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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ministear airson Foghlam Leantainneach, Foghlam
Àrd-ìre agus Saidheans
Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and
Science



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

August 2019

Dear Gavin

ERASMUS+ CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS IN THE EVENT OF “NO DEAL”

We look forward to working constructively with you on the basis of mutual respect for the responsibilities of our governments and our shared role in the governance of the UK.

Following the appointment of the new Prime Minister, the UK Government’s position appears to have moved towards taking the UK out of the European Union on 31 October, come what may, including potentially without a Withdrawal Agreement being in place; in contrast to the reassurances given previously around the UK Government’s goal of securing an agreement.

The Withdrawal Agreement, if agreed, would provide for the UK to continue to participate in EU programmes through to the end of the current Multi-Annual Financial Framework period ending in December 2020. Leaving the EU without that agreement being in place, and without the UK Government reaching an alternative Third Country agreement or other arrangement, will result in universities, colleges, and schools across the UK being ineligible to submit applications to participate in the final year of the current Erasmus+ programme in 2020. This will be a significant loss to both our education sectors. Between 2014 and 2018, Erasmus+ has enabled an estimate of over 10,000 students and staff in Wales to undertake mobility visits to benefit their learning and career development. In Scotland, proportionally more students take part in Erasmus+ than from any other country in the UK.

The UK’s financial contribution to the Erasmus programme is held by the UK Government; it is not held by the Devolved Administrations. For as long as the UK Government retains control of those financial resources, the UK Government will need to take responsibility for delivery of alternative domestic arrangements to replace the provision which has been lost

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

to education sector bodies across the UK. Equally, the UK Government will need to take responsibility for any failure to deliver replacement arrangements.

As we understand the position, the UK Government has not, that we have seen, made or planned alternative domestic UK arrangements to ensure that the education sector can continue to access international mobility opportunities in place of those which will no longer be available due to the UK's exclusion from Erasmus. Any such plans would, of course, require discussion and agreement with the Devolved Administrations.

For the Devolved Administrations to put in place alternative arrangements to address the loss of provision arising from the UK Government's failure to reach an agreement with the EU and any failure to develop and fund appropriate UK alternative arrangements, a transfer of funding from the UK Government to Devolved Administrations' budgets would be required.

As we have made clear in previous Welsh and Scottish Government statements and various Ministerial and official-level discussions, and in line with pre-referendum promises made by those campaigning in favour of Brexit, we expect the funding that the Devolved Administrations would have received from the EU to be replaced in full by the UK Government.

We are now 12 weeks away from a scenario where the UK Government takes the United Kingdom out of the EU without an agreement in place. A meeting of Education Ministers needs to be arranged urgently to discuss the steps being taken by the UK Government to ensure that a loss of provision and opportunities for universities, colleges and schools is avoided.

In closing, we must again emphasise that, as you will be aware, the position of our Governments is that a damaging No Deal Brexit must be avoided and that, as we have repeatedly made clear, should the UK leave the EU, our preferred position is for the UK Government to secure continued participation in Erasmus+. We would also draw your attention to the joint letter of both First Ministers of 25 July to the new Prime Minister.

We are copying this letter to the Secretaries of State for Wales and Scotland; Jo Johnson MP, the Minister of State for Universities and Science; and Noel Lavery, Permanent Secretary for the Department for the Economy.

Yours sincerely

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Minister for Education



Richard Lochhead MSP
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