



Academies urge UK government to invest in research after Brexit vote

Jacqui Wise

Kent

Four national academies have urged the government to show that it is committed to attracting and retaining researchers from around the world in post-Brexit Britain.

The Academy of Medical Sciences, the British Academy, the Royal Academy of Engineering, and the Royal Society have issued a joint statement calling on the chancellor to send a positive message in the autumn statement on 23 November that the United Kingdom will remain a leading global destination for research and innovation.

Together, the academies called for research and innovation to be placed at the heart of the government's industrial strategy. They suggested that the UK should set a target of 3% of gross domestic product for combined public and private research and for development spending. And the government should offer regulatory and financial incentives to encourage global companies to carry out research and development in the UK, they added.

The academies highlighted that the UK has less than 1% of the world's population but produces 15.9% of the world's most highly cited research papers. Around a quarter of UK research and development takes place in UK universities, but 10% of their funding for this came from the European Union in 2013-14. In 2015 over half of the UK's research output was the result of an international collaboration.

Robert Lechler, president of the Academy of Medical Sciences, said, "We are urging the government to send a bold message and build an immigration system that allows the UK to welcome talented people from across the world to join and strengthen our research community."

Venki Ramakrishnan, president of the Royal Society, added, "Putting research and innovation at the heart of the government's industrial strategy will give it the best chance of success in ensuring broad economic prosperity through productivity gains. This will require a bold commitment to invest in research and innovation to build on our many strengths."