

Science and Technology Committee

Oral evidence: [Brexit science and innovation](#),
HC 705

Tuesday 6 March 2018

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Members present: Norman Lamb (Chair); Vicky Ford; Stephen Metcalfe; Carol Monaghan; Damien Moore; Graham Stringer.

Questions 1 - 102

Witnesses

I: Sam Gyimah MP, Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation; and Amanda Dickins, Deputy Director, EU Exit: Science and Innovation, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.



Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Sam Gyimah MP and Amanda Dickins.

Q1 Chair: Welcome, Minister, and welcome to you, Amanda. Thank you very much for attending. Minister, before we get on to Brexit issues, I would be grateful if we could raise with you your decision not to attend the previous session on research integrity. I think you have managed to achieve a first. I have been told by colleagues that never before has a Minister refused to come to this Committee to give evidence.

It was apparent in the questions that we put to Sir Mark that there were a number of issues where he simply could not answer, because they were matters for Government, not for him. That rather begged the question of why the Minister was not there to respond.

Given that we could not get answers to a number of questions from Sir Mark, would you be willing to come back and for us to rearrange? Originally, when Jo Johnson left the post and you came in, we shifted back the date to accommodate you. We understand that you are new to the post and that there will be things that you will not be able to answer, but we would very much welcome the opportunity to put key questions to you about Government policy. Would you reconsider that?

Mr Gyimah: Absolutely. Having been on a Select Committee myself and having been a Minister for a while, I understand the responsibilities that Ministers have to Parliament, including to Select Committees. I would not want to deprive the Committee of the Minister's evidence when it is undertaking an inquiry.

My suggestion that Sir Mark appear on the issue of research integrity was a suggestion, not a refusal, and was based on my sense that that was an area that UKRI covers specifically. If there are questions that the Committee wants to put to me, as the Minister, on the Government's role, I will certainly be willing to reappear to answer them.

Q2 Chair: There may have been some confusion between you and your private office. Certainly, when we pressed the private office to encourage you to come, we got a refusal as regards your attendance today.

Mr Gyimah: I am here.

Q3 Chair: On the other issue. I very much welcome your willingness to reappear. Is it okay for us to try to fix up another date with your office specifically to address Government policy issues as far as research integrity is concerned?

Mr Gyimah: That is not a problem at all.

Q4 Chair: I really appreciate that. Thank you.

We now move on to Brexit. I can change my tone completely by thanking you very much for coming to the summit. It was really appreciated that you were willing to attend that and, indeed, to answer questions there.



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People felt that it was a useful opportunity to air a number of concerns.

For me, one of the recurring themes throughout the summit, and in all the other discussions I have had with the science community, is this sense of urgency. Everyone is clear about, and is encouraged by, the Government's ambition, but they feel the need for an early settlement of these issues, so that we move rapidly—not at the end, when everything else has been negotiated—to a settled position on participation in the successor to Horizon 2020, on issues of access to people and on regulation.

We were also encouraged by the Prime Minister's reference to "a far-reaching science and innovation pact." Do you agree that there is a sense of urgency? Is it your intention that we move rapidly and that, in a sense, we address this up front, now, rather than leave it to the end of the process?

Mr Gyimah: I reiterate the comments I made last week. Having spoken to my counterparts in the EU—a lot of EU Science Ministers—we all take the view that science is one area that is a win-win for us and them. If it were left to me alone, as the Science Minister, this would be one area on which we could come to an agreement very early in the process, but it is part of a much bigger negotiation.

Q5 **Chair:** Are you making the case within Government that we should move to an early settlement?

Mr Gyimah: I was about to say that, notwithstanding that, there is a sense of urgency on the part of the Government. For example, today we will publish the Government's position on the future of European research programmes beyond 2020—specifically, on framework programme 9. That will be published later today.

Q6 **Chair:** Are you able to say anything about what is in it?

Mr Gyimah: I can give a sense of it. It will look at the Government's priorities for FP9 and how we can maximise its impact and effectiveness. As the Committee is aware, the Prime Minister stated in her Mansion House speech last Friday that the UK is "committed to establishing a far-reaching science and innovation pact with the EU, facilitating the exchange of ideas and researchers," to enable us "to participate in key programmes alongside our EU partners." This follows what she said earlier about collaboration on science and innovation.

The paper considers nine key areas that are important to the UK: continued focus on excellence; openness to the world; a mission-orientated approach; further reducing the administrative burden; spreading excellence and widening participation; providing EU added value; innovation; demonstrating impact; and simplifying the partnership instruments.

It is important to state, however, that this is not a commitment to associate with FP9, but it sets out quite a broad, wide-ranging and



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positive vision of what would make the UK excited about FP9. It shows that we are eager to engage with the EU on collaborative research and innovation projects. It makes it clear that we are not turning our backs on the EU and that we want to continue to work together in ways that promote long-term economic development.

As set out in our future partnership paper, we also hope to have a full and open discussion with the EU about this and all possible options. We will be looking to engage in that discussion while we are a fully paid-up member, even though the terms of our engagement and relationship could well be different when we exit the EU. We are on the front foot as far as this is concerned.

Q7 Chair: You made clear at the summit that participation in the successor programme could not be at any price. Is it your clear objective to negotiate a deal to enable us to be a part of the successor programme?

Mr Gyimah: I said that there are two tests for participation. One is that it is based on excellence. That is reflected in the position paper that will be published later today. The second is value for money, which should be a consideration in all these things. On the nature and extent of the participation, we will look at all possible options, to make sure that we get the collaboration that we need.

Q8 Chair: So the paper published today does not define at all whether your objective is to be a participant in the successor programme. Does it leave open the nature of the relationship?

Mr Gyimah: Those are options that will have to be thrashed out in the negotiations.

