

Government requests consultations with EU on participation in EU science programmes

News story

The UK Government wrote to the European Commission on 16 August 2022 to request consultations on finalising the UK's participation in EU Programmes.



The UK Government has initiated formal consultations with the EU, with the aim of finalising UK participation in EU science and research Programmes. This follows persistent delays by the EU in implementing the agreement reached under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

The UK Government wrote to the European Commission on 16 August 2022 to request consultations on finalising the UK's participation in EU Programmes (Horizon Europe, Copernicus, Euratom Research and Training, Fusion for Energy) and access to programme services (Space Surveillance and Tracking) as soon as possible.

The UK's participation was agreed with the EU under the TCA in 2020, which was clear that it would take place at the earliest opportunity when the relevant EU legislation was finalised. This timeline was vital so that UK researchers and businesses would be able to fully participate from the beginning of the respective EU Programmes. But it has now been over 18 months since the TCA was agreed and the EU has refused to proceed with the UK's association.

The UK Government has engaged extensively with the EU in an effort to resolve this issue. It is clear that the EU is not fulfilling the agreement reached. Association to these Programmes remains the UK's preference, but the EU's delays are creating intolerable uncertainty for researchers and businesses in both the UK and EU Member States. That is why the Government is taking action to start consultations with the aim of finalising UK participation. This is a mechanism agreed in the TCA to resolve issues between the UK and EU.

Supporting the UK's research and development sector through this period and ensuring continued collaboration remains the Government's priority. That is why, in parallel to starting consultations, the UK continues to develop bold and ambitious plans for domestic alternative arrangements should the EU continue its refusal to meet its commitments. The UK Government released a publication on 20 July 2022 setting out further detail on these plans. If the delays continue, the UK Government will be forced to decide whether to put in place these arrangements.

Now more than ever the UK and the EU should be working together to tackle our shared challenges from net zero to global health and energy security. The UK Government is ready to work together with the European Commission to resolve this issue and looks forward to constructive engagement during consultations.

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