

University leaders from 24 European countries, including Germany and France, have signed a joint statement to stress the importance of continued European university collaboration following the UK's vote to leave the EU.

The statement – from representative organisations of universities and national rectors' conferences from across Europe – highlights the importance of international cooperation and exchange and says that universities are strongest when they tackle issues collaboratively.

While acknowledging that, following the outcome of the UK's referendum, the UK will develop a new relationship with the EU, it calls for continued 'research and exchange relationships between Europe's universities, for the benefit of people across the continent'.

Dame Julia Goodfellow, President of Universities UK and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kent, said: "This is a welcome statement from our European partners. While we know the referendum result will have no immediate effect on the UK's participation in EU research and exchange programmes, it is important that we get long-term guarantees that the UK will continue to benefit from opportunities to collaborate with partners on ground-breaking research. We are determined that the UK university sector will remain a welcoming destination, open and internationally engaged and a high-quality partner of choice."

Rolf Tarrach, President of the European University Association, said: "Given the strength of the UK's research base, isolating the UK from European cooperation structures would not just have negative consequences for the UK, it would also undermine the profile and impact of European research more widely. It is through working together within a united, European knowledge community that universities can achieve the best outcomes and tackle the big challenges."

The joint statement in full:

We as European university leaders wish to reaffirm our commitment to international cooperation and exchange in this turbulent time for Europe. We are strongest when we tackle issues collaboratively, when we exchange ideas and people, and when we open our hearts and minds to new perspectives and new knowledge.

Collaboration is also a cornerstone of innovation and excellence. It is by pooling infrastructure, data and expertise that we can best pursue ground-breaking research which improves people's lives and help to build strong and sustainable knowledge economies.

The outcome of the UK's referendum on EU membership will mean a new relationship between the UK and the rest of Europe, but we will work together to ensure that the long-standing research and exchange relationships between Europe's universities continue, for the benefit of people across the continent.

The Presidents of European Rectors' Conferences

Prof. Rolf Tarrach	President	European Universities Association
Prof. Dame Julia	President	Universities UK

Goodfellow		
Prof. Dr. Horst Hippler	President	German Rectors' Conference
Professor Jean-Loup Salzmänn	President	French Conference of University Presidents
Prof. Dr. Oliver Vitouch	President	Universities Austria
Prof. Dr. Tomas Zima	President	Czech Rectors' Conference
Rector Per Michael Johansen	Vice Chair	Universities Denmark
Professor Tiit Land	President	Universities Estonia
Professor Jouko Niinimäki	President	Universities Finland
Professor Luc De Schepper	President	Flemish Interuniversity Council
Dr. József Bódis	President	Hungarian Rectors' Conference
Dr Jon Atli Benediktsson	President	National Rectors Conference in Iceland
Prof. Don Barry	President	Irish Universities Association
Prof. Gaetano Manfredi	President	Conference of Italian Universities Rectors
Professor Arvids Barsevskis	Chairman	Latvian Rectors' Council
Professor Rainer Klump	President	University of Luxembourg
Jan Mengelers	Board Member	Association of Universities in the Netherlands
Prof. Dr Vidar L. Haanes	President	Norwegian Association for Higher Education Institutions
Professor Wieslaw Banyś	President	Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland
Prof. António M. Cunha	President	Portuguese National Conference of Rectors
Prof. Dr Vladimir Bumbasirevic	President	Conference of the Universities of Serbia
Professor Rudolf Kropil	Head	Slovak Rectors' Conference
Professor Dragan Marušič, PhD	President	Slovenian Rectors' Conference

Mr. Segundo Píriz Durán	President	Conference of the Rectors of Spanish Universities (CRUE)
Professor Helen Dannetun	Chair of the Board	Association of Swedish Higher Education