Q9 Chair: The Prime Minister talks about having "a far-reaching science and innovation pact." Do you envisage that that pact would encompass more than just our relationship with the successor programme? Would it deal with access to people, regulation and so forth? Is it an all-consuming science pact, of the sort that the Wellcome Trust paper suggested?

Mr Gyimah: I have seen the Wellcome Trust paper, which contains some very thought-provoking ideas. You mentioned people. We are under no illusion that the strength of Britain's world-class universities and our ability to deliver our ambitions in research and development rest not just on having the brightest and the best, but on having the skills available to us. That is why we are making this announcement today, to reassure people that we are serious and ambitious.

Amanda Dickins: The FP9 position paper that will be published this afternoon is intended as a contribution to the consultation that the Commission has opened to help to shape framework programme 9. At this point, it would be unwise to commit oneself to a programme that is yet to be finalised.

Q10 Chair: Does it set the basis upon which the Government will then seek to



negotiate the deal on the successor programme? Is that the purpose of it? At some point, we have to move beyond the high-level ambition to the specifics, to address this point about the need for certainty. There are researchers out there who are shaping research programmes and need to know whether we are going to be part of the successor programme. They do not need to know that in a year's time; they need to know it very soon. Is that your objective? Is that the purpose of this paper?

Mr Gyimah: The position paper does what the UK, as a fully paid-up member of the EU, should currently be doing—it sets out what we want to see in the design of the programme.

Q11 **Chair:** In the successor programme; sure.

Mr Gyimah: As the Committee is well aware, the actual design is a question for all EU members. As Amanda said, to go to the next stage, prior to the consultation period, would be jumping the gun a bit. But it is a hugely positive step, to show that we are engaged, that we want to collaborate and that, subject to getting the right agreement, this is something we want to be part of.

Q12 **Chair:** Are you publishing this paper? Is it in your name?

Mr Gyimah: It is done by BEIS. It is a UK Government paper.

Amanda Dickins: It is a UK Government paper that has been cleared across Government.

Q13 **Chair:** It is a bit frustrating, in a way, that it was not published this morning, to enable us to discuss it with you. Is there a reason why it is being published after our discussion? Obviously, it is very pertinent to the discussion.

Mr Gyimah: No. I would have been delighted for you to have had it yesterday. As you are aware, cross-Government processes and the grid do not always allow the Minister to get things published exactly when they want. That is why I want to give you a preview of it. It will be published early this afternoon.

Q14 **Chair:** What have you done in the period since your appointment to apprise the Cabinet of the needs of the research and innovation community in the Brexit process—and, in particular, of this sense of urgency?

Mr Gyimah: The high-level group for higher education, research and innovation was set up in 2016 and has been meeting ever since.

Q15 **Chair:** How often does it meet?

Mr Gyimah: I think it meets every other week—or once a month.

Amanda Dickins: It meets monthly, but it takes some breaks over Christmas and the summer holidays.



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Mr Gyimah: I have chaired two such meetings since I was appointed. The high-level group is made up of all the leading academics in this area who have strong views on the shape of UK science, research and innovation, as well as on the sense of urgency that is needed. That has been communicated loudly and clearly. I have chaired two such meetings, where we have gone through the issues that are currently on the table.

In addition, I was at the informal Competitiveness Council of EU Science Ministers in Bulgaria, where I spoke at a number of bilaterals with my EU counterparts on issues to do with science, research and innovation—including a bilateral with Commissioner Moedas on the Commission's position, what we expect and how the Commission is looking at some of the issues we need to deal with as we go through this negotiation process. If I look at the science, research and innovation part of my brief, this is very much at the top of my agenda. It is a top priority.

Q16 **Chair:** Thank you. Amanda Dickins, will you tell us a bit more about your role as deputy director of the EU exit and migration part of BEIS?

Amanda Dickins: I took up this role in September 2016. It has been my responsibility to develop the analysis, to put policy options to Ministers, in the usual way that one does in any policy area, and to lead a substantial programme of work to ensure that we are prepared for every eventuality and to support science and innovation under any circumstances.

Q17 **Chair:** How are you informed about views across the science and innovation community to instruct your work?

Amanda Dickins: The high-level group on higher education, research and innovation that the Minister just mentioned has been extremely important for us. It has been meeting since December 2016—on a monthly basis, as I said.

Q18 **Chair:** You attend that every time, presumably.

Amanda Dickins: I, members of my team and my peers attend; it is a group effort. In fact, it is a joint group that reflects the Minister's portfolio, bridging the Department for Education and BEIS. The group covers higher education as well as research and innovation. The Minister's predecessor felt strongly, and rightly, that those were not issues that you could easily divorce.

Q19 **Chair:** Sure. I have a final question before I pass on to Damien. Sam, I am pleased you have reinforced the sense that you very much understand the sense of urgency in getting to a final conclusion. Can I get a sense of what your ambition is? Do you hope that there will be a deal in place by this summer, for example? What timescale do you have in your mind?

Mr Gyimah: The honest answer is that the timescale will be driven by cross-Government decisions, rather than what I specifically want. When it



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comes to positive engagement, we have a unique opportunity to engage with the design of FP9 now, which we are doing.

On Horizon 2020, we are already engaging with the finer details of the position that the Prime Minister reached last December, to make sure that we are participating at the end of 2020 and that the programme works as we expect it to work. When it comes to the broader science deal, I expect to continue to work with my colleagues across Government; it is going to be a cross-Government decision. It is not how quickly we can land a deal and also not just a unilateral decision. The Commission also has to want to do a deal in the terms that we want.

Q20 Chair: Within Government, you are reinforcing the importance of getting to a deal quickly.

Mr Gyimah: Absolutely.

