

Press release: UK joins world-leading research programme to help develop medicines of the future

- UK signs agreement to work with other countries to create new medical treatments using a powerful laser
- super-strength laser acts like a microscope to help understand deadly viruses
- the UK joins existing member countries including, France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland

The UK will be at the forefront of the fight against life-threatening diseases after confirming that it has signed the European X-Ray Free-Electron Laser (XFEL) convention in Berlin, Germany today (19 March). The XFEL programme uses a super-strength laser to help understand life-threatening viruses.

The UK's membership of XFEL reinforces the government's modern [Industrial Strategy](#), and through the [Ageing Society Grand Challenge](#), the government is committed to harnessing the power of innovation to create the treatments of the future and maintain our position of being a world-leader in science, research and innovation.

The XFEL, one of the most powerful X-ray machines ever built, acts like a huge microscope, using intensely bright and short duration X-ray flashes which will enable scientists to map the atomic details of viruses. The laser also allows scientists to look in greater detail to the composition of cells, take 3D images of atoms and molecules and study processes such as those occurring deep inside planets.

Science Minister Sam Gyimah said:

The incredible XFEL will help us better understand life threatening diseases by using one of the world's most powerful X-ray machines. Working with our international partners, the super-strength laser will help develop new medical treatments and therapies, potentially saving thousands of lives across the world.

Through our modern Industrial Strategy we are investing an extra £4.7 billion into research and development. I am determined that we continue to secure our position as being a world-leader in science, research and innovation and I can't wait to see the results that come from our participation in this extraordinary project.



STFC designed and built LPD detector. Credit: European XFEL

British engineers from the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) have already built the advanced camera for XFEL, called the Large Pixel Detector (LPD). The camera operates at a frame rate of 4.5MHz – 4.5 million pictures per second.

The UK has been involved with XFEL since 2008, contributing £30 million towards the construction of the facility, and every following year we will contribute £2.5 million towards operations costs.

STFC have also contributed a number of UK researchers who are currently working at the facility. The UK has also developed a training facility at the Diamond Light Source on the Harwell campus in Oxfordshire for British scientists. The UK XFEL life sciences hub will enable users to fully prepare for their experiments with XFELs.

[Pressemitteilung: Künftige Ausgaben für landwirtschaftliche Betriebe](#)

sollten auf ehrgeizigen und relevanten Leistungszielen basieren, so die EU-Prüfer

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Prepackaged chocolate pies may contain allergen (almonds)

A spokesman for the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (March 19) said that a batch of prepackaged chocolate pies manufactured in Korea might contain an allergen, tree nuts (almonds), but it was not declared on the product's food label. Consumers who are allergic to almonds are advised not to eat the affected batch of the product. The trade should also stop using or selling the product concerned immediately.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Choco Pie Banana
Brand: Lotte
Place of origin: Korea
Manufacturer: Lotte Confectionery Co. Ltd.
Importer: Four Seas Mercantile Limited
Net weight: 336 grams/11.85 ounces per box
UPC: 8 45502 06140 7
Best-before-date: June 14, 2018 and October 23, 2018

"The CFS, through its Food Incident Surveillance System, noted a notice issued by the Canadian authorities that several kinds of Lotte products are under recall because they may contain an allergen, almond, which is not declared on the food label," the spokesman said.

Upon learning of the incident, the CFS immediately followed up with major local importers and retailers. Preliminary investigation revealed that the above importer has imported a total of 120 cartons of the abovementioned product, which were all distributed to a chain supermarket for sale. The affected product has been removed from shelves and is no longer on sale, and the importer has also initiated a recall according to CFS' instructions. Members of the public may call its hotline at 3473 0323 during office hours for enquiries about the recall.

"Tree nuts (almonds) are a known food allergen. Those who are allergic to it may develop symptoms like vomiting, diarrhoea, asthma and rash upon

consumption. In severe cases anaphylactic shock may even develop,” the spokesman said.

The spokesman advised consumers who are allergic to almonds not to consume the product concerned. Those who feel unwell after consuming it should seek medical treatment.

The Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap 132W) require that all prepackaged food for sale in Hong Kong should list out the food’s ingredients in its label. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$50,000 and six months’ imprisonment.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. Investigation is on-going.

[Last week showed an archaic Westminster at its very worst](#)

Last week was just one of those weeks that put Westminster into perspective for me; at times it really showed this archaic monstrosity at it’s worst. But there was two things that really stuck out for me.

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Author:

[New report underlines the key role of education in the inclusion of immigrant students](#)

The [report](#)’s main findings highlight that immigrant students are struggling to integrate in schools in many Member States, often due to lower socio-economic status and language barriers. For example, in the EU overall, 72.3% of native students achieve baseline academic proficiency, while this is only the case for 54.3% of immigrant students. Moreover, the report provides new evidence that students with an immigrant background often lack a sense of belonging to their school community and are more likely to be affected by

schoolwork-related anxiety. While two thirds (66.5%) of native students experience a sense of belonging at school, this is only the case for less than 60% (58.6) of first generation immigrant students. At the same time, however, they tend to show higher aspirations to succeed than native students. While 57.55% of native students have high aspirations to achieve, this is true for almost two thirds (65.8%) of immigrant students.

The report also underlines the significant role education systems, schools and teachers can play in helping immigrant students integrate into their communities. In addition, it confirms that education is crucial in enabling immigrants to acquire skills and contribute to the economy, that it has a big role to play in fostering their social and emotional well-being and is key in sustaining their motivation to participate in the social and civic life of their new communities.

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: *"This report shows that we are on the right track when promoting active citizenship, common values and high quality, inclusive education. The European Commission strives to provide everyone in Europe with real opportunities. This is why our first package of measures to build a European Education Area presented in January included a proposal on promoting inclusive education and common values. And I will shortly present a second package of initiatives including proposals to promote quality in early childhood education and care and in language learning. All these initiatives can help pupils and students overcome disadvantages linked to an immigrant background."*

Migration flows are profoundly changing the composition of classrooms. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results reveal that in 2015, almost one in four 15-year-old students in OECD countries reported that they were either foreign-born or had at least one foreign-born parent. These numbers exclude the tens of thousands of refugees who have recently arrived in many of the countries that participated in PISA.

Inclusive education based on common values is at the core of the Commission's work towards building a [European Education Area by 2025](#). It was also one of the main topics discussed at the first [European Education Summit](#), which Commissioner Navracsics hosted in Brussels in January and brought together around 450 stakeholders. In spring 2018, the Commission will present further initiatives, including proposals on the mutual recognition of diplomas, language learning, and a quality framework for early childhood education and care.

Background

European leaders have in recent months expressed their strong support for ensuring a smooth and full integration of immigrants as well as establishing common values and inclusive societies. The [Country Reports](#) published by the European Commission on 7 March 2018 in the context of the European Semester highlight the challenges for pupils with an immigrant background in many Member States.

In January, as part of its first package of measures to build the European Education Area by 2025, the Commission proposed a [Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching](#). This builds on the [Paris Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education](#) adopted at the informal meeting of Education Ministers on 17 March 2015. To guide its proposal, the Commission held a [public consultation](#) in 2017.

For more information

[OECD Report: The resilience of students with an immigrant background: Factors that shape well-being](#)

[Factsheet on the European Education Area](#)

[EU Communication on Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture](#)

[Multilingual classrooms: Erasmus+ is here to help all teachers!](#)

[“Multilingual education in the light of diversity – lessons learned”](#)