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Dear Mr Michel Barnier, dear Rt Hon David Davis MP, dear Dr Christian Ehler MEP, dear Federal Minister Anja Karliczek, dear Commissioner Moedas, and dear Dr Dan Nica MEP,

We the 153 undersigned Max Planck Directors write to share our view on the importance of securing a strong Brexit deal on science and innovation to support European science. It is important to find a way for the UK to participate in Horizon Europe as an associated country, and for researchers to move as freely as possible between the UK and EU.

The EU needs more scientific collaboration, not less, to address the great challenges of our time, such as climate change, infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistance, and aging societies to ensure Europe competes strongly with the rest of the world. To this end we must continue to work as closely as possible with our colleagues in the UK. Collaborating together, and competing for excellence-based European Research Council funding, improves European research.

Together the EU has built the Framework Programmes, which have proved to be an excellent system to foster scientific collaboration. We are pleased that the proposal for Horizon Europe would allow the UK to participate as an associated country. This will enable the deepest collaboration possible for a non-Member State, and it is important that this be maintained through the EU legislative process.

World-leading research is only possible thanks to people and their ideas. Exchanges of hypotheses and their experimental tests occur via students, postdoctoral scholars and investigators working together. It is therefore essential that researchers are able to move as easily as possible between the UK and EU after Brexit.



The UK has set out its desire for a “far-reaching Science and Innovation Pact” including Associated Country status, and supported by research mobility. This should make it possible to reach a pragmatic agreement on science and innovation quickly and thereby provide certainty to the research community. We hope that in your on-going negotiations and in the Horizon Europe legislation you will find a way to achieve this outcome. It is in the best interest of our research, European science, and therefore ultimately society at large.

Yours sincerely,

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