Q21 Vicky Ford: Amanda, you said we cannot commit to participate in the programme until we know what it looks like. Having been involved in Horizon 2020 and having looked at the associate members, such as Israel, Norway and Switzerland, the default assumption was that they would participate in the framework programme unless something was materially wrong with it. I am worried about your emphasis, which is to say, "Obviously, we cannot participate until we know what it looks like," as opposed to, "We envisage participating unless we have material problems."

The backdrop at the moment is that we know that people have stopped coming to the UK for science and that there are scientific concerns. For example, last week we had a lot of evidence from UCL of people not applying for funding through UCL and not applying for roles, and so on. Maybe it is an observation, but the emphasis needs to be, "We envisage participating," as in the Prime Minister's point that we want this pact, rather than, "We will participate only if this happens," or, "We will wait and see."

Mr Gyimah: I do not mean to answer for Amanda; I am sure she can answer for herself. As the Minister, I do not think that our position is a passive one, to see what comes out at the end. Our position has to be—and is—a very active one at the moment.

Q22 Chair: To use Vicky's phraseology, would you say that the default assumption is that we will be part of it?

Mr Gyimah: We want to be, but not at any price. It is a negotiation, after all.

Q23 Chair: Do you want to push that further, Vicky?

Amanda Dickins: I am not quite sure what the question is. Vicky reflected that it was an observation.

Vicky Ford: My observation from five years ago was that it was assumed



that people would be in unless there was a material problem with it. If the assumption is that we will be in unless the price is materially wrong, that will be a different level of tone.

Q24 Chair: In addition, there is a danger that people outside could see what is being said today as something of a retreat from what was said at the summit, which was very positive, about seeking to be part of the framework programme, subject to the price that is demanded. What we want to understand is whether, subject to the price being right, is it your intention, desire and default assumption that we will be part of the successor programme—yes or no?

Mr Gyimah: If you are asking me what my ambition is, as Minister for Science, the answer to that is yes. In every one of the Prime Minister's statements and speeches, there has been a reference to science and our desire for a deep and special relationship around that. The direction of travel is there. I will go to the next EU Council to engage with my counterparts in the EU on issues to do with science and innovation. There is no retreat whatsoever here.

I understand why it can be a bit frustrating for Select Committees seeking clear-cut answers, but we are walking a fine line between the fact there is a negotiation, in which nothing is agreed until everything is agreed, and our desire to show that we have been part of these programmes and that the UK has benefited, and continues to benefit, from them. I do not think that any Science Minister would say, "This is something we want to retreat from."

Q25 Stephen Metcalfe: You talked about wanting this, but not at any price, which I completely understand. Is not the other criterion on which you will assess whether to take part in FP9 how much excellence plays a part in this? It is about more than just the money; there is a concern that excellence still has to be the absolute heart of the programme.

Mr Gyimah: That is true. In my earlier answer, I gave two tests: excellence and value for money. This is an issue that I raised in my bilateral with Commission Moedas, because I know that there are some other discussions within the Commission that the criterion is somehow flexed. I made it very clear that, from a UK perspective, science funding and the successor to Horizon 2020 should be driven by excellence. I think that a number of other EU countries agree with us.

Q26 Stephen Metcalfe: Will that play a part in the decision?

Mr Gyimah: Absolutely.

Q27 Damien Moore: Many of the submissions we have received suggest that a lack of clarity around immigration will have a negative effect on UK science and innovation. What are we doing to address that?

Mr Gyimah: As I said in my earlier remarks, I am very aware that it is not just about the framework programmes, but about people. In fact,



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getting the right people—the brightest and best minds—here is as critical as participating in programmes if we are to succeed in science and innovation.

Your specific question was, what is being done about it? First, it is worth recapping where we are at the moment. The joint report makes it clear that no EU citizen living lawfully in the UK will be required to leave when the UK withdraws from the EU. That is the position as outlined last December. Last week, the Government also announced a proposed offer for EU citizens and their family members who arrive during the implementation period. It looks at the rights to settle of those arriving during that period and says that they will be able to live, work and study in the UK as they can now, although obviously they will have to register. Together, those two moves give a lot more reassurance than where we were this time last year.

Q28 Chair: But the long-term arrangement is also critical, isn't it? You have talked about the position while we remain in and about the implementation period. Do you agree that getting the deal right on the long-term arrangements to get access to the best people is also critical?

Mr Gyimah: That is also critical. The Committee is aware that the independent Migration Advisory Committee is looking at the evidence on international students, academics coming here, and so on. That will help to inform our approach to our immigration policy post exit, so there is a process there as well. It is worth realising that, for example, no one here will have to leave on exit and that, during the implementation period, people will be able to come and work and, potentially, get indefinite leave to remain as well. That is a significant improvement on where we were this time last year.

Q29 Vicky Ford: We heard at our summit how that model, where you come to the UK, stay here, are fixed here, work here for a certain period of time and can then continue to live here, simply does not fit for many scientists or for research and mobility. For example, if you are working at the Scott Polar Research Institute, you may have to go off to the Arctic for months of the year, or you may choose to do a project with another research laboratory. Are you fighting the corner to make sure that our immigration policy facilitates world-class researchers and the mobility they need to be able to engage with other organisations around the world?

Mr Gyimah: Absolutely. We have world-class universities and world-class research, and we should do everything possible to preserve that. That means that facilitating the brightest and the best to do research—and doing research does not mean being rooted in one place all the time—is something I will be fighting for as the Minister for Science.

Vicky Ford: Thank you. You must fight for it.

Q30 Chair: Do you think that the pact the Prime Minister talked about last



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week will encompass these issues?

Mr Gyimah: Which issues?

Q31 **Chair:** The Prime Minister talked about having “a far-reaching science and innovation pact”; that is the phraseology she used. Will that pact address people, as well as issues such as the successor to Horizon 2020?

