

Minister for Higher Education, Further Education,
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Jamie Hepburn MSP



Scottish Government
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George Freeman MP
Minister for Science, Research and Innovation
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial
Strategy
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John June 2022

Dear George

I am deeply concerned that the UK Government's approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol, – specifically its intention to bring forward unilateral domestic legislation to dis-apply parts of it – is adding to the damage Brexit is causing to Scottish universities and the research community.

The ideological pursuit of a 'hard' Brexit by the UK Government has already ended freedom of movement and taken us out of the Erasmus+ programme, cutting off educational mobility and eliminating opportunities for all our students, staff and young people.

Scotland of course did not vote for Brexit and these decisions have caused real harm to Scotland's universities and students.

The threat of this new legislation is now putting at risk access by Scotland's researchers and organisations to Horizon Europe. Horizon Europe is globally unparalleled and Scotland has benefited greatly from the scope, scale and prestige of this €95.5bn European Research & Innovation Framework programme.

I urge the UK Government to urgently resolve the dispute on the Northern Ireland Protocol and limit the damage being caused to higher education, research and innovation in Scotland.

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