7 May 2019

Dear Prime Minister,

The UK is currently a great place to do science. The European Elections are an opportunity for the Conservative Party to ensure a positive future for UK science and engineering. It is important that scientific collaboration between the UK and the EU is sustained and any barriers are minimised, regardless of the outcome of the Brexit negotiations, and that work should start now. I hope that Conservative Party MEPs will take up that challenge.

The Campaign for Science and Engineering (CaSE) is the UK’s leading independent advocate for science and engineering. Our mission is to ensure that the UK has the skills, funding and policies to enable science and engineering to thrive. We represent over 115 scientific organisations including businesses, universities, professional bodies, and research charities as well as individual scientists and engineers. Collectively our members employ over 336,000 people in the UK, and our industry and charity members invest over £32bn a year globally in R&D. We are funded entirely by our members and receive no funding from government.

Our belief is that the UK should seek full participation in Horizon Europe after Brexit. MEPs elected in May should promote full participation of the UK in Horizon Europe because the evidence shows that international collaboration makes science stronger and leads to higher quality research.

Being part of Horizon Europe has intangible benefits for UK science, which are as important, if not more important, than the financial benefits. These intangible benefits should be protected as far as possible, whatever the outcome of the Brexit process. The intangible benefits identified by the participants of a workshop co-hosted by CaSE and the Wellcome Trust in September 2018 included:

- Competition for EU funding raises standards and accelerates research progress.
- EU funding increases the diversity of the UK research base by complementing domestic spending.
- Participation in EU programmes provides access to advanced facilities and access to large data sets unavailable in the UK alone.
- Participation in EU programmes helps attract talented researchers to the UK. The pool of top quality researchers in the EU is clearly larger than that in the UK alone.
- Many research-intensive businesses operate across several EU member states and are attracted to EU research programmes with similar geographic coverage. Business participation in these collaborative programmes may improve access to markets elsewhere in the EU.
- Participants in EU programmes have opportunities to influence the future shape of EU research and innovation and sometimes have opportunities to influence technical standards that shape future regulation.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Main
Executive Director