Mr Gyimah: Yes, I envisage that it will.

Q32 **Damien Moore:** Obviously, we want to attract people, but we also want to retain the professionals we have here—laboratory technicians, and so on. Are you putting that case forward in your discussions with other Ministers? Are you saying that, if we are to excel, we have to keep the people we have, as well as bring other people in?

Mr Gyimah: Yes. That is why I chose my words very carefully. I said that we had to attract not just the brightest and the best, but also skills. I am very aware of the issue. It has come up in the two meetings that I have had with the high-level group and in my visits on science that it is as much about these skilled technicians as it is about the academics.

Chair: It is not just the top people.

Damien Moore: It is the support staff.

Q33 **Chair:** Did you want to add something, Amanda? You were just agreeing.

Amanda Dickins: No; I was just nodding. This is a point that has been made very clear throughout in the evidence and the discussions we have had with stakeholders.

Q34 **Damien Moore:** Many of these professionals are from the EU. There has been a fall in net migration from the EU. What do you think is causing that? Is it temporary or long term? How will it affect science and innovation?

Amanda Dickins: I am not sure that it is for me to speculate on motives, but the Committee has already reflected to us that we are in a period of uncertainty. That is something that human beings find challenging.

Q35 **Damien Moore:** The Committee just wants certainty and clarity from you that you will fight to keep the people we have, as well as bringing people in. That is the underlying point. If we want to excel post Brexit and to market ourselves as a global player in science and technology, we need the people to do it. They might not all be from this country.

Amanda Dickins: You are absolutely right. That is why, for example, when we raised the level of investment in R and D, there was money in addition to fund additional PhDs and research fellowships. Indeed, in line with what you have just suggested about making sure that we still attract people to the UK, as well as retain and develop the skills of those already



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here, money was set aside for the Ernest Rutherford Fund, which is there specifically to support people coming to the UK.

Mr Gyimah: That is a fund of £100 million to attract the brightest and the best from around the world to come and do scientific research in the UK. The challenge around talent is not just about people from within the EU coming here, but about getting the brightest and the best from around the world to come here.

Q36 **Carol Monaghan:** The technician-level staff we are talking about will not be the exceptional tier 1 visas; they are more likely to fall into the tier 2 visas. A Home Affairs Committee report stated, "in January 2018 the cap on Tier 2 (general) visas was reached for the second successive month, causing minimum salary requirements to jump from £30,000 to over £50,000." I understand that you appreciate the skills shortage at technician level. How are we going to deal with that if we have a cap of £50,000?

Mr Gyimah: The Government have set up a process to look at the issues of migration. We mentioned that the Migration Advisory Committee is going to be performing an objective assessment. The question is: what am I or my Department doing? In a separate commission, we have asked the Migration Advisory Committee to report on the impacts of exiting the EU on the UK labour market and how the UK's immigration system should be aligned with our modern industrial strategy.

Q37 **Chair:** What is the timescale for it to report on that, incidentally?

Mr Gyimah: The committee will report on both commissions by September 2018. That will look at these issues. Of course, to deliver on our industrial strategy—

Q38 **Chair:** The Migration Advisory Committee will report by September 2018. Is that what you are saying?

Mr Gyimah: That is right; yes. It is due to report on both the commissions—the one specifically asked for by BEIS and the general one—by September 2018. While the details are yet to be decided, we are doing what we can to make it clear that we are open to the rest of the world and for talent to come here. Obviously, things like the visa caps and so on would all be looked at.

Q39 **Carol Monaghan:** Exceptionally talented researchers often want to bring their own team with them. We could find ourselves not being able to attract the exceptional people if they cannot bring the technician-level team. Can you assure the Committee that this aspect is going to be considered in this commission?

Mr Gyimah: I can give you a general answer. These are issues that any country that has to have its own migration system has to grapple with. Subject to all the competing objectives in our migration policy and the importance for us to remain world class, yes, we will work through them.



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We are leaving the EU, and a consequence of leaving the EU is that a whole lot of things that we have taken for granted are now up in the air and we will have to work through them in the best interests of science, research and innovation.

Q40 **Chair:** You are fighting the corner on behalf of British science to ensure that that issue is addressed within Government. I appreciate that other players will be involved in the decision.

Mr Gyimah: That is my job.

Q41 **Chair:** Your job is to fight the corner to ensure that those technicians can come in and that we will not have artificially limited numbers that prevent—

Mr Gyimah: My job is to make sure that we can continue to do world-class science research and that we are in a position to do so, whatever is needed to deliver that. I take that very seriously.

Q42 **Carol Monaghan:** The mobility issue is fundamental to science, but both universities and STEM employers report that a huge amount of time is now taken up with paperwork associated with immigration. Some professional groups have suggested that there should be a fast-track process for trusted employers, whereby employees could come and get settled status more quickly. Could that be considered as part of this commission process?

Mr Gyimah: The Migration Advisory Committee process is under way. It is looking at the labour market and the impact of EU exit on the labour market. We have asked it specifically to look at in relation to how it relates to the industrial strategy.

Q43 **Carol Monaghan:** Minister, are you supportive of this idea that professional trusted groups could employ professionals from the EU without having to go through a lengthy paperwork process?

Amanda Dickins: I would ask a question for clarification. You are talking about the amount of paperwork they now encounter. Presumably that is with respect to non-EU.

Q44 **Carol Monaghan:** That is non-EU, but we are assuming that the same rules are going to be applied to the EU. I think that is widely understood, or maybe it is not widely understood. Maybe it is a grey area that we need to explore.

Amanda Dickins: That sounds like quite a strong assumption when the MAC is doing its work.

Q45 **Chair:** The president of the Royal Society made this point at the summit.

Amanda Dickins: I believe he said that mobility is the single most important thing.

