Universities UK – 30 June, 2016

Universities UK (UUK) has provided an update on its activities to its members. Key information is outlined below.

Brexit working group

UUK has established an internal Brexit working group, which will draw on relevant expertise throughout the International Unit and the UUK Policy Group. The group will be working closely with colleagues in Universities Scotland and Universities Wales, and will also be leading on coordination with other groups across the sector, in particular the wider science and research community, to ensure that responses to Brexit are coordinated.

Meantime, UUK continue to be in very regular contact with BIS, Number 10 officials and other relevant government departments and are making contact with the new Cabinet Office EU (Brexit) Unit that was announced. The body is also in touch with contacts at the European Commission and have a meeting with Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research and Innovation, as part of a schedule of meetings of a delegation going to Brussels.

Current and prospective EU students and staff

UUK is supporting a broad-based coalition of prominent organisations and individuals in calling for the Government and Conservative Leadership candidates to make a clear and unequivocal statement that EU migrants currently living in the UK are welcome here and that any post-referendum changes would apply only to new migrants.

Student Finance arrangements for EU students

The following statement has been published by the Welsh Government to clarify and reassure EU students at Welsh universities, and UUK is expecting a statement for Scotland shortly. UUK is continuing to press BIS on eligibility for EU students for loans for 2017/18 onwards.

Jo Johnson MP, Universities Minister statement on higher education and research:

The following statement on higher education and research following the EU referendum was issued on Tuesday. This includes updates on student finance for EU students in England, Erasmus+, status of EU staff/students and Horizon 2010 research funding. Although it does not provide many of the reassurances we are seeking, it does provide a summary of the latest state of play.

European Commission statement on Erasmus+

The DG Education and Culture published the following statement regarding the impact of Brexit on the programmes it is responsible for: Following the referendum result in the United Kingdom, DG Education and Culture, which is responsible for EU programmes such as Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions, has received many questions from partners and participants. According to the Treaties which the United Kingdom has ratified, EU law continues to apply to the full to and in the United Kingdom until it is no longer a Member. This therefore also applies to the projects financed through the Erasmus+ programme.

More information can be found in the following FAQs document: UK Referendum on Membership of the European Union: Questions & Answers.

Policy positions for future negotiations

UUK is exploring a range of models (and their pros and cons) for future relationships with the EU and will be developing positions on priorities for future negotiations in consultation with members. This will include making clear sector priorities for exit negotiations and necessary domestic policy change including the development of a set of detailed ‘asks’ with associated evidence and benefits.