

UK launches formal consultations with EU over access to scientific programmes

The Government has launched formal consultations with the EU, in an effort to end persistent delays to the UK's access to EU scientific research programmes, including Horizon Europe. Formal consultations is a mechanism set out in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) to resolve disputes between the UK and EU.

The UK negotiated access to a range of EU science and innovation programmes as part of the TCA in 2020. However, more than 18 months later, the EU has still refused to finalise UK access, causing serious damage to research and development in both the UK and EU Member States.

The delays have prevented the UK from accessing Horizon Europe, the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation, as well as Copernicus, the earth observation programme, which provides data on climate change. Other affected schemes include Euratom – the nuclear research programme – and access to programme services including Space Surveillance and Tracking.

Now the Government has written to the European Commission to launch dispute resolution proceedings and to encourage the EU to abide by their obligations in the deal.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

The EU is in clear breach of our agreement, repeatedly seeking to politicise vital scientific cooperation by refusing to finalise access to these important programmes. We cannot allow this to continue. That is why the UK has now launched formal consultations and will do everything necessary to protect the scientific community.

Minister for Europe Graham Stuart said:

It is disappointing that the EU has not facilitated UK participation in the agreed scientific programmes, despite extensive UK engagement on the issue. 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. We look forward to constructive engagement through the formal consultations.

UK membership of Horizon Europe would be a win-win for both the UK and EU. The UK is a world leader in science and technology, houses some of the most

research intensive universities in the world and led the global effort to combat Covid-19. The UK has set aside around £15bn for Horizon Europe alone.

The EU's research and innovation community has been calling on the European Commission to associate the UK to these programmes. The UK Government also continues to seek association so that collective work to solve the greatest economic and societal challenges can continue.

In the event that association is not formalised, the government has prepared an alternative set of programmes to support UK scientists and researchers: [Supporting UK R&D and collaborative research beyond European programmes](#).

The UK Government is ready to work together with the European Commission to resolve this issue and looks forward to constructive engagement during consultations.