

Supplementary written evidence from Professor Dame Wendy Hall
- AIF0002

When I gave evidence on 14 October I undertook to expand on my one-word answer to the question whether the UK was as internationally competitive now as when the Select Committee first looked at the topic.

I have read Professor Wooldridge's supplementary evidence, and I feel much less pessimistic than he does. Jerome Pesenti and I wrote the AI Review in 2017 in the context of Brexit and the rise of the two AI superpowers - the US and China. The House of Lords report was published 6 months later. AI became part of the industrial strategy in November 2017 and the AI sector deal was launched in April 2018 with the announcement of a £1 Billion investment package. The Office for AI was set up to manage the roll out of the sector deal and the AI Council was set up to provide oversight of this and to develop future strategy. Since then we have seen investment in skills through funding for PhDs, MSc and Turing AI Fellowships, research through investment in the Turing Institute, and adoption by industry has been encouraged through Industrial Strategy Challenge Funds. This has all been perceived very well internationally, and has significantly helped us to retain our position in the Global Index for AI. I would argue this has helped to balance the negative effects of Brexit. I am also very optimistic for the future as we make the case for more funding so that whether or not we are able to take part in the European Research Council competitions, we have the funding to recruit and retain top talent in AI and invest as a nation in AI research and innovation. This will put us in a strong position to realise the opportunities afforded by AI technology whilst mitigating against the risks through our global leadership in AI ethics and data governance.

Professor Dame Wendy Hall

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