



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

The Rt Hon Chris Skidmore MP
Minister of State for Universities,
Science, Research and Innovation

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By email

20 January 2020

Dear Minister

Horizon 2020

At its meeting on 9 January 2020, the Culture, Tourism Europe and External Affairs Committee considered a number of bi-annual reports on EU issues prepared by the Scottish Government (reports attached). One of the reports covers Scotland's participation in the Horizon 2020 programme.

As you will see from the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science's letter of 5 December 2019, Scotland continues to benefit disproportionately well from Horizon 2020 for the size of its research base compared to other UK nations.

The Committee understands that the current iteration of the Withdrawal Agreement Bill if agreed would extend the UK's eligibility to the end of the Horizon 2020 period. However, Scotland's continuing participation in EU programmes for research and innovation and, in particular Horizon Europe, beyond 2020 remains uncertain. Despite the UK Government's assurances regarding precautionary measures to investigate potential alternatives to participating in Horizon Europe and the stated intention to associate to the programme, the Committee would appreciate clarification as to the UK Government's plans either to participate in, or alternatives to, EU programmes for research and innovation as soon as possible.

Furthermore, the Committee considers it imperative that the UK Government work in close consultation with the Scottish Government and Scottish organisations in receipt of EU funding to help design potential alternatives or precautionary measures.

We would impress upon you the urgent need to clarify the UK's position with regards to our continuing participation in EU programmes for research and innovation in order to mitigate the potentially irreparable damage a loss of EU funding might cause to those sectors in receipt of these funds.

Yours Sincerely,

Joan McAlpine MSP, Convener,
Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee