Brexit update 21 December 2017

Dear colleague,

As we near the end of a year which has been fraught with uncertainty about what Brexit might mean for European and non-European colleagues and students alike, the outcomes of recent negotiations have been a cause for guarded optimism. Earlier this month the government announced that ‘sufficient progress’ has been made in the Brexit talks to move on to discussions of a future trade relationship, a position confirmed by the European Council last week.

Of particular interest to the University community may be the following points:

- there will be no retrospective change of status for EU citizens in the UK who are already in the country before the ‘specified date’, which will be the date of withdrawal (29 March 2019)
- those already holding permanent residence documents in the UK will have the opportunity for these to be translated automatically and free of charge into the new status
- confirmation that people with settled status will be able to spend up to five consecutive years outside the UK without losing this status;
- confirmation that the UK will continue to participate in EU programmes financed by the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 until their closure, meaning that we remain eligible to participate in Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ until at least the end date of current programmes;
- an overt mention that the UK may wish to participate in future programmes as a non-Member state
- the commitment to continued north-south co-operation in Ireland and upholding the Good Friday Agreement.

Although this is all positive news, there are many caveats surrounding it. We recognise that, while some progress is being made, the ongoing uncertainty is unsettling for many staff and students. Our Brexit pages are regularly updated with any new developments that might have an impact on the University community, and the links on those pages to the UUK and Russell Group websites will give you access to some of the policy documents that have been prepared within the sector.

As the Brexit talks progress into the next phase, we will continue to work with our sector colleagues and the UK government to seek to secure an effective post-exit strategy that ensures our existing teaching, research and innovation relationships with Europe continue to flourish.

Together with the entire Executive Team, I would like to thank all of you for your commitment, patience and professionalism during these uncertain times.

If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to ask.

Dr Erik Lithander
Pro Vice-Chancellor