Q46 **Chair:** Yes. He made the point that, as Carol has said, there will be



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organisations that need the flexibility to bring in who they need to bring in rather than having to go through a slow, bureaucratic process. That is what they are really anxious about. Is that understood?

Amanda Dickins: I came to this job of working on Brexit because I actually started working on how we could ensure that the visa system was supportive of research and innovation. I am very much aware of the issues you are raising, including some of the difficulties that some employers have reported in the current system. All those points are very much heard and part of the policy conversations within Government.

Q47 **Chair:** I think their nightmare is that, if the same process that applies to the rest of the world applies to the EU, it will make it very difficult to attract people to this country.

Amanda Dickins: I think that point has been very well made by the sector in a number of different representations to both our current Minister and his predecessor.

Q48 **Chair:** And you probably hear it every month at your group meetings.

Mr Gyimah: There is also the point that Vicky Ford made at the summit about the impact on families and bringing families over. There are lots of different strands that we need to get right.

Q49 **Vicky Ford:** It was on women researchers, who are more likely to take a career break. If the visa situation does not recognise that, then they have a double whammy. Just at the time when we are trying to encourage more women into science and research, they have this extra hurdle of a visa that does not recognise career breaks.

Mr Gyimah: Absolutely. What I am saying is that the point has been very well made and taken on board.

Q50 **Carol Monaghan:** Minister, EU students need to hold comprehensive sickness insurance in order that the time spent studying in the UK can count towards their five years of continued stay if they are looking at a permanent residency application. Do you feel that this information is being properly communicated to students at the moment?

Amanda Dickins: That is one where we need to write back to you.

Q51 **Carol Monaghan:** You might wish to write back to the Committee on this one as well. There is a concern that because of the comprehensive sickness insurance requirement we may struggle to attract the top-level students, who possibly cannot afford this. Are you able to make any comment on that? Again, if you are happy to make a comment I am happy to hear it; otherwise, if you want to report back to the Committee that would be really helpful.

Mr Gyimah: We are highly attractive in attracting international students to the UK—I understand the concerns you raise—and we are second only to the US in the number of international EU and non-EU students we attract. We have seen an increase of about 17% in university-sponsored



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visa applications for non-EU students since 2011. I understand the precaution that—

Q52 **Carol Monaghan:** We are talking specifically about EU students who are likely to seek permanent residency following their course of studies. If they cannot afford the CSI, will they be put off coming to the UK—EU students?

Mr Gyimah: It is something we will have to look at. I would also be concerned, frankly, about British students in EU countries and the arrangements for them.

Chair: We alerted you to the issue of the CSI before this session, so we would very much appreciate written confirmation, within days, of what the position actually is, to respond to Carol's question.

Q53 **Carol Monaghan:** Chair, it is also worth mentioning that student groups have raised this as an issue, because currently a lot of EU students are completely unaware of the situation.

Amanda Dickins: We certainly need to clarify the situation with respect to students, but overall this is my understanding from the Home Office. Other Committees have hardtasked me, but Brandon Lewis has talked about the different cultural approach of the Home Office with respect to how we will work on these questions about granting EU citizens settled status if they can prove that they have been lawfully resident for five years. That applies to EU citizens currently in the UK, although the offer is potentially for those who arrive during the implementation period. We need to double-check that that is clearly applicable to students and then come back to you.

Chair: We need to disseminate this information widely so that people actually understand what the rules are. There is clearly a lack of—

Carol Monaghan: There is confusion among student groups.

Chair: There is a confusion within Government, let alone student groups.

Q54 **Carol Monaghan:** Some student groups have reported that students are unaware of the requirement for CSI. They are under the assumption that currently their time is counting towards it, but it may not be necessarily. We would like some more information on that or some more publicity for student groups.

Amanda Dickins: What Brandon Lewis actually said was that we are removing the need to demonstrate comprehensive sickness insurance in order to secure settled status. What I would like to be able to do is for us to double-check.

Carol Monaghan: But they still need an insurance card, similar to an EHIC, I believe.

Q55 **Chair:** Come back to us with a definitive position—hopefully, within days. Is that okay?



Amanda Dickins: We will come back to you; absolutely.

Mr Gyimah: That is fine.

Q56 **Vicky Ford:** My questions are largely about participating in the successor to Horizon 2020. It is extremely welcome that you are publishing this paper today and showing that we are engaged in developments towards the next framework. We had questions about how you intend to influence after we have left. For example, do you intend to keep the UK research office in Brussels? Do you intend to try to stay part of other networks that are involved behind the scenes in membership of the higher levels of the ERC, for example?

Mr Gyimah: The exact nature of how we participate is something that we are working through. We have signalled our intent that we are engaging positively. We have outlined a vision, but in terms of how that is delivered the Prime Minister has, for example, signalled that we are interested in the long-term economic development of the EU. In terms of how this is delivered and in which organisations people work, they are things we are going to have to work through during the negotiation process.

Amanda Dickins: The UK Research Office, based in Brussels, is of course funded by the UK Government and by subscriptions from its higher education institutions who subscribe to its services. We think it is a very important organisation. We do not see why its role would in any way diminish. In fact, given the complexity and the uncertainty facing the UK research community, which the Committee has once again reminded us of, I think UKRO is performing an incredibly valuable service for the research community. It is providing them with and quickly disseminating additional information.

For example, yesterday we were able to publish some additional information about the status vis-à-vis the current programme. UKRO plays a key role in disseminating that information more widely in the research community. As previous lines of questioning around students have highlighted, the importance of actually getting out information about the practicalities to individuals who are facing choices right now is really important. That is why we have developed these lines on Horizon.

