courses in 2018/19. We believe this will go some way to assuring EU students that they are welcomed and valued in Wales and the UK.

15. There is also a risk that EU staff (and UK staff with EU spouses) will seek employment outside of the UK, if they no longer feel welcome or are uncertain over their right to remain. Cardiff University seeks the earliest possible commitment from the UK Government that EU nationals already living in the UK have the right to remain. It is vital for Welsh and UK Governments to spell out how valuable EU researchers and students are to the country and provide reassurance that Cardiff, Wales and the United Kingdom will continue to provide a welcoming environment for them.

City Region Deals for Wales

16. Cardiff University has been involved in the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, a £1.2bn agreement by UK Government, Welsh Government and the ten local authorities of south-east Wales that seeks to improve productivity, drive innovation and support job growth throughout the region.

17. The UK Government has already announced that it will provide £50m to help develop the compound semiconductor technology of the future as part of the UK Government's City Deal investment. The University and Cardiff-based compound semi-conductor specialist IQE will spearhead the UK national 'catapult'.

18. However, the University's involvement is expected to go much further. The City Deal is looking to invest in other areas in which the University is able to offer expertise, such as:

- Software development and cyber security
- Public service innovation
- Energy and resources
- Development of Cardiff Capital Region

19. The University also believes that areas beyond Cardiff, such as the Swansea Bay City Region should benefit from a similar deal. The Internet Coast proposal, as already submitted to the Treasury by the Swansea Bay City Region Board aims to turn the whole of the region into a digital super hub to transform the regional economy, the future of Energy and transforming the way health and social care will be delivered in future. We believe there is endless potential available for the area, and wider Wales, to be leaders in new technologies such as wireless 5G connectivity and the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon.

20. We would welcome assurances from both the UK and Welsh Governments on the status of the Cardiff City Deal post Brexit as well as the Swansea Bay City Region Deal, at the earliest opportunity.

Can you provide examples of where the UK's proposed approach to transferring the *acquis communautaire* (the body of European law), through the proposed Great Repeal Bill, into domestic law might have particular implications for Wales?

21. Cardiff University is committed to ensuring that the Brexit process delivers the best outcomes for Wales and the UK. It is expected that the Great Repeal Bill will be tabled in the next session of Parliament following the Queen's Speech in 2017. The Bill, when it becomes an Act, will annul the 1972 European Communities Act, which gives EU law instant effect in the UK. This will give the UK Parliament the power to absorb parts of EU legislation into UK law and to get rid of elements it does not want to keep.

22. Whilst we know that the Great Repeal Bill is likely to be tabled next year, and in all likelihood (as it stands) run alongside the Article 50 negotiation process, Cardiff University believes significant uncertainty still remains on what the shape of all this would be. As such, this makes it difficult to comment in detail at this stage on the implications that this Bill may have for Wales.

23. Despite this, we believe there will devolved implications for Cardiff University and Brexit. The University will continue to be responsive to Welsh Government priorities. We would urge both the Welsh and UK Governments to consider carefully how changes arising from Brexit (be it from the Great Repeal Bill or the Article 50 negotiations) may best be managed so that the University – along with other higher education providers in Wales – can play a fully supportive role.