



As representatives of the European Union's health community, we are united in our call for the United Kingdom's association to Horizon Europe to be formalised as soon as possible. Horizon Europe aims to tackle the major global challenges of our time but achieving this aim will be impossible without international collaboration. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly highlighted the critical value of global partnerships to advance scientific discovery and innovation, especially where speed is of the utmost importance. The depth and strength of successful international collaborations resulting from the relationships built up over many years with the UK is long established.

We have all reaped the mutual health benefits of these collaborations. Together, we have significantly advanced health care across Europe, saving and improving citizens' lives. Clinical trials, particularly on diseases with limited patient populations, have been heavily reliant on EU-UK collaboration, while close research and innovation partnerships continue to accelerate life-changing medical research.

Going forward, we must continue to work together in order to meet the challenges of our swiftly changing world. Our ability to respond to the threat of climate change and outbreaks of new diseases like COVID-19 has been greatly improved by close scientific and clinical partnerships across Europe. Knowledge and discovery do not stop at borders: the shared global challenges we face require joint solutions. Collaboration through the research framework programmes is a springboard to productive partnerships across the world.

As a community, we welcomed the provision in Protocol I of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement for the UK to associate to Horizon Europe. The subsequent Q&A document from the European Commission provided us with confirmation that we could apply with UK entities for the first multi-beneficiary calls. Based on these reassurances, EU health research organisations have been working with UK partners on the understanding that they would shortly become full associate members. However, the absence of a clear timeframe for formalising UK association is now causing increasing concern. We notice too with regret that while the specialised committees for other policy areas are already established, the Specialised Committee on Participation in Union Programmes has not yet even had its first meeting.

This continuing uncertainty risks jeopardising current and future research partnerships, and time is fast running out. With the first Horizon Europe grant agreements nearing finalisation and new calls expected imminently, UK association must be formalised. Now is the time to act. Further delays or the spectre of non-association would result in a missed opportunity to tackle the major challenges of our time, diminish our collective research capabilities and weaken Europe's position in the highly competitive global market.

Many profound and long-lasting EU-UK research partnerships are at stake. These are of high value to Europe as a whole – and to the world at large. We owe it to future generations in the EU and beyond to ensure that the new EU-UK relationship best serves them through research.

We stand with our colleagues in the [European Union's research and innovation community](#) in urging the European Commission to formalise the United Kingdom's association to Horizon Europe without further delay.

The European Health Stakeholder Group