Q57 **Vicky Ford:** We have heard quite a lot about the impact on universities and on students. At our Brexit summit we heard quite a lot from universities and pure scientists but not a lot about any industrial collaboration elements—for example, public-private partnerships and the clean skies initiative. Do you see the UK wanting to continue to engage in those industrial areas as well?

Amanda Dickins: In terms of the industrial strands of Horizon, we talk about innovation in, for example, the paper that will be published this afternoon. I think there is an ambition—it is not purely a UK ambition but one that is shared across Europe—for framework programmes to do an



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even better job of supporting innovation and therefore innovative businesses going forward.

Q58 **Vicky Ford:** You talked earlier about the nine objectives, one of which was commenting on the missions. Can you see a position where the UK would be leading or jointly leading some of those missions?

Amanda Dickins: I think that remains to be seen. What I can say is that there has been quite a lot of interest in learning from the UK experience of challenges.

Mr Gyimah: The grand challenges and the industrial strategy.

Amanda Dickins: And also the GCRF—the Global Challenges Research Fund. There has been quite a lot of interest from counterparts across Europe about that experience and what everyone can learn from it.

Q59 **Vicky Ford:** As a slight aside, your predecessor made it very clear that you intend to continue on the European Space Agency, but I have picked up rumours of British research being cut out of bids. What action are you taking about the perception that perhaps Britain is being cut out of current elements of European funding, whether that is Horizon funding or space agency funding?

Mr Gyimah: The ESA is an international organisation rather than an EU organisation. The programmes will continue to play an important role for us. Our commitment to it is underscored by the £1.4 billion investment over five years in ESA space initiatives that was announced in December 2016. I think that shows that we are seriously committed in the long term as far as the ESA is concerned.

Q60 **Vicky Ford:** Is the perception that Britain is being cut out of consortia on Horizon, for example, just that—perception—or reality? Even if there is a perception, what are we doing to address it?

Q61 **Chair:** Are complaints being brought to you that British people are being excluded from any programmes?

Amanda Dickins: What was interesting in my conversations with the sector through the good offices of UKRO and with research liaison managers from across a number of universities was that this was raised, but then there is the question of what happens when people push back. Anyone who has been involved with the research community would recognise that, like any group of human beings, there is always a certain amount of politics and jockeying for position. It is inevitable and only human that others may spot opportunities perhaps to position themselves in the top spot in the lead on something, where perhaps previously you would not have expected that.

Again, this is very much anecdotal, but, unfortunately, I think we are still in that space of what is being reported to us.

Q62 **Chair:** So those concerns are being brought to you.



Amanda Dickins: What was interesting was where people had pushed back and said, “Look, we have always co-operated on the basis of excellence, and on that basis we would expect to go forward with our usual configuration.” That is often very successful. There is something here about making sure that the research community feel empowered to make those points strongly but tactfully to their current or potential collaboration partners, which is exactly one of the issues that made us want to get out the lines on Horizon. We felt that time was particularly pressing because, of course, as the Committee will be very well aware, there are a number of calls due to open shortly. We thought it was important that the research community had some—I do not want to say ammunition because that sounds a little military—evidence, collateral and clear lines from Government to help them in those conversations.

Mr Gyimah: In the case of Horizon specifically, I made the call at the summit because we want our academics to continue applying. It is very important that people do not hesitate or stop applying because of perceived uncertainty. We are part of the programme. We are paid into the programme, and we want to see British scientists and academics applying, as they always would have done.

Q63 **Chair:** Are you monitoring the overall success rate of applications, and are you seeing any reduction?

Amanda Dickins: Yes; we are monitoring the overall success rates. I would say that we continue to be very strongly involved. We have received 15% of all agreed funds to date—around €4 billion. We are second only to Germany in project participations.

Q64 **Chair:** So you are not seeing any reduction or any drop-off in success rate.

Amanda Dickins: From what has been published to date, no. It is within statistical variation, but we do watch it very carefully and we do have concerns.

Q65 **Chair:** Are you able to disclose to us the data that you have?

Amanda Dickins: I would need to come back to you on that.

Q66 **Chair:** Can you check on that?

Amanda Dickins: Yes.

Q67 **Graham Stringer:** Jo Johnson set up a mechanism to try to establish beyond anecdote whether there was evidence of prejudice against British researchers. I think he set up an email address. Is that mechanism still there? Have you continued it, and is there any evidence coming through it?

Amanda Dickins: The research at BEIS inbox still exists. It is still monitored by my team. We have not had a huge amount of traffic in



recent months, but we continue to monitor it and to take seriously what people report to us through that route.

Q68 Vicky Ford: I wrote down quite quickly the list of nine points you are announcing this afternoon, but I did not hear about research and mobility. Possibly when we were a full member of the EU we may not have needed to have mentioned that. Is that because you see it as a separate issue? You have said you are committed to making sure we can recruit the best and the brightest, but the statistics we heard last week or the week before from UCL—that job applications from EU non-UK citizens had fallen from 25% to 5%—felt quite dramatic. I wonder whether we can do more to give that message out clearly.

Amanda Dickins: The paper is a position paper on FP9 specifically; it does not cover research mobility because that is not forming part of the framework programme. We do talk about excellence. Therefore, you might consider under that the programmes that are within Horizon's excellence pillar—the European Research Council fellowship programmes and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions, which together form the excellence pillar. We do see those as a very important and valuable element of framework programmes.

Mr Gyimah: Your second point was whether we could be doing more. Absolutely we could be doing more. People are aware that we are open for business and that we want to welcome them, but we could do more.

Q69 Vicky Ford: What is the commitment to research and mobility of the associate members of Horizon 2020?

Amanda Dickins: The current associated countries—I forget the exact number; I think it is 16—include countries that do not have full freedom of movement: for example, Israel. The issue of researcher mobility is an important one, but it does not translate in any very mechanical way into requirements of an association agreement.

Q70 Chair: Has the paper that is being published this afternoon been provided “embargoed” to the media?

Amanda Dickins: No, it has not been.

Chair: So it is just going to be published this afternoon.

Mr Gyimah: On gov.uk at about 2.00 pm.

Q71 Graham Stringer: I understand that this country gets back more out of Horizon 2020 than we put in, but overall on the science budget—the EU funds science through its regional development funds as well—we do not. Those funds are not used to support science on an excellence basis; they are used on a geographically spatial basis. That is the determination. As the Science Minister, are you going to try to claw back some of the money that was spent through the regional funds on science to go into our research base and our excellence science?



Mr Gyimah: Is the question whether we will claw back some of the money that has gone into programmes as a result of our budgetary contribution to the EU?

Q72 **Graham Stringer:** What I am saying is that we get more back in Horizon 2020 than we put in. That is not true of the other science that the EU funds. I am asking whether, when we get that money back, you will fight for it to go into the science base.

Mr Gyimah: Post exit?

Graham Stringer: Yes.

Mr Gyimah: That is a discussion to be had, to be honest. For the two months that I have been in the job my focus has been making sure of the current process—the current programmes—locking in our advantages and making sure that we give assurances to academics not only from the EU but also here. There is a broader discussion to be had. I will have a say and the Treasury will have a say, as will a number of other Ministers across Government, as to what we do with some of the other contributions.

Q73 **Graham Stringer:** But you will bear that in mind.

Amanda Dickins: If I might just add, of course the Government are working to create a UK-shared prosperity fund. That will be a domestic programme of investment to produce productivity and reduce economic inequality. It is viewed by Government that this new fund gives us a fresh opportunity to spend money according to our own priorities rather than those set by the EU.

Q74 **Graham Stringer:** Is it the Government's intention to stay in the Galileo project?

Mr Gyimah: It is.

Q75 **Graham Stringer:** And to continue funding at the same level.

Mr Gyimah: It is our intention to continue to be part of the programme. The terms and the nature of it will be a matter for negotiations.

Q76 **Graham Stringer:** One of the major concerns of the summit, which I could not attend, was the future of medicines regulation. How do you envisage that the UK's medicines innovations will be regulated after Brexit?

Amanda Dickins: In terms of medicines regulation, the aim, as we exit, is to make sure that patients in the UK and across Europe can continue to access the best and most innovative medicines, but that their safety is protected through ongoing co-operation and the strongest regulatory framework. In terms of how that works, it is clear that the Government recognise that co-operation between the EU and the UK is in the best interests of patients and is needed to ensure the quality, safety and efficacy of medicines, and, of course, of devices. As I am sure you are



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aware, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and my own Secretary of State wrote a letter to the *Financial Times* back in July where they were very clear that in the regulation of medicines as we leave the EU the UK is fully committed to a continuing, close working relationship with our European partners.

Q77 **Graham Stringer:** One of the benefits of leaving the EU was to separate regulations so that there would be divergence where regulations would fall. There has been a lot of criticism that the EU has been slow to reform the clinical trials directive. What is the Government's approach to the new clinical trials regulations?

Amanda Dickins: Specifically on the clinical trials directive, my understanding is that the timing of the application date for the new regulation has not yet been determined. If it is after our exit from the EU, it will not be part of the withdrawal Bill, but the Government will ensure that the UK's clinical trials framework continues to be both competitive and effective.

Q78 **Graham Stringer:** Does that mean it might diverge from the EU's directive? It would have been to the benefit of this country if it had done that some time ago.

Amanda Dickins: I do not feel that I have the licence to answer that.

Q79 **Graham Stringer:** Perhaps the Minister could answer.

Mr Gyimah: I think I will have to write to the Committee.

Q80 **Graham Stringer:** The Government have stated that they envisage that the MHRA will work closely with the European Medicines Agency. Can you explain what that means in practice?

Amanda Dickins: The important thing is to ensure that patients are not disadvantaged by any future regulatory regime. If we do not achieve our desired relationship with the EU, the Government will set up a regulatory system that protects the interests of patients and strengthens the UK's life sciences industry.

Q81 **Chair:** Do you rule out completely continued membership of the EMA? I know that has been the position, but does that continue to be the position?

Mr Gyimah: I would say that we will want to explore with the EU the terms on which we could remain a part of the European Medicines Agency.

Q82 **Chair:** So that is something you seek to achieve, if it is possible.

Graham Stringer: You could become an associate member.

Mr Gyimah: It would be a matter for discussion, but the PM highlighted this in her Mansion House speech just last Friday.



Q83 **Graham Stringer:** There is a real difference between being an associate member and being a full member in terms of the control of the European Court of Justice, is there not?

Mr Gyimah: I understand.

Q84 **Graham Stringer:** Which do you think it will be?

Mr Gyimah: I do not think I can second-guess that.

Q85 **Graham Stringer:** The Government have been floating the concept of three baskets of regulations—full alignment, similar regulations and divergence. Have you given any consideration to what areas you would like to see in each of the baskets?

Amanda Dickins: I think I am quite limited in what I can say on this.

Q86 **Graham Stringer:** Do you mean it is a secret?

Amanda Dickins: It is part of an ongoing conversation.

Mr Gyimah: It is work in progress and we are not in a position to have a definitive view.

Q87 **Graham Stringer:** Have you put the proposition in principle to the EU negotiators? If you have, what has been their response?

Mr Gyimah: As I have said, it is work in progress and I cannot really go beyond that at this stage. As soon as I can, I will be happy to share it with the Committee.

Q88 **Chair:** Are you saying that at the moment it is a just a theoretical division of approach to these three areas, but you have not gone any further in defining what goes into those three baskets?

Mr Gyimah: I do not think that I am in a position where I can publicly share where the thinking has got to.

Q89 **Graham Stringer:** Many regulations are made not at the EU level but at the world level, not just in science but in other areas from banking to sheep farming. Have you given any thought to what the scope is for the UK taking some sort of leadership role in setting science regulations at a global level?

Mr Gyimah: As we look at these issues there will be a number of options to consider, one of which is leadership at a global level. The focus, for me, of the last two months has been the implementation period. It is obviously time limited. There is the existing structure of EU rules and regulations during which the UK and the EU would continue to have access to each other's markets and how it turns into eligibility to participate in programmes. There are broader questions here around what we do in science programmes globally, which we will have to deal with in due course. There is thinking and work under way, but I am not sufficiently at a position where I can share anything definitive.



Q90 **Graham Stringer:** Does that mean there will be a number of bodies—not just in science but elsewhere—where, because we have had our interests represented or otherwise by the EU, we will be able to take our seat on those global bodies? Can you tell us of any global bodies on which you are considering taking up a seat?

Mr Gyimah: The best thing is that, when we are in a position to actually share something, we will. These are very delicate matters. I am not in a position to share anything definitive. Rather than speculate or half-guess in front of the Committee, I would rather share it with you.

Amanda Dickins: The Department is preparing for the Minister's consideration an international strategy. These issues are important for a wider global strategy.

Q91 **Chair:** What is the timescale for that?

Amanda Dickins: I am not sure of the precise publication date. Apologies, but that is not my area.

Q92 **Graham Stringer:** What is the plan for recognising British products once we are not participating in the European conformity scheme for marketing purposes?

Amanda Dickins: Both parties agree on the principle that the goods placed on the market under Union law before withdrawal may freely circulate on the markets of the UK and the Union with no need for product modifications or relabelling. They can be put into service where provided in Union law, and the goods concerned should be subject to continued oversight. I think it is important that the Government are keen to ensure that UK companies have maximum freedom to trade and operate within European markets, and to let European businesses do the same in the UK.

Q93 **Stephen Metcalfe:** My first question is on the continuing sharing of scientific data, which is an increasingly important commodity. What is our thinking on ensuring that data can be shared across EU borders post Brexit?

Amanda Dickins: We are working on that. I am sorry but I will have to come back to you on it.

Q94 **Stephen Metcalfe:** But you can state for the record the importance of ensuring that there will be a system in place, can you, or not?

Amanda Dickins: It has been made very clear to us in our conversations with important stakeholders, particularly those engaged in social science and medical research, that it is important to have continued ability to exchange data.

Q95 **Stephen Metcalfe:** You can write to us with a bit more detail on that.

My final question is about the continuing recognition of qualifications and whether there will be a mutual recognition—or whether we are working



towards that, both within the UK and the EU—of qualifications from other countries. If not, how are we going to get round that?

Amanda Dickins: Under our proposals, UK and EU citizens who hold or, importantly, are in the process of acquiring a professional qualification on the withdrawal date will retain the right to have that qualification recognised after the UK leaves the EU.

Q96 **Stephen Metcalfe:** And moving forward.

Amanda Dickins: We understand the importance of flexibility in moving across the European Union to live and work. We are seeking a reciprocal deal so that those with professional qualifications obtained before the date on which the UK leaves the EU will be able to use their qualifications in the UK and EU member states in the same way.

Q97 **Stephen Metcalfe:** Is there any thinking going on about how we might continue to recognise each other's qualifications post Brexit so that it makes it easy for scientists to move around and they can be involved in these important multi-international projects?

Amanda Dickins: I am very comfortable in saying there is a good deal of thinking going on around that question.

Q98 **Carol Monaghan:** Euratom membership or taking ourselves out of Euratom has been raised repeatedly. Professionals working, particularly in nuclear medicine, have spoken about the potential difficulties of obtaining radioactive sources both for treatment and diagnosis of cancer. I asked the Prime Minister about this back in December and she told me that BEIS was putting in place arrangements that will ensure we have the same capabilities and can operate in the same way as we do today. Can you tell us a bit about the arrangements that BEIS is putting in place?

Amanda Dickins: I can tell you that a good deal of work is going on to ensure the maintenance of rapid access to materials. I do not feel able to comment in further detail on that.

Q99 **Carol Monaghan:** Is associate membership of Euratom being considered at all?

Amanda Dickins: I believe Ministers have been quite plain on that point.

Mr Gyimah: I think a written ministerial statement was published on 11 January this year, where the Government made it clear that as part of the future relationship negotiations the Government will seek a close association with the Euratom research and training programme, including JET and ITER. Obviously, our position is to discuss the precise nature of this association.

Q100 **Carol Monaghan:** Association is not associate membership, however.

Mr Gyimah: The precedent is what we are looking at. There are precedents for non-EU countries participating in the programme.



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Switzerland and Ukraine are two examples, and we would look to agree terms for continued co-operation that would reflect our unique position.

Q101 **Chair:** Is an active discussion under way on these issues with European colleagues?

Mr Gyimah: There is an active discussion, yes.

Q102 **Carol Monaghan:** Is there any indication of timeframe on this one or is this another one that is—

Mr Gyimah: It is an ongoing negotiation. Science is a very key part of it, but science is one part of many other issues on which the Government are negotiating with the EU. I cannot give a definitive time on that.

Chair: Thank you very much. You have undertaken to write to us on a number of issues: some are factual matters and some require a bit more consideration. We are working to a very tight deadline. We want to finalise our report next week, so we need to hear from you by Thursday afternoon at the latest. We very much hope that you will be able to deal with many of the issues we have raised and that you have committed to write to us about in what you send to us by Thursday afternoon, if that is okay.

Mr Gyimah: Sure; that is fine.

Chair: Good. Thank you both very much indeed.